

March 18, 2012

As only he can do, [Karl Rove](#) drills into Obama's fundraising results. This will help you understand why he has stiffed the Senate and House Dems.

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Seven months later, I'm even less impressed. Through January, the president has raised an average of \$24 million a month for his campaign and the DNC. Next week, the Obama campaign will release its February numbers, but the president is on track to be hundreds of millions of dollars shy of his original goal.

It's not for lack of trying. Mr. Obama has already attended 103 fund-raisers, roughly one every three days since he kicked off his campaign last April (twice his predecessor's pace).

The president faces other fund-raising challenges. For one, there are only so many times any candidate can go to New York or Hollywood or San Francisco for a \$1 million fund-raiser. Team Obama is running through its easy money venues quickly.

For another, many of Mr. Obama's 2008 donors are reluctant to give again. The Obama campaign itself reported that fewer than 7% of 2008 donors renewed their support in the first quarter of his re-election campaign. That's about one-quarter to one-third of a typical renewal rate: In the first quarter of the Bush re-election campaign, for example, about 20% of the donors renewed their support. ...

[Ross Douthat](#), NY Times columnist, tries to figure why Obama's polls are so weak. *Why aren't President Obama's poll numbers higher? That's the question unsettling the Washington conventional wisdom this week. Amid improving economic growth, a grim and grinding Republican primary campaign and the White House's skillful exploitation of Rush Limbaugh's boorishness, Obama's reelection was being taken almost for granted in many political circles. But then came a pair of surveys – one from the Washington Post and ABC and one from the New York Times and CBS – that showed the president's approval ratings sinking this month back toward the lower 40s after a steady winter climb.*

Everyone has a theory. Maybe it's rising gas prices. Maybe it's anxieties over Iran and Afghanistan. Maybe it's a backlash against the president's overconfident selling of a still-weak recovery. Maybe it's evidence that the White House's claim that religious resistance to its contraception mandate represents a "war on women" isn't finding as many takers as the media narrative suggested.

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Remember the end of last week when we had Ann Coulter who wrote on the White House campaign to keep Romney off the ballot. Of course, the press wants to help their man. [Ross Douthat](#) spotted The New Yorker doing it's best for Obama. And [the beat](#) goes on: Mitt Romney loses a couple of primaries that he was always likely to lose (while winning the majority of the night's available delegates), and there's a rush to declare that the race might still be wide open, Rick Santorum might be the nominee, we might have a convention surprise, etc. This time, it's the New Yorker's John Cassidy's turn to set my teeth on edge: ...

So how do the Dems deal with the shortages of cash? [Andrew Malcolm](#) notes the number of campaign bundlers invited to last week's state dinner. The pliant press was invited too.

... state dinners are Big Deals in the suck-up social hierarchy of Big Deals in D.C. and beyond. Soldiers are assigned to stand stiffly at attention watching the designer dresses pose and mingle. Music plays. The presidential party and Joe too make grand entrances down the staircase from the private quarters.

People would bundle a lot of campaign cash to wangle a pair of those invites.

Funny you mention that because [dozens of the 360 attendees](#) Wednesday evening were actually current money bundlers for Barack's reelection campaign that wants a billion bucks this time. Guys like Harvey Weinstein, Barry Karas, Gerald Acker and some of the boys from the Chicago gang, Neil Bluhm, Wally Brewster Jr. and, of course, Fred 'Count on Me' Eychaner.

These are not your middle-class Americans that Obama says he sees through his teleprompter. They donate to the max, then collect similar checks from numerous friends who do the same to their friends. Like those junior high chain letters, only this money's wonderfully real.

They say raking in millions to enable a politician to buy an office also buys the bundler special access later that ordinary Americans simply don't have. Well, first, why should un-rich Americans have access to elected representatives simply for donating a vote? How does that help the current system work? Or just because a citizen pays their taxes, unlike three dozen Obama aides, according to the IRS? Makes no sense in 2012.

And anyway that special access stuff is bunk. If being a multi-million-dollar campaign bundler really bought special treatment, then one of them from somewhere such as Oklahoma would have gotten like a \$545 million federal loan guarantee for his solar panel company that was going bust. ...

Marc Thiessen shows how this works for the crony capitalists.

In a speech this morning to the United Auto Workers Local 12 Hall in Toledo, Ohio, Vice President Joe Biden declared:

"Stated simply, we're about promoting the private sector. They're about protecting the privileged sector. We're a fair shot, and a fair shake.... And ultimately that's what this election is all about. It's about a choice. A choice between a system that's rigged, and one that's fair."

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Carl Cannon posts on the Rutherford B. Hays misquote.

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It's hard to know where to begin unraveling this, but a good place to start is the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center, where resident scholar Nan Card confirmed to any journalist who bothered calling her -- which is more than you can say for the White House speechwriting crew - - that Hayes never said anything of the kind about the telephone, or any other invention.

According to contemporaneous accounts, what Hayes really said when he first used the phone was, "That is wonderful."

In fact, Hayes installed the first telephone in the White House, along with the first typewriter, and invited Thomas Edison in for a visit to show off the phonograph -- and was no one's idea of a technophobe. "He really was the opposite," Card told [Benjy Sarlin of Talking Points Memo](#). "Between the telephone, the telegraph, the phonograph, and photography, I think he was pretty much on the cutting edge."

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WSJ

Obama's Money and the Enthusiasm Gap

The president's fund-raising troubles are evidence of disappointed Democrats.

by Karl Rove

Last July, President Obama's campaign announced that it had raised an average of \$29 million in each of the previous three months for itself and the Democratic National Committee (DNC). I was only mildly impressed. After all, that was well below the \$50 million a month needed to reach the campaign's goal of a \$1 billion war chest for the 2012 race.

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There are other troubling signs. Team Obama's email appeals don't ask for \$10, \$15, \$25 or \$50 donations as they did in 2008, but generally for \$3. Nor are the appeals mostly about issues; many are lotteries. Give three bucks and your name will be put in a drawing for a private dinner with the president and first lady.

This is clever marketing, but it suggests the campaign has found that only a low price point with a big benefit can overcome donor resistance among people who contributed via mail or the Internet in 2008. It also points to higher-than-expected solicitation costs and lower-than-expected fund-raising returns.

The final financial challenge facing Mr. Obama's campaign is how fast it is burning through the cash it is raising. Compare the 2012 Obama re-election campaign with the 2004 Bush re-election campaign. Mr. Obama's campaign spent 25% of what it raised in the second quarter of 2011, while Mr. Bush's campaign spent only 9% in the second quarter of 2003. In the third quarter it was 46% for Obama versus 26% for Bush; for the fourth quarter it was 57% versus 40%. In January 2012 the Obama campaign spent 158% of what it raised, while the Bush campaign spent 60% in January 2004.

At the end of January, Team Obama had \$91.7 million in cash in its coffers and those of the DNC. At the same point in 2004, the Bush campaign and Republican National Committee had \$122 million in cash combined.

The Obama campaign's high burn rate doesn't come from large television buys, phone banks or mail programs that could be immediately stopped. It appears to result instead from huge fixed costs for a big staff and higher-than-expected fund-raising outlays. These are much tougher to unwind or delay. Left unaltered, they generally lead to even more frantic efforts to both raise money and stop other spending.

This perhaps explains why the White House told congressional Democrats last week not to expect a single dime for their campaign efforts from the Democratic National Committee this year. All the DNC's funds will be needed for the president's re-election.

His campaign's financial situation also may explain why Mr. Obama has embraced Super PACs after decrying them as a "threat to democracy" in the midterm elections. The president was quick to criticize Rush Limbaugh's crude comments about contraception advocate Sandra Fluke. But he refused to condemn his Super PAC's acceptance of a million-dollar donation from Bill Maher, who routinely attacks Republican women such as Sarah Palin and Michele Bachmann in vulgar and sexually charged terms.

That virtually all Republicans and many independents consider Mr. Obama a failure is obvious. But many Democrats are disappointed with him, too. The president's difficulty in raising campaign cash is evidence of this. He is working a lot harder than he thought he would to raise a lot less than he had hoped.

Mr. Rove, the former senior adviser and deputy chief of staff to President George W. Bush, is the author of "Courage and Consequence" (Threshold Editions, 2010).

NY Times - Campaign Stops [Wait. Wasn't Obama Winning?](#)

by Ross Douthat

Why aren't President Obama's poll numbers higher? That's the question unsettling the Washington conventional wisdom this week. Amid improving economic growth, a grim and grinding Republican primary campaign and the White House's skillful exploitation of Rush Limbaugh's boorishness, Obama's reelection was being taken almost for granted in many political circles. But then came a pair of surveys – one from the Washington Post and ABC and one from the New York Times and CBS – that showed the president's approval ratings sinking this month back toward the lower 40s after a steady winter climb.

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and earth-shattering – and it’s precisely that smallness that should have the White House worried.

The message of the latest polls isn’t that springtime gas prices and culture war debates will determine who wins the White House in November. Rather, it’s that Obama’s political position is tenuous enough that it doesn’t take all that much bad news – particularly on the economy — for his approval ratings to go negative.

The president’s essential problem today is the same as it was last summer, when brutal unemployment numbers and the specter of a debt crisis made his re-election look more doubtful. Obama was elected to be a domestic policy president, and his signature domestic policy achievements are all persistently unpopular.

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The stimulus package’s economic effectiveness will be debated for as long as human beings read Keynes and Hayek, but as a political matter it was a flop. The White House overpromised and underdelivered, creating a widespread public perception that its central recession-fighting program had failed outright.

Liberals are confident that the president’s health care bill will become popular once its provisions are fully in effect. But that won’t happen until 2014 or beyond, and Americans are sharply divided over the bill today, with polls regularly showing pluralities favoring outright repeal and huge majorities opposing the mandate requiring individuals to buy insurance.

Then there’s the auto bailout, which the White House (joined by G.M. and Chrysler) has spent the last few months touting as a great success. Michiganders agree, but the country does not: By 51 to 44 percent, the most recent Gallup survey finds, Americans still disapprove of the decision to bail out automakers.

As of a month ago, Obama’s overall job approval numbers were positive only on foreign policy issues and the environment. They were in the 30s and 40s on every other domestic issue, from taxes and deficits to health care and jobs.

This is not a record that lends itself to an obvious re-election pitch. (*Obama 2012: He championed legislation you don’t like— and delivered results that you like even less.*) The president will have to evade his own record as often as he touts it, and his message will necessarily lack the clarity and coherence of Reagan’s “morning in America” or Clinton’s “bridge to the twenty-first century” – or even the George W. Bush’s campaign’s persistent 2004 theme, “he kept us safe.” And it will necessarily be more negative as well, since the best way to defend a relatively unpopular record is usually to argue that the other guy is a fanatic or a shill for plutocracy.

A themeless, defensive and pudding-like message — *things are slowly getting better, and anyway they could have been worse, and you can’t trust the Republicans, and did we mention that Osama bin Laden is dead?* — can still be a winning one. Against the backdrop of steady job growth, facing a weak nominee and an opposition party still tainted by the Bush era, the president still looks like the favorite.

But while it will be hard for Republicans to beat him, the unpopularity of the Obama record ensures that it won't be hard to sow doubts about his leadership. This means that more than many previous incumbents, the president's poll numbers will probably be extremely vulnerable to whatever's front-and-center in the news. The White House's case for re-election is a relatively fragile thing, and it will be easy for short-term developments — a month or two of bad jobs numbers, an even sharper spike in gas prices, a failed strategic gambit or a rhetorical gaffe — to pluck a strand out or snip a hole in it. Even if President Obama ends up winning, in other words, he'll have a lot of weeks like this one along the way.

NY Times - Campaign Stop **[The Predictable Republican Primary](#)**

by Ross Douthat

And [the beat](#) goes on: Mitt Romney loses a couple of primaries that he was always likely to lose (while winning the majority of the night's available delegates), and there's a rush to declare that the race might still be wide open, Rick Santorum might be the nominee, we might have a convention surprise, etc. This time, it's [the New Yorker's John Cassidy's turn](#) to set my teeth on edge:

After yet another remarkable night, which started out with Mitt "Bubba" Romney telling Wolf Blitzer that Rick Santorum was "at the desperate end of his campaign" and ended with a defeated but unbowed Newt Gingrich congratulating Santorum on his two victories and raising the prospect that Romney could be run out of Tampa at a brokered convention, only a fool would predict what will happen next.

Here, I'll give it a try. Romney will win Illinois, Maryland, Washington D.C., Delaware, Indiana, Connecticut, New York, Rhode Island, North Carolina, California, New Mexico, New Jersey, Oregon and Utah. Rick Santorum will win Louisiana, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Kentucky, Texas, South Dakota, Montana and Nebraska. In the states that Santorum wins, Romney will pick up more delegates than Santorum picks up in states that Romney wins. There could be some slight variation in these results: If Santorum does particularly well he could pull out narrow wins in states like North Carolina; if Romney does unusually well he could beat Santorum in Wisconsin or even in his Pennsylvania backyard, etc. But the basic pattern will hold, and the consequences are eminently predictable: Either Romney will clear the 1,144 delegate threshold in May or early June, or else he'll fall 50-100 delegates short and need to play a little inside baseball to win [some of the uncommitted delegates](#). In either scenario, Santorum is not going to be the party's standard-bearer, and neither is Jeb Bush or Chris Christie or Sarah Palin or Mike Huckabee or anyone else besides the man who is actually winning, however slowly and grindingly and unexcitingly, the Republican nomination for president.

I could go on, but [Michael Brendan Dougherty has a good post](#) on the same exasperated theme, so go read him instead.

Investor's.com

[What Obama's White House guest list reveals of his real priorities](#)

by Andrew Malcolm



Joe Biden, who is still vice president, was chatting the other night with six dozen Democrat supporters in the gorgeous Georgetown garden of John Kerry.

He's still the Massachusetts senator who's been docking his luxurious yacht in Rhode Island to save his wife, ketchup queen Teresa Heinz, thousands of dollars a year in Bay state property taxes. The supporters had peeled off 10 \$1,000 bills per couple to sit around with the bigs and help Joe keep that job, if Barack lets him.

Joe likes the VP job. Lots of entire afternoons devoted to meetings with 'senior advisers.' Private weekly lunches with BO. Plus, Joe charges rent to the Secret Service for using a cottage on his Delaware property so agents can protect him. Sweet deal. They gotta protect him, right?

So, for a change JB got to talking at the fundraiser. And, frankly, he shared his sincere belief that Republicans just don't get it, you know? They just can't connect with ordinary Americans because, well, they're all about money. Not about the American middle class, the 99%. Just about money and living well with their fat-cat friends. Please pass the truffles.

Anyway, where were we? Oh, yes. the sixth official state dinner of the Obama-Biden administration Wednesday evening. These lavish White House soirees are a large drain on the entertainment budget. Think that daughter's wedding, times ten. They're typically packed with the usual Washington suspects, especially cabinet and presidential staff. Some supportive celebrities; George Clooney sat in Tom Hanks' usual chair last night.

Beyond government though, state dinners are Big Deals in the suck-up social hierarchy of Big Deals in D.C. and beyond. Soldiers are assigned to stand stiffly at attention watching the designer dresses pose and mingle. Music plays. The presidential party and Joe too make grand entrances down the staircase from the private quarters.

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And anyway that special access stuff is bunk. If being a multi-million-dollar campaign bundler really bought special treatment, then one of them from somewhere such as Oklahoma would have gotten like a \$545 million federal loan guarantee for his solar panel company that was going bust.

Clearly, these dozens of state dinner bundlers just all happened to be in town with their taxes.

Another conservative canard is that many members of the mainstream media are really fellow traveling Democrats who, consciously or not, sympathetically help push the liberal agenda on unsuspecting American viewers and readers.

If that were the case, then you'd expect to see the guest list for an Obama state dinner sprinkled with the names of prominent media people like, for example, Gwen Ifill and Charlie Rose Jr. of PBS, Jonathan Capehart of the Washington Post, Anna Wintour, the editor in chief of Vogue, Katty Kay of BBC America, Claire Shipman of ABC News (who's also Jay Carney's wife) and Andrew Sullivan of the Daily Beast.

All of those media names were, in fact, on the Wednesday guest list for British Prime Minister David Cameron's state dinner. But, look, Wintour is also an Obama campaign bundler.

American.com

Here's a 'rigged system,' Mr. Vice President

by Marc Thiessen

In a speech this morning to the United Auto Workers Local 12 Hall in Toledo, Ohio, Vice President Joe Biden declared:

Stated simply, we're about promoting the private sector. They're about protecting the privileged sector. We're a fair shot, and a fair shake.... And ultimately that's what this election is all about. It's about a choice. A choice between a system that's rigged, and one that's fair.

This is laughable. If Obama and Biden want to run on the idea that Republicans are defending a "rigged" system while they are "promoting the private sector," they are going to run into a little problem of their own making called the Obama green energy program.

In his outstanding book, [*Throw Them All Out*](#), Hoover Institution scholar Peter Schweizer goes through Obama's 2008 campaign finance records and cross references Obama's list of donors against the list of those who got grants and loans under the green energy program. Here is what he found:

- **71 percent** of Energy Department grants and loans went to Obama's political cronies. **71 percent!**
- Collectively, they raised about **\$457,834** for Obama's campaign.
- And they were in turn approved for grants or loans of nearly **\$11.346 billion**.
- That means they got **\$24,783** in taxpayer dollars for every **\$1** they gave to Obama's campaign.

Now that is one heck of a return on investment.

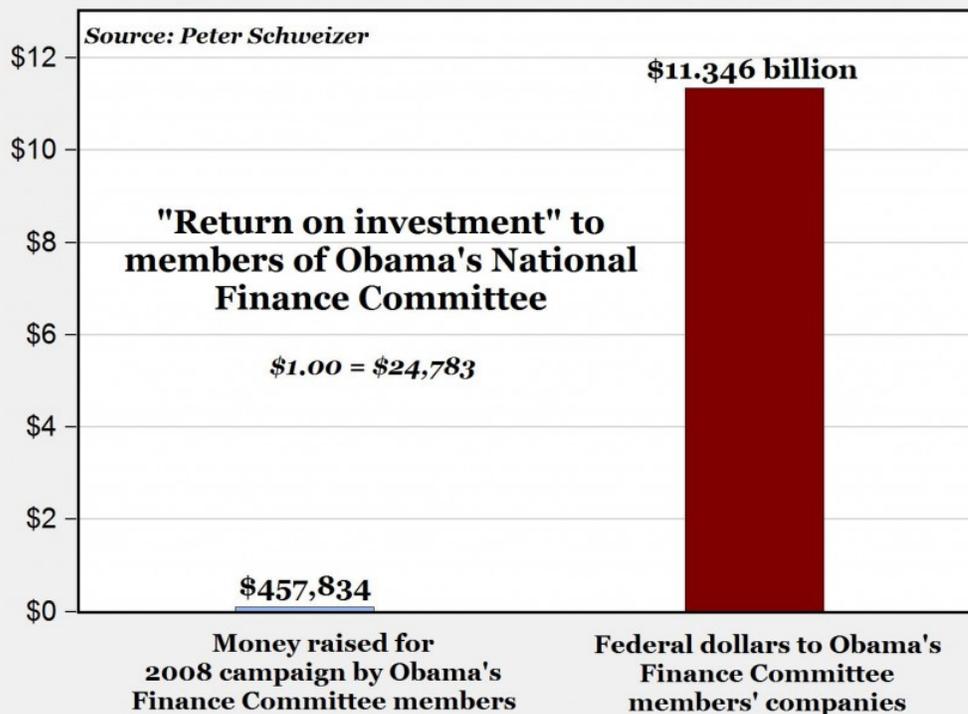
Biden calls this "promoting the private sector." Most Americans have a different name for it: "crony capitalism." And there's nothing "fair" about it.

It seems the Obama-Biden idea of "fairness" is that if you give lots of money to the Obama election effort, you'll get billions of taxpayer dollars in return to subsidize your failing business. Most Americans don't look at debacles like Solyndra and see a model there for promoting the private sector. They see it as a model of corruption.

So if Obama wants to make this the issue he will run on in the fall, he's on very weak ground.

Here is a chart that tells the sordid story:

Investing in Politicians Can Be Highly Profitable



Real Clear Politics

[Obama Flubs U.S. History -- Again](#)

by Carl M. Cannon

He wasn't born in Kenya, and he attended some of this country's finest schools, but as he demonstrated anew on Thursday, Barack Obama shares with his fellow Americans one of their most dubious national traits: a nonchalant disregard for historical accuracy.

In an age when Twitter and other social media can propagate with distressing efficiency the fake Lincoln quote, the false Twain quip, the invented Ben Franklin advice, Obama is a president for our times.

Speaking yesterday about energy, the president found it necessary to casually slander Rutherford B. Hayes. In Obama's telling, Hayes was a Luddite who, when confronted with the invention of the telephone, wondered who would ever want to use one.

"That's why he's not on Mount Rushmore," Obama intoned. "He's explaining why we can't do something instead of why we can do something."

It's hard to know where to begin unraveling this, but a good place to start is the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center, where resident scholar Nan Card confirmed to any journalist who

bothered calling her -- which is more than you can say for the White House speechwriting crew - that Hayes never said anything of the kind about the telephone, or any other invention.

According to contemporaneous accounts, what Hayes really said when he first used the phone was, "That is wonderful."

In fact, Hayes installed the first telephone in the White House, along with the first typewriter, and invited Thomas Edison in for a visit to show off the phonograph -- and was no one's idea of a technophobe. "He really was the opposite," Card told [Benjy Sarlin of Talking Points Memo](#). "Between the telephone, the telegraph, the phonograph, and photography, I think he was pretty much on the cutting edge."

This is not first time Obama and his communications team have fallen for a quote they apparently ripped from the Internet.

In the waning days of his 2008 campaign, then-Sen. Obama criticized Republicans with this statement: "Abraham Lincoln once said to one of his opponents, 'If you stop telling lies about me, I'll start telling truth about you.' "

(If that quote doesn't sound like Lincoln, that's because it wasn't. Adlai Stevenson, another Illinois Democrat, was fond of this line. So was William Randolph Hearst, who used it when he ran for governor of New York in 1906, although Sen. Chauncey Depew, another New Yorker, employed it back in the 19th Century.)

Although tradition holds that a president's words are his own, some of this stuff comes from careless staff work, and some comes when he's just winging it. Given the demands of modern presidential politicking, no one is going to be perfect. But that doesn't explain why, as president, Obama keeps discussing the "Intercontinental Railroad," supposedly built in the United States in the 19th Century. (It was called the Transcontinental Railroad, and crossed no oceans.)

In his very first news conference as president-elect, Obama was asked if he'd spoken with any former presidents in preparation for taking office. He replied that he'd talked with all the ex-presidents "that are living," adding with a smile, "I didn't want to get into a Nancy Reagan thing about doing any séances."

(Besides being mean-spirited -- and Obama quickly phoned Mrs. Reagan to apologize -- this was inaccurate: Nancy Reagan consulted an astrologer; she didn't converse with the dead.)

A couple of months later, the second paragraph of Obama's inaugural address contained another historical mistake. "Forty-four Americans have now taken the presidential oath," he said. (Not quite. While Obama is the 44th president, 43 men have taken the oath. Grover Cleveland, because his terms were not contiguous, is counted as both the 22nd and the 24th chief executive. Two presidents, but only one American.)

This kind of fact-checking can come across as pedantic. Even his most persistent critics don't believe, for instance, that Obama really thinks there are 57 states in this country, as he said in a moment of exhaustion at the tail end of the 2008 campaign.

But some conservatives have noticed that Republicans are invariably at the butt end of Obama's historic flights of fancy. Asked during his first few months to explain his rationale for banning waterboarding and releasing the previous administration's "torture memos," Obama gave this answer:

"I was struck by an article that I was reading the other day talking about the fact that the British during World War II, when London was being bombed to smithereens, had 200 or so detainees. And Churchill said, 'We don't torture,' when . . . all of the British people were being subjected to unimaginable risk and threat. . . . Churchill understood, you start taking shortcuts, over time, that corrodes what's best in a people. It corrodes the character of a country."

(Except that it was blogger Andrew Sullivan who said those things, not Winston Churchill. The "article" Obama was reading was, let's just say, underreported. The British did torture German prisoners during World War II. Not to mention the 16 Nazis hunted down by the British and assassinated after the war while Churchill was prime minister.)

But social media is good for more than disseminating untruths. It's also very good at poking fun at those who promulgate them in the first place.

A new hash tag on Twitter, [#BarackObamasPresidentialFacts](#), popped up yesterday, full of the clever irreverence we've come to expect:

"James A. Garfield loved lasagna and hated Mondays," tweeted one wag.

"Before winning the White House, Warren G. Harding and his running mate, 'Nate Dogg,' had 4 platinum albums," proclaimed another.

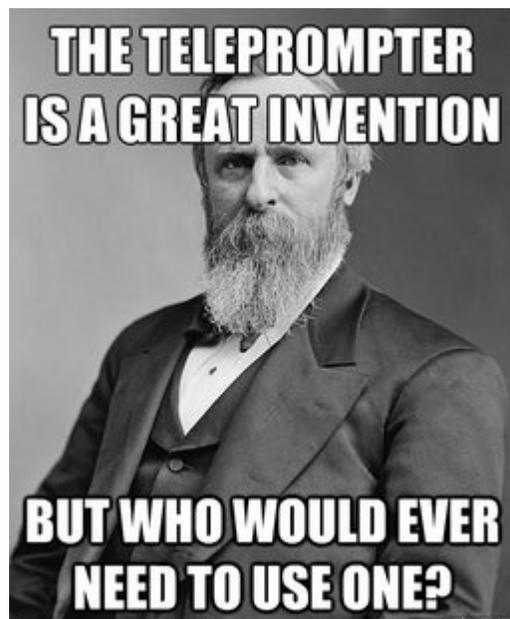
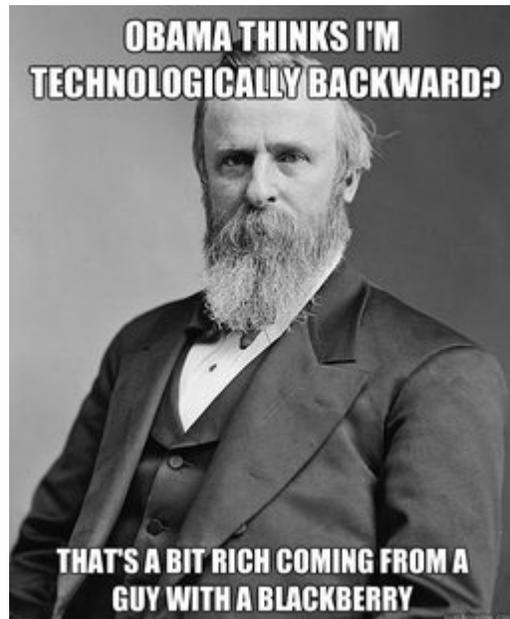
"Ulysses S. Grant was our first Greek president," proclaimed a third.

A whimsical Abe Lincoln made a cameo on #BarackObamasPresidentialFacts, just as he did in the real Obama's memory banks: "Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin where he invented pancake syrup,"

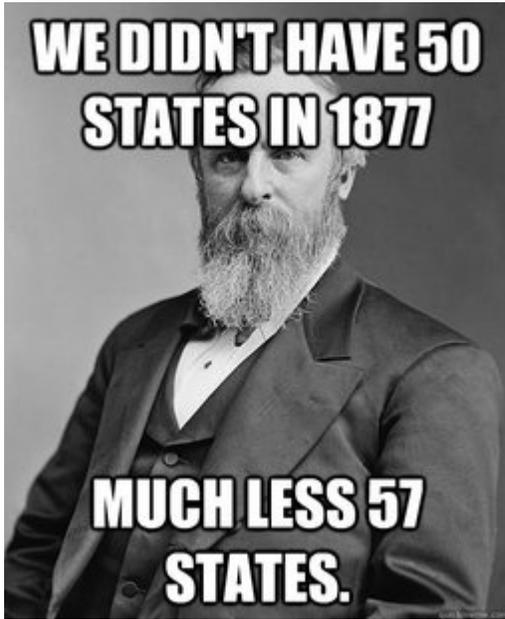
But as Lincoln said -- or was it Mark Twain? -- truth is the first casualty of war. (Actually, that sentiment is originally Samuel Johnson's. "Among the calamities of war," Johnson wrote in 1758, "may be justly numbered the diminution of the love of truth by the falsehoods which interest dictates and credulity encourages.")

That quote is more than 140 characters, but it's worth remembering nonetheless.

Having Fun with Rutherford

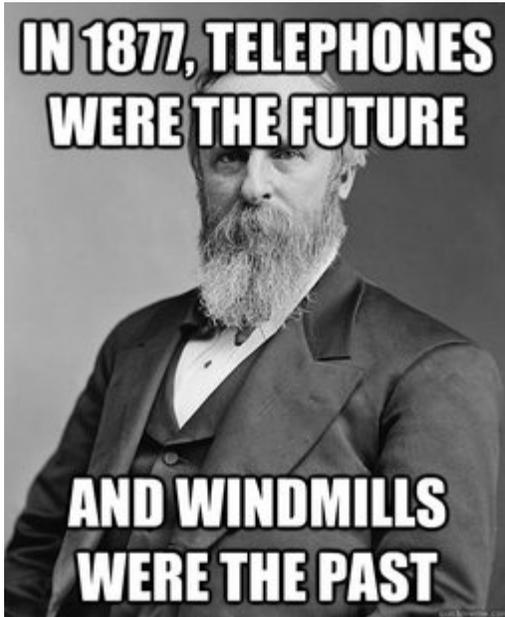


**WE DIDN'T HAVE 50
STATES IN 1877**

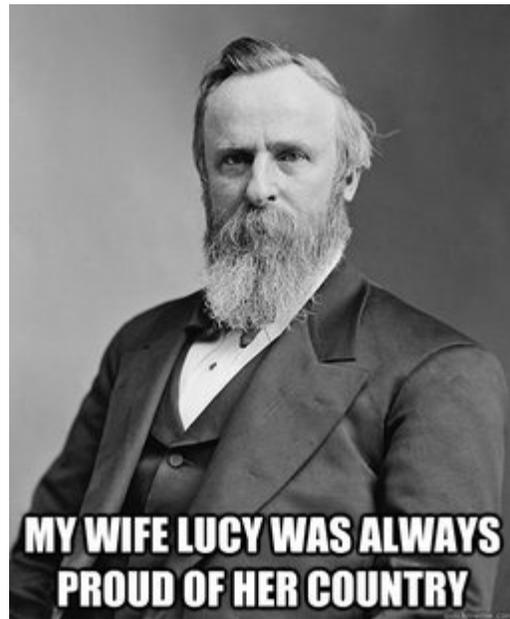
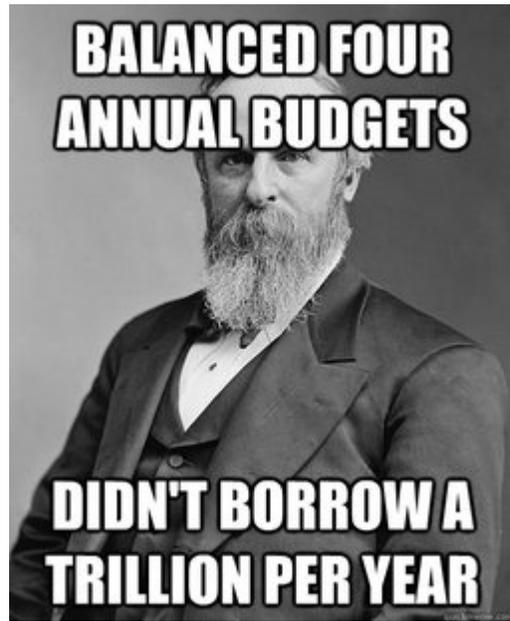


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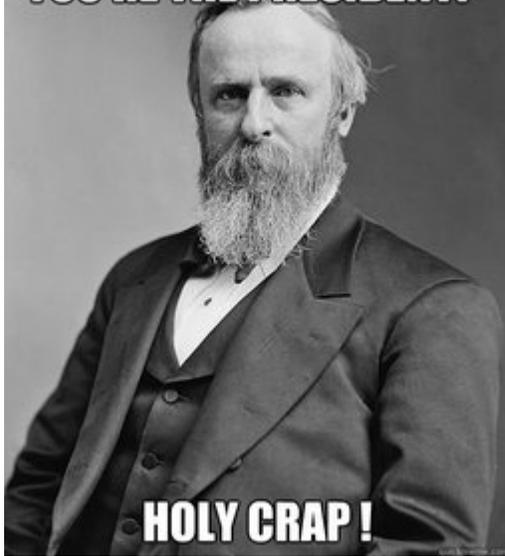
**IN 1877, TELEPHONES
WERE THE FUTURE**



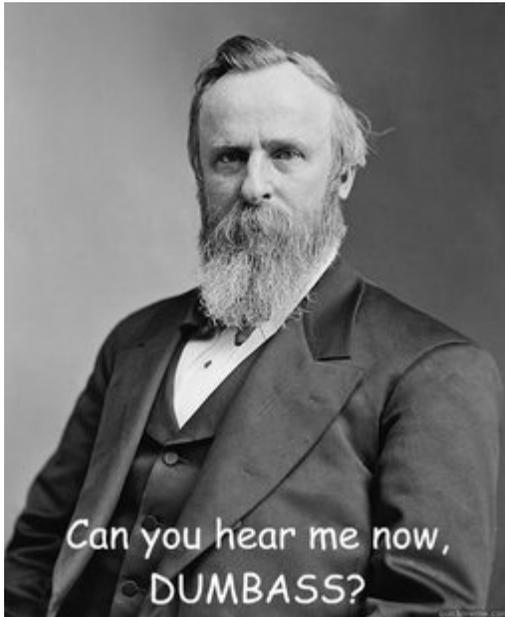
**AND WINDMILLS
WERE THE PAST**



YOU'RE THE PRESIDENT?



HOLY CRAP!



Can you hear me now,
DUMBASS?