

# Ann Coulter Exploits Death of Friend's Sister

## Coulter Creates Yet Another Controversy – and Confusion

On the ever-friendly-to-Coulter *Fox & Friends*, Coulter dropped a political bombshell: Obamacare was responsible for the death of her friend's sister, Julie. Coulter attributed Julie's death to Obamacare, specifically to Blue Shield leaving the state of California and the deceased's inability to access the Obamacare website. Those two specifics were later proven to be wrong. Meanwhile, days passed with no corroboration of any of Coulter's story and no information about the deceased.

Some questioned her story in its entirety, while others wondered about specific key details. Strikingly, *no other Fox News Channel program has yet reported on Coulter's charge* (FNC producers and hosts, please correct me if I am wrong).

Who was Julie? Where did she live? What really happened? Why did Coulter's friend give her permission to tweet about the situation but then remain silent. Why were there no published death notices, obituaries, or eulogies?



Within a few days, left-wing blogs claimed Coulter fabricated the whole thing. Later, the deceased's brother posted a guest column on Coulter's website, essentially supporting Coulter's story but leaving out the erroneous information Coulter had actually provided to her audience. Two days later, the family held a memorial service. Fully 11 days after that service, a very brief public announcement appeared in a church bulletin.

Finally, exactly one month after this tragic death, a conservative blog attempted to fully exonerate Coulter's erroneous scoop.

What really happened, and why?

This essay explores the myriad aspects of this tragedy and its aftermath. Out of respect, I have not contacted the bereaved. Portions of this essay are suppositional and appropriately identified as such.

## A Few Foundational Facts

Let's begin with the facts that we *do* now know.

- 2/1/14. Coulter broke the news about Julie's death on twitter.
- 2/2/14. Coulter gave some details of Julie's death while appearing on *Fox & Friends*.
- 2/5/14. Politifact reported on two crucial errors in Coulter story.
- 2/10/14. For the first time in ten days, corroboration of Coulter's claims appeared – in a guest column written by Julie's brother, a column which debuted on Coulter's website and was later reposted on numerous conservative websites.

- 2/12/14. The family held a memorial service for Julie at St. Andrew the Apostle Church.
- 2/23/14. St. Andrew the Apostle Church's weekly bulletin provide an (exceptionally brief) announcement which merely mentioned Julie's passing – fully 11 days after her memorial service and three weeks after Julie's death. Apart from this nominal entry, there have been no death notices, obituaries, or published eulogies to date.
- 3/1/14. A conservative blog fully backed Coulter's entire story.
- 3/3/14. Coulter denied posting Graham's essay to defend her from criticism.

## Coulter Exploits the Recently Deceased

For decades, Coulter has exploited personal and national tragedies to promote herself and her agenda.<sup>1</sup> In the beginning of February, Coulter told this remarkable tale of death due to ObamaCare. It was an astonishing and poignant human interest story of a life unnecessary lost due to the legal, medical, and bureaucratic nightmare of government-run health care. In Coulter's words:<sup>2</sup>

A shocking and horrible thing happened to me yesterday. I mean, this does have real-world consequences. I got up in the morning and got an email from a friend saying, "my sister almost died because of Obamacare." **She had been thrown off her insurance plan, you know Blue Shield just completely pulled out of California.** A lot of insurance companies have just had to pull out. And there is no competition, I mean, there is fake competition. There are a million insurance companies but they all have to provide under federal law the exact same product. So, have it and go and compete.

So, anyway **she was thrown off her insurance, she was trying to get insurance some other way, get on Obamacare, she couldn't get through the website.** And she started to get a fever and she didn't want to go to the hospital, the emergency room. She didn't know what it was until she got her insurance. So she put it off, she put it off. On Thursday, she went into septic shock.

I was giving a speech yesterday [Saturday], a lunch speech, I went down and mentioned this during the speech – you know, this woman nearly died, she went into septic shock. I got up to my hotel room after the speech and my friend sent me email saying, "my sister died from Obamacare."

But really, it isn't [shocking]. It's expected. We knew this would happen. It's a horrible story and people need to know about these stories. I emailed her, I asked her, "Can I tweet this?" She said, "Julie would be very happy for you to tweet this."

For well over a week, people wondered about the identity of "Julie" and investigators were stymied by the absence of any death notices or obituaries.

Critics of the president's signature political achievement naturally took Coulter at her word and saw this tragedy as a natural outcome of this draconian beast known as Obamacare. Some skeptics analyzed those portions of her story which were potentially provable and, indeed, *disproved* portions of Coulter's tale.

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<sup>1</sup> See chapter 8, "The Lost Art of the Eulogy," in *Vanity: Ann Coulter's Quest for Glory*, available as a free download at [www.coulterwatch.com/vanity.pdf](http://www.coulterwatch.com/vanity.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Ann Coulter, *Fox & Friends*, FNC, 2/2/14 (emphasis added).

## Truth-O-Meter

As it turns out, *Coulter's story did not pan out* as presented by Coulter.



**A friend's sister "died from Obamacare" because Blue Shield "completely just pulled out of California."**

[Ann Coulter](#) on Sunday, February 2nd, 2014 in an interview on "Fox & Friends Weekend"

Politifact's Truth-O-Meter ranked portions of Coulter's claim "Pants on Fire."<sup>3</sup> They concluded:

We don't know the name of the woman (beyond Julie), the type of coverage she had or anything about her medical history, and Coulter did not respond to our request for more information. But the claim that someone "died from Obamacare" because Blue Shield "completely just pulled out of California" is something we can fact-check. ...

But more germane to this particular fact-check is Coulter's assertion that the woman found herself without insurance because Blue Shield pulled out of the state of California.

That did not happen. ...

Coulter said a friend's sister "died from Obamacare" because she was "thrown off her insurance plan, you know Blue Shield completely just pulled out of California."

We're not fact-checking whether someone died. We're looking at the circumstances Coulter presented.

Blue Shield did not pull out of California, and the company did not leave people without insurance. In fact, customers were allowed to keep their existing insurance plans through March. If the basic facts of Coulter's story are accurate, the woman in question elected to drop insurance coverage.

Whatever the story of Blue Shield, saying someone died "from Obamacare" is incendiary and grossly misleading.

Coulter's claim rates Pants on Fire.

How did Coulter get it so wrong?

### Ann Coulter, Investigative Journalist Extraordinaire

Readers of my book, *Never Trust Ann Coulter - at ANY Age*,<sup>4</sup> know that I am rightly wary of anything Coulter claims. In recounting her story, Coulter appeared to be truthful. Certainly, as a human interest story, the death of her friend's sister is both heartbreaking and compelling, putting a human face on an institutional imbroglio.

<sup>3</sup> Politifact, 2/5/14, <http://www.politifact.com/punditfact/statements/2014/feb/05/ann-coulter/ann-coulter-says-friends-sister-died/>.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Borchers, *Never Trust Ann Coulter - at ANY Age*, 2013, available as a free download at [www.coulterwatch.com/never.pdf](http://www.coulterwatch.com/never.pdf).

But did Coulter actually *verify* what her friend told her? Did Coulter follow-up to *confirm* the merits of this particular case? It appears not. In my view, Obamacare is abominable-care. Though this particular anecdote fits that narrative, did Coulter *accurately* report the story?

Coulter regards herself as an investigative reporter and she boasts of doing all of her own research, yet she utterly failed to investigate this sensational charge. Why? Was it just sloppiness? Would looking too closely at the details have undercut the import of her scoop?

I suspect Coulter was all too eager to exploit this tragedy for her own purposes. It was politically and emotionally perfect to put a human face on the consequences of big-government, one-size-fits-all nanny state solutions.

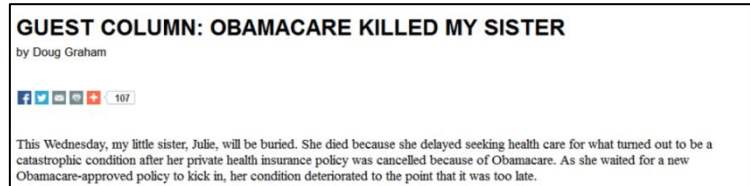
ObamaCare is dying on its own. It's tombstone is being engraved. We don't need to lie – as its architects did – to put it out of our (and America's) misery. But Coulter, in her arrogance, chose to do so. (If her errors are innocent, her failure to correct those errors turns them into lies.)

As we now know, Coulter was initially emailed by her friend, Melanie Graham (who has appeared in the acknowledgements of many of Coulter's books). Melanie lives in California. My suspicion is that Coulter *assumed* the deceased was also a resident of California. Without verifying her assumptions, Coulter – despite having ample time to review the actual facts of the situation – went with those assumptions and, before a national television audience the very next day, made claims which remain *demonstrably untrue*.

To date, Coulter has yet to correct her false statements and conservative bloggers have falsely attacked Politifact and others for accurately analyzing those errors.

## Doug Graham Speaks Out

Eight days after breaking her story on national television, in an unprecedented action, Coulter posted guest commentary on her website.<sup>5</sup> Her friend, Doug Graham, corroborated *part* of Coulter's story.<sup>6</sup> Graham's column is emotional and political, but it is not a eulogy.<sup>7</sup> His version of events differed from Coulter's in several key respects. First, he made no mention of the state in which his sister lived (she said California) and no mention of Blue Shield (as Coulter claimed).



As noted by Politifact, people in California did not use the Obamacare website and Blue Shield did not drop people from coverage.<sup>8</sup> Coulter broke the story – without fact-checking – and her version of events remains *false*. Without vetting the story, Coulter repeated an unverified accusation, sharing it with an audience in Orlando, FL, on her twitter account, and to a national TV audience. And her version is wrong in key details.

Strikingly, in *Godless* (2006), Coulter decried “the Left's doctrine of infallibility” wherein “victims” are used as spokesmen to prevent discussion. As Coulter wrote, “Finally, the Democrats hit on an ingenious

<sup>5</sup> Doug Graham, “ObamaCare Killed My Sister,” 2/10/14.

<sup>6</sup> My cynical side questions *why* Coulter chose this time – for the *first* time in 15 years – to publish a *guest* column on her website. Is Graham her first close friend to experience a tragedy? Or did the incendiary political nature of his charge take precedence? Or did Coulter want the pathos of his story to distract from the errors in her premature reporting?

<sup>7</sup> Surprisingly, I have been unable to unearth any death notice or obituary for Graham's sister *anywhere*.

<sup>8</sup> Author interview.

strategy: They would choose only messengers whom we're not allowed to reply to. That's why all Democratic spokesmen these days are sobbing, hysterical women. You can't respond to them because that would be questioning the authenticity of their suffering.”<sup>9</sup>

Take a close look at Coulter’s condemnation of these spokesmen: “Democrats with a dead husband, a dead child,” claiming, “Liberals prey on people at a time of extreme emotional vulnerability and offer them fame and fortune to be that month's purveyor of hate. Victory goes to the most hysterical.”

Back then, Coulter railed against “the Left's invocation of infallibility based on personal experience” and she asked, “If these Democrat human shields have a point worth making, how about allowing it to be made by someone we're allowed to respond to?”<sup>10</sup>

Coulter has now found her own “human shield” to promote her own political agenda and distract us away from her own false reporting.

### **Feelings vs. Facts**

Graham genuinely believes Obamacare is to blame for his sister’s death, but that *belief* does not necessarily make it *true*. *Feelings* are not *facts*. Other factors fell into play in this tragic event: an ill-timed illness, economic concerns, and personal choices. The bereaved brother wrote, “She died because she delayed seeking health care.” The deceased made a *choice*, as many people without health insurance must make every day. (I myself was without health insurance for almost a decade and faced similar quandaries.) Blaming Obamacare itself may ease his grief, but the accusation is not necessarily true.

My heart goes out to all of the bereaved for the tragic loss of their loved one. Deaths like these are unbearable and it is understandable why the family and friends would blame ObamaCare – a grossly inept and unconstitutional health insurance system – for their loss.

Mr. Graham, you and your family have my deepest sympathy. May God’s grace comfort you and yours.

Two days after Graham’s guest column appeared, the family held a memorial service for Julie. Eleven days after that, the church bulletin included a brief mention of Julie. Until that February 23<sup>rd</sup> bulletin, few people knew the identity of Julie, and even here, no personal information is provided.

<p><b>Please Remember in Your Prayers</b> the repose of the souls of all the faithful, especially Hank Baker, and Julianne Stovall.</p>
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### **The Conservative American Attempts to Exonerate Coulter**

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, the *Conservative American* blog featured a story which attempted to fully vindicate Coulter’s imperfect story.<sup>11</sup>

While people can debate the merits of blame for this death on Obamacare, the *Conservative American* went too far by repeatedly asserting that “Coulter did NOT lie!” and falsely claiming:

<sup>9</sup> Ann Coulter, *Godless: The Church of Liberalism*, Crown Forum, 2006, pg. 104.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 146.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Andrew, “Death by Obamacare – The Real Story of Julie Stovall, The Woman Ann Coulter Spoke About,” *Conservative American*, 3/1/14, <http://conservativeamerican.org/death-by-obamacare-the-real-story-of-julie-stovall-the-woman-ann-coulter-spoke-about/>.

“Politifact jumped to the conclusion that this person lived in California and had Blue Cross-Blue Shield. **Neither statement was true.** While a viewer could *infer* those things from what Coulter said, Coulter did **NOT** say Julie Stovall was from California and she did **NOT** say Stovall had Blue Cross.”

Sorry, but that is *precisely* what Coulter *did* say. Though Coulter may not have intentionally lied, she most certainly *did* speak in error and most certainly she *did*, in fact, claim what *Conservative American* denies she claimed.


Examine the full text of Coulter’s remarks provided on page 2, noting those items in bold. Coulter inserted her remarks about California and Blue Shield in the midst of talking about Julie – seamlessly, with no break in thought flow – to specifically detail the cause of Julie’s death. California and Blue Shield were *contextually* part of Julie’s story and *integral* to Coulter’s charges.

Mar. 1, 2014

### Death by Obamacare – The Real Story of Julie Stovall, The Woman Ann Coulter Spoke About

By Peter Andrew – [ConservativeAmerican.org](http://ConservativeAmerican.org) – Leading the way Right.

**EXCLUSIVE – THE WOMAN WHO DIED BECAUSE OF OBAMA’S BROKEN PROMISE...**



The day after Christmas last year, we wrote a post called, “[Obamacare 2014: Who Dies First?](#)” We asked if the news of that first passing would happen in January. We were *only off by a few hours*. It was in the early morning hours of February 1st, when the first death unfortunately happened.

**55-year-old Julianne “Julie” Stovall** was a happily married mother of four living in Clifton, Virginia. Her kids ranged in age from 13-23. She had spent 25 years in marriage to her husband, John. **Her tragic death** on February 1st, 2014 is **the first known death that happened because of changes the Obamacare law required.**

ConservativeAmerican.org Picture – Mrs. Julie Stovall, Clifton, Virginia.

She was a real person. A daughter. A sister. A wife. A mother. A friend and coworker. She was loved and is dearly missed by her children, spouse and family. This is a true story.

Conservative author and commentator **Ann Coulter** happens to be friends with one of Julie’s sisters, **Melanie Graham**, so Coulter knew about this situation. Coulter mentioned the case, without details, during a **Fox TV** interview, a mention that earned her a **“Pants on Fire” Lie Award from the so-called “Politifact” website.** Ann Coulter was right. The story is not a lie, despite the liberal politifact’s claim. Here’s the video...

Coulter neither verified the accuracy of her reporting nor has she yet corrected any of the errors she made.

This is just another instance in which Coulter has exploited the death of innocent people to serve her own purposes.

Did Melanie Graham intend for Coulter to make a *political* statement in her tweet? Or did she merely intend her friend to pay *homage* to her lost sister?

Was Doug Graham’s very political essay intended to *bolster* Coulter’s flagging credibility, in addition to informing the political debate over Obamacare and over the intrusion of an ever-expanding government into the lives of American citizens?

As noted earlier, it is significant that the only Fox News Channel television show to broadcast Coulter’s claims is Fox & Friends. The sheer silence of that network – hardly a left-wing organization backing Obamacare – suggests that network is reluctant to assert a *causal* relationship in this tragedy.

## Coulter’s Denial

Remember, Coulter broke a controversial story without verifying the facts because the truth might have gotten in the way of a good story. She did not want truth to trump talking points. Naturally, people questioned the source and substance of her claims. (We *still* don’t know the *official* date, time, location, and cause of death!)

March 3, 2014, 9:15 PM

### First Obamacare Death of the Year ... -

Except for the fact I did not post Doug Graham's original piece in response to any "criticism" -- he wrote it and I posted it -- and that I also never communicated with Kraemer, other an open tweet telling him to READ MY WEBPAGE for Doug Graham's story, this is a good piece on my friend's sister who died of Obamacare.

[Death by Obamacare – The Real Story of Julie Stovall, The Woman Ann Coulter Spoke About](#)

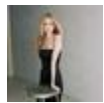
Coulter's obvious errors were caught by *Politifact*. In damage control mode, Coulter orchestrated a diversion from criticism by publishing a friend's exculpatory essay on her website. Those central errors reported by *Politifact* were not corrected; indeed, those errors were deliberately ignored.

When confronted with the timing of that essay posting, Coulter denied any attempt to rebut criticism of her claims, even chastening the *Conservative American*, which had wholeheartedly defended Coulter.<sup>12</sup>

Why Can't Coulter just say she made a mistake? Why does she so abhor admitting error?

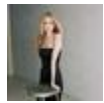
## Coulter's Tweets

For those who are interested, here are Coulter's tweets on Julie's tragic death:



[Ann Coulter](#) @AnnCoulter February 1, 2014, 3:25 pm via web ↻ 1,041 ★ 202

My friend's sister died today because of Obamacare. Was thrown off insurance, waiting to get O-care, > septic shock, died at hospital.



[Ann Coulter](#) @AnnCoulter February 3, 2014, 2:43 pm via web ↻ 56 ★ 21

RT [@jeff\\_poor](#) [@AnnCoulter](#): My Friend's Sister Died Because of ObamaCare (Video) [bit.ly/1j4Muqh](http://bit.ly/1j4Muqh)



[Ann Coulter](#) @AnnCoulter February 10, 2014, 1:26 pm via web ↻ 134 ★ 49

"Obamacare killed my sister" - story here: [bit.ly/1aOgeoi](http://bit.ly/1aOgeoi)



[Ann Coulter](#) @AnnCoulter February 20, 2014, 12:44 pm via web ↻ 20 ★ 18

FULL STORY'S BEEN ON MY WEBPAGE FOR 2 WKS! RT [@ConsAmericanOrg](#) [@anncoulter](#), can you share details of this story so we can shut the left up?



[Ann Coulter](#) @AnnCoulter February 20, 2014, 12:47 pm via web ↻ 102 ★ 50

Doug Graham's on his sister's death by Obamacare - on my website SINCE 2/17. If only liberals could read... [bit.ly/1aOgeoi](http://bit.ly/1aOgeoi)



[Ann Coulter](#) @AnnCoulter March 3, 2014, 9:21 pm via web ↻ 69 ★ 58

Death by Obamacare – The Real Story of Julie Stovall, The Woman Ann Coulter Spoke About - [bit.ly/MJWfM6](http://bit.ly/MJWfM6)



[Ann Coulter](#) @AnnCoulter March 6, 2014, 10:51 pm via Twitter for iPhone ↻ 21 ★ 15

RT [@LoopyNora](#): Read this, so sad! “[@AnnCoulter](#): Death by Obamacare –The Real Story of Julie Stovall, The Woman Coulter Spoke of - <http://t...>

*Conservative American* later defamed me to defend Coulter, justifying and rationalizing error instead of standing up for truth.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Coulter's March 3<sup>rd</sup> website posting appeared two days after the publication of "Ann Coulter Exploits Death of Friend's Sister." (You are obviously reading an updated version of my essay.)

<sup>13</sup> See Daniel Borchers, "Ann Coulter's Groupies and Useful Idiots," [www.coulterwatch.com/files/groupies.pdf](http://www.coulterwatch.com/files/groupies.pdf).