

June 3, 2012

**John Hinderaker** celebrates the Romney campaign competence.

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*We've seen it over and over: the Obama campaign will launch an attack, and in next to no time, the Romney team hits back—twice as hard, as President Obama and Glenn Reynolds both like to say. It happened with the smear of Ann Romney, it happened with the dog on the roof, it happened with the silly “war on women,” it happened with the administration's clumsy attack on Bain Capital, and it happened again today with the Democrats' attempt to denigrate Romney's service as Governor of Massachusetts.*

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**Bill Kristol** has examples of how liberal Jews have turned away from the president.

*There are no wounds as bad as those inflicted by one who loves you: their hurt is accurate. Their pain burns. In the midst of the election campaign in the US, a comprehensive book on the achievements and failures of the administration's foreign policy was published this month ([Bending History: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy](#)). The Middle Eastern chapters were written by Martin Indyk, who served twice as US ambassador to Israel and was one of the senior members of the peace process team. Four years ago, he supported Hillary Clinton. After she lost the Democratic Party's primary elections, he enlisted in Obama's election campaign. He praised him highly before audiences of Jewish Americans and Israelis.*

*Not this time. The chapter he wrote presents a long series of colossal mistakes by the US president, partly due to inexperience, mostly due to misunderstanding of the Israeli-Arab arena, unsuitable temperament and erroneous conceptions. Obama did not show any particular interest in regime change and democracy in the Arab world. Ironically, it's the only area which has changed during his term in office....*

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*The turning point was Obama's speech at Cairo University in June 2009. I was there. After the speech, I spoke to Obama's close advisers, Ram Emanuel and David Axelrod. I told them that the Israelis took the speech badly. The comparison between the Holocaust and Palestinian suffering infuriated them. The fact that Obama chose to speak in Cairo but not visit Jerusalem hurt their honor.*

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**John Podhoretz** reacts to the typically immodest Obama claim he knows more about Judaism than any other president.

*... Perhaps what the president meant is that he's known more Jews than other presidents. This too is an absurdity, as Ronald Reagan spent 30 years in Hollywood and had Jews coming out his ears. In fact, chances are Barack Obama knows less about Judaism than most presidents, except that he knows a lot of liberal Jews.*

*What the president does, without question, know a great deal about is the act of preening.*

**Alana Goodman** posts on Obama's Jewish friends in Chicago.

*John has already [responded](#) to President Obama's absurd claim about being a Judaism genius. But that may not even be the most offensive argument Obama made at yesterday's meeting with Conservative Jewish rabbis, according to the [Haaretz report](#). When asked about his personal views on Israel — the kishkes question again — Obama reportedly went for the some-of-my-best-friends-are-Jews defense:*

*There were some questions directed at the president concerning his thoughts on the role of religious leaders in a more civil political dialogue, which then lead to the inevitable question — how does he feels about Israel? Obama joked that [Chief of Staff Jack] Lew always warns him it will get to "the kishkes question."*

*"Rather than describe how deeply I care about Israel, I want to be blunt about how we got here," Obama said, reminding his guests that he had so many Jewish friends in Chicago at the beginning of his political career that he was accused of being a puppet of the Israel lobby.*

*Ignore the overwhelming ignorance and offensiveness of that argument for a second. The one person I can recall who has actually accused Obama of being an AIPAC puppet is Rev. Wright — though [his theory](#) was that Obama didn't turn into a lapdog for the Jews until he started running for president. I don't doubt the president hung out with plenty of Jews in Chicago, but considering that some of the most vile Israel bashers out there are Jewish, that says absolutely nothing about his own views on Israel. Plus, if we're now supposed to judge Obama's support for Israel based on his Chicago friendships, that's not exactly comforting. Two of his close friends in the city were an anti-Semitic pastor and a famed anti-Israel [academic](#) — oh, and there was also his domestic terrorist buddy who participates in [anti-Israel activism](#) on the side. What are we supposed to glean from that?*

*These friendships were one of the reasons why the pro-Israel community was initially unsure about Obama's true personal feelings on Israel during his 2008 campaign. Since then, those early concerns have been substantiated again and again by Obama's own public actions and statements on Israel. The American public still supports the Jewish state, which means Obama grudgingly supports it when necessary, but it's clear his heart isn't there. His lame response when questioned on his true feelings — citing knowledge of Judaism and friendship with Jews — is just the latest example of that disconnect.*

Speaking of Chicago, [John Fund](#) says it is time to look at some of the friends from there.

*... John Heilemann, co-author of a definitive work on the 2008 election called [Game Change](#), [writes](#) in a new piece in New York magazine that for "anyone still starry-eyed about Obama" the 2012 campaign will disabuse them of that notion:*

*The months ahead will provide a bracing revelation about what he truly is: not a savior, not a saint, not a man above the fray, but a brass-knuckled, pipe-hitting, red-in-tooth-and-claw brawler determined to do what is necessary to stay in power — in other words, a politician.*

*If the mainstream-media journalists who spent so little time in 2008 looking into the Daley machine that Barack Obama sprang from want to do more due diligence this time, they could start with a closer look at Eric Whitaker and the rest of Obama's inner circle. It's probably a much richer mine of stories than any investigation of Mitt Romney's Bain Capital days or Ann Romney's obsession with expensive horses is likely to provide.*

[Andrew Malcolm](#) has the story on another Dem who has bailed on Obama.  
*Good thing Artur Davis doesn't live in Chicago. He'd be worse than friendless this morning.*

*The former member of Congress, the first from outside Illinois who endorsed then Sen. Barack Obama for the presidency so long ago, is now a former Democrat too.*

*Davis, who represented Alabama's 7th congressional district for four terms until last year, says he's left his longtime party, left Alabama for Virginia and is pondering a state or congressional race there, as a Republican.*

*It's a wounding PR blow to Obama's reelection campaign, which has had [some rocky weeks](#) recently, even with Joe Biden on vacation now. Davis' defection is also an unexpected and rare fracture in the seemingly monolithic political support for Obama among blacks. ...*

[Michael Barone](#) writes on the Dem campaign managers.  
*"Axelrod is endeavoring not to panic." So reads a sentence in [John Heilemann's](#) exhaustive article on Barack Obama's campaign in this week's New York magazine.*

*Heilemann is a fine reporter and was co-author with Time's Mark Halperin of a [best-selling book on the 2008 presidential campaign](#). While his sympathies are undoubtedly with Obama, he does a fine job of summarizing the arguments and tactics of both sides.*

*And he's capable of directing snark at both candidates. Samples: Romney "seems to suffer a hybrid of affluenza and Tourette's." "A cynic might say that the liberation Obama feels is the freedom from, you know, actually governing."*

*Heilemann's article is well-sourced. It's based on interviews with David Axelrod, the former White House aide now back in Chicago, David Plouffe, the 2008 manager now in the White House, and Jim Messina, the current campaign manager.*

*The picture Heilemann draws is of campaign managers whose assumptions have been proved wrong and who seem to be fooling themselves about what will work in the campaign. ...*

**Debra Saunders** has a devastating take on E. Warren.

*It's hard to figure who looks the worse in this story - Elizabeth Warren or Harvard Law School's affirmative action policies. ...*

*... Warren's campaign now is working overtime to pooh-pooh any notion that she was hired for any reason other than that she was a great law professor. I believe that.*

*I also believe that Warren was too smart to not know that she was 31 times more white than Native American. She's too smart to not know that the designation could help her career, while taking pressure off Harvard Law to hire a real minority. But she was not so liberal that she cared.*

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## **PowerLine**

### **These Aren't Your Father's Republicans**

by John Hinderaker

One of the most heartening aspects of the early stages of the presidential race has been the Romney campaign's aggressiveness. Nothing discourages activists more than getting out front of a candidate who, it later turns out, isn't willing to do what it takes to win. A number of Republicans of recent years could be said to fit that description, most recently John McCain. But not Mitt Romney.

We've seen it over and over: the Obama campaign will launch an attack, and in next to no time, the Romney team hits back—twice as hard, as President Obama and Glenn Reynolds both like to say. It happened with the smear of Ann Romney, it happened with the dog on the roof, it happened with the silly “war on women,” it happened with the administration's clumsy attack on Bain Capital, and it happened again today with the Democrats' attempt to denigrate Romney's service as Governor of Massachusetts.



A campaign can resemble a boxing match. Obama thinks he sees an opening and takes a swing at Romney. But before he can do any damage, he realizes he has walked into a counterpunch. Bam! Romney rocks him, and Obama retreats in disarray. Romney has shown himself already to be a top-notch counterpuncher.

His campaign has shown itself to be tough in other ways, too. When reporters pressed Romney to repudiate Donald Trump because he has been a “birther,” Romney flatly refused. (Maybe Obama should be asked to repudiate his literary agent, who also, evidently, is a “birther.”) This is exactly the right course. When Obama apologizes for Bill Maher and urges his SuperPac to return Maher’s million dollars, then Romney can at least consider repudiating someone who supports him—if, that is, he can find anyone remotely as unsavory as Maher.

We saw another manifestation of the Romney campaign’s aggressiveness today when David Axelrod made what was supposed to be a surprise appearance in Boston to attack Romney’s record as governor. Word of the event leaked out, and Romney supporters were out in force, embarrassing and at times drowning out Axelrod. [Byron York](#) tells the story in an article titled “Combative Romney team hits Obama coast-to-coast.”



Then, when Democrats began speaking, a crowd of about 100 Romney workers, supporters, and volunteers showed up to chant, shout, and heckle the speakers every step of the way. The protesters shouted “Solyndra!” and “Where are the jobs?” and “Mitt, Mitt, Mitt!” while Democrats gamely attacked Romney’s tenure as governor. ... In the end, the Obama event was overshadowed by the loud, aggressive Romney forces.

Byron notes that the Romney campaign considered this payback for similar disruptions of Romney events that have been carried out by Obama supporters.

Of course, amid all of the punching and counterpunching it is vital for Romney to stay on message, and not be distracted away from the all-important issue of the economy. He has done a good job of that, too. Today he held a surprise press conference at Solyndra. What I liked about Romney’s comments at Solyndra is that he didn’t just focus on the financial loss to the taxpayers, or accept the implicit assumption that everything would have been fine if only the company hadn’t gone out of business. Rather, he talked about the differences between free enterprise and government cronyism:



“It’s also a symbol of a serious conflict of interest. An independent inspector general looked at this investment and concluded that the administration had steered money to friends and family – to campaign contributors. This building, this half a billion dollar taxpayer investment, represents a serious conflict of interest on the part of the president and his team.”

“It’s also a symbol of how the president thinks about free enterprise,” said Romney. “Free enterprise to the president means taking money from the taxpayers and giving it freely to his friends.”

“You look at this building behind us; this is not the kind of building that is built by private enterprise,” he said. “This is the kind of enterprise – the kind of building – that’s built with half a billion dollars of taxpayers money. It’s not just the Taj Mahal of corporate headquarters. you probably also heard that inside there are showers that have LCD displays that tell what the temperatures are of the shower water. and the robots inside actually provide Disney music tunes.”

Elsewhere, Romney said: “So his view is what I call ‘crony capitalism. Give money to your friends that contributed to your campaign. That’s crony capitalism.”

Romney’s aggressive approach is getting a lot of favorable notice. On his radio show today, Rush Limbaugh praised Romney’s toughness:

**I’m telling you this is not the McCain campaign.** McCain had the left demanded that he distance himself from Trump, not only would have distanced himself he would have gone public and kicked Trump out of his campaign. And Romney did not do that. I gotta take a break. Romney did something else. There’s a Tweet here. Mitt Romney. Romney supporters drown out Axelrod press conference in Boston shouting “Five more months, five more months!” Axelrod showing up everywhere and he was in Boston and Romney voters showed up and shouted him down, “Five more months, five more months!” until we’re finished with you. ...

That’s the way to run the campaign! So you got in Boston anti-Obama, anti-Axelrod protestors show up, “Where are the jobs? Where are the jobs? Five more months! Where are the jobs?”

Glenn Reynolds is impressed, too. He [wrote today](#): “You know, I think I like the cut of this Romney fellow’s jib.”

Not your father’s Republicans, indeed. Romney and his team are ready to fight for a better America, and they are doing it every day. I hope you have joined them.

UPDATE: And then there’s [this](#):

Told that conservatives were comparing Romney’s tactics to Breitbart’s, one aide responded: “Oh great, that’s what we were going for.”

## Weekly Standard

### [Liberal Jews Turn on Obama](#)

by William Kristol

Have pro-Israel liberals—at least some of the intelligent ones—finally had enough of President Obama's incompetence and dithering with respect to Israel and the Middle East?

Apparently. First, there was [the extraordinary column](#) by well-known journalist Ari Shavit, a man of the left, in Israel's newspaper of the left, *Haaretz*, last Thursday. Here are the highlights (but by all means read the whole thing [here](#)):

President Barack Obama is a cool-headed leader. For the past 40 months he has known that history will judge him by his actions and failures vis-a-vis Iran....

And yet, the man sitting in the Oval Office is ignoring the possibility that his inaction will make the Middle East go nuclear and undermine the world order. He doesn't care that he might be responsible for losing the United States' superpower status and turning the 21st century into a century of nuclear chaos....

The president sees how the Iranians mock him - and does nothing. He sees radical Islam approaching the nuclear brink - and does not budge....

He is staging a deceptive show of a deal with the Iranians, which will seem to dull the Natanz threat. He is trying to make a fool of Jerusalem as Tehran is making a fool of him. The president is pushing Israel into a corner, but is hoping that Israel will accept its fate submissively....

But the extremely thrifty commander-in-chief is not prepared to pay any price for stopping the 8,000 Shi'ite centrifuges. That's why Obama didn't stand by the Iranian Spring of 2009 as he stood by the Arab Spring of 2011. That's why Obama didn't act firmly against the underground facility near Qom, which was discovered three years ago. That's why Obama has not touched, to this day, Iran's central bank, nor has he stopped the flow of oil distillates to the country's ports.



The cautious president sees not the catastrophic price the West will pay for Iran's nuclearization, but the political price he will pay if oil prices rise. Never in its history has the United States had such a thrifty leader as its 44th president.

The international community and international public opinion are preoccupied with King Netanyahu these days - will he or won't he attack? But instead of focusing on a statesman who isn't supposed to save the world from Iran's nuclear program, it would be better to focus on the leader whose historic role is just that. In the past 40 months Barack Obama has been betraying his office. Will he wake up in the next four months, come to his senses and change his ways?

Then, on Monday, [Yedioth Ahronoth featured an interview](#) with Martin Indyk, former top Clinton administration Middle East aide and ambassador to Israel, by Nahum Barnea. Here are highlights of Barnea's account (read the whole thing [here](#)):

There are no wounds as bad as those inflicted by one who loves you: their hurt is accurate. Their pain burns. In the midst of the election campaign in the US, a comprehensive book on the achievements and failures of the administration's foreign policy was published this month ([Bending History: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy](#)). The Middle Eastern chapters were written by Martin Indyk, who served twice as US ambassador to Israel and was one of the senior members of the peace process team. Four years ago, he supported Hillary Clinton. After she lost the Democratic Party's primary elections, he enlisted in Obama's election campaign. He praised him highly before audiences of Jewish Americans and Israelis.

Not this time. The chapter he wrote presents a long series of colossal mistakes by the US president, partly due to inexperience, mostly due to misunderstanding of the Israeli-Arab arena, unsuitable temperament and erroneous conceptions. Obama did not show any particular interest in regime change and democracy in the Arab world. Ironically, it's the only area which has changed during his term in office....

"Obama was a president of epic proportions from day one," Indyk began. "You cannot expect less from a first African-American president. From his first day in the White House, he put the Middle East at the top of his political agenda. Unfortunately for him, his personal involvement only made things worse."

"The vision he presented was great, the promise huge. But his cold, analytical and aloof attitude didn't suit the Middle Eastern climate. Middle Eastern leaders, Israelis and Arabs alike, rely on the personal relations they develop with the president. Obama doesn't develop personal relationships. It's his character."

There is no argument that regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict, Obama's first term of office has been a complete failure, I said. He promised to bring peace, but couldn't renew the negotiations that took place on a regular basis during the Bush era. The Arab world didn't believe him. The Israelis didn't trust him.....

The turning point was Obama's speech at Cairo University in June 2009. I was there. After the speech, I spoke to Obama's close advisers, Ram Emanuel and David Axelrod. I told them that the Israelis took the speech badly. The comparison between the Holocaust and Palestinian suffering infuriated them. The fact that Obama chose to speak in Cairo but not visit Jerusalem hurt their honor.

The two looked at each other in silence, as if to say, we knew it would happen, we warned him but he refused to listen. As time passed, the fact that Obama wrote the speech himself, against the advice of all his advisers, was made public.

“The demand to freeze the settlements was not new: previous presidents had made it and in certain times the Israelis complied. Obama demanded that natural growth not be taken into consideration. It was a new demand. Then he gave George Mitchell plenipotentiary authority to negotiate a compromise [that would produce less than a complete settlement freeze]. In doing so, he put Abu Mazen in an impossible position: he couldn’t have agreed for less than what Obama had demanded. Obama, Abu Mazen complained, put me on a high horse. I have no way to get off it.”

“That is how Obama operates. First, he sets a far-reaching goal. Then he looks for a compromise. At the end, no side is pleased.”

One imagines the president's apologists aren't pleased, either, by these high-profile defections from the Obama camp to the truth-telling camp.

## Contentions

### Obama’s Absurd Claim About Judaism

by John Podhoretz

Apparently, Barack Obama [told a visiting contingent of Conservative Jewish rabbis](#) that he probably knows more about Judaism than any other president—on the same day that he referred to “Polish death camps.” For that last remark he apologized, but the one about Judaism is far more telling. In the first place, the claim is transparently absurd. We can quickly pass over the fact that John Adams and James Madison, among the most educated men in the world at the time, knew Hebrew as well as Latin and Greek and just say that the president is, to put it mildly, punching above his weight here. So let’s move on to the fact that every president until the modern era knew more about Judaism than Barack Obama because the Bible was the one book every literate person knew, and the Bible includes the books Christians call the “Old Testament,” and a working knowledge of the Old Testament certainly is the best introduction to “Judaism” there is.

Earlier presidents did not learn the Talmud, of course, but if Barack Obama ever has, that would come as news to me. There is no indication from Obama’s own writing that he is especially Bible-literate, and we can presume that his notorious pastor of 20 years used the Bible primarily as flavoring for his political duck soup. I have no doubt that, among presidents closer to our time, Jimmy Carter was far more conversant in the lore of Biblical Judaism, for all the good it did his corrupted soul when it comes to the Jewish state.

Perhaps what the president meant is that he’s known more Jews than other presidents. This too is an absurdity, as Ronald Reagan spent 30 years in Hollywood and had Jews coming out his ears. In fact, chances are Barack Obama knows less about Judaism than most presidents, except that he knows a lot of liberal Jews.

What the president does, without question, know a great deal about is the act of preening.

## National Review [The Chicago Way](#)

by John Fund

Every president comes to Washington with a coterie of outside advisers, friends, and fixers they've picked up during the course of a career. Eventually one or more of them becomes controversial. Richard Nixon had Bebe Rebozo. Jimmy Carter had his brother Billy and Bert Lance. Ronald Reagan had Mike Deaver. Bill Clinton had many trailing after him — they became the menagerie implicated in Whitewater and Monicagate. But Barack Obama's inner circle has almost completely escaped close scrutiny since he became president. That may be about to change, and the rich cast of characters making up [Team Obama](#) merits further attention.

A new biography of Obama by Edward Klein called [The Amateur](#) has rocketed to the No. 1 slot on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Among its explosive allegations is that after videos of Reverend Jeremiah Wright's anti-American sermons surfaced in the 2008 campaign, a close friend of Obama's and a fellow member of Wright's church named Eric Whitaker approached the reverend. In a taped interview with Klein, Wright said Whitaker offered him — via e-mail, through an intermediary — \$150,000 to stop preaching and appearing in the media until after the election.

After Wright turned the offer down, Barack Obama set up a private meeting with him to urge him not to speak publicly during the campaign. Secret Service logs document that it took place, writes Klein. But Wright refused to cooperate, and the meeting ended in frustration for Obama.

Efforts to discredit Klein's book by Team Obama went into overdrive after the revelation. Certainly, Klein made errors in a previous book attacking Hillary Clinton, and his occasional sloppiness in his current book isn't up to the standards of a *New York Times Magazine* editor, which he used to be. But Klein says he has tapes with Wright to back up his account, which also includes the charge that Obama relied on Whitaker to find a replacement preacher once Wright was dropped from an Obama event.

Whitaker's role in Obama's world is important because, as Patrick Brennan has [pointed out](#) on National Review Online, "it's almost impossible to overstate how close Whitaker is to the president." He's been a friend of and fundraiser for Obama for nearly 20 years and has joined the first family on every summer and Christmas vacation since 2008. *Politico* reported in 2009 that Whitaker had become "a kind of gatekeeper and spokesman for Obama's inner circle."

Whitaker has also been involved in Illinois's always shady politics. He became the state's top health official in 2003 when he was appointed by then-governor Rod Blagojevich, now a resident of federal public housing after his conviction in 2011 on corruption charges. As the *Chicago Sun-Times* reported in 2008, Obama gave Whitaker "a 'glowing' reference to Tony Rezko," who interviewed him for the job. Rezko, a friend of Obama's for two decades and a top fundraiser for both Obama and Blagojevich, is also now in federal prison on corruption charges. Prosecutors alleged that Rezko engineered pay-to-play schemes with Blagojevich to help allies secure jobs. Neither Obama nor Whitaker was implicated during Rezko's trial.

You might recall the name of Tony Rezko from the 2008 campaign.

Rezko was involved with Obama in a controversial 2005 land [deal](#) in which Obama bought a \$1.65 million home on the same day that Rezko's wife bought the plot of land next to it from the same seller for \$625,000. Obama has strenuously denied suggestions that the same-day sale enabled him to pay \$300,000 under the house's asking price because Mrs. Rezko paid full price for the adjoining lot — a portion of which Obama subsequently purchased — but he admitted the whole deal was a “boneheaded” mistake.

One of Whitaker's duties as Illinois's health director was to oversee the scandal-wracked Illinois Health Facilities Planning Board. Under Blagojevich, that board was used to extract kickbacks for state contracts to expand hospitals, which financially benefited Rezko and his associates who controlled the board. During a subsequent [investigation](#), Whitaker denied knowing anything about the wrongdoing, saying he wasn't involved in the board's day-to-day operations.

Whitaker left his job under Blagojevich in 2007, and is now executive vice president of strategic affiliations at the University of Chicago Medical Center. He is in charge of its Urban Health Initiative, which this May won a \$5.9 million federal grant. As Brennan reported, the UHI “is a microcosm of Obama's small and incestuous corner of Chicago's elite politics.” Michelle Obama, as an executive at the University of Chicago Medical Center, created and developed the UHI program until she took a leave of absence during her husband's 2008 campaign. Valerie Jarrett, now perhaps the most powerful staffer in Obama's White House, approved the program as chairman of the medical center's board, and Obama strategist David Axelrod was hired to promote its minority-outreach efforts.

The program itself is controversial, with several medical groups claiming its efforts to shift poor patients to local clinics and away from hospitals such as the University of Chicago's amount to a deliberate effort to dump uninsured and unprofitable patients onto clinics so that the hospitals can treat insured patients instead.

Fran Eaton, the editor of the conservative blog *Illinois Review*, says the Whitaker–Reverend Wright controversy is fascinating because it exposes the cozy world of the “Chicago Way” that brought Obama to power. Everyone in the drama is involved in the Richard Daley machine. Valerie Jarrett and Michelle Obama first met while working for then-mayor Daley. Obama ran for the first time for the Illinois state senate unopposed after Daley-machine lawyers knocked every one of his primary opponents off the ballot by successfully challenging the validity of their nominating petitions. Rahm Emanuel, the current mayor of Chicago, was elected to Congress in 2002 with Daley's help and went on to serve as Obama's White House chief of staff from 2009 to 2010.

None of this suggests Barack Obama was directly involved in the seamy underworld of the Daley machine — on the contrary, he was always protected from any hint of corruption because he was clearly being groomed for higher office. But it certainly demonstrates just how little scrutiny Team Obama got over its Daley connections during the 2008 campaign and how far removed the “hope and change” theme of his campaign was from the rough-and-tumble reality of Chicago politics.

John Heilemann, co-author of a definitive work on the [2008 election](#) called *Game Change*, [writes](#) in a new piece in *New York* magazine that for “anyone still starry-eyed about Obama” the 2012 campaign will disabuse them of that notion:

The months ahead will provide a bracing revelation about what he truly is: not a savior, not a saint, not a man above the fray, but a brass-knuckled, pipe-hitting, red-in-tooth-and-claw brawler determined to do what is necessary to stay in power — in other words, a politician.

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by Alana Goodman

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There were some questions directed at the president concerning his thoughts on the role of religious leaders in a more civil political dialogue, which then lead to the inevitable question — how does he feels about Israel? Obama joked that [Chief of Staff Jack] Lew always warns him it will get to “the *kishkes* question.”

“Rather than describe how deeply I care about Israel, I want to be blunt about how we got here,” Obama said, reminding his guests that he had so many Jewish friends in Chicago at the beginning of his political career that he was accused of being a puppet of the Israel lobby.

Ignore the overwhelming ignorance and offensiveness of that argument for a second. The one person I can recall who has actually accused Obama of being an AIPAC puppet is Rev. Wright — though [his theory](#) was that Obama didn't turn into a lapdog for the Jews until he started running for president. I don't doubt the president hung out with plenty of Jews in Chicago, but considering that some of the most vile Israel bashers out there are Jewish, that says absolutely nothing about his own views on Israel. Plus, if we're now supposed to judge Obama's support for Israel based on his Chicago friendships, that's not exactly comforting. Two of his close friends in the city were an anti-Semitic pastor and a famed anti-Israel [academic](#) — oh, and there was also his domestic terrorist buddy who participates in [anti-Israel activism](#) on the side. What are we supposed to glean from that?

These friendships were one of the reasons why the pro-Israel community was initially unsure about Obama's true personal feelings on Israel during his 2008 campaign. Since then, those early concerns have been substantiated again and again by Obama's own public actions and statements on Israel. The American public still supports the Jewish state, which means Obama grudgingly supports it when necessary, but it's clear his heart isn't there. His lame response when questioned on his true feelings — citing knowledge of Judaism and friendship with Jews — is just the latest example of that disconnect.

**Investors.com**

## [Another key backer gives up on Obama; What's it really mean?](#)

by Andrew Malcolm



*Artur Davis and a former Democrat friend*

Good thing Artur Davis doesn't live in Chicago. He'd be worse than friendless this morning.

The former member of Congress, the first from outside Illinois who endorsed then Sen. Barack Obama for the presidency so long ago, is now a former Democrat too.

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It's a wounding PR blow to Obama's reelection campaign, which has had [some rocky weeks](#) recently, even with Joe Biden on vacation now. Davis' defection is also an unexpected and rare fracture in the seemingly monolithic political support for Obama among blacks.

Davis was not only an early and enthusiastic backer of Obama four years ago, he was co-chair of the senator's successful national campaign.

On his personal blog Wednesday Davis painted a picture of someone whose party and [party leader had long disappointed](#) and then left him. Safe to say, Davis will not be seconding Obama's nomination in primetime at the Democrat convention this year, as he did in 2008.

"Wearing a Democratic label no longer matches what I know about my country and its possibilities," [Davis said](#).

He also wrote:

"I have regularly criticized an agenda that would punish businesses and job creators with more taxes just as they are trying to thrive again. I have taken issue with an administration that has lapsed into a bloc by bloc appeal to group grievances when the country is already too fractured: frankly, the symbolism of Barack Obama winning has not given us the substance of a united country."

Despite his decisive primary defeat last year for the governor's office, Davis has revealed what are among Democrats suspicious tendencies. He voted against ObamaCare, for one thing, saying, "It goes further than we need and costs more than we can bear." He was also revealed to have made donations to some Republican candidates in other states.

Will Davis' very public defection fan the smoldering fires of party disaffection about [Obama's "Me-first" leadership](#) and agenda across coal country, like the crucial state of Pennsylvania, which preferred Hillary Clinton in 2008's primary. Are there many other Democrats who will show their disappointment/dissatisfaction with Obama by simply silently staying at home on Nov. 6?

Davis' move comes after an unchallenged [Obama failed to get beyond 60% of the votes in several recent state primaries](#). In West Virginia, a federal inmate won 40% of the votes while 41% of Kentucky Democrats showed up just to cast ballots for "Uncommitted" against the incumbent.

And it comes days after Erskine Bowles, another prominent Democrat who's worked with Obama and a one-time Clinton White House chief of staff, unequivocally rejected published rumors that he succeed Tim Geithner as Treasury secretary should Obama be reelected.

"Parties change," Davis observed. "...This is not Bill Clinton's Democratic Party (and he knows that even if he can't say it)."

## Washington Examiner

### [Are Obama's campaign aides fooling themselves?](#)

by Michael Barone



"Axelrod is endeavoring not to panic." So reads a sentence in [John Heilemann's](#) exhaustive article on Barack Obama's campaign in this week's *New York* magazine.

Heilemann is a fine reporter and was co-author with *Time's* Mark Halperin of a [best-selling book on the 2008 presidential campaign](#). While his sympathies are undoubtedly with Obama, he does a fine job of summarizing the arguments and tactics of both sides.

And he's capable of directing snark at both candidates. Samples: Romney "seems to suffer a hybrid of affluenza and Tourette's." "A cynic might say that the liberation Obama feels is the freedom from, you know, actually governing."

Heilemann's article is well-sourced. It's based on interviews with David Axelrod, the former White House aide now back in Chicago, David Plouffe, the 2008 manager now in the White House, and Jim Messina, the current campaign manager.

The picture Heilemann draws is of campaign managers whose assumptions have been proved wrong and who seem to be fooling themselves about what will work in the campaign.

One assumption that has been proved wrong is that the Obama campaign would raise \$1 billion and that, as in 2008, far more money would be spent for Democrats than Republicans.

Heilemann reports the campaign managers' alibis. Obama has given donors "shabby treatment," he writes. This of a president who has attended more fundraisers than his four predecessors combined.

As for the Obama-authorized super-PAC being \$90 million short of its \$100 million goal, well, it was late getting started and some money givers don't like negative ads.

A more plausible explanation is that big Democratic donors don't trust the political judgment of super-PAC head Bill Burton -- who was passed over for promotion to White House press secretary -- the way big Republican donors trust Karl Rove.

Here's another: A lot of people like the way Obama has governed less than they liked the idea of Obama governing.

A second assumption is that the Obama managers "see Romney as a walking, talking bull's-eye" and have "contempt for his skills as a political performer."

You can find some basis for this in Romney's performance in the primaries. But you can also find evidence to the contrary. In my own experience as a political consultant, I found it dangerous to assume your opponents will screw up. Sometimes they don't.

As for fooling themselves, I have to wonder whether the Obama people were spoofing Heilemann at points. He quotes Plouffe as saying. "Let's be clear what [Romney] would do as president," and then summarizes: "Potentially abortion will be criminalized. Women will be denied contraceptive services. He's far right on immigration. He supports efforts to amend the Constitution to ban gay marriage."



These claims don't seem sustainable to me. No one seriously thinks there's any likelihood of criminalizing abortion or banning contraception. Romney brushed off that last one in a debate.

Nor is there any chance an anti-same-sex marriage amendment would get the two-thirds it needs in Congress to go to the states. Opposing legalization of illegal immigrants is not a clear vote-loser, particularly now that, the Pew Hispanic Center reports, a million have left the country.

Also, the Obama managers' explanations about why it's really not inconsistent to attack Romney as a flip-flopper during the primaries and then flip-flop to attack him for "extreme right" views do not ring true. It sounds as "thoroughly tactical" as Axelrod's description of Romney.

Heilemann quotes Messina as saying Obama has "a distinct advantage" in battleground states. He envisions the campaign as a long, hard slog through the target states, like George W. Bush's re-election campaign in 2004.

That's what it looks like now. But there are other possibilities. Bush was running in a 10-year period in which partisan preferences were very steady. In five straight House elections from 1996 to 2004, each party got about the same percentage of the popular vote every time.

We're in a different setting now. Obama won the popular vote by 7 points in 2008. Republicans won the House popular vote by 7 points in 2010. Many more voters have been moving around than had been eight years ago.

The strategy of rallying currently unenthusiastic core Obama voters -- Hispanics, young voters, unmarried women -- risks alienating others who may be more moveable than their counterparts were in 2004. The Obama managers seem unaware of that risk. Could be a problem for them.

## **San Francisco Chronicle**

### **Elizabeth Warren is not a dumb blonde**

by Debra J. Saunders

It's hard to figure who looks the worse in this story - Elizabeth Warren or Harvard Law School's affirmative action policies.

Warren is the former Harvard law professor whom President [Obama](#) pegged to set up the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Warren is now running as a Democratic challenger to Massachusetts GOP Sen. Scott Brown.

Last month, the Boston Herald reported that in 1996 Harvard Law School touted the blonde blue-eyed Warren as proof that it hired "minority women." Then spokesman Mike Chmura wrote in the Harvard Crimson, "Elizabeth Warren is a Native American." In a 1997 Fordham [University](#) law review article, Chmura called Warren Harvard's "first woman of color."

Who knew Warren was Native American?

Warren reacted by telling reporters that she didn't even know Harvard was touting her as a minority until she read about it in the Herald. That's not credible: Warren listed herself as a minority in the Association of American Law Schools directory from 1986 to 1995.

Is she a Native American? Warren belongs to no tribe. The New England Historic Genealogical Society says that it has no proof of Warren's Native American heritage. Warren says that, according to "family lore," she is part Cherokee. Make that 1/32 Cherokee, thanks to her great-great-great-grandmother.

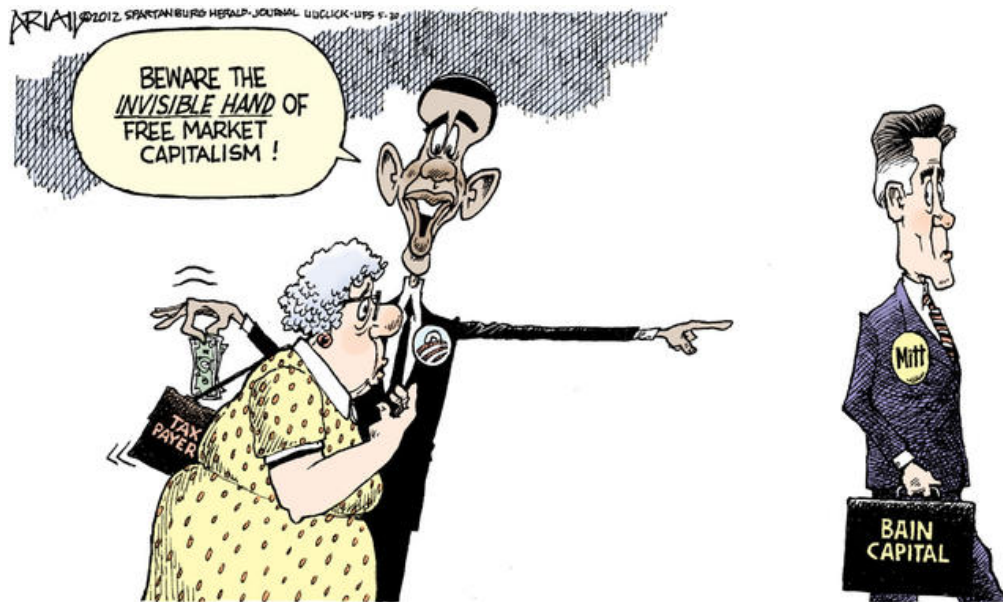
There's reason to believe Warren thought she is part Cherokee. She contributed recipes in 1984 to the "Pow Wow Chow" cookbook. Even that bit of corroboration, however, turns out to be problematic. The New York Times reported that some of those recipes "appear nearly identical to recipes by Pierre Franey, a chef and New York Times food writer, and hardly seem Indian (one is for "Crab with Tomato Mayonnaise Dressing"). The Warren campaign has declined to comment on the recipes."

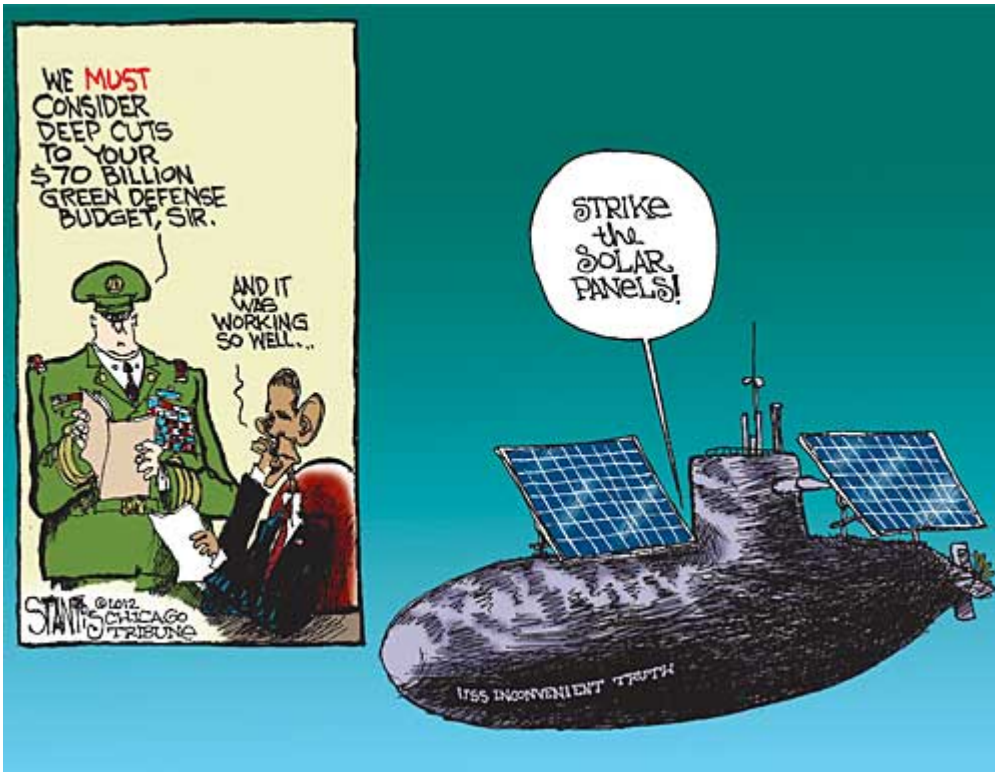
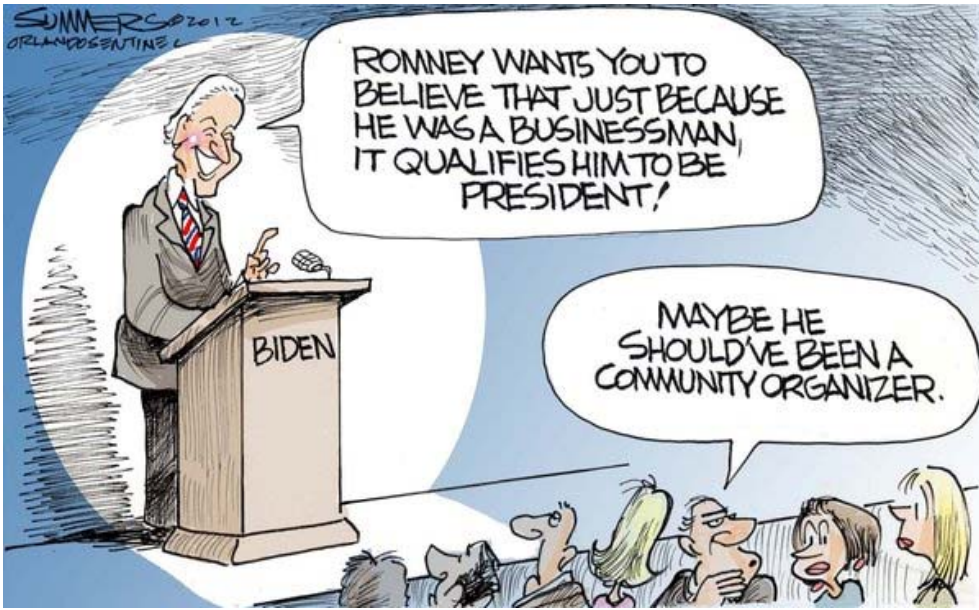
Why would a blonde blue-eyed woman who looks very white, who belongs to no tribe (but who can only claim a great-great-great-grandmother Cherokee ancestor) nonetheless designate herself as Native American? Warren bristles at any suggestion that she did so to enhance her employment prospects. She says she did so to "meet more people who had grown up like I had grown up."

Why did she stop designating herself as Native American after she won tenure at Harvard? She had wanted to meet "people who are like I am," Warren told the Herald. But: "Nothing like that ever happened, that was clearly not the use for it, and so I stopped checking it off."

Warren's campaign now is working overtime to pooh-pooh any notion that she was hired for any reason other than that she was a great law professor. I believe that.

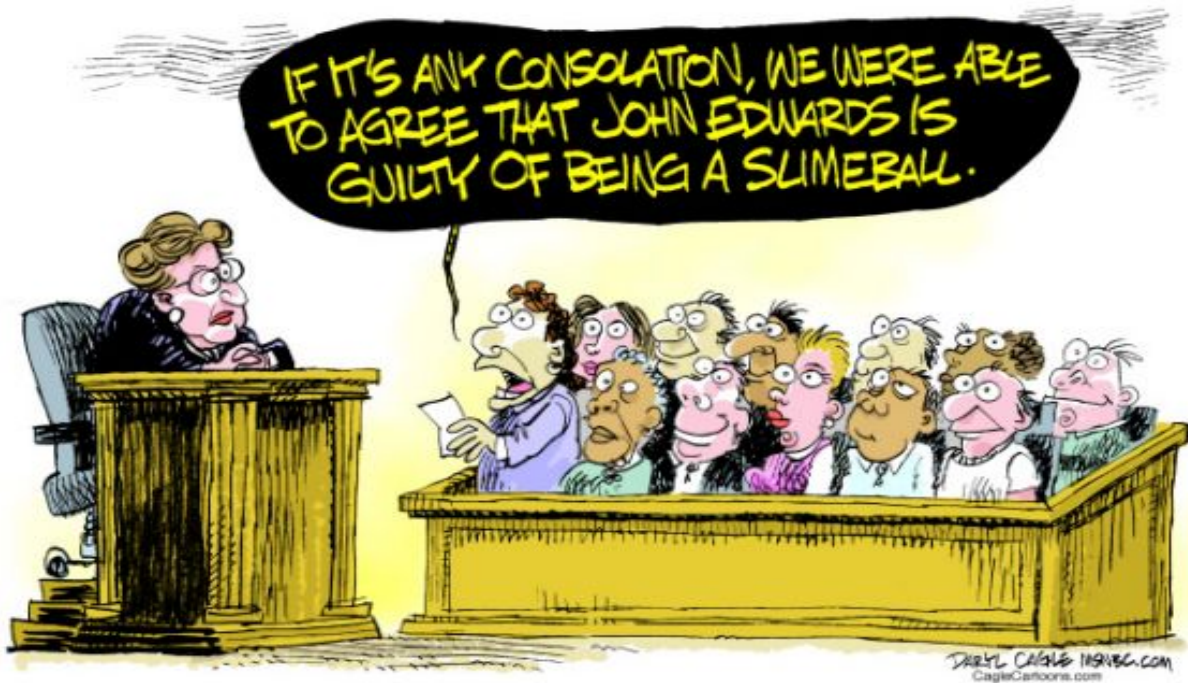
I also believe that Warren was too smart to not know that she was 31 times more white than Native American. She's too smart to not know that the designation could help her career, while taking pressure off Harvard Law to hire a real minority. But she was not so liberal that she cared.







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