



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #238 — OCT. 2, 2012

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How the Cookie Crumbles

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Oct. 2, 2012)

News Flash: Progressive cookies beat conservative cookies!

"Michelle Obama Wins Cookie Contest" by Caitlin McDevitt, Politico

Oct. 1, 2012, (<http://www.politico.com/blogs/click/2012/10/michelle-obama-wins-cookie-contest-137162.html?hp=12>)



Sorry, Ann Romney. But the cookie has crumbled in favor of the first lady.

Michelle Obama has won *Family Circle's* 2012 Presidential Cookie Bake-Off, the magazine reports in its November issue.

Obama and Romney both submitted recipes to the contest, and – after more than 9,000 people weighed in – “just 287 votes separated the two women, our smallest margin ever,” *Family Circle* says.

Romney's M&M cookies got 48.5 percent of votes, while Obama's white and dark chocolate chip cookies won with 51.5 percent.

Ann Romney: <http://www.familycircle.com/recipes/desserts/cookies/presidential-cookie-recipes/#page=2>.

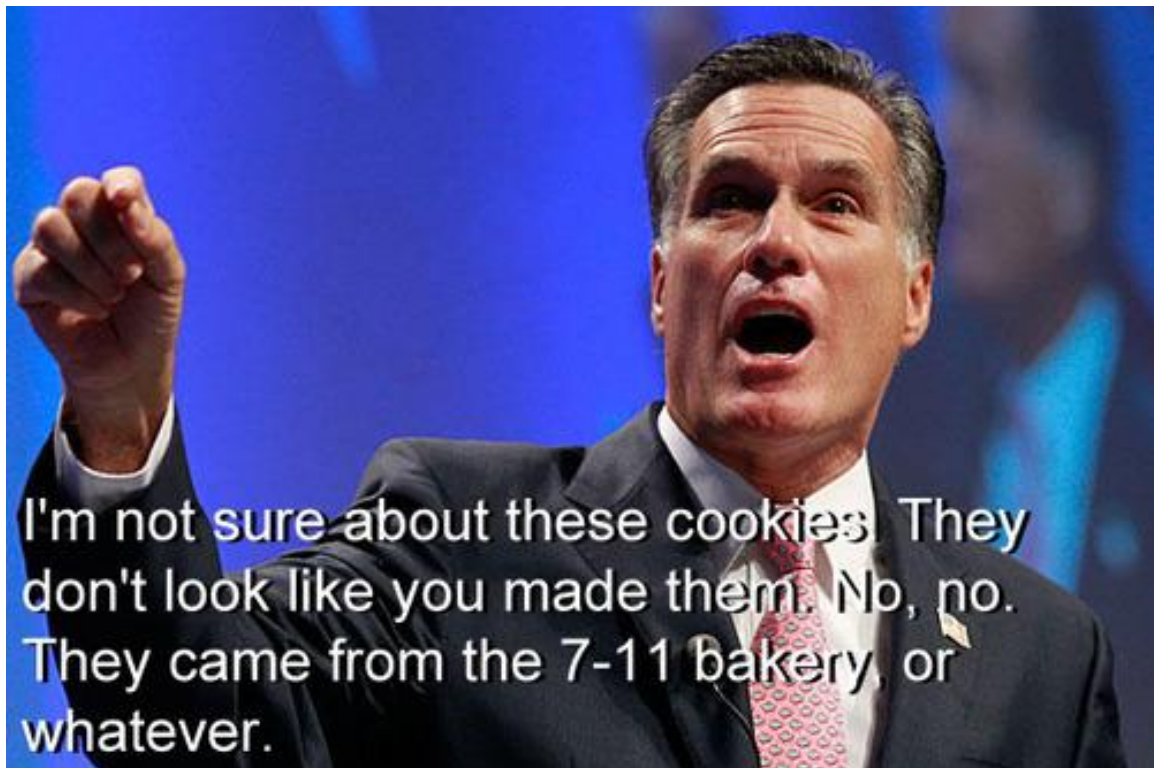
Michelle Obama: <http://www.familycircle.com/recipes/desserts/cookies/presidential-cookie-recipes/?ordersrc=rdfc1105320>.

Family Circle notes that the bake-off, which it's hosted since 1992, "has been a bell-weather in four out of five elections."

The exception? Obama lost to Cindy McCain four years ago, despite complaints that the Arizona senator's wife had cheated.

"Mitt Romney Would Rather Starve Than Touch That Mass-Produced Poor-Person Cookie" by Juli Weiner, *Vanity Fair*

Apr. 19, 2012, (<http://www.vanityfair.com/online/daily/2012/04/Mitt-Romney-Would-Rather-Starve-Than-Touch-That-Mass-Produced-Poor-Person-Cookie>)





Mitt Romney's mainframe continues to be unable to handle such basic functions like PANDER 3.0. Earlier this cycle, we watched as Romney was unable to answer a simple question about whether he enjoys NASCAR racing, while at a NASCAR race, and instead essentially changed the subject to the tremendous wealth of some of his friends. And as evidenced by Romney's appearance at a Pittsburgh-area picnic on Tuesday, his human technicians have yet to fix the bug.

At an outdoor roundtable with some Pennsylvania voters, Romney was offered lemonade and cookies. You can imagine what fresh public-relations havoc this offering wrought. "I'm not sure about these cookies," Romney said. "Did you make those cookies? You didn't, did you? No. No. They came from the local 7-Eleven bakery or wherever."

Soooooo grosssss. Ewwww. These cookies are, like, bought at a store where people can get gas right outside? That customers pump themselves? What are you, competing with the service class? Grosssss. Get this cookie away from me before it insists I claim it as a dependent.

That the cookies came from some "beloved local bakery," Bethel Bakery, is just the icing on the low-rent Entenmann's Coffee Cake. (According to The Hill, the bakery "is running a 'Cookie Gate special' on Thursday, giving away half a dozen cookies with the purchase of a dozen." The Democratic National Committee and 7-Eleven are also mock-offended, though not nearly as charmingly.)

Seriously, can someone get that cookie out of here? Before it demands a 529 college savings plan?

["Mitt Romney Insults Local Pittsburgh Bakery: 'I Don't Know About These Cookies'" by Sara Dover, International Business Times](#)

Apr. 19, 2012, (<http://www.ibtimes.com/mitt-romney-insults-local-pittsburgh-bakery-i-dont-know-about-these-cookies-439426>)

All Bethel Bakery wanted was to welcome Republican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney to its Pennsylvania town with some locally-made cookies.

Instead, the gaffe-prone candidate inadvertently insulted the plate of baked goods that was presented to him at a campaign stop in Bethel Park on Wednesday, guessing it was from a convenience store.

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"Fire Congress, Vote Out Incumbents" by Joel S. Hirschhorn, NationofChange

Oct. 1, 2012, (<http://www.nationofchange.org/fire-congress-vote-out-incumbents-1349101588>)

For politicians to do what is right, first citizens must do what is right.

Of all the many, many stupid things that most Americans do, nothing is more insane than the ritual every two years of reelecting incumbent members of Congress. Countless opinion polls find that the public has incredibly low levels of positive regard for Congress. Just one in 10 Americans approves of the job Congress is doing, according to a Gallup poll released a few weeks ago, tying the branch's lowest approval rating in 38 years.

Yet this year as in past years, unless Americans take back control of their country, voters will again reelect nearly all incumbents. Often, some incumbents do not even have any significant opposition. For example, in the 2000 election cycle, out of 435 House seats, 64 members had no major-party opponent, and in 2008 every House race in Arkansas was uncontested by a major party according to the Center for Voting and Democracy. Political redesign of congressional districts, gerrymandering, is widely done to ensure reelection of incumbents or one party.

The main way that incumbents get removed from office these days is when they lose in a party primary election, or die, or get themselves into a sex or corruption scandal. Primaries often replace the incumbent with someone else from the same party who will, in time, become an incumbent. That replacement is often a more extreme partisan than the previous incumbent.

The usual rationale for this survival of incumbents given by political analysts and writers is that although the public correctly sees Congress as a whole as incompetent, dysfunctional and incapable of serving critical public interests, they somehow think that their own Representatives and Senators are worth reelecting. This, of course, makes no sense. If this had validity, then cumulatively and nationally it would make sense to keep incumbents in office and Congress would get better and better with each election. In fact, Congress has become worse and worse with each election. This holds true in a genuine bipartisan sense, as nearly all incumbents, regardless of party, do not deserve to be reelected.

If Congress as a whole stinks, which it clearly does, then it is only logical to believe that this bleak condition must result from nearly all incumbents contributing to the mess. The exceptions are not defined by simply being the ones on your ballot.

How can a democracy function and have any deserved credibility when the electorate stubbornly refuses to act honestly and appropriately to get rid of the elected representatives who have proven themselves incapable of governing with competence and honor?

There must be better explanations.

Here is a likely one. Most Americans have become beholden to one of the two major political parties even if they are not officially members of them and may even consider themselves as uncommitted or independent. Moreover, a majority of people find themselves living in places where their favored party has predominated. When election time rolls around they cannot get themselves to vote for the candidate from the "other" party and they refuse to vote for third party candidates. Or they are so fed up with an awful government and political system that they do not vote at all, or not for congressional races.

Another contributing factor might be related to the lesser evil mode of thinking. The incumbent loser that you know is, somehow, thought to be better than the competing candidate you do not know, especially one from the "other" party. Reelecting incumbents is like some form of hallucinatory fantasy deemed the safer choice as if keeping them in office will magically turn out to be different and better than in previous times. They have seen the light, gotten the message, turned the corner, become what they once promised to be, and so on. Nuts. Congressional experience is not to be rewarded; it must be penalized for rotten performance.

Third, incumbents almost always have the most money because they have already been corrupted by money. More money means more advertising and more lies. Lies work. Especially for the many information-poor voters that are easily swayed by campaign propaganda. The big popular lie of omission these days is staying completely away from their congressional record. No incumbent wants to be seen as an experienced Washington insider. If you failed on the job, why would you?

In our country effective representative government is crucial. To keep reelecting congressional incumbents that nearly always deserve to be fired is unpatriotic, subversive and antithetical to the ideals of our constitutional republic.

This year ten Senators and 42 Representatives are not running for reelection. Odds are that far fewer incumbents will be voted out of office, if historic trends continue. For House elections from 1982 to 2008 only one in three voters did not vote for a winning House representative and 73 percent of House races were won by landslide margins of at least 20 percentage points. The power of incumbency reduces much needed political competition which a healthy democracy requires.

If the royalty of incumbency does not stop there is no hope whatsoever of putting the nation on a much better track. It does not matter who is elected president. In the end, if the fractured Congress we have witnessed for years perseveres the US is doomed to join the list of once great global powers that went down the toilet.

Flush congressional incumbents out. Now. Or be complicit in the death of American democracy. Stop making excuses, rationalizing. Throw incumbent turds out of office. Even more important than not voting for the challenger or incumbent from the "other" party is not voting for the incumbent of your party, even if it threatens party control of the House or Senate.

If you do not help fire Congress, then you deserve to suffer personally from what the federal government does or does not do. Make your voice really heard this year.

20121001-02	14:27	Charis	Video: "Plaza 24 de Septiembre, Santa Cruz, Bolivia"
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Video: "Plaza 24 de Septiembre, Santa Cruz, Bolivia" by BoliviaBella

Oct. 1, 2012, (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbnQh57ArXY&feature=youtu.be>)

Plaza 24 de Septiembre is Santa Cruz, Bolivia's central square around which the entire city has been built. On the Southern end is the Basilica de San Lorenzo, the ancient Catholic cathedral (you can climb the cathedral clock tower to overlook the city). Here you'll also find the Mayor's Office, City Council, and other government buildings, as well as a great many stores and souvenir shops, banks, and other centuries-old buildings. Inside the cathedral you can visit the Museum of Religious Art. Cine Palace, on the west side, is a great place to take in a movie.

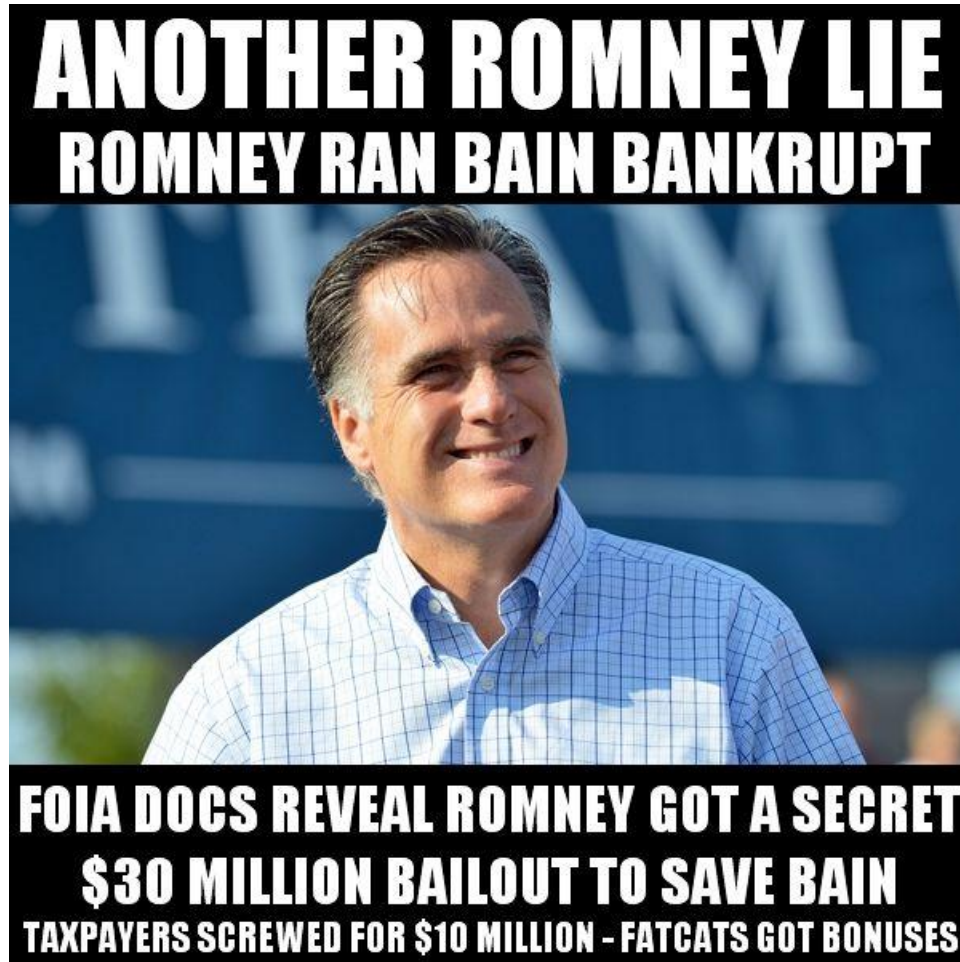
For more: www.boliviabella.com/plaza-24.html.

20121001-03 14:46 SteveB "The Federal Bailout That Saved Mitt Romney"

"The Federal Bailout That Saved Mitt Romney" by Tim Dickinson, *Rolling Stone*

Aug. 29, 2012, (<http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/the-federal-bailout-that-saved-mitt-romney-20120829>)

(Government documents prove the candidate's mythology is just that.)



Mitt Romney likes to say he won't "apologize" for his success in business. But what he never says is "thank you" – to the American people – for the federal bailout of Bain & Company that made so much of his outsize wealth possible.

According to the candidate's mythology, Romney took leave of his duties at the private equity firm Bain Capital in 1990 and rode in on a white horse to lead a swift restructuring of Bain & Company, preventing the collapse of the consulting firm where his career began. When *The Boston Globe* reported on the rescue at the time of his Senate run against Ted Kennedy, campaign aides spun Romney as the wizard behind a "long-shot miracle," bragging that he had "saved bank depositors all over the country \$30 million when he saved Bain & Company."

In fact, government documents on the bailout obtained by *Rolling Stone* show that the legend crafted by Romney is basically a lie. The federal records, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, reveal that Romney's initial rescue attempt at Bain & Company was actually a disaster – leaving the firm so financially strapped that it had "no value as a going concern." Even worse, the federal bailout ultimately engineered by Romney screwed the FDIC – the bank insurance system backed by taxpayers – out of at least \$10 million. And in an added insult, Romney

rewarded top executives at Bain with hefty bonuses at the very moment that he was demanding his handout from the feds.

With his selection of Paul Ryan as his running mate, Romney has made fiscal stewardship the centerpiece of his campaign. A banner at MittRomney.com declared, "We have a moral responsibility not to spend more than we take in." Romney also opposed the federal bailout for Detroit automakers, famously arguing that the industry should be forced into bankruptcy. Government bailouts, he insists, are "the wrong way to go."

But the FDIC documents on the Bain deal – which were heavily redacted by the firm prior to release – show that as a wealthy businessman, Romney was willing to go to extremes to secure a federal bailout to serve his own interests. He had a lot at stake, both financially and politically. Had Bain & Company collapsed, insiders say, it would have dealt a grave setback to Bain Capital, where Romney went on to build a personal fortune valued at as much as \$250 million. It would also have short-circuited his political career before it began, tagging Romney as a failed businessman unable to rescue his own firm.

"None of us wanted to see Bain be the laughingstock of the business world," recalls a longtime Romney lieutenant who asked not to be identified. "But Mitt's reputation was on the line."

The trouble began in 1984, when Bain & Company spun off Bain Capital to engage in leveraged buyouts and put Romney in charge of the new operation. To free up money to invest in the new business, founder Bill Bain and his partners cashed out much of their stock in the consulting firm – leaving it saddled with about \$200 million in debt. (Romney, though not a founder, reportedly profited from the deal.) "People will tell you that Bill raped the place clean, was greedy, didn't know when to stop," a former Bain consultant later conceded. "Did they take too much out of the firm? You bet."

The FDIC documents make clear what happened next: "Soon after the founders sold their equity," analysts reported, "business began to drop off." First came scandal: In the late 1980s, a Bain consultant became a key figure in an illegal stock manipulation scheme in London. The firm's reputation took a hit, and it fired 10 percent of its consulting force. By the time the 1989 recession began, Bain & Company found itself going broke fast. Cash flows weren't enough to service the debt imposed by the founders, and the firm could barely make payroll. In a panic, Bill Bain tapped Romney, his longtime protégé, to take the reins.

In Romney's own retelling, he casts himself as a selfless and loyal company man. "There was no upside," he told his cheerleading biographer Hugh Hewitt in 2007. "There was no particular reason to do it other than a sense of obligation and duty to an organization that had done great things for me."

In fact, Romney had a direct stake in the survival of Bain & Company: He had been working to build the Bain brand his entire career, and felt he had to save the firm at all costs. After all, Bain sold top-dollar strategic advice to big businesses about how to protect themselves from going bust. If Bain & Company went bankrupt, recalls the Romney deputy, "anyone associated with them would have looked clownish." Indeed, when a banker from Goldman Sachs urged Bain to consider bankruptcy as the obvious solution to the firm's woes, Romney's desperation began to show. He flatly refused to discuss it – and in the ensuing argument, one witness says, Romney almost ended up in a brawl when the Goldman banker advised him to "go f*ck yourself." For the sake of Romney's career and fortune, bankruptcy was simply not an option – no matter who got screwed in the process.

According to the government records obtained by *Rolling Stone*, Bain & Company "defaulted on its debt obligations" at nearly the same time that "W. Mitt Romney...stepped in as managing director (and later chief executive) in 1990 and led the financial restructuring intended to get the firm back on track."

Romney moved decisively, and his early efforts appeared promising. He persuaded the founders to return \$25 million of the cash they had raided from Bain & Company and forgive \$75 million in debt, in return for protection from most future liabilities. Romney then consolidated Bain's massive debts into a single, binding loan agreement with four banks, which received liens on Bain's assets and agreed to delay repayments on the firm's debts for two years. The federal government also signed off on the deal, since the FDIC had recently taken control of a bank that was owed \$30.6 million by Bain. Romney assured creditors that the restructuring would enable Bain to "operate normally, compensate its professionals competitively" and, ultimately, pay off its debts.

Almost as soon as the FDIC agreed to the loan restructuring, however, Romney's rescue plan began to fall apart. "The company realized early on that it would be unable to hit its revenue targets or manage the debt structure," the documents reveal. By the spring of 1992, Bain's decline was perilous: "If Bain goes into default," one analyst warned the FDIC, "the bank group will need to decide whether to force Bain into bankruptcy."

With his rescue plan a bust, Romney was forced to slink back to the banks to negotiate a new round of debt relief. There was only one catch: Even though Bain & Company was deep in debt and sinking fast, the firm was actually flush with cash – most of it from the looted money that Bill Bain and other partners had given back. "Liquidity is strong based on the significant cash balance which Bain is carrying," one federal document reads.

Under normal circumstances, such ample reserves would have made liquidating Bain an attractive option: Creditors could simply divvy up the stockpiled cash and be done with the troubled firm. But Bain had inserted a poison pill in its loan agreement with the banks: Instead of being required to use its cash to pay back the firm's creditors, the money could be pocketed by Bain executives in the form of fat bonuses – starting with VPs making \$200,000 and up. "The company can deplete its cash balances by making officer-bonus payments," the FDIC lamented, "and still be in compliance with the loan documents."

What's more, the bonus loophole gave Romney a perverse form of leverage: If the banks and the FDIC didn't give in to his demands and forgive much of Bain's debts, Romney would raid the firm's coffers, pushing it into the very bankruptcy that the loan agreement had been intended to avert. The losers in this game would not only be Bain's creditors – including the federal government – but the firm's nearly 1,000 employees worldwide.

In March 1992, according to the FDIC documents, Romney approached the banks and played the bonus card. Allow Bain to pay off its debt at a deep discount, he demanded – just 35 cents on the dollar. Otherwise, the "majority" of the firm's "excess cash" would "be available for the bonus pool to its officers at a vice president level and above."

The next month, when the banks balked at the deal, Romney decided to prove he wasn't bluffing. "As the bank group did not accept the proposal from Bain," the records show, "Bain's senior management has decided to go forth with the distribution of bonuses." (Bain's lawyers redacted the amount of the executive payouts, and the Romney campaign refused to comment on whether Romney himself received a bonus.)

Romney's decision to place executive compensation over fiscal responsibility immediately put Bain on the ropes. By that July, FDIC analysts reported, Bain had so little money left that "the company will actually run out of cash and default on the existing debt structure" as early as 1995. If that happened, Bain employees and American consumers would take the hit – an alternative that analysts considered "catastrophic."

But Romney didn't dole out all of Bain's cash as bonuses right away. According to a record from May 1992, he set aside some of the money to put one last squeeze on the firm's creditors. Romney now demanded that the banks and the government agree to a deal that was even less favorable than the last – to retire Bain's debts "at a price up to but not exceeding 30 cents on the dollar."

The FDIC considered finding a buyer to take over its loans to Bain, but analysts concluded that "Bain has no value as a going concern." And the government wasn't likely to get much out of Bain if it allowed the firm to go bankrupt: The loan agreement engineered by Romney had left the FDIC "virtually unsecured" on the \$30.6 million it was owed by Bain. "Once bonuses are paid," the analysts warned, "all members of the bank group believe this company will dissolve during 1993."

About the only assets left would be Bain's office equipment. The records show FDIC analysts pathetically attempting to assess the value of such items, including an HP LaserJet printer, before concluding that most of the gear was so old that the government's "portion of any liquidation proceeds would be negligible."

How had Romney scored such a favorable deal at the FDIC's expense? It didn't hurt that he had close ties to the agency – the kind of "crony capitalism" he now decries. A month before he closed the 1991 loan agreement, Romney promoted a former FDIC bank examiner to become a senior executive at Bain. He also had pull at the top:

FDIC chairman Bill Seidman, who had served as finance chair for Romney's father when he ran for president in 1968.

The federal documents also reveal that, contrary to Romney's claim that he returned full time to Bain Capital in 1992, he remained involved in bailout negotiations to the very end. In a letter dated March 23rd, 1993, Romney reassured creditors that his latest scheme would return Bain & Company to "long-term financial stability." That same month, Romney once again threatened to "pay out maximum bonus distributions" to top executives unless much of Bain's debt was erased.

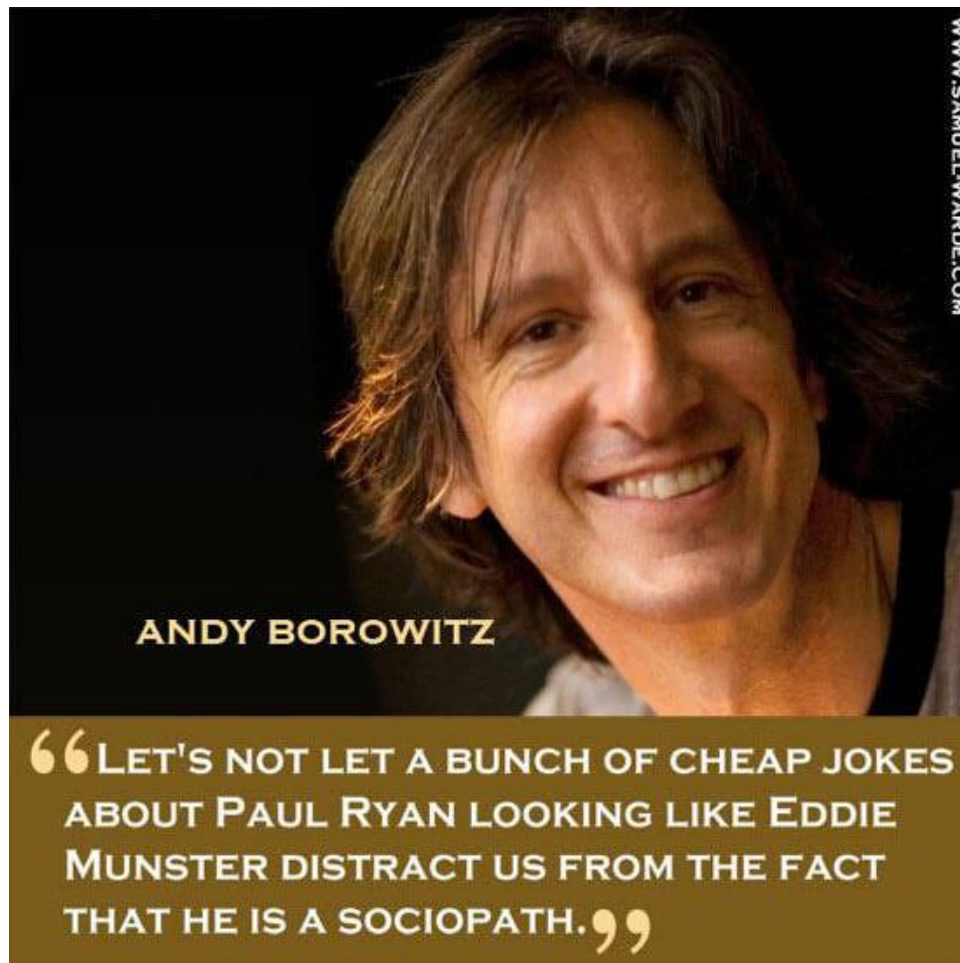
In the end, the government surrendered. At the time, *The Boston Globe* cited bankers dismissing the bailout as "relatively routine" – but the federal documents reveal it was anything but. The FDIC agreed to accept nearly \$5 million in cash to retire \$15 million in Bain's debt – an immediate government bailout of \$10 million. All told, the FDIC estimated it would recoup just \$14 million of the \$30 million that Romney's firm owed the government.

It was a raw deal – but Romney's threat to loot his own firm had left the government with no other choice. If the FDIC had pushed Bain into bankruptcy, the records reveal, the agency would have recouped just \$3.56 million from the firm.

The Romney campaign refused to respond to questions for this article; a spokeswoman said only that "Mitt Romney turned around Bain & Company by getting all parties to come to the table and make difficult decisions." But while taxpayers did not finance the bailout, the debt forgiven by the government was booked as a loss to the FDIC – and then recouped through higher insurance premiums from banks. And banks, of course, are notorious for finding ways to pass their costs along to customers, usually in the form of higher fees. Thanks to the nature of the market, in other words, the bailout negotiated by Romney ultimately wound up being paid by the American people.

Even as consumers took a loss, however, a small group of investors wound up getting a good deal in the bailout. Bain Capital – the very firm that had triggered the crisis in the first place – walked away with \$4 million. That was the fee it charged Bain & Company for loaning the consulting firm the services of its chief executive – one Willard Mitt Romney.

(This story is from the Sept. 13, 2012 issue of *Rolling Stone*.)



"The Blowout Scenario Following a Possible Obama Landslide" by Michael Tomasky, *The Daily Beast*

Oct 1, 2012, (<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/10/01/the-blowout-scenario-following-a-possible-obama-landslide.html?obref=obinsite>)

(Heading into the debates, an Obama victory on Election Day is looking likely. But what if he doesn't just win, but wins huge? Michael Tomasky on the consequences of a landslide.)

Personally, I still think it will be fairly close. And—warning; "to be sure" sentence coming!—to be sure, Mitt Romney could still win. But let's have some fun. Let's spend one column imagining that this thing is a blowout. A massacre, as Arlo Guthrie put it; an Agincourt, a replay of those boring '80s Super Bowls, a Jordin Sparks versus Sanjaya Mulakar kind of situation. What would happen? After we finish laughing malevolently and gloating sometime in December, would it change things in the actual world? You bet it would. I can see four changes, and they'd all be pretty great.

Before we get to that, let's define our delicious terms here. Obviously, Obama isn't capable of a blowout along 1972 or 1984 lines, when the losers carried just one state each plus the District of Columbia. It can't be like 1988, when Mike Dukakis won nine states and DC. Romney will win a lot of states. But let's say Obama wins all the blues and takes every swing state. That's 347 electoral votes. And it's not at all implausible.

But what I'm talking about here is one further and devastating twist of the knife. Let's say here that Romney really collapses, and Obama picks off one state no one expected: Missouri, because Todd Akin became such an

embarrassment, or Arizona—both states where Obama is now about seven points behind. The same is true, interestingly, in Georgia and Tennessee. But let's say Arizona. All those old people somehow rise up against Paul Ryan. That's 358.

If anyone had said back in January that Obama would end up with tallies like these, people would have called Bellevue on him. So if something like this were to happen on election night, it would be staggering. Remember—according to the “it's all about the economy” caucus, Obama was supposed to lose this election! So what would be the result of this blowout?

First, a marvelously amusing recriminations war among Republicans and conservatives about what happened, and it will result in the conservative movement marginalizing itself from mainstream America even further. It will start with arguments over political strategy. Romney was a squish. Romney ran too far right. Ryan was a bad choice. Ryan was a great choice but he wasn't allowed to be Ryan. We should have gone with Santorum. We should have gone with Newt. Even Herman Cain would have done better (someone will say it!).

The more entertaining part of this feud will not be tactical but philosophical, and already I feel great joy in anticipation of the certainty that they'll reach exactly the wrong conclusion. That is, Romney will have lost, if he loses, because the extreme right wing led him around by the nose and ruined him with swing voters, but those same people who charted his demise will argue that he wasn't a true conservative. And within conservative ranks, they'll win!

Okay, that's largely a battle of operatives and pundits. Meanwhile, the pols themselves will have a different argument, which brings us to our second effect: the Republicans in Congress would almost surely have to become less obstinate. Yes, there will be intense pressure from the Tea Party wing to draw an even firmer line against Obama. But I suspect there will be more pressure in the other direction, especially on senators, who represent whole states. Your average American is going to think: “Okay, come on, guys, you went hard at him for four years, gave him your best shot, he kicked your asses in a royal way, now grow up.”

We already saw, in one recent *Washington Post* story that some Hill Republicans are preparing themselves now for coming to terms with the idea of giving in to Obama on upper-income tax increases. A huge victory will ratchet up such pressure.

So let's say that's impact number three: Obama gets his grand bargain before Jan. 1. He gets his tax increase, meaning that some Republicans vote to raise a tax for the first time in 20 years. What he gives in return for that is a serious question. Some concessions on defense spending and probably on Medicare. What exactly they are we'll see. Liberals might be unhappy, but in the mainstream, Obama will be praised to the heavens. He really will have changed the tone in Washington. And he'll have done it by crushing the other side into submission so that it had no real choice.

Your average American will think: 'Okay, come on, guys, you went hard at him for four years, gave him your best shot, and he kicked your asses in a royal way. Now grow up.'

And fourth and finally, if all this happens, the political balance of the country changes. We'll still be bitterly divided, because the people responsible for sowing most of the division will never shut up. But it won't be a 50-50 country anymore. It'll be a 54-46 country. That's a country with a clear majority. Built by Obama. Don't you love that? While the wingnuts spend the next four years looking for that Kenyan birth certificate, Obama can solidify implementation of the Affordable Care Act, notch a foreign-policy accomplishment or two, and preside over a rebounding economy, and some day my great-grandchild can go see this (conservatives: don't click, really, you'll be sick):

<http://www.sodahead.com/fun/you-know-there-are-some-things-that-you-just-never-think-oflike-mt-rushmore-from-the-ca/question-2125819/?page=2&link=ibaf&q=&imgurl=http://t-shirtguru.com/product-images/mt-rushmore-obama-t-shirt-choiceshirts-1.jpg>.

I don't really think this election will be a blowout. But I see little reason to think that's any less possible than a Romney win. Indeed, everything we've seen from the Romney campaign suggests it will comport itself these last five and a half weeks exactly as it has up to this point, which is to say, incompetently. And while my fourth change,

I confess, is a tad wishful, the first three are completely in the realm of the possible, even if Obama wins more narrowly than I've laid out above. But of course, counting chickens and all that. So after filing this column, I'm not going to spend any more time pondering the consequences of a blowout. But conservatives had better.

20121001-06 23:59 SteveB Photo: Indiana Dunes State Park

<http://www.duneland.com/aer/indiana-dunes/indiana-dunes-state-park.html>



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

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