

Ralph Northam's Pathetic Performance

by Gary Fouse



It's been quite a week for Virginia governor Ralph Northam. First he speaks in favor of late term abortion even describing a scenario where a baby is delivered successfully (or aborted unsuccessfully). In this dark tale, the baby would be kept comfortable while the mother and doctor figure out what to do. Then the baby would be terminated. Northam, who is a doctor, did not elaborate on how the baby would be put to death or "allowed" to die.

Now, a photograph from his 1984 medical school yearbook has come to light in which he is supposedly one of two people posing in KKK garb and blackface respectively. On Friday, Northam pled guilty and began his apology tour. This is what he said Friday:

"Earlier today, a website published a photograph of me from my 1984 medical school yearbook in a costume that is clearly

racist and offensive," he said. "I am deeply sorry for the decision I made to appear as I did in this photo and for the hurt that decision caused then and now."

On Saturday, with his own party leaders asking him to resign, Northam took to the podium with his wife dutifully in tow. He now says that after reaching out and consulting with old classmates, he has come to the conclusion that he will not resign because that is *not* him in the photo.

"...in the hours since I made my statement, I reflected with family and classmates from that time and it affirmed my conclusion that I am not the person in that photograph."

Northam, however, acknowledged that he was somewhat different in his youth than he is today, without being too specific. He did admit that around that time, he donned blackface at a party in San Antonio portraying Michael Jackson. Later in his press conference, he described it as dabbing a little shoe polish under his eyes, you know like those baseball players do on sunny days. And those apologies the previous day? He was only apologizing on behalf of the yearbook.

Somewhere, Brett Kavanaugh is laughing. Good thing for Northam he is a Democrat because that-and only that- might allow the story to die down though I doubt it. The fact is that in the past 48 hours, he has made a national joke of himself. His credibility is somewhat lower than... well, I am reminded somewhat of a whale, if you get my drift.

First of all, let's apply a little common sense here. If you appear in KKK garb or blackface, you don't forget it. Similarly, if you have never appeared in a photo like that and someone comes up with a photo depicting you as such, you know instantly that it is not you. Your first reaction is, "*No! That's BS! That's not me, period.*" It is not, "*I am deeply sorry for the decision I made to appear as I did in this photo and for the hurt that decision caused then and now.*"

With this flip-flop, Northam has destroyed any possibility that he could remain in office with this in his past. Forgiveness after this performance today? A lot of reasonable people including African-Americans could have said it was something that happened 30 years ago, he is not the same person, and he can be forgiven for a youthful indiscretion based on youthful ignorance. By many accounts, Northam has lived a good life of service. How many politicians or public figures-or folks like you or me- don't have indiscretions in our distant past that would haunt us later? Unfortunately, this is an indiscretion that touches America's most sensitive nerve – race.

A few years ago at UC Irvine, an Asian-American fraternity had a party where some members dressed up in blackface. In all likelihood, they were unaware of the history of blackface, which goes back to the first part of the 20th century. They quickly learned and were remorseful. They not only apologized but suspended themselves as a fraternity. Lesson learned.

Northam has compounded his earlier mistakes and now revealed himself to be just another pathetic political hack. He was in a better position Friday when he was apologizing. I am betting he will resign within 48 hours.