

She's So Vain

by Bruce Bawer



Why has it taken so long for us to learn about the remarkable Michaela Kennedy-Cuomo? On her mother's side, she's the granddaughter of Robert F. Kennedy; on her father's side, she's a member of another political dynasty – one that is (if possible) even more obnoxiously self-centered than the gang from Hyannisport.

Take Michaela's paternal grandfather, New York Governor Mario Cuomo, who became a national figure after giving the keynote speech at the 1984 Democratic convention. In its most famous passage, Mario waxed treacly about his immigrant father, "a small man with thick calluses on both his hands" who emigrated to America "uneducated, alone, unable to speak the language," worked "15 and 16 hours a day," etc., etc. It was widely interpreted as a heartfelt tribute to all hard-working legal immigrants; but it was also in large part – Mario Cuomo being Mario Cuomo – a characteristic dose of braggadocio about the amazingness of Cuomos.

For the Cuomos, everything's *always* about the Cuomos.

Then there's Michaela's father, current New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. Four years ago, against the wishes of over 85% of the residents of the counties flanking the Tappan Zee, he slapped his father's name on the newly built Tappan Zee Bridge.

Then, last year, at one of the daily televised ego trips – sorry, COVID briefings – that made *him* a national figure, Andrew announced what he called “Matilda's Law,” named for (who else?) his mother. The law obliged senior citizens to stay at home, limit visitors, and wear masks. Alas, it didn't prevent Andrew from sending COVID patients into nursing homes – thereby causing a giant spike in nursing-home deaths that he then tried to cover up.

During the past year, when he wasn't killing other people's mothers – or being accused of sexual harassment, or threatening to “destroy” Assemblyman Ron Kim – Andrew was writing a book, *American Crisis: Leadership Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic*, about how absolutely terrific he is.

Anyway, that's Michaela's dad. And let's not forget her uncle Chris, the CNN star and monster of vanity. Last year, on camera, while he was quarantined at his Hamptons home with the virus, he lifted weights that turned out to be fakes. Later, again on camera, he made a big show of emerging from his basement – like Jesus from the tomb – to mark the end of his quarantine. It turned out to be a total charade: he'd already stepped outside a week earlier, and when a passerby called him on it, Chris threatened him like a thug: “I'll find out who you are!”

Well, move over, Andrew and Chris. It's Michaela's turn in the spotlight. On June 3, the 23-year-old – a Brown University grad who's been described by one high-society mag as a “total social butterfly” – announced on Instagram that she's

bisexual. (She also demonstrated that, despite her pricey Ivy League degree, she doesn't know the difference between "who's" and "whose.")

That wasn't all. In an Instagram [chat](#) last Tuesday, she seemed to reject the "bisexual" label. Speaking with one Donato Tramuto (she has one of those disconcerting little-girl voices one hears nowadays, plus a touch of vocal fry), she explained that in elementary school, she thought she might be lesbian; in middle school, she came out as bisexual; in high school, she decided she was pansexual. But now, she's determined that the label that best suits her is "demisexual."

Although I wasn't at all sure what she was saying here, it seemed pretty clear that she wasn't planning to enter a convent. (It was also clear that, like her dad – and her Kennedy antecedents too, come to think of it – she's quite a sexual creature.)

In any case, it turns out that a demisexual requires an emotional bond to feel sexually attracted. The term can also "refer to being halfway between sexual and asexual."

Who knew there was an orientation called demisexuality? Who knew there was something "halfway between sexual and asexual"? Well, apparently Michaela did. Her education and early career may not have qualified her to do anything useful, but they've definitely prepared her to live – and thrive – in this woke new world of ours: at Brown she studied "social inequality"; since then, she's facilitated student workshops about "systems of oppression" and "rape culture" and worked as Chief Marketing Officer for a podcast about "wellness, spirituality, self-care, and astrology."

Watching Michaela, I thought about another child of celebrities, Chaz Bono. Chaz did the coming-out thing in two steps, and at the time I thought *that* was pretty impressive: first she came out as a lesbian, and even got a book out of

it; years later, Chaz scored a new round of headlines by coming out as transsexual. But Michaela has already far outdone Chaz: who imagined that by age 23 you could go from lesbian to bi to pan to demi?

In her interview with Tramuto, Michaela insisted that it was urgently important for her to divulge her sexual orientation: she needs, you see, to “support intersectional identities” by “sharing [her] authentic self,” because “fully embracing [one’s] true self” is “a revolutionary act of resistance.” To be sure, having declared the utter importance of trumpeting an identity label, Michaela turned on a dime and proclaimed, “We’re always evolving and growing and these labels only restrict us.” She showed no awareness that she’d totally contradicted herself.

Oh, well. She went on in this vein, saying that while she dreams “of a world in which nobody will have to come out because everybody’s sexuality will be assumed fluid and none of our business,” we’re not there yet. And “in a world that force-feeds cisgendered sexuality, coming out of the closet is a lifelong process of unpacking internalized social constructions and stigmas.”

Of course, by referring to “everybody’s sexuality” as “fluid,” Michaela is telling us to forget “born that way”: if you’re “always evolving,” you can wake up every morning with a new orientation – and hence a new reason to hog attention on Instagram.

Bottom line: Michaela is an airhead – and a narcissist. Yet Tramuto cheered her on, enthusing that she was doing her father proud. Well, that’s for sure: this ditz’s through-the-roof self-absorption shows that she’s one apple that didn’t fall far from the tree. And why do I have the sneaking suspicion that her courageous personal journey will end at the Plaza Hotel, with her dad giving her away in wedlock to some cis-male from a “good family”?

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