

*By Kenneth Morris*

printed from [www.financialthrillers.com](http://www.financialthrillers.com)

### **Buying Sarah Palin**

[I'm trying to buy Sarah Palin.](#) Actually, I'm trying to rent lovely Sarah and husband Todd for a few hours.

And, believe it or not, there's nothing nefarious about this: I'm not a lobbyist for health care or big tobacco or any of a hundred other special interests that fill political coffers, expecting a political payback. No, this is 100% legit. The ex-governor of Alaska has put herself up for auction on Ebay with proceeds to benefit Ride 2 Recovery (an organization dedicated to the health and wellness of wounded soldiers). I'm bidding to purchase a "DINNER FOR FIVE WITH SARAH PALIN". As the Ebay auction site says, "This is the chance of a lifetime..." The event is to be four hours maximum, I'll provide my own transportation, and I'll pay for dinner. Hey, I'm fine with that. I'll even throw in a couple bottles of champagne. If Sarah or Todd like thrillers, I'll give 'em free copies of my first two. Signed. You betcha.

My bid was submitted Tuesday night. Within five minutes, I received a call from a super nice man representing Ride 2 Recovery asking if I was "for real". I guess since the minimum bid is \$25,000, there are, as he indicated, "...a lot of nuts out there." While I'm sometimes kooky, I'm no nut. My bid is uber-sincere. Excuse me if I seem a little star-struck, but I find this tres cool (this is, after all, Sarah Palin, political super star, ergo I'm permitted to be struck, okay?).

At first, I was nervous about a required background check. Here's where I thought it'd get a little interesting. Reason? For starters I voted for and contributed money to President Obama. However, that shouldn't eliminate me as being unsuitable "based on her (Sarah's) subjective standards of suitability, professionalism, background, and other factors." If nothing else, however, I am 100% positive ex-Governor Palin would agree that political differences, especially as she has a son serving honorably in the service, shouldn't be placed in the way of raising money for veterans.

In that spirit, I pledge that when we meet, I'll be polite, respectful, professional, and as charming as an ordinary guy meeting an icon can be. If we get this done and Ms. Palin approves of my donation, I pledge here and now not to talk about her kids, Levi Johnson, Vanity Fair, The National Enquirer, or Katie Couric.

And, after all, when Governor Palin ran for national office, she was in line to become not just the Vice President of Republicans. She'd have been my Veep as well.

As it turns out, for whatever reasons, I was approved. My money's up there on Ebay, competing away with four others for the Palin dining rights. Go figure.

The twenty-five thousand dollar question now becomes: why would I want to have dinner with Ms. Palin? For starters, this country needs sit-downs and face-to-faces with people straddling different fences.

More to the point, though, there are important issues I'd like to discuss with Ms. Palin, issues that trouble me deeply. She has, I suspect, insights into these matters that are worth plumbing and worth paying for (please all, let's give her the benefit of the doubt); and though it may sound hyperbolic, my peace of mind is at stake.

There exists an emotional divide in this country that I've not experienced since I attended the University of California near the end of the Vietnam War. As a protester who took to the streets post the bombings of Cambodia and being tear-gassed on three occasions and nearly arrested twice, I was part of the schism that ripped apart our generation. While leaving scars that thickened the hearts of many from that era, the ending of the war allowed for a healing to begin. Painful, but now mostly a distant memory.

Today's rancor, however, troubles me more profoundly. Why? Maybe it's because I don't see a catalyst—like the end to a tragic war—that will magically lead us to end this political divide. Politically biased “news” channels, over-heated rhetoric by bloggers, and (in my view at least) the demise of investigative mainstream journalism and the role of Watergate-like Fourth Estate, are here to stay. This period has more the odor of the Civil Rights debate that ripped apart the South during the administrations of President Kennedy and Johnson. A rift that has never been bridged.

How, I'll ask Ms. Palin, can we work together (“we” meaning not just her and me, but all people on both sides of the political fence) to begin to fix this? I'll ask her a few questions that might seem harsh, but aren't intended to offend—after all, we must be honest, no? Do you regret saying several hundred times that our president “...palled around with terrorists...”? Do you really believe that providing health insurance to all Americans is socialism or fascism or Nazism or that there are truly ‘death squads’ in these proposals? I'll likely feel compelled to suggest that she doesn't, in her heart of hearts, actually believe any of these things (if she does, then this will give her a chance to educate and win me over). In any event, doesn't she think we should all tone down the rhetoric? Angry mobs and gun-toting advocates can't be in anyone's best interests.

I'd also suggest that she ix-nay the Glenn Beck recommendations: after all, the man called our president a “racist”. Surely that's not a healing kind of thing to say; not to mention that for a half-white man raised by a white mother and grandmother, being labeled racist sounds on face absurd.

As Ms. Palin is a born-again Christian, maybe we'd begin dinner by reading Colossians 3:13:

*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.  
Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

Amen to that.

Now, all I have to do is figure out who to invite (the short list: Olbermann, Maddow, Shannyn Moore, and, of course, Bree Palin). Oh, and I wonder if the Palins like Mexican. Solving the political divide over nachos?

As it says on the auction page: *Value: Priceless.*

### **Dinner with Sarah Palin: Part Two**

The “Dinner With Sarah Palin” eBay auction came and went with Ms. Cathy Maples, a grandmother who happens to be a military contractor, winning with a bid of \$63,500. Good for her. That I participated is a good thing, even though I didn’t win. As there were only seven bidders, each of us played a role in advancing the final tally for the benefit of [Ride2Recovery](#).

However, I remain concerned over [issues I raised when earlier explaining my participation](#):

*There exists an emotional divide in this country that I’ve not experienced since I attended the University of California near the end of the Vietnam War. While leaving scars that thickened the hearts of many from that era, the ending of the war allowed for a healing to begin. Painful, but now mostly a distant memory.*

*Today’s rancor, however, troubles me more profoundly. Why? Maybe it’s because I don’t see a catalyst—like the end to a tragic war—that will magically lead us to end this political divide. This period has more the odor of the Civil Rights debate that ripped apart the South during the administrations of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson; a rift that has never been bridged.*

*How, I’ll ask Ms. Palin, can we work together (“we” meaning not just her and me, but all people on both sides of the political fence) to begin to fix this? I’ll ask her a few questions that might seem harsh, but aren’t intended to offend—after all, we must be honest, no? Do you regret saying several hundred times that our president “palled around with terrorists?” Do you really believe that providing health insurance to all Americans is socialism or fascism or Naziism, or that there are truly ‘death panels’ in these proposals? I’ll likely feel compelled to suggest that she doesn’t, in her heart of hearts, actually believe any of these things (if she does, then this will give her a chance to educate and win me over). In any event, doesn’t she think we should all tone down the rhetoric? Angry mobs and gun-toting advocates can’t be in anyone’s best interests.*

As the auction never was designed to provide intellectual meat as its main course, I’d have either been turned down under the rules of engagement or disappointed in the discourse. However, ‘what-if’ notions continue to nag me. What if it were possible to have meaningful dialogue with this woman who leads her party? What if intelligent minds that happen to disagree could meet over dinner and explore political ideology?

In the great American spirit of never say die, here's my challenge: I will donate **\$100,000** to veterans' charities for a second dinner with Sarah Palin and four guests, this one *on-the-record* and taped so as to minimize misrepresentations. In the name of fair play, my list of invitees will include a subset of Rachel Maddow, Keith Olbermann, Thom Hartmann, Oprah Winfrey, James Carville, Randi Rhodes, Arianna Huffington, Frank Rich, [Mudflats' Jeanne Devon](#), [Jane Hamsher](#) and [Shannyn Moore](#). On her side, Sarah Palin may invite guests as well (how about Bill Kristol and Glenn Beck?). The only additional conditions are that the dinner/event last the entire four hours and questions asked are answered and discussed civilly. No filibustering, no third party prompts, just face-to-face honesty. Hostility by any invitee will be cause for removal. No discussion of children, Vogue, Katie Couric, The Enquirer, or Levi Johnston permitted.

This could become a win/win for everyone: Sarah Palin gains political chops and has a launching pad for her ideas while dispelling suggestions that she fixed the first auction to avoid debate; progressives and conservatives finally gain an in-depth understanding of her intellect; and veterans' charities benefit from some much-needed support..

As for me, I get to be an observer to one of the greatest meetings of the minds the twenty-first century has yet to assemble. *Tres cool.*

*~Ken Morris*

### **Dinner With Palin Part III: Competing with the Chinese**

What the flippin' flapjacks is going on here? The pounding in my head is like a bongo on steroids and unless I gain some understanding of what looks like an ocean of crazy stew, I'm liable to take up residence in a rubber room.

Here's what's got my head Linda Blairing: Sarah Palin—who must've said our President was "pallin' around with terrorists" a thousand times--gave a speech in a communist nation known for human rights abuses, forced late term abortions, child sweatshops (thereby making products so cheaply that U.S. manufacturing cannot compete), and poisoned dog food. She then criticized the president in this foreign land for implementing trade restrictions. Does anyone remember the Dixie Chicks?

Days ago, when I lost out on the eBay auction to have dinner with Ms. Palin, I rationalized that with the restrictions, I'd not have been approved anyway. So, as I wrote shortly thereafter, "In the great American tradition of never say die," I proposed a more substantial offer for an on the record discussion.

***I will donate \$100,000 to veterans' charities for a second dinner with Sarah Palin and four guests, this one on-the-record and taped so as to minimize misrepresentations. In the name of fair play, my list of invitees will include a subset of Rachel Maddow, Keith Olbermann, Thom Hartmann, Oprah Winfrey, James Carville, Randi Rhodes, Arianna Huffington, Frank Rich, [Mudflats' Jeanne Devon](#), [Jane Hamsher](#) and [Shannyn Moore](#). On her side, Sarah Palin may***

***invite guests as well (how about Bill Kristol and Glenn Beck?). The only additional conditions are that the dinner/event last the entire four hours and questions asked are answered and discussed civilly. No filibustering, no third party prompts, just face-to-face honesty. Hostility by any invitee will be cause for removal. No discussion of children, Vogue, Katie Couric, The Enquirer, or Levi Johnston permitted.***

My reasons for such an offer are honorable and important. With the Supreme Court positioned to overturn campaign finance laws in the *Citizens United vs. Federal Elections Commission* case now before it, corporate contributions to federal elections will be unfettered. In other words, Sarah Palin with the help of an unlimited dose of corporate funds might one day be president. Already she has what appears to be a heady stable of influential supporters: Fox News, Rupert Murdoch, Bill Kristol, Lawrence Kudlow, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera). In other words, I take her prospects seriously. And, as she has chosen to be a spokesperson for, as she says, "American Main Street," it is vital that she come out from behind her handlers and speak on the record in unscripted fashion. We deserve to be enlightened by honest insights not merely prepared comments and pre-screened questions.

Many readers didn't expect Ms. Palin to accept my offer and, so far, I've not heard a peep from her handlers (though I did get a few candid comments some of her supporters and to them, yes, I do know who my parents are. Thanks for asking).

How to generate interest in Camp Palin? To that end, if it's a question of numbers, I'm prepared to up the ante. I originally wanted to post a challenge to the hundreds of readers who have expressed a willingness to contribute to veteran charities if this meeting of the minds came about. My thought was to match public contributions up to an additional \$100,000. However, there are many logistical problems beyond my ability to address so I'll simply double the offer and suggest to Ms. Palin that there are many people who will add to the total. The \$200,000 minimum might well be something substantially larger.

The only change I'd like to make in the original proposal is to add one additional name to the list of potential attendees. As Ms. Palin claimed in her speech that de-regulation and lower taxes would end the financial crisis, it would be useful to invite Paul Krugman. From a recent interview with Rachel Maddow, I gather he isn't in full support of that economic analysis.

While I've not quite matched the reported \$300,000 China fee, with public help we might yet reach that level and Ms. Palin won't have to travel across the world to attend. Best of all for her, the visibility and good will should be priceless. As I said before a win-win and *tres* cool.

Ken Morris

## Voices from the Flats – President Foam Finger

he Supreme Court Gives You: President Foam Finger

By Ken Morris

Remember me? I'm the guy who, last September, lost out in his attempt to [buy Sarah Louise Palin on EBay](#). Not the retiring type, [I then issued a \\$200,000 personal challenge](#) to the "I'm quittin' for the good of Alaska" ex-gov to attend a second dinner where, on the record, she would answer policy issues and set the record straight. This was, I explained, a chance for her to solidify her political chops and change minds. She didn't respond. Instead, Sarah chose to go to China and pal around with child-labor abusing, abortion sponsoring, pet-food poisoning communists while pulling a Dixie-Chicks on steroids criticism of our current president. All that was a prelude to her wildly successful journey onto the Best Seller Lists with her black comedy, *Going Rogue*. Two hundred large to charity for an honest discussion? As they say in New York, "fuhgiddabout. "

Were this the end of it, I'd be content to lay back and let the political winds blow where they might. But as I wrote in my original offer to Ms. Palin, there is a Category Five on its way and, unfortunately, today it struck. In September's invitation, I explained my motivations with the following observation:

My reasons for such an offer are honorable and important. With the Supreme Court positioned to overturn campaign finance laws in the *Citizens United vs. Federal Elections Commission* case now before it, corporate contributions to federal elections will be unfettered. In other words, Sarah Palin with the help of an unlimited dose of corporate funds might one day be president. Already she has what appears to be a heady stable of influential supporters: Fox News, Rupert Murdoch, Bill Kristol, Lawrence Kudlow, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. In other words, I take her prospects seriously. And, as she has chosen to be a spokesperson for, as she says, "American Main Street," it is vital that she come out from behind her handlers and speak on the record in unscripted fashion. We deserve to be enlightened by honest insights not merely prepared comments and pre-screened questions.

This morning, the Roberts Supreme Court—in its most activist incarnation since awarding George W. Bush the presidency in 2000—did just what I predicted and reversed limits on corporate spending in elections. Essentially, our system of campaign finance laws (never a good one to begin with) becomes a financial free for all. And, in this new la la land of issues-be-damned, the human equivalent of a giant foam-finger (uh, maybe someone just like Sarah Palin) morphs into an ideal candidate for national office. Strap her face and image in front of nefarious handlers (can you say, "Dick Cheney?"), record a few easy to remember sound bites ("Pallin' around with terrorists" or "Joe the Plumber" or "Drill, Baby, Drill"), prop up her fictional Main Street Cred, and keep her off the Katie Couric show. That's it. Because elections will become wall-to-wall negativity, making the electorate hate an opponent enough to vote agin 'em might well allow a stupendously under-qualified person to stomp their way to victory. In other words, we are faced with George Bush beating Swift Boated John Kerry times a few billion. No restrictions, no limits, no need to bother telling the truth, even less incentive to discuss political philosophy (assuming a candidate has one). Main Stream Media will follow the scent and report

on the rumors because they know issues don't sell ads (especially since advertisers are the ones paying for the production of all those salacious stories).

Add to this the sad disenfranchisement of a progressive movement that now realizes fighting for and winning a massive majority in the House and Senate is meaningless and, bingo-bango, practice saying, "Hello, President Caribou Barbie." Sounds like the Perfect Storm of political misfortune, doesn't it? And, worse, if it isn't to be Sarah Palin, how many George W. Bush wannabes are there? It only takes one, backed by a few billion ad dollars, to do the trick.

Thanks to the Supremes, it's almost inevitable.

*~Ken Morris*