



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #250 — OCT. 18, 2012

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The Plethora of Disqualifying Lies Itemized

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Oct. 18, 2012)

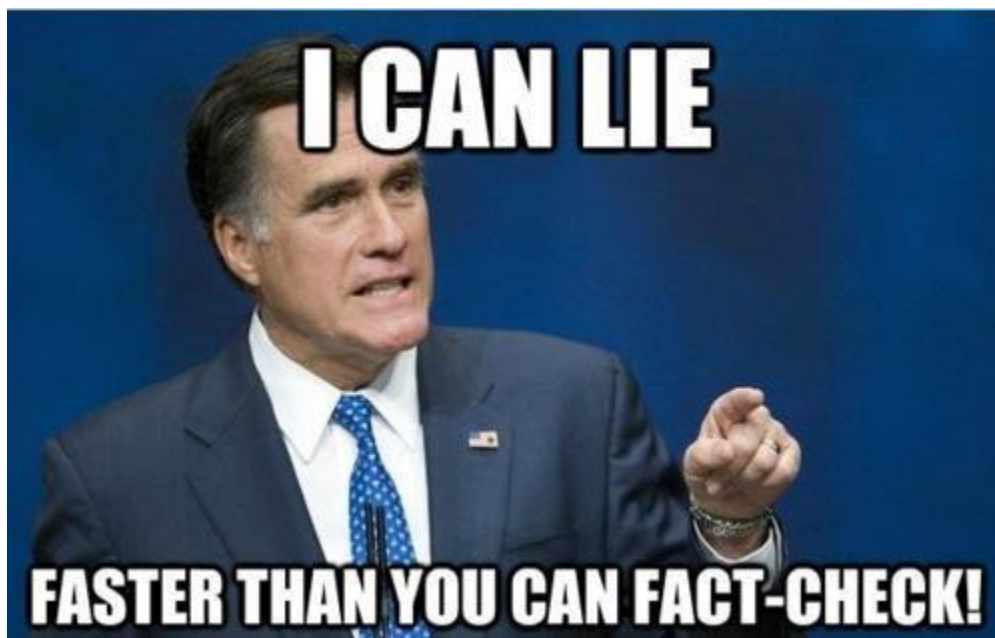
"The liar's punishment is not in the least that he is not believed, but that he cannot believe anyone else." —George Bernard Shaw

"The income tax has made liars out of more Americans than golf." —Will Rogers

"Liar, liar, pants on fire." —The Castaways

"Mitt Romney's Entirely Untrue, Objectively False Statements" by Nick Wing, Huffington Post

Oct. 17, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/17/mitt-romney-false-statements_n_1965351.html?utm_hp_ref=politics#slide=1640939)



It's impossible to spend the larger part of six consecutive years campaigning for president of the United States of America without saying a lot. Some of what candidates say is inspiring, but most of it isn't. A lot of it is true, but only partially. On certain occasions, however, the words we hear are just plain false.

In a political world up to its neck in spin and half-truths, this "malarkey" or "baloney," if you will, stands isolated from fact. Sometimes it's told deliberately, other times it's accidental. On some occasions, it's apparently told in private to donors, and then completely disavowed later.

Whatever the reason or manner, GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney has managed to run a campaign laden with numerous completely, totally, 100 percent untrue statements.

The reason is simple: Romney says a lot of things that are objectively false. That's not a recent revelation. Steve Benen over at the Maddow Blog has put together an exhaustive chronicle of Romney's misadventures in truth-telling (<http://maddowblog.msnbc.com/news/2012/10/12/14397013-chronicling-mitts-mendacity-vol-xxxviii?lite>).

He's written nearly 40 editions, and it's still growing. PolitiFact's webpage for Romney's "pants on fire" statements looks like a blazing inferno (<http://www.politifact.com/personalities/mitt-romney/statements/byruling/pants-fire/>).

Even the satirists at The Onion have called Romney out, joking that he's adopting a last-minute campaign strategy of just "lying more" (see below).

Below is our list of some of Romney's most prominent factually deficient statements, a number of which Romney repeats frequently. Give them a look, vote, and tell us what we missed in the comments below.

1. My Name Is...

At a GOP presidential debate last November, Romney followed CNN host Wolf Blitzer's lead, giving his own attempt at an introduction.

"I'm Mitt Romney -- and yes Wolf, that's also my first name," the former governor offered.

That is entirely, completely, 100 percent, not true.

Romney's first name is Willard. Willard Mitt Romney: Male, 65 years old, married, white, businessman-turned-governor-turned-potential-next president of the United States of America. His father, George Romney, a Mexican-born governor and onetime presidential candidate, named him after J. Willard Marriott, of Marriott hotel fame. His middle name, "Mitt," was apparently an homage to his father's cousin, Milton "Mitt" Romney.

So, what Romney really should have said was, "I'm Mitt Romney -- and yes Wolf, that was the nickname of my first cousin once removed."

2. Obama Made Things Worse -- On Purpose

In announcing his candidacy back in 2011, Romney gave birth to an untruth that has become a focal point of his campaign.

"Barack Obama has failed America. When he took office, the economy was in recession. He made it worse," Romney declared.

He's since broadened that claim in a number of ways, the falsest of them perhaps his suggestion that Obama "knowingly slowed down our recovery" in order to create a climate that would allow for the passage of health care reform.

None of this is true.

If the point Romney had tried to make was that the economy is still weak, he would have been correct. Instead, he made a false statement in claiming that Obama had worsened the recession. Key economic indicators in areas such as the unemployment rate, GDP growth and the stock market suggest that the economy has begun to climb out of recession, though more slowly than anyone could have hoped.

In fact, when Romney was pressed on these facts in the days following his announcement, he ran from his earlier statement, saying that he "didn't say things are worse."

The second part of Romney's deceit comes from his twisted interpretation of *The Escape Artists*, a book by Noam Scheiber. The magnitude of Romney's untruth regarding Obama's supposed willful undermining of economic recovery is actually quite vast, but here's how *New York Magazine's* Jonathan Chait condensed the key takeaway:

First, and most importantly, at no point did anybody in the Obama administration ever believe that passing the Affordable Care Act would "slow down the recovery." Nothing close to that is ever described. Romney presents the book as revealing that Obama believed health-care reform, through its "big gummint" regulations, would harm the recovery, but cackling that he wanted to pass it out of some belief that Americans wouldn't notice mass economic suffering. This bears no relationship to anything the book says.

3. Mitt's Tax Plan

"I indicated as I announced my tax plan that the key principles included the following. First, that high-income people would continue to pay the same share of the tax burden that they do today. And second, that there would be a reduction in taxes paid by middle-income taxpayer," Romney said in an interview with *Fortune Magazine*, responding to a criticism of his plan by the non-partisan Tax Policy Center. "We are not going reduce the share of taxes paid by high-income individuals, and we're certainly not going to increase the taxes paid by middle-income taxpayers."

Romney and his campaign have since made repeated attempts to reinforce their claim that the tax plan will lower the burden on all Americans and still remain deficit neutral, all by eliminating loopholes -- which they've refuse to specify.

Well, that sounds nice, but it isn't true. It can't be, and Romney keeps saying it. The math just isn't on his side. At the bare minimum, Romney has said he'd reduce income tax rates by 20 percent, repeal the estate tax and eliminate the alternative minimum tax. Without the details about which tax loopholes and deductions he'd eliminate to pay for it, the Tax Policy Center and a number of other analysts have maintained that Romney's blueprint would actually provide a windfall for the richest Americans, while shifting some of the burden onto the middle class.

From what Romney is saying, there's no way his tax plan would work. Simply saying that it would, without providing any additional detail to back it up, hasn't changed any expert's mind.

But that hasn't stopped Romney from continuing to insist that the math makes sense depending on which budget baseline and reports you look at. It turns out the "six studies" Romney and Paul Ryan have turned to for support on their plan, don't actually back them up, at least not in the way they claim.

4. Obamacare, Romneycare, and Mandates

This has always been one of Romney's most glaring vulnerabilities. He's claimed that he didn't support an individual mandate on health insurance and insisted that he never said his plan for Massachusetts' health care reform should be used as a national model.

He's also attempted to portray Obamacare as a law that will rob Americans of choice when it comes to choosing their health insurance, and claimed inaccurately at the second presidential debate that Obamacare has increased insurance premiums by \$2,500 a year.

This is absolutely false.

Romney was once an unapologetic supporter of the individual mandate, and quite publicly in fact, at least until his most recent foray into presidential politics. Romney has also attempted to destroy the notion that he believed the Massachusetts model should be replicated nationally. Of course, this becomes difficult when numerous op-eds and interviews emerge showing a Romney who encouraged health care reformers to adopt the individual mandate, which Obamacare has since done, in order to craft a system that can offer affordable health care to a greater number of Americans.

Romney also appears to have repeatedly and deliberately misled about details of Obamacare to portray it as a plan that eliminates health insurance choice by design. The Affordable Care Act, implemented through state-regulated exchanges, is designed to give consumers options about which private plans they want for coverage.

As The Huffington Post's Jeffrey Young points out, Romney's math on the rising costs of health care insurance is wrong. The total average increase of premiums from 2009 through 2012 has been \$2,370 -- not the \$2,500 a year stated by Romney. The average hike in the employee's share comes to \$801 over that period.

Health insurance premiums almost doubled from 2002 to 2012 as the cost of health care continues to rise faster than the economy has grown, but has slowed in recent years.

Read more from Young's report at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/16/presidential-debate-2012_n_1970698.html?utm_hp_ref=politics#129_romney-falsely-claims-health-insurance-premiums-grew-2500-a-year:

Mitt Romney's assertion that health insurance premiums have gotten more expensive by \$2,500-a-year during President Barack Obama's presidency is false.

Health insurance premiums for a family plan cost an average \$15,745 this year, of which workers pay \$4,316 on average and the employer picks up the rest, according to a survey of more than 2,000 employers conducted by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and the Health Research and Educational Trust. In 2009, Obama's first year in office, an average family plan cost \$13,375 and the average employee's share was \$3,515.

The total average increase during those years was \$2,370 -- less than Romney claimed premiums increased each year under Obama. The average hike in the employee's share comes to \$801. Republican vice presidential nominee Paul Ryan made a claim similar to Romney's during his debate with Vice President Joe Biden last week.

Health insurance premiums almost doubled from 2002 to 2012 as the cost of health care continues to rise faster than the economy has grown, but has slowed in recent years.

"Premium growth is at historic lows," Maulik Joshi, president of the Health Research and Educational Trust and vice president for research at the American Hospital Association said in a news release when the organizations issued their survey findings last month.

This trend, however, doesn't fulfill a promise Obama made during the 2008 presidential campaign to reduce family health care premiums by \$2,500 a year.

5. 'Binders Full of Women'

Defending his credentials on women's issues during the second presidential debate, Romney claimed that he'd sought out female candidates to fill his cabinet as governor of Massachusetts. Romney said that, at his

direction, a women's group put together "binders full of women" who were qualified for various positions. Romney then boasted about how many of them he'd gone on to hire.

Romney's story is a work of fiction.

As The Huffington Post's Laura Bassett reports, the situation played out differently:

In fact, Romney did not direct women's groups to bring him female candidates, *Boston Pheonix* reporter David Bernstein points out. A non-partisan collaboration of women's groups called Massachusetts Government Appointments Project (MassGAP) was responsible for the effort in 2002, when the group's leaders realized that women held only 30 percent of the top appointed positions in the state.

MassGAP had independently prepared the binder before they knew who would win the governorship. Furthermore, according to a later MassGAP study, Romney may be truthful in touting his 42 percent female-appointment rate during his first two and a half years as governor, but that figure ignores the fact that the number of women in high-level appointed positions actually declined to 27.6 percent during his full tenure.

6. Raiding Medicare

"There's only one president that I know of in history that robbed Medicare, \$716 billion to pay for a new risky program of his own that we call 'Obamacare,'" Romney said during an interview on CBS' "60 Minutes."

There's not a shred of truth to this.

The figure Romney points to is actually a \$716 billion cost cut out of Medicare over the next decade. According to a report from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, Obamacare will effectively save \$716 billion, while maintaining the same operations and fulfilling promises to Medicare recipients. Under Obama's plan, these savings would then be reallocated to implement other parts of the Affordable Care Act. Notably, the same savings appear in Rep. Paul Ryan's budget.

7. Dog on a Roof

Romney once strapped his Irish Setter Seamus and its crate to the roof of the family station wagon during trip to Canada in 1983. The whole bizarre incident has been a huge nuisance for the GOP presidential candidate. Seriously, it even has it's own Wikipedia page.

In his many efforts to explain what happened on that voyage, Romney has told people both that his dog liked "fresh air," and that the crate was, in fact, air tight.

It isn't possible for both statements to be accurate.

Seamus either liked "fresh air," or was sealed into an air-tight transportation chamber. It was more likely neither, but it certainly can't be both.

8. Welfare Reform

Romney and his campaign went all in on an all-out falsehood this summer, claiming in interviews and ads that Obama ended a requirement that people on welfare must meet certain work requirements.

Despite being called baseless and factually incorrect -- which they are -- Romney has defended the attacks and furthered their use in campaign speeches and anti-Obama attack ads.

The Huffington Post's Arthur Delaney breaks down the distinction between fact and fiction:

Here is what actually happened: At the request of several states -- including two with Republican governors -- the Obama administration announced in July that it would consider waiving certain federal welfare rules if states have ideas for "demonstration projects" they promise can increase welfare employment outcomes by 20 percent (states are required to maintain certain percentages of welfare beneficiaries in work activities or else face penalties). The administration has not announced that it has issued any waivers.

But instead of saying something to the effect that the administration has potentially removed welfare work requirements, or perhaps opened the door for their eventual removal -- even those phrasings would be a big stretch -- the Romney campaign has been saying, "Obama quietly ended work requirements for welfare."

9. 'You Didn't Build That'

When Obama uttered the four words, "You didn't build that" at a campaign event over the summer, Republicans worked themselves into a frenzy trying to paint it as proof that Obama is an anti-business president who demonizes entrepreneurship and believes the government is solely responsible for economic success. They even dedicated an entire day to the phrase at the Republican National Convention. Weeks later, DNC planners were no doubt wishing Romney's "47 percent" video had leaked earlier.

But unlike that video, the "you didn't build that" campaign was built on an absolute mischaracterization and false premise.

Besides the fact that this small segment was cherry-picked out of larger speech to make an argument that Obama wasn't actually trying to make, the numbers don't back up the GOP's assertion. Over the course of his first term, Obama has enacted a series of small business tax cuts, incentives and loan programs. Monthly data for small businesses has also shown modest gains in some key areas.

Bloomberg *Businessweek* relayed one of those points earlier this year:

Job creation at small companies has also been pretty robust when compared with the previous recovery. In the 33 months since the current recovery began, small employers added 2.6 million jobs, a 2.9 percent increase in employment, ADP figures show. By contrast, in the first 33 months of the recovery from the 2001 recession, small employers added 1.8 million jobs, a 2.1 percent increase.

10. Bain Capital Timeline

Romney says he played no part in executive decision-making related to Bain Capital after 1999, as he left the company to organize the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics.

Romney has steadfastly clung to this unmitigated untruth.

There is a wealth of evidence, most of it provided by Romney himself, that would suggest he remained at least somewhat actively involved in Bain's decision-making processes until well after the 1999 date he provided.

Reports by the *Boston Globe*, Mother Jones and Talking Points Memo all pointed to Romney's own filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, which listed him as the "sole stockholder, chairman of the board, chief executive officer, and president" of Bain, an "executive" who drew a six-figure salary in 2001 and 2002.

According to a report from The Huffington Post's Jason Cherkis and Ryan Grim, subsequent testimony from Romney in front of the SEC appeared to corroborate the dates listed on those documents.

Read their entire piece for a more in-depth account of Romney's Bain departure:
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/12/mitt-romney-bain-departure_n_1669006.html.

11. Hands on Our Hearts

At a campaign stop in February, Romney made his best effort to promote American exceptionalism with a rousing, and entirely false, claim.

"We are the only people on the earth that put our hand over our heart during the playing of the national anthem," he said.

There is zero truth to this unusual claim.

The United States isn't the only country to do this. Not even close. *The Washington Post* provided an anecdotal smattering of additional examples in a subsequent fact check, but Romney is just plain wrong on this one.

12. Auto Bailout

Romney has claimed he deserves credit for the turnaround of the American auto industry because Obama took his ideas in helping to foster its eventual recovery.

"I pushed the idea of a managed bankruptcy, and finally when that was done, and help was given, the companies got back on their feet," Romney said in an interview earlier this year. "So, I'll take a lot of credit for the fact that this industry has come back."

He also tried to walk a similar line, repeating this relentless falsehood at the second presidential debate.

Weeks after the 2008 election, Romney penned an op-ed in the *New York Times* titled "Let Detroit Go Bankrupt" (http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/19/opinion/19romney.html?_r=4). In it, he argued that the proposed bailout for the American automobile industry would prevent it from making the changes it would need to achieve longterm success.

The eventual assistance offered to American car companies, first by President George W. Bush and then under Obama, didn't prevent all of them from going bankrupt. Chrysler and GM both filed for bankruptcy in mid-2009, and Romney has used this point to attempt to draw parallels to his stated plan, as well as argue that Obama wasted billions of dollars by not forcing them into bankruptcy earlier.

But David Shepardson of the *Detroit News* points out that there are clear differences between how Obama acted and what Romney had planned:

Obama's auto task force used a section under the bankruptcy code to use government money to buy the "good assets" of GM and Chrysler in bankruptcy by outbidding anyone else, allowing the companies to exit in just 40 days.

If Romney's course had been adopted, GM and Chrysler could have been in bankruptcy for months or years before exiting -- and would have had much more debt on their balance sheets.

13. Iran Nuclear Policy

In March, Romney crafted an attack on Obama that he's since echoed when criticizing the president on foreign policy: "This is a president who has failed to put in place crippling sanctions against Iran. He's also failed to communicate that military options are on the table and in fact in our hand, and that it's unacceptable to America for Iran to have a nuclear weapon."

This claim holds no connection to the truth.

The Obama administration, together with Congress, has passed measures that impose tough new sanctions on Iran's energy sector and financial system. Together with key western allies, the U.S. has also passed sanctions through the UN Security Council that target the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, which controls the Iranian nuclear program. The U.S. also pressed European Union countries to agree to an oil embargo on Iran that took effect this past summer.

Obama has also repeatedly said that it is unacceptable for Iran to get a nuclear weapon. He told Jeffrey Goldberg of *The Atlantic*.

"I think both the Iranian and the Israeli governments recognize that when the United States says it is unacceptable for Iran to have a nuclear weapon, we mean what we say."

14. Disenfranchising Veterans

The Obama administration tried to take away early voting rights for veterans in Ohio, Romney has claimed.

This is 100 percent false.

When Ohio Republicans eliminated early voting on weekends for all except veterans this year, the Obama administration sued to keep the Saturday and Sunday window open for all voters.

The Romney camp attempted to spin this as a move to strip veterans of voting privileges, when in fact it was a move by the administration to expand voting opportunities for everyone.

15. AAA Credit Rating

Obama is to blame for the nation's AAA credit rating being downgraded, Romney has suggested on a number of instances.

But the actual truth tells a much different story here.

According to an analysis from Standard & Poor's, the rating agency that downgraded America's credit rating from AAA to AA+ in the summer of 2011, the decision to downgrade was partially because "the majority of Republicans in Congress continue to resist any measure that would raise revenues."

As has been reported, Obama struck a deal to avoid the growing threat of default but was undermined by Tea Party Republicans who backed out of the compromise at the last minute, continuing their game of political brinksmanship. As S&P put it, "The statutory debt ceiling and the threat of default have become political bargaining chips in the debate over fiscal policy." Republican obstructionism played a significant part in the downgrade.

16. Obama's Jobs Plan

Romney has frequently attempted to claim that Obama has not put forth a jobs plan. At the Republican National Convention in Tampa, Romney said, "And unlike the president, I have a plan to create 12 million new jobs."

Another unrestrained, truth-free statement.

Obama's jobs plan, the American Jobs Act (2011), was shot down by Congress after he promised that his plan wouldn't add to the deficit. While Obama's legislation hasn't passed, it does, in fact, exist.

As for Romney's plan to create "12 million new jobs," Moody Analytics projects that the untouched economy would produce something close to that over the next 4 years, regardless of who is in the White House.

17. Obama Apologizes For America

Over the course of his campaign, Romney has frequently suggested that Obama is guilty of "apologizing for America" instead of standing up for the nation's interests.

This is one of Romney's favorite criticisms, and entirely untrue.

Fact-checkers and other people with eyes and ears have consistently debunked Romney's claims each time they're made, pointing out that the word "apology" simply doesn't apply to the actions and words Obama has used.

PolitiFact perhaps put it best in the wake of Romney's highly criticized decision to use the terrorist attack on a U.S. consulate in Libya as an opportunity to criticize the president:

This is a theme for Romney: He has long accused Obama of apologizing for America, starting in 2010, when Romney published *No Apology: The Case for American Greatness*. Since then, he has repeatedly criticized what he has called an "apology tour" by Obama shortly after he took office. PolitiFact has examined those speeches, consulted experts on speechmaking and apologies, and rated Romney's claim Pants on Fire.

Obama might have some things he thinks America needs to apologize for, but sorry, he's not saying so.

18. Trade Deals

On numerous occasions, Romney has claimed that Obama "has not signed one new free-trade agreement" since entering office.

That's inarguably false.

The president has signed multiple free-trade deals, with Colombia, Panama and South Korea. They've all been approved by Congress and signed by Obama.

The agreements didn't go over without a hitch. Organized labor forces opposed some of the specifics, but ironically, many of the pro-business, GOP-aligned forces that Romney represents hailed their passage as a strong step in the right direction. Romney, on the other hand, has chosen to pretend they don't exist.

His campaign claims the statement is strictly true, arguing that the deals are not "new" because they were first negotiated under the Bush administration, and only completed under this administration.

[19. Then there's the infamous 47% lie caught on hidden video, insinuating that 47% of the population are scum—everyone on disability, welfare, or Social Security, anyone going to college, or anyone simply paying payroll taxes because they didn't make enough money to have to pay income taxes. But to me, all that seems like a lying subset of the real, underlying truth—that 99% of the populace are scum to Romney. –SteveB]

[20. See: "Newsflash for Mitt: The Recovery's Not So Sluggish" by Jared Bernstein, Salon, Oct. 17, 2012, (http://www.salon.com/2012/10/17/newsflash_for_mitt_the_recoverys_not_so_sluggish/). "It's understandable that Romney's painting a grim picture of the economy, but the numbers don't quite bear him out." –SteveB]

"Romney Proudly Explains How He's Turned Campaign Around: 'I'm Lying More,' He Says" by The Onion

Oct. 8, 2012, (<http://www.theonion.com/articles/romney-proudly-explains-how-hes-turned-campaign-ar,29845/>)

(Romney and his staffers say the candidate's new lying strategy has already paid significant dividends.)

(BOSTON) For weeks many Beltway insiders had written off the Romney campaign as dead, saying the candidate had dug himself into too deep a hole with too little time to recover. However, with a month to go before ballots are cast, Romney has pulled even with President Obama, and the former Massachusetts governor credits his rejuvenated campaign to one, singular tactic: lying a lot.

"I'm lying a lot more, and my lies are far more egregious than they've ever been," a smiling Romney told reporters while sitting in the back of his campaign bus, adding that when faced with a choice to either lie or tell the truth, he will more than likely lie. "It's a strategy that works because when I lie, I'm essentially telling people what they want to hear, and people really like hearing things they want to hear. Even if they sort of know that nothing I'm saying is true."

"It's a freeing strategy, really, because I don't have to worry about facts or being accurate or having any concrete positions of any kind," Romney added.

Romney said he is telling at least 80 percent more lies now than he was two months ago. Buoyed by his strong debate performance, which by his own admission included 40 or 50 instances of lying in one 90-minute period, the candidate said he will continue to "just openly lie [his] ass off" until the Nov. 6 election.

Whether it's a senior citizen, military family, working mother, businessman, or middle-class American, Romney said, he will lie to every single one of them as often as he can if that's what it takes to win the presidency.

"The best part is, it's really easy to lie," said Romney, who added that voicing whatever untruths come into his mind at any given moment is an easy thing to do because all it requires is opening his mouth and talking. "For example, if someone accuses me of having a tax plan that makes no discernible sense, I just lie and say that I do have a tax plan that makes sense. I also say there is a study that backs up my plan. See that? Simple. None of it is remotely true, of course, but now we're moving on to the next topic because people are usually too afraid to ask me straight up if I'm lying, because that is apparently not something you ask someone who is running for president."

Moreover, Romney said, if anyone does accuse him of lying, he will simply say he is not lying, which he noted is just an extension of the overall strategy.

"So, if I'm talking to retirees," Romney continued, "I lie and say I'll fight tooth and nail to save Medicare, which causes them to applaud. On the other hand, if I'm talking to the party base, I lie and say we have to cut Medicare, which causes them to applaud. So, you see, my goal here is to get everyone applauding for me, because if everyone is clapping their hands, standing on their feet, and shouting my name, that means they like me and will vote for me."

Romney's campaign advisers said that they adopted the strategy of lying a lot after realizing several things: (1) Lying sounds good, especially when the truth sounds bad, (2) the American media doesn't care if you lie, (3) the American people don't care if you lie, and (4) it's okay to lie if you are very, very desperate to become the president of the United States.

"If we're going to be carried into the White House, it's going to have to be on a wave of lies," Romney campaign manager Matt Rhoades said. "Most important, Mitt is comfortable when he is lying because then he doesn't have to say anything bad. And in this last month it's important that we just let Mitt be Mitt, whoever the hell that is."

"It's late in the game, but this campaign has finally found its groove," Rhoades added. "And that groove is lying. Bald-faced, make-no-apologies, dirty, filthy lying."

According to Romney, amidst all the lies, there is only one thing that remains true.

"I literally have no clue where I stand on any single issue at this point," said Romney, adding that when it comes to women's rights, gay rights, health care, the middle class, the economy, or the U.S. military, all he knows is how to lie about them. "I understand what other people want. And what I've learned, especially in the past week, is that in order to be a viable candidate for the White House, that's all you really need to know."

Following the interview, Romney told various reporters that, if elected, he would save the newspaper industry.



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20121017-03	15:44	Pam	Re: The Plethora of Disqualifying Lies Itemized (reply to SteveB, above)
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This is great stuff, but I fear that the folks who need to see it most won't. I used to share stuff on Facebook, until I was asked by a relative not to. I was so stunned by the request I complied immediately. Occasionally I'll share something, but I try to keep a low profile--except with all of you. I know that even if you don't agree with me, you're not going to get mad at me.

I'm with Jon Stewart: "For the love of God, please let this (campaign) stop!"

20121017-06	18:24	Art	Re: The Plethora of Disqualifying Lies Itemized (reply to Pam, above)
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Read the latest lie on the "binder gals". Tell your relative to stuff it.

20121017-01	06:46	Tom	"An Honest Debate About Gun Violence"
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Here are some interesting statistics... Great article.

With all the political correctness and propaganda propagated by the media, here are some statistics, which just might help you focus on the issues.

In the second presidential debate of 2012, President Obama clearly stated that he favors, and will support, a reinstatement of the so-called Assault Weapons Ban. (Scary Looking Weapons Ban) In fact, he said all military weapons should be kept out of the hands of civilians.

So, with only 3 weeks to the election, you might want to review the statistics and come up with your own solution.

First, a quote from the article below:

...gun violence in America largely consists of black and Hispanic males shooting other black and Hispanic males. According to a study by the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, based on data collected by the Center for Disease Control, 1.5 white Americans in 100,000 were shot and killed in 2007 — still higher than the Canadian rate of 0.6, but, given the population densities of the two nations, at least in the same ballpark. On the other hand, **the rate for Hispanic Americans was an alarming 5.2 per 100,000 — more than three times the rate among whites Americans. The rate for African Americans was a grotesque 18.1 per 100,000, or roughly 12 times the rate among whites Americans. The rate for African-American males was an obscene 37.59 per 100,000.**

Those are the *victim* rates. The ethnic disparities among gun homicide *offenders* mirror the disparities among victims. **Though blacks make up less than 13% of the U.S. population, year after year they commit more than half of all gun homicides...**

"An Honest Debate About Gun Violence" by Mark Goldblatt, The Daily Caller

Oct. 2, 2012, (<http://dailycaller.com/2012/10/02/an-honest-debate-about-gun-violence/?print=1>)

Few things in American public life are as predictable as gun control advocates taking to the airwaves and editorial pages in the immediate aftermath of a shooting spree to call for more stringent gun control measures. The summer of 2012 was a banner season for anti-gun rhetoric since it featured not one but two horrific incidents: the July 20th massacre of patrons at a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, and the August 5th massacre of worshippers at a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin.

The absolute worst time to engage in such a debate is in the immediate aftermath of a shooting, with our emotions still raw, and with images of the carnage still fresh in our minds — which, of course, is the reason the political left wants to have the debate while the yellow police tape is still up at the crime scenes. But as time passes, the potential for a saner debate increases. To ask, for example, whether a civilian should be allowed to purchase a high-capacity "drum magazine" for a semi-automatic weapon, as the Colorado shooter was allegedly able to do, is not to dismantle the Second Amendment. Would such a restriction be the proverbial camel's nose under the tent? Maybe. But it's not an unreasonable question to ask.

That debate, however, has nothing to do with the broader problem of gun violence in the United States. Though both the Colorado and Wisconsin massacres were violent and did involve guns, they were aberrations. Legislation aimed at reducing the likelihood or deadliness of such incidents will have little or no impact on how many Americans get shot and killed from year to year.

[I happen to remember that they said that about seatbelts too. —SteveB]

Gun control advocates want to yoke their efforts to ban many types of firearms, including semi-automatic weapons with legitimate self-defense uses, onto our collective revulsion at the bloodshed wrought by a couple of maniacs. They argue that America has become a shooting gallery — at least when compared with other industrialized nations. If only Americans would stop clinging irrationally to their Second Amendment right to bear arms, we could cut gun violence down to, say, Canadian levels.

The argument seems plausible, at least at first glance. Canada has long had some of the strictest gun control laws in the world, and in 2007 Americans were almost six times more likely to be the victim of a gun homicide than Canadians were. The rate in Canada was 0.6 per 100,000 people; in America, it was 3.4 per 100,000.

End of discussion, right?

Except if you dig down into the numbers, the issue becomes more complicated. The plague of gun violence in the U.S., it turns out, is not as widespread or as random as many gun control advocates would have us believe. Indeed, gun violence in America largely consists of black and Hispanic males shooting other black and Hispanic males. According to a study by the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, based on data collected by the Center for Disease Control, 1.5 white Americans in 100,000 were shot and killed in 2007 — still higher than the Canadian rate of 0.6, but, given the population densities of the two nations, at least in the same ballpark. On the other hand, the rate for Hispanic Americans was an alarming 5.2 per 100,000 — more than three times the rate among whites Americans. The rate for African Americans was a grotesque 18.1 per 100,000, or roughly 12 times the rate among whites Americans. The rate for African-American *males* was an obscene 37.59 per 100,000.

Those are the *victim* rates. The ethnic disparities among gun homicide *offenders* mirror the disparities among victims. Though blacks make up less than 13% of the U.S. population, year after year they commit more than half of all gun homicides. The numbers for Hispanic offenders are harder to pin down since law enforcement agencies tend to group them with white offenders — perhaps to make the black-white contrast seem less stark. But given the high rate of Hispanic victimization, and the fact that more than half of all homicide victims in the U.S. are acquainted with their killers, it seems safe to conclude that Hispanic offenders also commit gun homicides at substantially elevated rates.

Any honest discussion of gun violence, therefore, begins with the inconvenient truth that it's disproportionately a black and Hispanic phenomenon. That makes last summer's horrors in Colorado and Wisconsin exceptional on at least three levels: first, because of the body count; second, because of the weaponry; third, and most critically, because of the demographics of shooters and their victims.

Recognizing the centrality of ethnicity to the problem of gun violence is just another way of saying, "Guns don't kill people. People kill people." But it also underscores the gnarly politics of dealing with the issue. You likely *could* significantly reduce incidents of gun violence in the U.S., and save many black and Hispanic lives in the process, with mandatory sentencing. So, for example, if you're convicted of using a gun to commit a crime, we could tack an extra five years onto the end of your sentence. If you discharge a gun while committing a crime, make it 15. If you shoot someone, make it 25. No exceptions. No plea bargains. No mercy.

If states began to adopt such sentencing guidelines, you likely *would* have a drastic reduction in gun homicides — not because violent criminals would necessarily be deterred, but because, once they're caught and convicted, they'd be incarcerated for much longer periods. It would therefore be a boon to the overwhelming majority of blacks and Hispanics, who are law-abiding citizens. But it would also require building many more prisons and filling them with mostly black and Hispanic males — which means that most blacks and Hispanics would oppose the effort. So too would every left-of-center advocacy group that fancies itself a guardian of minority interests.

So, yes, by all means, now that our emotions are no longer raw, let's have a national conversation about gun violence. But for once, how about an honest one?

(Mark Goldblatt is the author of "Bumper Sticker Liberalism." He teaches at Fashion Institute of Technology (SUNY).)

20121017-02	14:07	Ben	Photo: Today's Seafood Lunch at Apple
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Flounder, or Albacore? What a terrible dilemma...

I did the albacore. Either would have been an excellent choice: the flounder looked great, too.

The logic went like this:

- We don't get flounder very often. It's a delicious, sweet, delicate white fish.
- Tuna is really yummy, especially if it's rare, and fresh enough to be flattered by tha.
- Flounder is really yummy. The vegetables are white beans (yum), with onions-tomatoes-bell peppers.

- Tuna from the pasta line, with no pasta. I don't get to eat as much of Chef Patricia's stuff these days, 'cause too much pasta is ... too much pasta.

Coin flip: stuck.

Snoop reconnaissance:

- Both dishes look very inviting.
- Chefs are doing pretty-plate on both lines.

Coin flip: there's no one in the pasta line. Bistro is stacked up.

Decision: Tuna

I know I'd have been well-rewarded either way. Hard to go wrong.

My gorgeous tuna filet looks like it was from that muscle that runs along the spine. It was dense, tender, rare at the center, very moist and fresh, even where cooked, and I never had to lift my knife off the tray: it just flayed itself out into tasty morsels, almost by itself. The asparagus was roasted perfectly: still crunchy at the core, and firm everywhere. I'm not sure how it was seasoned; sea salt and black pepper, perhaps, but it was just the right amount of whatever it was, enough for a little zing without being particularly noticeable. The cute little roasted red potatoes disappeared along with the rest, as they, too, were perfect, with a browned slightly crusty surface, and moist, fluffy tater inside. The tapenade was beautiful and so finely chopped as to be almost smooth, redolent of olive oil (of course), a rich burst of flavor.

Footnote: the twin cash registers have been replaced by a quartet of iPads, for a much cleaner, more efficient checkout process. Credit cards are now accepted, too.



Seared Albacore over Asparagus and Rosemary Taters

"Five Key Issues Omitted from First Two Debates" by Michael O'Brien, NBC News

Oct. 17, 2012, (<http://nbcpolitics.nbcnews.com/news/2012/10/17/14513694-five-key-issues-omitted-from-first-two-debates?lite>)

The first two debate meetings between President Barack Obama and GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney have covered a broad array of issues, but some of the most pressing matters they would encounter as commander in chief were left unmentioned.

Among the topics covered by the two prime-time outings include taxes, the economy, jobs, Medicare, Social Security, education, immigration, Libya, China, energy, gun rights, contraception, abortion rights, and a whole host of other issues.

To be sure, the format of each debate and the actions of both Romney and Obama, in part, limited the issue scope in each debate. Romney frequently overrode the interjections and questions of moderator Jim Lehrer in the first debate, and the town-hall format of Tuesday evening's debate allowed undecided voters to pose questions in a discussion guided by CNN's Candy Crowley.

Moreover, some of these topics could work their way into the third Obama-Romney showdown, which is scheduled for Monday in Boca Raton, Fla. That debate will focus primarily on matters of foreign policy.

With that in mind, here's a look at the top five issues left unaddressed so far through the first two presidential debates:

FISCAL CLIFF

Regardless of the outcome of next month's election, Obama or Romney would almost assuredly encounter a potential fiscal crisis immediately upon being sworn into office.

While the topics of taxes, spending and entitlements were rampant during the first two debates, the so-called "fiscal cliff" looming at the beginning of 2013 presents a far more beguiling challenge for either candidate come January.

The fiscal cliff is a shorthand way of referencing the cocktail of automatic spending cuts and tax hikes set to take effect at the beginning of next year, the by-product of legislative gridlock which economists warn could do serious damage to the recovery.

Obama and Romney have each talked about their tax proposals, which would presumably compensate for the expiration of the 2001 Bush tax cuts at the end of this year, along with a two-year payroll tax cut initiated by Obama.

But the next president would have to juggle tax reform -- a politically tricky issue in its own right -- with having to reach an agreement to avert the effects of the "sequester."

When lawmakers reached a last-minute deal in the summer of 2011 to raise the nation's borrowing limit and avert default on U.S. debt, they included a provision that would trigger a series of deep cuts -- including steep reductions to defense spending -- set to take place at the end of 2012.

These automatic cuts were designed to be politically unpalatable in order to provide an automatic incentive for a bipartisan "supercommittee" of lawmakers (which was also established by the debt deal) to reach a consensus plan to address the nation's mounting debt.

Romney has been an ardent critic of those automatic defense cuts and made frequent mention of them on the campaign trail. But he didn't reference them at all in his first two debates versus Obama.

These looming challenges are unlikely to reach resolution in the lame-duck Congress. That means Obama or Romney, as president, will be forced to confront not just a single portion of their fiscal proposals, but rather, a series of them linked together. Such a consequential legislative fight could consume the first few months of 2013, if not longer.

HOUSING MARKET

A troubled housing market and financial crisis related to over-extended mortgages are the root cause of America's current economic headache, but the topic received scant attention during the first two debates.

Obama took steps at the beginning of his first term meant to support struggling homeowners, and outlined an updated proposal in February -- but neither had much effect. One of Romney's earliest events during his bid for the Republican nomination, too, was in a neighborhood full of foreclosed homes in Nevada, one of the states hit hardest by the housing collapse.

But neither candidate paid lip service to the full severity of the housing market except as an aside in a larger discussion about the regulations on lenders included in the 2010 Dodd-Frank regulatory reform law.

Obama accused Romney of wishing to repeal that law, which the president asserted would eliminate rules on subprime housing loans.

"Dodd-Frank correctly says we need to have qualified mortgages, and if you give a mortgage that's not qualified, there are big penalties, except they didn't ever go on and define what a qualified mortgage was," Romney responded. "It's been two years. We don't know what a qualified mortgage is yet. So banks are reluctant to make loans, mortgages."

Viewers looking for more details about how Obama or Romney would handle Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac -- the troubled mortgage-lending giants that were taken into government conservatorship in 2008 -- also might have been disappointed in the first two debates. Neither candidate explained how they would move the troubled companies off the government's books.

IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

The winding-down wars in Iraq and Afghanistan received more attention during the lone vice presidential debate than they did during the first two meetings between Romney and Obama.

American combat troops have been in Afghanistan since 2001 and in Iraq since 2003, and Obama has begun the process of ending the wars in each country -- something of which he has been quick to remind voters during the debates.

Romney has sought to distinguish himself from Obama on both theaters, focusing his criticism on the pace at which Obama has withdrawn troops from both countries, and Obama's decision to set timelines by which American combat troops would leave both Iraq and Afghanistan.

"America's ability to influence events for the better in Iraq has been undermined by the abrupt withdrawal of our entire troop presence," Romney said earlier this month at a foreign policy speech.

On Afghanistan, Romney has also sought to paint stark differences between himself and Obama by arguing that Obama prematurely drew down "surge" troops from Afghanistan earlier this fall. Romney said he would have kept them there a few months longer, through the height of the fighting season.

Still, both Obama and Romney share the same expressed goal of all troops leaving Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

EUROPE'S FISCAL CRISIS

The debt crises beguiling Greece, Spain, Italy and a host of other European nations have imperiled the health of the European Union and its currency, the Euro. Moreover, much of Europe has plunged into a double-dip recession, the effects of which have imperiled the American economic recovery.

But the still-serious situation in Europe has been little more than a punchline for the candidates through the first two presidential debates.

"If the president were re-elected, we'd go to almost \$20 trillion of national debt. This puts us on a road to Greece," Romney said in Tuesday night's debate, repeating a line that should sound familiar to anyone who's followed the Republican presidential nominee's stump speeches this year.

So serious was the situation in Europe that the president took to the White House briefing room in early June -- the same remarks in which he suggested the private sector was "doing fine" relative to the public-sector economy -- to warn about the impact the European debt crisis could have on the American economy.

"In the meantime, given the signs of weakness in the world economy, not just in Europe but also some softening in Asia, it's critical that we take the actions we can to strengthen the American economy right now," Obama said on June 8.

But the situation in Europe received no attention in the first two debates, even though the EU was just awarded the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize in part for its perseverance through a politically-trying period in its history.

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Obama announced in June that his "evolution" on gay rights was complete, and that he supported the right of same-sex couples to marry.

Romney responded at the time by reiterating his opposition to gay and lesbians' ability to marry while calling it a "tender" issue that deserved sensitivity.

The president's announcement in June was heralded as historic, but also a politically shrewd move to energize young voters and his LGBT supporters, while also putting Romney in the difficult position of trying to strike a centrist note while not alienating the socially conservative voters who make up a core constituency of the GOP.

But given the magnitude and politics of that June announcement, it is striking that the topic of same-sex marriage didn't come up in the first two debates. (Even on another social issue, abortion and contraceptive rights, Romney stressed he believes "every woman in America" should have access to contraceptives.)

The absence of the conservative red meat on social issues is made all the more striking by comparing the first two debates of 2012 to the first debate of 2004, when President George W. Bush played up his opposition to same-sex marriage and used Sen. John Kerry's more moderate stance against the Democratic nominee.

"I believe in the sanctity of marriage. I think it's very important that we protect marriage as an institution, between a man and a woman," Bush said at his Oct. 13, 2004, meeting with Kerry.

"I proposed a constitutional amendment. The reason I did so was because I was worried that activist judges are actually defining the definition of marriage, and the surest way to protect marriage between a man and woman is to amend the Constitution."

But Kerry also stressed his opposition to same-sex marriage, too.

"The president and I share the belief that marriage is between a man and a woman. I believe that. I believe marriage is between a man and a woman," he said. "But I also believe that because we are the United States of America, we're a country with a great, unbelievable Constitution, with rights that we afford people, that you can't discriminate in the workplace. You can't discriminate in the rights that you afford people."

A GENERATION LOOKING WITHOUT SEEING AND HEARING WITHOUT LISTENING...

"I fear the day when the technology overlaps with our humanity. The world will only have a generation of idiots." — Albert Einstein

Having a Coffee...



REALLY?????

"Romney Challenged on How He Got the Binder Full of Women Managers" by Abby D. Phillip, ABC News

Oct. 17, 2012, (http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/romney-challenged-binder-full-women-managers/story?id=17501797#.UH_p88XA-RQ)

Mitt Romney's troubles with his "binder full of women" comment isn't over as Massachusetts women are challenging his version of how he got that binder and his record of hiring top women managers.

In answer to a question from a voter about pay discrepancies between men and women during Tuesday night's debate, Romney recalled how when he became governor of Massachusetts he sought out top level women.

"I went to my staff, and I said, 'How come all the people for these jobs are all men?' Romney said. "We took a concerted effort to go out and find women who had backgrounds that could be qualified to become members of our cabinet."

"I went to a number of women's groups and said, 'Can you help us find folks,' and they brought us whole binders full of women," Romney added.

He said his administration had the highest number of women in top positions of any governor in the country.

That version is under fire by a coalition of women's groups known as MassGAP, which is affiliated with the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus. The group compiled the names of female applicants before Romney came to office and offered them to both Romney and his Democratic opponent Shannon O'Brien.

"It didn't really have anything to do with Romney asking women to give him names," said Carolyn Jones, who was secretary of the Massachusetts Womens' Political Caucus during the time that Romney was governor.

MassGAP, which is non-partisan, issued a statement saying that while the Romney administration started with women comprising 42 percent of newly appointed positions, by 2006, that number had dropped to 25 percent.

"So when the spotlight was on him, sure he paid some lip service. But when no one was looking, those levels plummeted to 25 percent, below where they were in the previous governor's administration," said Jesse Mermell, a Democratic selectwoman in Brookline, Mass., who was the executive director of the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus from 2004 to 2008. During that time the organization commissioned a report on women in government positions in the state.

In response to the controversy, Romney tweeted from his official Twitter account today: "I understand the challenges women face and want to make it easier for them in the workplace." The message included a video of testimonials from women who served in Romney's cabinet as governor.

And a Romney campaign spokesman responded by emphasizing his cooperation with MassGAP in finding qualified women candidates.

"The incoming Romney administration worked with MassGAP to find the best qualified women for top positions in Massachusetts government," said Romney campaign spokesman Andrea Saul. "The efforts resulted in Massachusetts having the most women in top positions in the entire country."

The question about equal pay that prompted the "binders" answer was among several questions at the Hofstra University debate that were of particular interest to women, and the answers could be significant in this election as women voters have become a key demographic.

An ABC News/*Washington Post* poll in September found that among women registered voters, Obama's favorability plummeted from 57 percent in April to 46 percent.

And on Monday, a *USA Today*/Gallup Poll conducted after the first presidential debate, showed Romney within one point of Obama among likely women voters in swing states.

Faced with the same question about equal pay, Obama highlighted his administration's passage of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and hit Romney for hesitating to state his position on the bill.

"I just want to point out that when Governor Romney's campaign was asked about the Lilly Ledbetter bill, whether he supported it, he said, 'I'll get back to you.'" Obama said.

A Romney campaign adviser, Ed Gillespie, has since acknowledged that Romney originally opposed the Ledbetter legislation, and his position is now that he would not change the existing law.

Obama also reminded women during the debate that Romney has vowed to cut federal funds to Planned Parenthood.

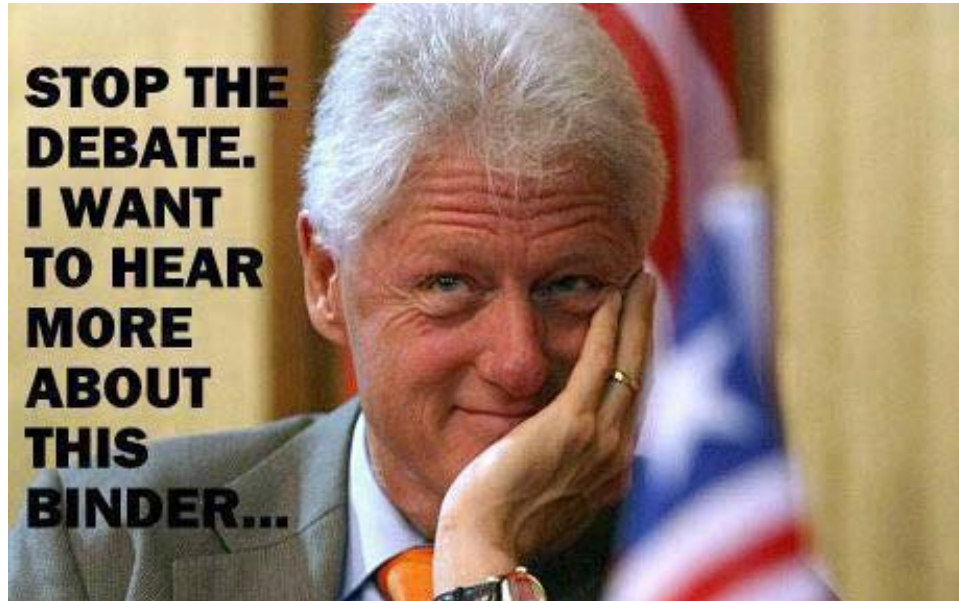
During a campaign stop in Virginia today Romney echoed a theme from the debate when he focused on where he says the Obama administration has hurt women the most: the economy.

"This president has failed America's women. They've suffered in terms of getting jobs, they've suffered in terms of falling into poverty," Romney said at an event in Chesapeake, VA on Wednesday. "That's what the women of America care about and the answers are coming from us, not from Barack Obama."

[20121017-11](#) 20:29 Pam Re: "Romney Challenged on How He Got the Binder Full of Women Managers" (reply to MarthaH, above)

Could I be any more disgusted? I don't think so.

[20121017-09](#) 19:35 SteveB Re: "Romney Challenged on How He Got the Binder Full of Women Managers" (reply to MarthaH, above)



[20121017-12](#) 20:32 Pam Re: "Romney Challenged on How He Got the Binder Full of Women Managers" (reply to SteveB, above)

Now THIS gives me a chuckle.

[20121017-08](#) 19:30 SteveB Video: FDR Warning About Today's Republicans in 1936

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUZGkNAUSvY>

FDR tells the truth about the leaders of the modern Republican Party. Somehow, in 1936, he foresaw what would be happening NOW.

[20121017-10](#) 20:28 SteveB Amphibia

"New Amphibious Vehicle to Debut in US Claims Record Speed" by Claire Martin, MSN

Oct. 15, 2012, (http://editorial.autos.msn.com/blogs/autosblogpost-tru.aspx?post=c30a04d9-d292-4ded-a9bb-eff1ba3a5b4f&icid=autos_3632)

(The \$40,000 Quadski, a combination ATV and personal watercraft, goes 45 mph on land and at sea.)



[20121017-13](#) 22:25 Ben Re: Amphibia (reply to SteveB, above)

OK, now that is cool. It doesn't look like something you could drive on a vacation, nor take even a small family, or your wife and a dog both, along. But it looks 'way fun, and they may have got the market research right. The folks who own and use Amphicars these days are a tiny few island commuters, maybe a slightly larger number in regions with canals, and by far the most are weekend fun. This looks good for those applications. It's even a decent layout for fishing,

The Amphicar can manage 70.

That's an unusual view of a Schwimmwagen. You can see "The Thing" in it, for sure.





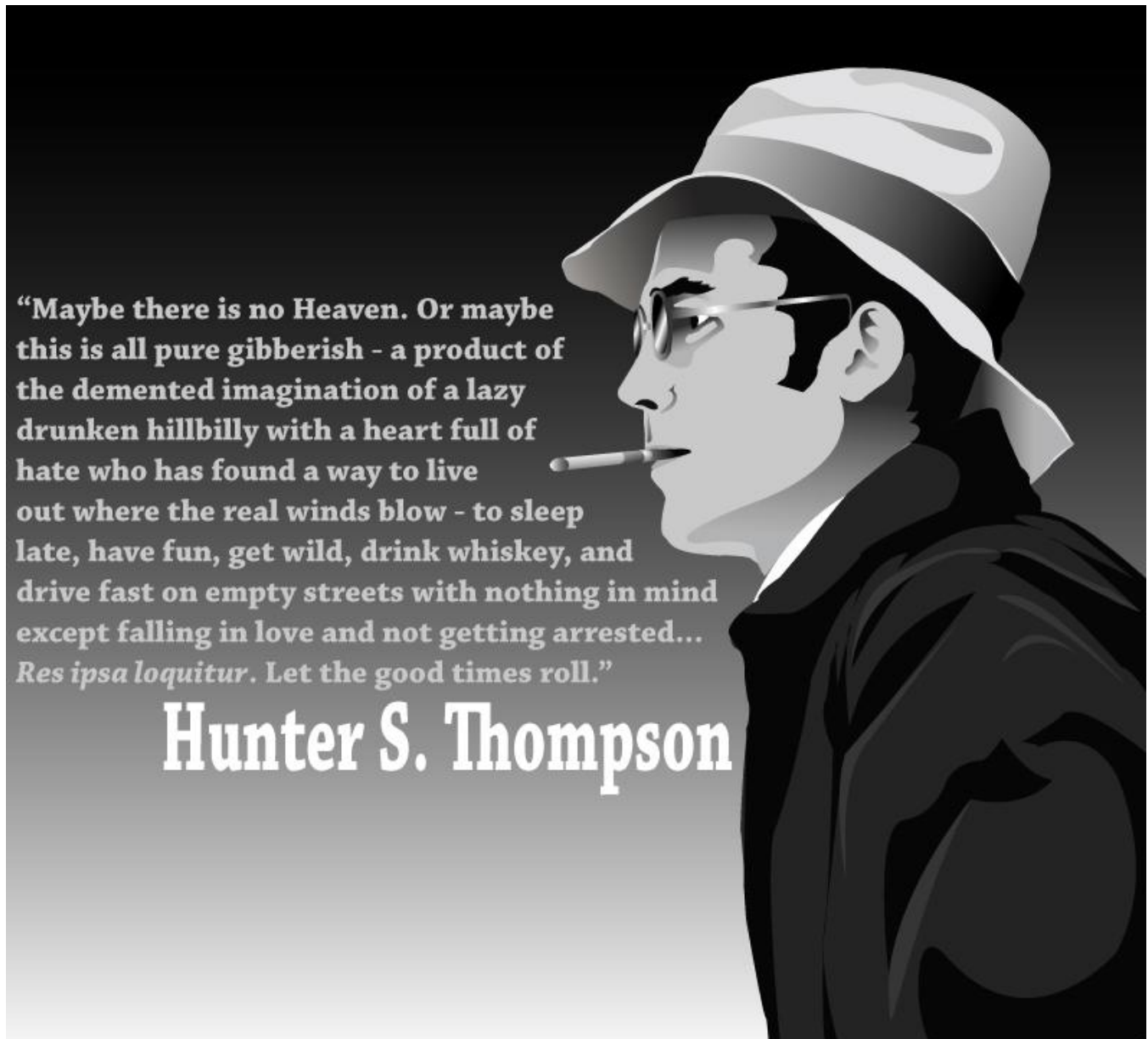
"Every GOP administration since 1952 has let the Military-Industrial Complex loot the Treasury and plunge the nation into debt on the excuse of a wartime economic emergency. Richard Nixon comes quickly to mind, along with Ronald Reagan and his ridiculous 'trickle-down' theory of U.S. economic policy. If the Rich get Richer, the theory goes, before long their pots will overflow and somehow 'trickle down' to the poor, who would rather eat scraps off the Bush family plates than eat nothing at all. Republicans have never approved of democracy, and they never will. It goes back to preindustrial America, when only white male property owners could vote."

Hunter S. Thompson

www.facebook.com/WeLoveToIrritateHatefulRepublicans

http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/5237.Hunter_S_Thompson

"I hate to advocate drugs, alcohol, violence, or insanity to anyone, but they've always worked for me." —Hunter S. Thompson



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

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