



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #218 — SEPT. 4, 2012

Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.
<http://www.FriendsOfTheMiddle.org> FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com

INDEX: Click here.

Labor Day, 2012

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Sept. 4, 2012)

If you are working or don't need to work, then I hope you had a very happy Labor Day at the BBQ! For others, I hope our great nation will see the need to keep changing course and to keep fighting the big money lie machine.

"Labor Day Without Jobs: Exposing the 'Job Creator' Fraud" by Paul Buchheit, NationofChange

Sept. 3, 2012, (<http://www.nationofchange.org/labor-day-without-jobs-exposing-job-creator-fraud-1346678884>)



With cunning, contempt, and catechismal fervor, the super-rich have argued on behalf of supply-side economics: the economic philosophy that contends that money should move to the top, where it will be used to stimulate the economy and create jobs. But they ignore the facts that prove them wrong. And it doesn't take much to prove them wrong.

1. First, a look at the success of the super-rich: Money has quickly moved to the top:

Based on IRS figures, the richest 1% nearly tripled its share of America's after-tax income from 1980 to 2006. That's an extra trillion dollars a year. Then, in the first year after the 2008 recession, they took 93% of all the new income.

Wealth is even more skewed. The richest 10% own 83% of financial wealth, which they've skillfully arranged to be taxed at just 15%, ostensibly because they pump that money back into job-creating ventures. More on that misconception later.

Conservatives claim that wealth inequality has remained steady for the richest Americans. But data from Edward Wolff shows that the excess wealth was simply redistributed among the rest of the top 5%, who saw their share of America's net worth increase by 18 percent from 1983 to 2007. It was also noted by Sam Pizzigati that much of the top-level wealth was socked away tax-free overseas, a fact largely confirmed by a Tax Justice Network study.

2. Corporations are just as successful: profits have doubled, taxes cut in half:

While corporate profits have doubled to \$1.9 trillion in less than ten years, the corporate income tax rate, which for thirty years hovered around the 20-25% level, suddenly dropped to 10% after the recession. The biggest firms basically said "We're not paying."

That's a half-trillion dollars a year unpaid by the very companies who have successfully convinced much of America that their tax rates are too high.

The tax they actually pay is very low relative to other countries. U.S. corporations paid a smaller rate of income taxes than all but two of the OECD countries analyzed by the Office of Management and Budget and the Census Bureau. A Treasury report agreed, noting that the Tax/GDP rate for U.S. companies was 35% lower than the OECD average from 2000 to 2005.

Corporations pay even less than low-wage American workers. On their 2011 profits of \$1.97 trillion, corporations paid \$181 billion in federal income taxes (9%) and \$40 billion in state income taxes (2%), for a total income tax burden of 11%. The poorest 20% of American citizens pay 17.4% in federal, state, and local taxes.

3. Some Non-Job-Creation Facts:

The *Wall Street Journal* noted in 2009 that the Bush tax cuts led to the "worst track record for jobs in recorded history." 25 million people remain unemployed or underemployed, with 30 to 50 percent of recent college graduates in one of those categories. Among unemployed workers, nearly 43 percent have been without a job for six months or longer.

For the jobs that remain, most are low-paying, with the only real employment growth occurring in retail sales and food preparation. A recent report by the National Employment Law Project confirms that lower-wage occupations (up to about \$14 per hour) accounted for 21 percent of recession losses and 58 percent of recovery growth, while mid-wage occupations (between \$14 and \$21 per hour) accounted for 60 percent of recession losses and only 22 percent of recovery growth.

The minimum wage is shamefully low, about 30% lower than the inflation-adjusted 1968 figure. And the tiny pay can't be blamed on small business. Two-thirds of America's low-wage workers, according to another National Employment Law Project report, work for companies that have at least 100 employees.

All these job woes persist while productivity has continued to grow, with an 80% increase since 1973 as median worker pay has stagnated.

4. So what are the "job creators" doing with all their money?

Over 90% of the assets owned by millionaires are held in a combination of low-risk investments (bonds and cash), the stock market, and real estate. Business startup costs made up less than 1% of the investments of high net worth individuals in North America in 2011.

Perhaps, instead, they're building businesses on their own? No. Only 3 percent of the CEOs, upper management, and financial professionals were entrepreneurs in 2005, even though they made up about 60 percent of the richest .1% of Americans. A recent study found that less than 1 percent of all entrepreneurs came from very rich or very poor backgrounds. They come from the middle class.

That deserves repeating. Entrepreneurs come from the middle class.

Not surprisingly, then, since the middle class has been depleted by the steady accumulation of wealth at the top, the number of entrepreneurs per capita has decreased 53% since 1977, and the number of self-employed Americans has decreased 20% since 1991.

5. Big business is even worse at job creation.

First of all, the cash holdings for non-financial U.S. firms increased to \$1.24 trillion in 2011, with about 57 percent of it stashed overseas. Commerce Department figures show that U.S. companies cut their work forces by 2.9 million from 2000 to 2009 while increasing overseas employment by 2.4 million.

The top holders of cash, including Apple and Google and Intel and Coca Cola and Chevron, are also spending their money on stock buybacks (which increase stock option prices), dividends to investors, and subsidiary acquisitions. According to Bloomberg, share repurchasing is at one of its highest levels in 25 years.

6. The Big Fraud: Tax us less, and the jobs will come:

Despite their unwillingness to invest in jobs, and even in the face of damning evidence against their tax myths, the super-rich fight like wildcats at any suggestion that they support the country that provided their wealth. Way back in 1984, right after the Reagan tax cuts, the U.S. Treasury Department came to the obvious but belated conclusion that tax cuts cause a loss of revenue. A 2006 Treasury Department study found that extending the Bush tax cuts would have no beneficial effect on the U.S. economy. Other sources have confirmed that economic growth was fastest in years with relatively high top marginal tax rates.

Ample evidence exists to show that no relationship exists between the capital gains tax rate and investment. As noted in the *Washington Post*, "The top tax rate on investment income has bounced up and down over the past 80 years - from as high as 39.9 percent in 1977 to just 15 percent today - yet investment just appears to grow with the cycle, seemingly unaffected." In fact, the low rate may even have a negative effect on growth. A Congressional Research Service report states: "Capital gains tax rate increases appear to increase public saving and may have little or no effect on private saving. Consequently, capital gains tax increases likely have a positive overall impact on national saving and investment."

7. So what becomes of the jobs?

Corporations are hoarding over a trillion dollars. The richest 1% take a trillion dollars a year more than productivity-based earnings since 1980. Over eight trillion untaxed dollars is being hidden overseas.

That's a present value of ten trillion misdirected dollars. Just 1/10 of that would create 25 million jobs, one for every unemployed or underemployed worker in America. Or a \$45,000 a year job for every college student in the United States.

But the people who call themselves "job creators" do nothing to make that happen.



FotM NEWSLETTER #218 (Sept. 4, 2012)—HYPERTEXT INDEX

| <u>DATE-ID</u> | <u>TIME</u> | <u>FROM</u> | <u>SUBJECT/TITLE</u> |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|---|
| 20120904-00 | | SteveB | Labor Day, 2012 by Steven W. Baker / SteveB ("Labor Day Without Jobs: Exposing the 'Job Creator' Fraud") |
| 20120903-01 | 08:13 | Art | Re: A Challenge to Mitt Romney (reply to Bill, FotM Newsletter #218) |
| 20120903-02 | 11:34 | SteveM | Fw: Obvious Message in This Photo... |
| 20120903-05 | 13:55 | SteveB | Re: Obvious Message in This Photo... (reply to SteveM, above) |
| 20120903-03 | 12:33 | SteveM | "Democrats Do Damage Control on 'Better Off' Question" & "Obama Advisers Don't Say Yes When Asked if People Are Better Off" |
| 20120903-06 | 14:00 | SteveB | Re: "Democrats Do Damage Control on 'Better Off' Question" (reply to SteveM, above) |
| 20120903-04 | 13:28 | Pam | "The Real Romney" |
| 20120903-07 | 15:14 | Pam | "The Medicare Killers" |
| 20120903-08 | 16:11 | SteveB | "The Man Who Is Obama's Problem" |
| 20120903-09 | 17:30 | SteveB | Transcript of the Strangest Moments in American Political Convention History |
| 20120903-10 | 17:45 | SteveB | "Why Chris Hedges Believes That Serious Revolt Is the Only Option People Have Left" |
| 20120903-11 | 18:31 | Anne | "Robert Ebert's Journal: The Best Cat Video of All Time" |
| 20120903-12 | 18:34 | SteveB | Global Warming & Conservatism |
| 20120903-13 | 10:12 | Pam | Re: Global Warming & Conservatism (reply to SteveB, above) |
| 20120903-16 | 19:24 | SteveG | Re: Global Warming & Conservatism (reply to SteveB, above) |
| 20120903-17 | 19:30 | Art | Re: Global Warming & Conservatism (reply to all, above) |
| 20120903-20 | 19:57 | Clark | Re: Global Warming & Conservatism (reply to SteveB, above) |
| 20120903-18 | 19:34 | SteveG | Re: Global Warming & Conservatism (reply to SteveB, above) |
| 20120903-19 | 19:43 | Pam | Re: Global Warming & Conservatism (reply to SteveG, above) |
| 20120903-14 | 19:21 | SteveG | Graphic: If You're Pro-Life, WhyAre You Against Universal Health Care? |
| 20120903-15 | 19:22 | Charis | Slideshow: Santa Cruz, Bolivia in Full Bloom! |
| 20120903-21 | 23:15 | SteveM | Fw: "Mr. Scam Man" |
| 20120903-22 | 23:58 | SteveG | Graphic: FOX News Saved My Life |
| 20120903-23 | 23:59 | SteveB | Photo: <i>El Altiplano</i> , Bolivia |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|-----|--|
| 20120903-01 | 08:13 | Art | Re: A Challenge to Mitt Romney (reply to Bill, FotM Newsletter #218) |
|-----------------------------|-------|-----|--|

Bill: At one point, and I think it was about the time of the Korean war, the highest rate for those with large taxable income was about 90 per cent. People seem to have forgotten about that.

Right you are Sir and we built the interstate highway system. Can't seem to repair a pothole now.

20120903-02 11:34 SteveM Fw: Obvious Message in This Photo...

Clearly, someone was unhappy with the President traveling through Lorain County in Ohio, last week:



And...oh, and by the way....am I missing it...or do you see an American Flag anywhere on this bus of the president of the United States? How much more proof do you need that Obama thinks that the U.S. Flag is oppressive and he utterly refuses to honor the flag of our country?

[Ummmm...I think I need just a little more proof than this. -SteveB]

20120903-05 13:55 SteveB Re: Obvious Message in This Photo... (reply to SteveM, above)

Maybe he's just trying to keep some right-wing nut case from shooting him.

The bus has the Presidential seal, which of course, says the United States of America, but it's probably too subtle for a right-wing nut case to notice.

And, gee, maybe Mr. Obama doesn't decide every little detail in the known universe like the Evangelical's God. Maybe the whole thing was a secret service decision based on security concerns, and the President had nothing to do with it. Surely he would defer...

These conspiracy theories are stacking up kinda deep, aren't they?

How likely is it that the President "utterly refuses to honor the flag of our country"? **TOTAL CRAPOLA AND YOU KNOW IT!**

20120903-03 12:33 SteveM "Democrats Do Damage Control on 'Better Off' Question" & "Obama Advisers Don't Say Yes When Asked if People Are Better Off"

Even Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley (D) flat out said NO!

Even the losers David Axelrod & David Plouffe, both senior advisor's, recognize the statute of limitations for blame is up.

Time to accept ownership for failure. Our first black Prez, turns out to be the worst in our history. I can hear Jimmy and Roselin cheering. And Filmore descendants are being invited to Labor day festivities again

"Democrats Do Damage Control on 'Better Off' Question" by Matt Vasilogambros, *National Journal*

Sept. 3, 2012, (<http://www.nationaljournal.com/2012-presidential-campaign/democrats-do-damage-control-on-better-off-question-20120903>)

With their national convention starting this week, Democrats took to morning television on Monday to better answer a question that many struggled with on Sunday's talk shows: is the country better off four years after President Obama took office.

With a definitive "absolutely," Obama campaign spokeswoman Stephanie Cutter said the country was moving in the right direction by pointing to job growth and the auto industry.

"By any measure the country has moved forward over the last four years," she said on NBC's Today. "It might not be as fast as people hoped. The president agrees with that. He knows we need to do more. That's what this week is about, laying out a road map of how we can continue this progress, how we can continue moving the country forward."

[Continue reading at the *National Journal*...](#)

"Obama Advisers Don't Say Yes When Asked if People Are Better Off" by Arthur Delaney, *Huffington Post*

Sept. 2, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/02/obama-economy-are-you-better-off_n_1850276.html)

(CHARLOTTE, NC) When asked on Sunday talk shows if Americans are better off today than they were four years ago, senior advisers to President Barack Obama didn't say yes.

On "Fox News Sunday," host Chris Wallace asked David Axelrod, "Can you honestly say the average American is better off today than four years ago?"

"Here's what I can say, Chris," answered Axelrod, who advises Obama's reelection campaign. "We are in a better position than we were in the economy in the sense that when the president took office, we were losing 800,000 jobs a month, and the quarter before he took office was the worst since the Great Depression. We are [now] in a different place: 29 straight months of job growth and private sector jobs. Are we where we need to be? No."

Axelrod then pointed out that Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney had failed to outline a specific alternative during his speech at the Republican National Convention last Thursday -- a convention that Axelrod called "a terrible failure."

Wallace recited grim statistics reflecting increased unemployment, higher gas prices, more national debt and lower incomes. He put the question to Axelrod again.

"I think the average American recognizes it took years to create the crisis that erupted in 2008 and peaked in January 2009," Axelrod said. "It's going to take some time to work through it."

On ABC's "This Week," host George Stephanopoulos had similar difficulty prying a yes-or-no answer to the "better off" question from Obama senior adviser David Plouffe.

"I think the American people understand that we got into a terrible economic situation, a recession -- the Great Depression is the only one the country has ever seen like it," Plouffe said, before pivoting to a broad criticism of Romney's policies.

Stephanopoulos tried once more, but Plouffe dodged, saying Romney would make things worse. "You still can't say yes," Stephanopoulos said.

"Well, we clearly improved, George, from the depth of the recession," Plouffe responded. "We were losing 800,000 jobs a month. We're now gaining them."

There were 316,000 net fewer jobs in July 2012 compared with January 2009, according to the Labor Department.

Romney campaign spokesman Eric Fehrstrom noted on Twitter, "The question Plouffe and @davidaxelrod wouldn't answer on the Sunday shows: Are we better off now than four years ago?"

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|-----|-------------------|
| 20120903-04 | 13:28 | Pam | "The Real Romney" |
|-----------------------------|-------|-----|-------------------|

"The Real Romney" by David Brooks, *The New York Times*

Aug. 27, 2012, (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/28/opinion/brooks-the-real-romney.html>)

The purpose of the Republican convention is to introduce America to the real Mitt Romney. Fortunately, I have spent hours researching this subject. I can provide you with the definitive biography and a unique look into the Byronic soul of the Republican nominee:

Mitt Romney was born on March 12, 1947, in Ohio, Florida, Michigan, Virginia and several other swing states. He emerged, hair first, believing in America, and especially its national parks. He was given the name Mitt, after the Roman god of mutual funds, and launched into the world with the lofty expectation that he would someday become the Arrow shirt man.

Romney was a precocious and gifted child. He uttered his first words ("I like to fire people") at age 14 months, made his first gaffe at 15 months and purchased his first nursery school at 24 months. The school, highly leveraged, went under, but Romney made 24 million Jujubes on the deal.

Mitt grew up in a modest family. His father had an auto body shop called the American Motors Corporation, and his mother owned a small piece of land, Brazil. He had several boyhood friends, many of whom owned Nascar franchises, and excelled at school, where his fourth-grade project, "Inspiring Actuaries I Have Known," was widely admired.

The Romneys had a special family tradition. The most cherished member got to spend road trips on the roof of the car. Mitt spent many happy hours up there, applying face lotion to combat windburn.

The teenage years were more turbulent. He was sent to a private school, where he was saddened to find there are people in America who summer where they winter. He developed a lifelong concern for the second homeless, and organized bake sales with proceeds going to the moderately rich.

Some people say he retreated into himself during these years. He had a pet rock, which ran away from home because it was starved of affection. He bought a mood ring, but it remained permanently transparent. His ability to turn wine into water detracted from his popularity at parties.

There was, frankly, a period of wandering. After hearing Lou Reed's "Walk on the Wild Side," Romney decided to leave Mormonism and become Amish. He left the Amish faith because of its ban on hair product, and bounced around before settling back in college. There, he majored in music, rendering Mozart's entire oeuvre in PowerPoint.

His love affair with Ann Davies, the most impressive part of his life, restored his equilibrium. Always respectful, Mitt and Ann decided to elope with their parents. They went on a trip to Israel, where they tried and failed to introduce the concept of reticence. Romney also went on a mission to France. He spent two years knocking on doors, failing to win a single convert. This was a feat he would replicate during his 2008 presidential bid.

After his mission, he attended Harvard, studying business, law, classics and philosophy, though intellectually his first love was always tax avoidance. After Harvard, he took his jawline to Bain Consulting, a firm with very smart people with excessive personal hygiene. While at Bain, he helped rescue many outstanding companies, like Pan Am, Eastern Airlines, Atari and DeLorean.

Romney was extremely detail oriented in his business life. He once canceled a corporate retreat at which Abba had been hired to play, saying he found the band's music "too angry."

Romney is also a passionately devoted family man. After streamlining his wife's pregnancies down to six months each, Mitt helped Ann raise five perfect sons — Bip, Chip, Rip, Skip and Dip — who married identically tanned wives. Some have said that Romney's lifestyle is overly privileged, pointing to the fact that he has an elevator for his cars in the garage of his San Diego home. This is not entirely fair. Romney owns many homes without garage elevators and the cars have to take the stairs.

After a successful stint at Bain, Romney was lured away to run the Winter Olympics, the second most Caucasian institution on earth, after the G.O.P. He then decided to run for governor of Massachusetts. His campaign slogan, "Vote Romney: More Impressive Than You'll Ever Be," was not a hit, but Romney won the race anyway on an environmental platform, promising to make the state safe for steeplechase.

After his governorship, Romney suffered through a midlife crisis, during which he became a social conservative. This prepared the way for his presidential run. He barely won the 2012 Republican primaries after a grueling nine-month campaign, running unopposed. At the convention, where his Secret Service nickname is Mannequin, Romney will talk about his real-life record: successful business leader, superb family man, effective governor, devoted community leader and prudent decision-maker. If elected, he promises to bring all Americans together and make them feel inferior.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|---|
| 20120903-06 | 14:00 | SteveB | Re: "Democrats Do Damage Control on 'Better Off' Question" (reply to SteveM, above) |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|---|

I don't care what's politically expedient or palatable.

The fact of the matter is that George Bush was one of the worst American Presidents, maybe the worst ever, and he wrecked the economy and nearly drove it off a cliff.

Mr. Obama managed the recovery, despite zero cooperation from the opposition (for nearly the first time in American history). That's the truth and it needs to be shouted from the rooftops and will be.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|-----|------------------------|
| 20120903-07 | 15:14 | Pam | "The Medicare Killers" |
|-----------------------------|-------|-----|------------------------|

Once again, Mr. Krugman sheds light.

"The Medicare Killers" by Paul Krugman, *The New York Times*

Aug. 30, 2012, (http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/31/opinion/Krugman.html?_r=1&emc=eta1)

Paul Ryan's speech Wednesday night may have accomplished one good thing: It finally may have dispelled the myth that he is a Serious, Honest Conservative. Indeed, Mr. Ryan's brazen dishonesty left even his critics breathless.

Some of his fibs were trivial but telling, like his suggestion that President Obama is responsible for a closed auto plant in his hometown, even though the plant closed before Mr. Obama took office. Others were infuriating, like his sanctimonious declaration that “the truest measure of any society is how it treats those who cannot defend or care for themselves.” This from a man proposing savage cuts in Medicaid, which would cause tens of millions of vulnerable Americans to lose health coverage.

And Mr. Ryan — who has proposed \$4.3 trillion in tax cuts over the next decade, versus only about \$1.7 trillion in specific spending cuts — is still posing as a deficit hawk.

But Mr. Ryan’s big lie — and, yes, it deserves that designation — was his claim that “a Romney-Ryan administration will protect and strengthen Medicare.” Actually, it would kill the program.

Before I get there, let me just mention that Mr. Ryan has now gone all-in on the party line that the president’s plan to trim Medicare expenses by around \$700 billion over the next decade — savings achieved by paying less to insurance companies and hospitals, not by reducing benefits — is a terrible, terrible thing. Yet, just a few days ago, Mr. Ryan was still touting his own budget plan, which included those very same savings.

But back to the big lie. The Republican Party is now firmly committed to replacing Medicare with what we might call Vouchercare. The government would no longer pay your major medical bills; instead, it would give you a voucher that could be applied to the purchase of private insurance. And, if the voucher proved insufficient to buy decent coverage, hey, that would be your problem.

Moreover, the vouchers almost certainly would be inadequate; their value would be set by a formula taking no account of likely increases in health care costs.

Why would anyone think that this was a good idea? The G.O.P. platform says that it “will empower millions of seniors to control their personal health care decisions.” Indeed. Because those of us too young for Medicare just feel so personally empowered, you know, when dealing with insurance companies.

Still, wouldn’t private insurers reduce costs through the magic of the marketplace? No. All, and I mean all, the evidence says that public systems like Medicare and Medicaid, which have less bureaucracy than private insurers (if you can’t believe this, you’ve never had to deal with an insurance company) and greater bargaining power, are better than the private sector at controlling costs.

I know this flies in the face of free-market dogma, but it’s just a fact. You can see this fact in the history of Medicare Advantage, which is run through private insurers and has consistently had higher costs than traditional Medicare. You can see it from comparisons between Medicaid and private insurance: Medicaid costs much less. And you can see it in international comparisons: The United States has the most privatized health system in the advanced world and, by far, the highest health costs.

So Vouchercare would mean higher costs and lower benefits for seniors. Over time, the Republican plan wouldn’t just end Medicare as we know it, it would kill the thing Medicare is supposed to provide: universal access to essential care. Seniors who couldn’t afford to top up their vouchers with a lot of additional money would just be out of luck.

Still, the G.O.P. promises to maintain Medicare as we know it for those currently over 55. Should everyone born before 1957 feel safe? Again, no.

For one thing, repeal of Obamacare would cause older Americans to lose a number of significant benefits that the law provides, including the way it closes the “doughnut hole” in drug coverage and the way it protects early retirees.

Beyond that, the promise of unchanged benefits for Americans of a certain age just isn’t credible. Think about the political dynamics that would arise once someone born in 1956 still received full Medicare while someone born in 1959 couldn’t afford decent coverage. Do you really think that would be a stable situation? For sure, it would

unleash political warfare between the cohorts — and the odds are high that older cohorts would soon find their alleged guarantees snatched away.

The question now is whether voters will understand what's really going on (which depends to a large extent on whether the news media do their jobs). Mr. Ryan and his party are betting that they can bluster their way through this, pretending that they are the real defenders of Medicare even as they work to kill it. Will they get away with it?

20120903-08 16:11 SteveB "The Man Who Is Obama's Problem"

"The Man Who Is Obama's Problem" by Howard Fineman, Huffington Post

Aug. 3, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/03/obama-black-voters_n_1850639.html?utm_hp_ref=politics)

(CHARLOTTE, NC) I know that 21st-century campaigns are about micro-targeting individual voters using social media and laser-casting of print, web and Facebook advertising, plus organizing and get-out-the-vote drives of ultra-granular, peer-to-peer viral specificity and outreach through personal, neighborhood and email contact.

I get that.

Well, I laser-cast, too. I did it by talking to the guy sitting next to me on the plane to Charlotte.

After an hour-and-a-half flight and two cups of coffee, I knew this: The fellow was as vivid an explanation as there could be for why President Barack Obama is in the fight of his life against the newly nominated Republican ticket.

My seatmate (whose name I can't use because his employer would have fits if he spoke publicly) is a 44-year-old African-American Army vet and married man. He describes himself as apolitical but is a registered Republican who reads national newspapers on his iPhone. In his spare time, he mentors young athletes and their families and does some recruiting for his college.

In 2008, he crossed party lines to vote for Obama. He watched some of the GOP convention from Tampa, Fla., last week and was underwhelmed. But he's not voting for the president again.

"I'm not going to vote this time," he said flatly. "I don't believe in politics anymore. Nobody can get anything done. It is gridlock and a lot of bickerin' and bitin'. Why should I bother?"

In the energize-your-base game of this election, helpless sentiments such as that can cancel out all the fancy micro-targeting and get-out-the-vote efforts in the world. Inertia is a very powerful thing, and cynicism is, too.

"The last 10 years have been very tough on the working man," my companion said. "I voted for the president for two reasons: Maybe he could do something about the economy; maybe he could do something about fixing Washington. I'm not happy saying it, but he hasn't done a good job at either."

In one recent poll, Obama was ahead 94 percent to 0 percent in the black community. But that doesn't mean African-American turnout this year will match the 90 percent-plus of registered voters who came out in 2008.

My new friend said that he had not voted in 2004 but, with some hope in his heart, had voted for Obama in 2008. According to the U.S. Census, voting participation among African Americans rose from 60 percent overall in 2004 to 65 percent in 2008. That translated into 2 million more black voters taking part, almost all of them voting for Obama. There were similar increases among the Hispanic community.

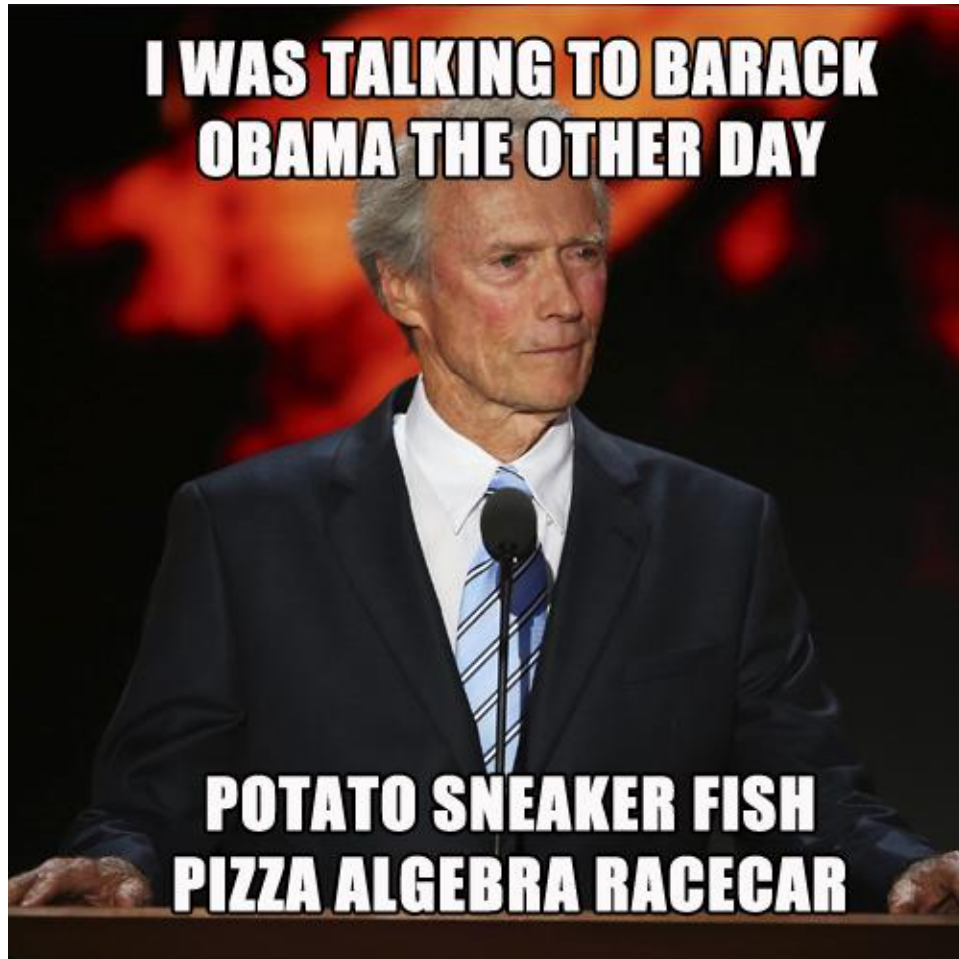
Since then, minority communities have been hurt badly and disproportionately by the slow pace of economic recovery, and if any group can say their hopes have been dashed, they can.

Will they turn out for Obama again? And if so, will they vote in the numbers and percentages of 2008?

That's one of the key questions of the fall and one of the concerns the president needs to address here in Charlotte. As for my seatmate, he hasn't ruled out changing his mind. "As of now, my position is I'm not voting," he said. Safe travels to wherever your next destination may be.

20120903-09 17:30 SteveB Transcript of the Strangest Moments in American Political Convention History

I understand it was Mitt who wanted Clint Eastwood to introduce him at the Republican Convention last week. LOL!



"Transcript of Clint Eastwood Speech at RNC" by Fox News

Aug. 30, 2012, (<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/08/30/transcript-clint-eastwood-speech-at-rnc/?intcmp=trending>)

EASTWOOD: Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much. Save a little for Mitt.

(APPLAUSE)

I know what you are thinking. You are thinking, what's a movie tradesman doing out here? You know they are all left wingers out there, left of Lenin. At least that is what people think. That is not really the case. There are a lot of conservative people, a lot of moderate people, Republicans, Democrats, in Hollywood. It is just that the conservative people by the nature of the word itself play closer to the vest. They do not go around hot dogging it.

(APPLAUSE)

So -- but they are there, believe me, they are there. I just think, in fact, some of them around town, I saw John Voigt, a lot of people around.

(APPLAUSE)

John's here, an academy award winner. A terrific guy. These people are all like-minded, like all of us. So I -- so I've got Mr. Obama sitting here. And he's -- I was going to ask him a couple of questions. But -- you know about -- I remember three and a half years ago, when Mr. Obama won the election. And though I was not a big supporter, I was watching that night when he was having that thing and they were talking about hope and change and they were talking about, yes we can, and it was dark outdoors, and it was nice, and people were lighting candles. They were saying, I just thought, this was great. Everybody is trying, Oprah was crying. I was even crying. And then finally -- and I haven't cried that hard since I found out that there is 23 million unemployed people in this country.

(APPLAUSE)

Now that is something to cry for because that is a disgrace, a national disgrace, and we haven't done enough, obviously -- this administration hasn't done enough to cure that. Whenever interest they have is not strong enough, and I think possibly now it may be time for somebody else to come along and solve the problem.

(APPLAUSE)

So, Mr. President, how do you handle promises that you have made when you were running for election, and how do you handle them? I mean, what do you say to people? Do you just -- you know -- I know -- people were wondering -- you don't -- handle that OK. Well, I know even people in your own party were very disappointed when you didn't close Gitmo. And I thought, well closing Gitmo -- why close that, we spent so much money on it. But, I thought maybe as an excuse -- what do you mean shut up?

(LAUGHTER)

OK, I thought maybe it was just because somebody had the stupid idea of trying terrorists in downtown New York City.

(APPLAUSE)

I've got to hand it to you. I have to give credit where credit is due. You did finally overrule that finally. And that's -- now we are moving onward. I know you were against the war in Iraq, and that's okay. But you thought the war in Afghanistan was OK. You know, I mean -- you thought that was something worth doing. We didn't check with the Russians to see how did it -- they did there for 10 years.

(APPLAUSE)

But we did it, and it is something to be thought about, and I think that, when we get to maybe -- I think you've mentioned something about having a target date for bringing everybody home. You gave that target date, and I think Mr. Romney asked the only sensible question, you know, he says, ``Why are you giving the date out now? Why don't you just bring them home tomorrow morning?''

(APPLAUSE)

And I thought -- I thought, yeah -- I am not going to shut up, it is my turn.

(LAUGHTER)

So anyway, we're going to have -- we're going to have to have a little chat about that. And then, I just wondered, all these promises -- I wondered about when the -- what do you want me to tell Romney? I can't tell him to do that. I can't tell him to do that to himself.

(APPLAUSE)

You're crazy, you're absolutely crazy. You're getting as bad as Biden.

(APPLAUSE)

Of course we all now Biden is the intellect of the Democratic party.

(LAUGHTER)

Kind of a grin with a body behind it.

(LAUGHTER)

But I just think that there is so much to be done, and I think that Mr. Romney and Mr. Ryan are two guys that can come along. See, I never thought it was a good idea for attorneys to the president, anyway.

(APPLAUSE)

I think attorneys are so busy -- you know they're always taught to argue everything, and always weight everything -- weigh both sides...They are always devil's advocating this and bifurcating this and bifurcating that. You know all that stuff. But, I think it is maybe time -- what do you think -- for maybe a businessman. How about that?

(APPLAUSE)

A stellar businessman. Quote, unquote, ``a stellar businessman." And I think it's that time. And I think if you just step aside and Mr. Romney can kind of take over. You can maybe still use a plane.

(APPLAUSE)

Though maybe a smaller one. Not that big gas guzzler you are going around to colleges and talking about student loans and stuff like that.

(APPLAUSE)

You are an -- an ecological man. Why would you want to drive that around? OK, well anyway. All right, I'm sorry. I can't do that to myself either.

(APPLAUSE)

I would just like to say something, ladies and gentlemen. Something that I think is very important. It is that, you, we -- we own this country.

(APPLAUSE)

We -- we own it. It is not you owning it, and not politicians owning it. Politicians are employees of ours.

(APPLAUSE)

And -- so -- they are just going to come around and beg for votes every few years. It is the same old deal. But I just think it is important that you realize , that you're the best in the world. Whether you are a Democrat or

Republican or whether you're libertarian or whatever, you are the best. And we should not ever forget that. And when somebody does not do the job, we got to let them go.

(APPLAUSE)

Okay, just remember that. And I'm speaking out for everybody out there. It doesn't hurt, we don't have to be (AUDIENCE MEMBER: Make my day!)

(LAUGHTER)

I do not say that word anymore. Well, maybe one last time.

(LAUGHTER)

We don't have to be -- what I'm saying, we do not have to be metal (ph) masochists and vote for somebody that we don't really even want in office just because they seem to be nice guys or maybe not so nice guys, if you look at some of the recent ads going out there, I don't know.

(APPLAUSE)

But OK. You want to make my day?

(APPLAUSE)

All right. I started, you finish it. Go ahead.

AUDIENCE: Make my day!

EASTWOOD: Thank you. Thank you very much.

[20120903-10](#)

17:45

SteveB

"Why Chris Hedges Believes That Serious Revolt Is the Only Option People Have Left"

"Why Chris Hedges Believes That Serious Revolt Is the Only Option People Have Left" by Mark Karlin, Truthout/AlterNet

Aug. 27, 2012, (<http://www.alternet.org/print/books/why-chris-hedges-believes-serious-revolt-only-option-people-have-left>)

Chris Hedges, a former *New York Times* reporter, has become perhaps the foremost media scribe and most prolific advocate of a need for revolutionary change in our current institutional oppression and control of the government by the oligarchical and political elite. Hedges writes with a reporter's detail, a prophet's eloquence and a compelling sense of urgency. This is evident in his latest book, which visits the "sacrifice zones", the just-released *Days of Destruction Days of Revolt*.

Mark Karlin: You begin *Days of Destruction Days of Revolt* with a visit to and reflection upon the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, the poorest and perhaps most hopeless Native American settlement in the United States. Indian reservations were a tragically ironic result of the American revolt to throw off the shackles of being a colony, only to become a colonial power over the indigenous residents that lay in its way to achieving "Manifest Destiny." Is this irony the reason why you begin your journey across the "sacrifice zones" of the United States at Pine Ridge?

Chris Hedges: This is where the dark ethic of endless expansion and limitless exploitation, of ruthless imperial conquest, subjugation and extermination of native communities, began in the name of profit. Commercial interests set out to obliterate native peoples who stood in the way of their acquisition of the buffalo herds, timber, coal, gold and later minerals such as uranium, commodities they saw as sources of power and enrichment. Land was sliced up

into parcels - usually by the railroad companies - and sold. Sitting Bull acidly suggested they get out scales and sell dirt by the pound. The most basic elements that sustain life were reduced to a vulgar cash product. Nothing in the eyes of the white settlers had an intrinsic value. And this dichotomy of belief was so vast that those who held on to animism and mysticism, to ambiguity and mystery, to the centrality of the human imagination, to communal living and a concept of the sacred, had to be extinguished. The belief system encountered on the plains and in the earlier indigenous communities in New England obliterated by the Puritans was antithetical and hostile to capitalism, the concept of technological progress, empire and the ethos of the industrial society.

The effect of this physical and moral cataclysm is being played out a century and a half later, however, as the whole demented project of endless capitalist expansion, profligate consumption and growth implodes. The suffering of the other, of the Native American, the African-American in the inner city, the unemployed coal miner or the Hispanic produce picker is universal. They went first. We were next.

MK: You write in your introduction, "We [you and Joe Sacco] wanted to show in words and drawings what life looks like when the marketplace rules without constraints, where human beings and the natural world are used and then discarded to maximize profit." This is pretty much a definition of neoliberal economics. Is the United States creating an internal economic system of colonies?

CH: The forces of colonization that were applied to the "sacrifice zones" Joe and I wrote about have been turned inwards on the rest of us to create a global form of neofeudalism, a world of corporate masters and serfs. The central point of the book is to show what happens when human beings, communities and the natural world are forced to prostrate themselves before the demands of the marketplace. It is incumbent on us to look closely at this system of neo-liberal economics because it is now cannibalizing what is left, including our eco-system. These forces know no limits. They will exterminate us all, as Joseph Conrad pointed out in *Heart of Darkness*, his masterpiece on the savagery of colonial exploitation. Kurtz in Conrad's book is the self-deluded megalomaniac ivory trader who ends by planting the shriveled heads of murdered Congolese on pikes outside his remote trading station. But Kurtz is also highly educated and refined. Conrad describes him as an orator, writer, poet, musician and the respected chief agent of the ivory company's Inner Station. He is "an emissary of pity, and science, and progress." Kurtz was "a universal genius" and "a very remarkable person." He is a prodigy, at once gifted and multi-talented. He went to Africa fired by noble ideals and virtues. He ended his life as a self-deluded tyrant who thought he was a god. That pretty much sums up what we have become as a nation.

MK: Regarding your third chapter on Welch, West Virginia, and the devastation you portray created by the coal mining industry in that state, I wonder why the victims, primarily white, of a rapacious and pretty much unaccountable coal industry don't revolt. In fact, West Virginia has become a pretty reliable Republican state in presidential elections. Rephrasing your introductory quote to this chapter (from H.L. Mencken) have the destitute of West Virginia been driven from "despair" to "hopelessness" - and a psychological crutch of white identity politics, because they see no possibility of change in their condition?

CH: We are seeing the conscious and deliberate creation by the corporate state of a permanent, insecure and terrified underclass within the wider society. They have had a lot of practice in refining these techniques in the sacrifice zones, such as West Virginia, we wrote about. The corporate state sees this permanent and desperate underclass as the most effective weapon to thwart rebellion and resistance as our economy is reconfigured to wipe out the middleclass and leave most of us at subsistence level. Huge pools of unemployed and underemployed effectively blunt labor organizing, since any job, no matter how menial, is zealously coveted. The beating down of workers, exacerbated by the refusal to extend unemployment benefits for hundreds of millions of Americans and the breaking of public sector unions, the last redoubt of union power, has transformed those in the working class from full members of society, able to participate in its debates, the economy and governance, into terrified people in fragmented pools preoccupied with the struggle of private existence.

The determining factor in global corporate production is now poverty. The poorer the worker and the poorer the nation, the greater the competitive advantage. With access to vast pools of desperate, impoverished workers eager for scraps, unions and working conditions no longer impede the quest for larger and larger profits. And when the corporations do not need these workers they are cast aside. Those who are economically broken usually cease to be concerned with civic virtues. They will, history has demonstrated, serve any system, no matter how evil, and do anything for a pitiful salary, a chance for job security and the protection of their families. There will, as the situation

worsens, also be those who attempt to rebel. I certainly intend to join them. But the state can rely on a huge number of people who, for work and meager benefits, will transform themselves into willing executioners.

MK: Of course, your chapter on the squalid, economically abandoned Camden, New Jersey, points to a particularly egregious example of an entire city that has been sucked of any hope. Financially, it has been written off by the *Masters of the Universe* economic agenda, its citizens parasites of the government, according to Paul Ryan. Even Barack Obama has been the first president in decades not to mention poverty in his State of the Union Addresses. But isn't Camden just representative of blighted urban areas, particularly minority neighborhoods, that have been left without jobs for decades? This goes back to before the urban riots of 1968 and the Kerner Report about what caused them. Isn't this structured poverty?

CH: The corporations and industries that packed up and left Camden and cities across the United States for the cheap labor overseas are never coming back. They have abandoned huge swathes of the United States, turned whole sections of American cities into industrial ghost towns. The unemployment and underemployment, the disenfranchisement of the working class, and the assault on the middle class, are never factored into the balance sheets of corporations. If prison or subsistence labor in China or India or Vietnam makes them more money, if it is possible to hire workers in sweatshops in Bangladesh for 22 cents an hour, corporations follow the awful logic to its conclusion. And as conditions worsen the corporate state, which controls the systems of information and entertainment, renders the poor and cities like Camden invisible. This is what Joe's illustrations are so crucial to the book. The goal of the book is to make these people visible.

MK: In the book, you bluntly write: "The American dream, as we know it is a lie. We will all be sacrificed." You speak of the spreading transnational corporate virus. Are you, in essence, saying the worst is yet to come, that the forsaken communities you profile are an ominous portent of what waits for so many of us except the privileged class?

CH: Yes. This is why we wrote the book, as a warning of what is about to befall us all. It is no more morally justifiable to kill someone for profit than it is to kill that person for religious fanaticism. And yet, from health companies to the oil and natural gas industry to private weapons contractors, individual death and the wholesale death of the ecosystem have become acceptable corporate business.

MK: Your fourth chapter is entitled "Days of Slavery" and it is about what you quote Bernie Sanders as calling "the bottom of the race to the bottom." It is about the exploited (and that seems an understated word given the circumstances) tomato pickers in Immokalee, Florida. It is indentured servitude and just short of slavery. But isn't there a glimmer of hope in the activism of the Immokalee workers' movement for better pay and working conditions?

CH: You cannot use the word hope if you do not resist. If you resist, even if it appears futile, you keep hope alive. And in every sacrifice zone we visited, including Immokalee where the Coalition of Immokalee Workers have organized tomato workers, we saw heroic struggles to fight back. But at the same time it is vital to remember that we cannot achieve significant reform or restore our democracy through established mechanisms of power. The electoral process has been hijacked by corporations. The judiciary has been corrupted and bought. The press shuts out the most important voices in the country and feeds us the banal and the absurd. Universities prostitute themselves for corporate dollars. Labor unions are marginal and ineffectual forces. The economy is in the hands of corporate swindlers and speculators. And the public, enchanted by electronic hallucinations, remains largely passive and supine. We have no tools left within the power structure in our fight to halt unchecked corporate pillage.

Once any political system ossifies, once all mechanisms for reform close, the lunatic fringe of a society, as I saw in Yugoslavia, rises out of the moral swamp to take control. The reformers, however well meaning and honest, finally have nothing to offer. They are disarmed.

MK: You were a vocal advocate of the hopefulness of the Occupy movement in creating radical change. But you also note in your book that the federal government joined local governments in dispossessing the Occupy movement of its beachheads of public land. Are we facing a situation like the suppression of the Green Revolution in Iran, like the crushing of the revolt in Czechoslovakia?

CH: The importance of the Occupy movement, and the reason I suspect its encampments were so brutally dismantled by the Obama administration, is that the corporate state understood and feared its potential to spark a popular rebellion. I do not think the state has won. All the injustices and grievances that drove people into the Occupy encampments and onto the streets have been ignored by the state and are getting worse. And we will see eruptions of discontent in the weeks and months ahead.

If these mass protests fail, opposition will inevitably take a frightening turn. The longer we endure political paralysis, the longer the formal mechanisms of power fail to respond, the more the extremists on the left and the right - those who venerate violence and are intolerant of ideological deviations - will be empowered. Under the steady breakdown of globalization, the political environment has become a mound of tinder waiting for a light.

MK: You write, "Revolt is all that we have left. It is our only hope." Most revolt from oppressive powers has come from the working class. But except for the Wisconsin uprising, the working class appear to view movements like Occupy as not representing them. And even in Wisconsin, the GOP was able to split the unions from the non-union working class. How do you see progressive revolts linking up with the working class?

CH: The movement in Wisconsin made a fatal mistake. It allowed its energy to be channeled back into a dead political system by the Democratic Party and the labor movement, or at least what passes for a labor movement in this country. It could not compete with corporate power and corporate money. And it will be hard now to regroup. They willingly played the game and lost, although of course the rules were rigged. The split between labor and non-labor is only one divide. Occupy is essentially a white, middle class movement led by college educated men and women who have found no place in the wider society. The working class and the poor deeply distrusts liberals, especially college-educated liberals, who since the Clinton administration have repeatedly betrayed them in the name of liberalism. Those who support Occupy will have to rebuild bridges to our impoverished working class, and more importantly to those of color who live in marginal communities and who also have been abandoned by the traditional liberal elites. But this skirts an even bigger and more important problem. In the traditional sense of a working class, i.e. one that is organized and manufactures goods, we no longer have one. Workers have been reduced to toiling at two or three jobs in the service sector. I don't know how we are going to fight back effectively without an organized work force. That is one of my greatest concerns.

MK: You are a consummate writer. But what role do you see that six decades of visual and sound bite messaging on television has had on allowing the political elite and oligarchy to sustain their "frame" of the status quo through corporate TV?

CH: The chatter that passes for news, the gossip that is peddled by the windbags on the airwaves, the noise that drowns out rational discourse, and the timidity and cowardice of what is left of the newspaper industry reflect our flight into collective self-delusion. We stand on the cusp of one of the most seismic and disturbing dislocations in human history, one that is radically reconfiguring our economy as it is the environment, and our national obsessions, because of these electronic hallucinations, revolve around the trivial and the absurd. The illusionists who shape our culture, and who profit from our incredulity, hold up the gilded cult of Us. Popular expressions of religious belief, personal empowerment, corporatism, political participation and self-definition argue that all of us are special, entitled and unique. All of us, by tapping into our inner reserves of personal will and undiscovered talent, by visualizing what we want, can achieve, and deserve to achieve, happiness, fame and success. It is, of course, magical thinking.

MK: You conclude *Days of Destruction* with an anecdote about your experience as a boxer fighting men who were professionals and pummeling you, but you kept fighting and eventually the crowd cheered you on as the underdog. How does this relate to achieving a successful revolt against a status quo with unlimited financial power and military/police powers?

CH: You do not fight tyrants because you are going to win. You fight tyrants because they are tyrants. Yes, we do not have the tools or the wealth of the state. We cannot beat it at its own game. We cannot ferret out infiltrators. The legal system is almost always on the state's side. If we attempt to replicate the elaborate security apparatus of our oppressors, even on a small scale, we will unleash widespread paranoia and fracture the movement. If we retreat into anonymity, hiding behind masks, then we provide an opening for agents provocateurs who deny their

identities while disrupting the movement. If we fight pitched battles in the streets we give authorities an excuse to fire their weapons.

All we have, as Vaclav Havel wrote, is our own powerlessness. And that powerlessness is our strength. The survival of the movement depends on embracing this powerlessness. It depends on two of our most important assets - utter and complete transparency and a rigid adherence to nonviolence, including respect for private property. This permits us, as Havel puts it in his 1978 essay "The Power of the Powerless," to live in truth. And by living in truth we expose a corrupt corporate state that perpetrates lies and lives in deceit.

This attempt to "live within the truth" brings with it ostracism and retribution. Punishment is imposed in bankrupt systems because of the necessity for compliance, not out of any real conviction. And the real crime committed is not the crime of speaking out or defying the rules, but the crime of exposing the charade.

Links:

<http://www.alternet.org/authors/mark-karlin>

<http://truth-out.org/opinion/item/11032-truthout-interviews-chris-hedges-about-why-revolt-is-all-we-have-left>

<https://members.truth-out.org/bgift96-gift/choose-type-donation>

<http://www.alternet.org/tags/chris-hedges>

<http://www.alternet.org/tags/days-destruction-days-revolt>

<http://www.alternet.org/tags/american-dream>

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|------|--|
| 20120903-11 | 18:31 | Anne | "Robert Ebert's Journal: The Best Cat Video of All Time" |
|-----------------------------|-------|------|--|

"Robert Ebert's Journal: The Best Cat Video of All Time" *Chicago Sun-Times*

Aug. 31, 2012, (<http://blogs.suntimes.com/ebert/the-best-cat-video-of-all-time.html>)

Video ("We Cannot Escape Ourselves" or "Henri 2, Paw de Deux")

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=Q34z5dCmC4M.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|-------------------------------|
| 20120903-12 | 18:34 | SteveB | Global Warming & Conservatism |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|-------------------------------|

I was thinking about global warming this hot tropical nearly spring day.

It seems to be real, but we're in an interglacial period of warming at this point in Earth's history. That makes it hard to determine whether the changes we measure are caused by man.

The truth of the matter is that most climate scientists: (a) seem to be worried; (b) feel the evidence supports the contention that the warming is partly or largely man-made and appears to be potentially very destructive to civilization as we know it. Scientists say to use caution.

But let's go ahead and assume that all these scientists with their big liberal brains might be wrong? Then what should we do? Forget about the problem?

There is so much at stake! Any error could be disastrous to our grandchildren, at the very least. In past history, they, as a group, have usually been proven to be right. But environmental standards, etc. can be very expensive—as in, "Don't touch my pile of money!"

To me, the issue doesn't even involve science at this point. We just need to make a prudent executive decision. A **CONSERVATIVE** decision, because it is wrought with danger!

We should be very careful about harming the Earth. Logic dictates. Period.

Now, why are Republicans so radical instead of truly conservative when it comes to the issue of human life? "Scientists say to use caution." Isn't that what a true conservative would do? Isn't that what conservatism is really founded upon—prudent caution?

In the case of Global Warming, It's certainly easy to see the logic of why millions of tons of greenhouse gasses, etc., etc., could just possibly cause problems.

Modern conservatives have become something that is not conservative at all—it's downright off-the-deep-end radical!

I see something similar to the global warming pattern in other contemporary conservative Republican positions and actions on issues such as world trade, financial matters, deficits, separation of church and state, living without a social safety net, guns (the party of 'law and order' wants more), education, war, pipelines and drilling, etc.

Republican positions do not seem to me to be conservative in any of these matters!

Am I missing something?

[20120903-13](#) 10:12 Pam Re: Global Warming & Conservatism (reply to SteveB, above)

No. You're not missing anything, Steve. As for global warming, it's true, the earth has gone through various "ages" and the geography of the planet has changed many times. It's foolish to think its present configuration is going to last forever. I believe the scientists who say human beings are contributing to the current warming trend, and I think that trend began with the agricultural revolution--long before our time, in other words. The industrial revolution hurried things along, and our consumption of fossil fuels is pushing things over the top, but maybe earth is just heating up faster than it otherwise would. It may be the trend was toward warming anyway. I don't know enough about the science, obviously. What I think we can do is prepare for what's coming, and we aren't doing enough in that direction. Big oil simply wants to keep raking in the money, and big coal is no better. Efforts at cleaning up emissions are a day late and a dollar short. Our coastlines are in danger of being flooded out, which means many of our largest cities are at risk. I actually think people will wake up to the realities at some point, but I think it will require a few more Katrinas and tsunamis. All those recent apocalyptic movies about planetary destruction were prophetic, as so much of science fiction is. We won't escape. Our only hope is to create new types of shelter and novel methods of "weathering the storm" that is coming. Underground sanctuaries, hell, underground railroads...who knows what we'll come up with. It is ironic indeed that conservatives don't see the necessity for conserving the earth. I don't think so-called conservatives are conservative at all; they're reactionary ideologues who believe that if you think something that makes it true. They've bent language into such a pretzel that "right to life" now means "packing heat." It's obscene.

[20120903-16](#) 19:24 SteveG Re: Global Warming & Conservatism (reply to SteveB, above)

SteveB: Am I missing something?

Not yet.

[20120903-17](#) 19:30 Art Re: Global Warming & Conservatism (reply to all, above)

As always, Pam hits the nails on the head. I think the real issue, however, is that, if conservatives admit that the release to incredible amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere from fossil fuel burning is accelerating any

natural process of global warming, then they would have to do something about it. Again the obvious answer is cut back on fossil fuel use and that hits the pockets of too many rich folks. So, they are paying to manufacture some sort of science that at least calls the whole thing into question and thereby defers any action to be taken. Again, heck, most of their American political support thinks the earth was invented 6000 years ago and some mysterious being in the sky directs our every move. These people will believe anything.

Meanwhile they ignore everything that is happening around them. The Arctic ice melt this year is the greatest on record and we still have several weeks to go. Again what we need is a category 5 hurricane to sit along the east coast for about a week. Might finally get someone's attention. Otherwise the fact is, we are probably simply too stupid to survive as a species. Oh, and it is a worldwide issue.

FYI, as an aside to this and to many other economic questions, not too many years ago, 1 in 4 jobs in the United States were tied directly or indirectly to automobile production. Think about it. As we flail away at all this little stuff and who is to blame for the lack of jobs, the fact is we are undergoing a huge economic paradigm shift.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|--|
| 20120903-20 | 19:57 | Clark | Re: Global Warming & Conservatism (reply to SteveB, above) |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|--|

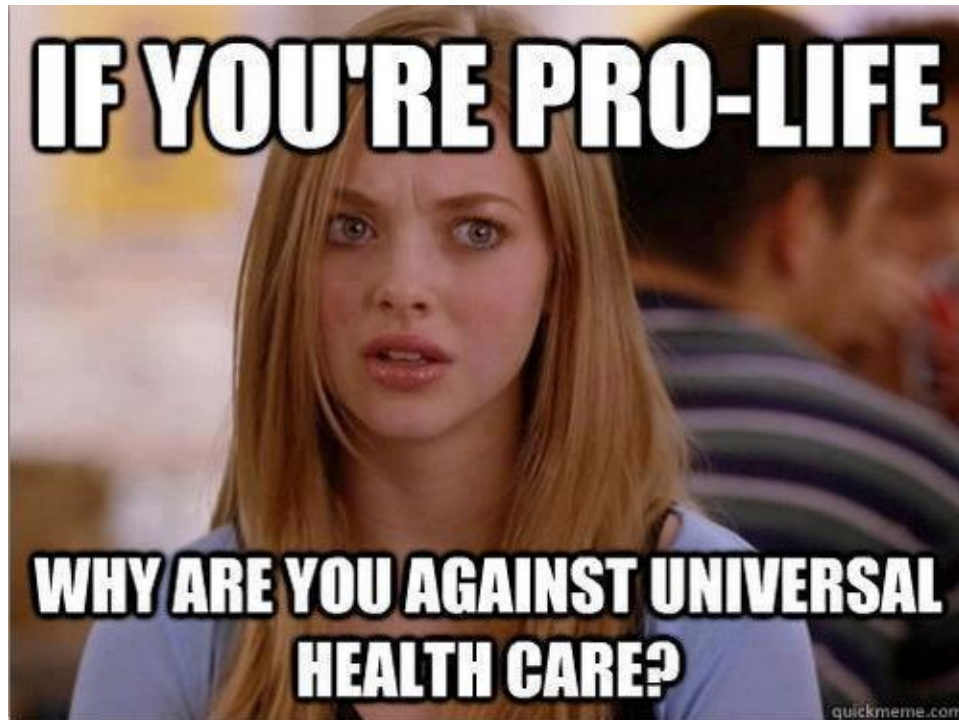
The term "conservative" has totally flipped in the past 15 years.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|--|
| 20120903-18 | 19:34 | SteveG | Re: Global Warming & Conservatism (reply to SteveB, above) |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|--|

We have gone through the draining of swamps in Florida and other coastal areas in order to build resorts, towns, etc.; we have gone through the draining of wetlands in the Midwest and other parts of the world; we have cut forests to make farmland; we have over farmed our land to make dustbowls; we have fracked to do who knows what to the water tables and stability of the surrounding areas; we have polluted our waterways to kill vegetation and fish; acid rain has killed vegetation; carbons have caused smog creating visibility and breathing problems – all chasing the almighty dollar.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|-----|--|
| 20120903-19 | 19:43 | Pam | Re: Global Warming & Conservatism (reply to SteveG, above) |
|-----------------------------|-------|-----|--|

It makes me want to weep.

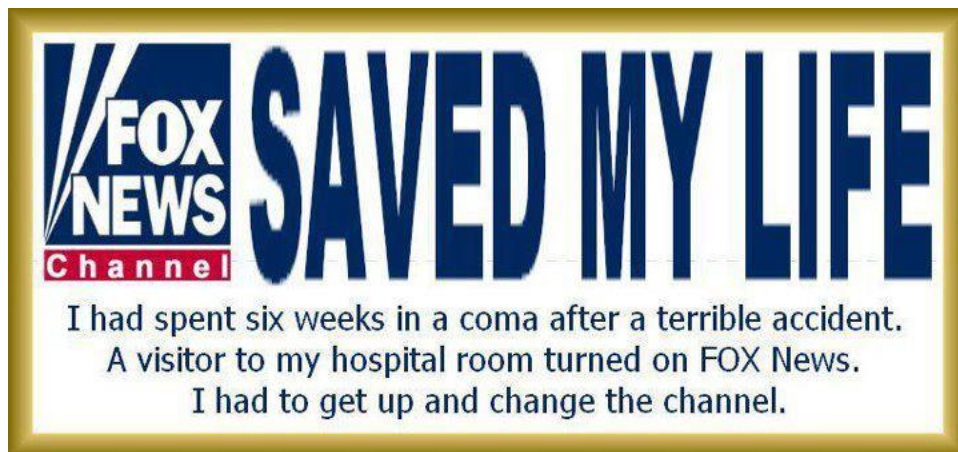


<http://www.kizoa.com/slideshow/d3171474kP164158254o2/santa-cruz-in-full-bloom>

[Source of original email unknown. -SteveB]

A little Country Western tune to cheer up your day...

http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=tE0M9R1YXH0.



<http://www.wildandexotic.co.uk/site/>



—Friends of the Middle,
Steven W. Baker (SteveB), Editor/Moderator

You can subscribe to this free, no-obligation, daily Newsletter filled with lively, intelligent discussion centered on politics and government, but ranging to anything members feel is important, interesting, or entertaining. To subscribe, use the form on our website or blog, or simply reply to this email with "Yes" or "Start" in the Subject line, then add our email address (below) to your Contacts or Safe list. To opt-out, reply with "No" or "Stop" in the subject line.

Welcome to all our new members who may be here for the first time. We want to hear from YOU! To submit your comment, you can use the form on our website or blog, or reply to this email with your two cents worth. Be sure to sign with your desired user name.

Your email address will always be kept strictly confidential.

Feel free to forward this Newsletter to anyone you know on the Right or the Left, though your motives might be different in each case. Regardless, PASS IT ON! Help keep your friends and acquaintances informed and thinking.

<http://www.FriendsOfTheMiddle.org>
FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com

original material ©2012 Steven W. Baker, all rights reserved