

When William F. Buckley Met Saul Alinsky - Hot Air

When [William F. Buckley met Saul Alinsky](#), one of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton's [biggest influences](#). Unfortunately, only five minutes of this December 1967 edition of Buckley's seminal *Firing Line* program is online the above clip, but you can read a transcript of the entire interview [at the Hoover Institute](#), or buy a DVD of the program for ten bucks [from Amazon](#). At one point, Buckley describes Alinsky's philosophy:

Look, this is a program of things we want, if you don't give it to us, we're going to make it impossible for Chicago to continue commercial or civic life at all.

Alinsky eventually argues:

I'll put it another way. I said that evolution is a chronological term used by non-participating historians to denote a time sequence of a whole series of revolutions which synthesize into a major change — then they call it evolution.

Change? Say, somebody should use that word as a campaign slogan!

And note this exchange:

ALINSKY: Controversy ranges. It ranges all through various levels of life. I would consider, for example, the same thing on revolution. I think Social Security was revolutionary.

BUCKLEY: Yeah.

ALINSKY: I think Medicare was revolutionary. You see the problem is every –

BUCKLEY: It does seem that we have a semantic difficulty.

ALINSKY: All words in the whole arena of action are all loaded. (Announcer breaks in)

ANNOUNCER: Our debate on these varied issues will continue after this brief pause.

ALINSKY: (Continuing but some of his remarks lost during simultaneous announcement) — gets an idea of blood and barricades, and that sort. And then you say, power — it's sinister word, you know.

BUCKLEY: But for instance, we got Medicare in this country, and we got it as a result of discussion. Now, mightn't Alinsky students have felt that you would need to shoot a few doctors, or let people die for lack of medical attention, before you'd have the kind of conflict that's necessary to midwife for Medicare?

ALINSKY: Buckley, I've been fascinated by your eyes in previous shows I've watched you on, and will you look at me and tell me whether you believe what you're saying?

Ahh, the old “do you *really* believe what you're saying?” [dodge](#). Also, Alinsky's hatred of traditional religion becomes increasingly palpable as the interview goes on; something that appears to have carried over to his most famous acolyte and his own, well, shall we say, [spiritual issues](#).

[Read the transcript online](#) as a PDF file here — you'll definitely read quotes from Alinsky that rhyme with

more than a few recent events.