

## About the Author

I ran for United States Congress in 2006 with radical honesty as a platform and I lost. It was one of the best unsuccessful campaigns anyone has ever run. There are bios of me in my former books, on our website, and all over the place. I like this one, which is excerpted from my campaign brochure at the time I ran for Congress. I have updated it and tinkered with it a bit to add in the four years since then.

My name is Brad Blanton and I'm running for United States Congress.

Heaven: I was born in Staunton Virginia on September 8, 1940, into a family with two parents and a sister who was nine. My brother was born fifteen months later. My father was a lineman for the telephone company and my mother was a homemaker, a poet, and a songwriter. We lived in a small house in the middle of an apple orchard and, as far as I can remember, we were in heaven.

Heaven Interrupted: When I was not quite six years old, my father dropped dead from a heart attack at thirty-seven years of age. Everything changed. A year later, my mother, who felt desperately alone and was grieving, and had three children to raise, married a shell-shocked veteran who had just returned home from six years in the Pacific. He was a machinist, she became a secretary, and they both became alcoholics.

Hell: Our heavenly family became the family from hell. The social security checks for us kids went for liquor; my stepfather beat my mother, sometimes putting her in the hospital, and causing her bodily injuries, broken bones, and three miscarriages. My little brother, Mike, was born a couple of months premature after a beating and survived. When I was nine, I became his primary caretaker until he was four and a half years old. My sister, who was sixteen, left home right after my brother was born to escape my stepfather's sexual advances.

Raising Hell: When I was twelve and my little brother was three he got rheumatic fever and it damaged his heart. The doctor said he needed to have rest and quiet to have a chance of healing. I became then not only his caretaker, but his protector from the chaos of our family. When I was thirteen years old, I interrupted one of my stepfather's violent attacks by picking up a stick of firewood and breaking three of his ribs and fracturing his skull. A few weeks later, I stole the social security money, went to the hardware store in town, bought two shotguns and two cases of shells for me and my eleven-year old brother (along with a basketball, a basketball hoop, a backboard, and a rod and reel), and I took over the family at gunpoint for a while and got the house cleaned up.

I told my stepfather to his face when he was cold sober that I was going to kill him the next time he laid a hand on anybody, and it became clear the family had to come to an end one way or another. I called in my grandparents and we split the family up. My little brother Mike went to live at his grandmother's house in Virginia, my younger brother Jimmy went to an aunt and uncle in Tennessee, and I went to Texas to live with my sister. My mother and stepfather stayed together for a couple of more years before she left him.

**Forgiveness:** I forgave my stepfather for almost everything before he died. It wasn't easy. And beating the hell out of him was a part of the process of forgiving him. Also included in the process of forgiving him was my coming to understand all the sadness and heartbreak and damage done to him by the life of killing he had been thrown into as a teenager when he spent six years in the Pacific slaughtering human beings. I learned the truth of the bigger story that had crippled him. The hatred that could have consumed me didn't. Compassion won out over vengeance. It was almost accidental. But I am not stupid. I was certainly struck by how brilliant our human arrangements for war work as a way to do religion and property settlements! That really works well doesn't it? And I can testify it lasts for generations to come—a gift that keeps on giving.

I forgave my mother for everything before she died, as well. Forgiving my mother and stepfather benefited me more than them. I learned that if we are able to forgive we can make a new beginning. I also learned that forgiveness is a very tough process, sometimes including things I myself need forgiveness for along the way. I learned that love happens when forgiveness is a two-way street, and that there is probably nothing more important than forgiveness and letting love happen.

**Gratitude for Direction:** I am grateful for the grace and luck of my whole childhood and for the path of life it put me on. I started college in Texas when I was sixteen, and I was clear and unhesitating about the direction of my life. I knew I wanted to help people who were helpless and protect them from the mean people. I have done that and am still doing it but I found that often the mean people and the helpless people are the same people. So helping mean people not have to be so mean is also good work that helps everyone, when I can do it.

**My Dilemma and Our Dilemma:** Helplessness and meanness are almost always in the same person. The helpless people are the mean people. The mean people are the helpless people who haven't learned how to forgive their crippers. (Newsflash: "Childhood is hell, reports former child!") Some mean people are in denial about being mad at their parents and teachers to

such a degree that they profess to love and honor them. These people are generally called neo-conservatives and they are in severe need of psychological help. They are the sickest among us.

In the course of figuring out how to help the helpless mean people, I got a doctorate in psychology when I was twenty-five years old. I have worked as a psychotherapist in private practice inside the beltway in Washington, D.C., for over twenty-five years, a seminar leader, and a trainer of psychotherapists. I worked with the helpless and the mean and their mates and families—the victims and oppressors produced by our civilization. I saw a lot of lawyers in therapy. Most of what they say about lawyers is true: ninety-nine percent of them give the rest a bad name. They are our professional liars, and it costs them their lives, just as lying does for most people.

How Lying and Secrecy Prevent Forgiveness: Out of that practice of psychotherapy and from my own life I learned that (1) the key to forgiveness is honesty, and (2) the secret to meanness is lying, and that (3) most of us are trapped into lying most of the time by the way we are raised, and that (4) the major injustices of the world come from our systematic instruction in lying, and the unresolved anger and hurt continuously perpetrated on all of us by the culture in which we are raised. The culture's agents of instruction are the previous generation of cripples, parents, teachers, and peers, who suffer from a disease called moralism, an illness that lies at the heart of civilization, our mutual sickness.

Based on that insight, I wrote a nationwide bestselling book called *Radical Honesty*, which has now been published in about a dozen languages. I created a seminar which has been conducted around the world called "The Course in Honesty" (Sometimes called, "The Curse of Honesty.") I have written five other books since starting and conducting that workshop on an ongoing basis about twenty years ago. I have helped thousands of people live happier lives. I have helped people overcome depression, anxiety disorders, chronic conflict, damaged capacity for intimacy and other forms of self torture and torture of others.

I have also been a political activist all my life. I joined the civil rights movement in 1959 when I was nineteen years old and stuck with it until we passed the civil rights acts of 1964. Integration has still not yet occurred, but segregation is over. I put my ass on the line to make that happen.

I refused to serve in Vietnam and I was in the anti-Vietnam war movement for ten years, a couple of those years full time. I put my ass on the line over and over again, and it still took forever to end that stupid fucking war. And it only took a few years between when that one ended and the bullshit continuation of the murder-based economy of the United States to

work us into perpetual conflict and anti-terrorist terrorism still being perpetrated now in Iraq and Afghanistan and Pakistan, and elsewhere (God only knows where).

I have been arrested, jailed, beat up, bombed, tear gassed, shot at, fired from several jobs, received threats on my life, and been indelicately treated. I took it. I survived. I fought back. I wish I had done more of it more violently.

I was a hippie and lived in a school bus and drove all over America and I have taken nearly every illegal drug known to man, usually more than once. I did not exhale. I learned a hell of a lot. I have flaunted, opposed and broken laws all my life and I am not ashamed of most of it.

I have been married five times. I have fathered and helped raise five children, who are wonderful, loving contributors to the world. I am proud of them and of my ex-wives and of the job we did, and are doing, of raising those children together, and of supporting them after they have grown up.

I want to protect the future for all our children and stepchildren, and for my two grandchildren. I realize that the future of the people I love is in danger, and I hope you do too and that we can do something about it together.

I Am Damaged Goods: I can understand how some of you may feel it is a bit of a stretch to forgive me for the kind of life I have lived and vote for me to become a Congressman. I have overcome some of the hurts of my childhood, but you may not like the way I did it. And along the way and while doing that I have also made mistakes and been unkind, and lied and cheated, and stolen and been a hypocrite about professing love and acting hatefully.

Regardless of whether you agree with all of how I have lived or what I have done, I would like for you to understand that we can probably agree on a very important point: we are living in a damaged society. And I want you to know that I know how to help. I have broken some rules, and I have hurt some people, but I cannot hold a candle to the immense depravity, injustice, and murderous criminal behavior of the United States Government during my lifetime. Forgiving me for my past may be a challenge, but it is trivial compared to what it will take for both of us to forgive, for example, Bush, Cheney, Congressman Cantor, and the whole cabal of sick people who surround them, and the goddamned Democrats who have aided them.

The meanest people in the world are the ones considered morally righteous in a sick society. That is nowhere better demonstrated than the record of the Bush presidency and all the righteous people who have

helped him in his meanness and the furthering of his ignorance. Someone ought to take a stick of firewood to the whole damn bunch of them. (This wasn't in italics in the notes for the speech, but I put this in italics now to point out that I have not come very goddamned far!)

I know the value of forgiveness and I am in the process of trying to forgive the neoconservatives for their ignorance, malice, heartlessness, greed, and stupidity. Even harder, I am trying also to forgive the lying purveyors of hope who call themselves Democrats. Since I can't beat the hell out of them and get by with it, I have to use the process of getting to forgiveness by telling the truth. And you need to have the truth told to you as much as I need to tell it. So, for the benefit of both of us:

This Is the Truth: You are the one responsible for keeping this hell in place. It is time you did something about it. What you do and don't do makes a difference. Your vote or lack thereof set this crap in motion. Not voting is a vote for business-as-usual: corruption, corporate welfare, deficit spending, war and the occupation of foreign lands, the most expensive and yet least fair health care system of all nations in the industrialized world, and an educational system that is dumbing kids down instead of inspiring them and us to think.

Right here in Virginia, in District 7, our quality of life is at risk. The divide between the wealthy and the poor is ever-widening, and the middle class is an endangered species. Paychecks don't buy what they used to, and if you lose your job you're unlikely to find another. Our traditional family farms are being swallowed up by the Pro-Development Super-sizing Machine built by hypocrites preaching smaller government. Do you know who is responsible for that? It's you. And it's me. It's up to us to set things right.

We Don't Have to Live This Way. We don't have to have these troubles. We can lift ourselves out of this tragic failure of democracy by bringing into being a new vision. I hope you share this vision. The vision is to turn hell into heaven, and the time has come for us to proceed. I, personally, am committed to service and leadership in a world that works for me and everyone I know, and everyone they know—until together we bring into being out of our co-intelligence and common vision heaven on earth. The purpose of my life is to use every bit of my perceptiveness, intelligence, love of children, love of people, love of life, and sense of humor by writing books, designing and conducting workshops, giving talks, making media appearances, sharing honestly with friends, being with my family, running for public office, and helping with the raising of children and grandchildren in such a way as to create the possibility of a lifetime of play and service for every human being on the planet. (That's what I call heaven: the possibility of a

lifetime of play and service as an open option for every human being on earth.)

I invite you to share this vision with me and help me bring it into being in the real world. If we can picture this together we can make it come true together. Imagine: Every little baby born, every little child alive, every adolescent, and every adult in every family on every continent living together in a world where all they have to do is play—and serve each other in the process of playing—because it is fun, it's the best way to learn, and it makes for the greatest possible life with others.

The stretch from what is so now to what we can envision is not as far as it looks. A great reconciliation under the duress of global warming may at last deliver us from our worst enemy: ourselves.

I am a lucky person to have lived during the times I have lived and to have had the friends and lovers, and little children who loved me. They helped to sustain me and help me thrive within the context of the poisonous cultural conditions of my place of birth in the shameful thieving murderous heart of corporate capitalism, the United States of America in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I live in the country owned and operated by corporations who have no conscience. There was love there in the very heart of evil.

So I dedicate this life to the great God of evolution, in prayer for having our mutual human conscious participation in alliance with the Great Chaos to bring things forward to a locus of love in this starry little teeny place in eternal time within whose greater context our little activities play themselves out. I dedicate these words and all the information they convey to the God beyond God, in hope that the love of God so bastardized in our culture could really miraculously work out to be the actual love of God after all, the love to us from reality, and our love back for reality. In the words of Job, "The Lord giveth. And the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." I dedicate my books and my life to the whole trip.