

September 4, 2012

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** Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (\$2.2 million) ...*

Mark Steyn explains the new rules that can tell us what are "racist" remarks. They're not called remarks though; the new term is "dog whistles."

American racism is starting to remind me of American alcoholism. At the founding of the republic, in the days when beer was thought of as "liquid bread" and a healthy nutritional breakfast, Americans drank about three-to-four times as much as they do now. Today the United States has a lower per capita rate of alcohol consumption than almost any other developed nation, but it has more alcoholism support groups than any other developed nation — around 164 groups per million people. France, which drinks about 50 percent more per capita than America, has one-twentieth the number of support groups. The French and Italians enjoy drinking, the English and Irish enjoy getting drunk, and Americans enjoy getting drunk on ever more absurd stigmatizatory excess. At Walmart they card you if you "appear to be under" — what is it up to now? 43? 57? And the citizenry take this as a compliment: Well-preserved grandmothers return from failed attempts to purchase a bottle of wine with gay cries of, "I was carded at Costco! They've made my weekend!"

And so it goes with American racism: The less there is, the more extravagantly the racism-awareness lobby patrols its beat. The Walmart carding clerks of the media are ever more alert to those who "appear to be" racist. On MSNBC, Chris Matthews declared this week that Republicans use "Chicago" as a racist code word. Not to be outdone, his colleague Lawrence O'Donnell pronounced "golf" a racist code word. When Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell observed that Obama was "working to earn a spot on the PGA tour," O'Donnell brilliantly perceived that subliminally associating Obama with golf is racist, because the word "golf" is subliminally associated with "Tiger Woods," and the word "Tiger" is not-so-subliminally associated with cocktail waitress Jamie Grubbs, nightclub hostess Rachel Uchitel, lingerie model Jamie Jungers, former porn star Holly Sampson, etc, etc. So by using the word "golf" you're sending a racist dog whistle that Obama is a sex addict who reverses over fire hydrants.

While we're on the subject of GOP white supremacists, former Secretary of State Condi Rice spoke movingly of her rise to the top from a childhood in segregated Birmingham, Ala. But everyone knows that's just more Republican racist dog-whistling for "when's Bull Connor gonna whistle up those dogs and get me off stage?" Meanwhile, over at The Huffington Post, Geoffrey Dunn, author of "The Lies Of Sarah Palin" (St. Martin's Press, 2011, in case you missed it), was scoffing at Clint Eastwood's star turn at the convention – "better known as the Gathering of Pasty White People," added Mr. Dunn, demonstrating the stylistic panache that set a-flutter the hearts of so many St. Martin's Press commissioning editors. Warming to his theme, Mr. Dunn noted that Clint had been mayor of "the upscale and frighteningly white community" of Carmel, California. ...

John Fund explains how Akin can bow out of the Missouri senate race.

... Should Akin decide that his sliding poll numbers — he now trails McCaskill by ten points and many of his own supporters want him to exit the race — dictate dropping out, he will certainly want a say in who replaces him. John Brunner, a wealthy businessman, and Sarah Steelman, a former state treasurer, both challenged him in the GOP primary and are viewed as unacceptable by Akin forces. On the other hand, Wagner is respected in the Akin camp and a sufficiently conservative presence to satisfy Tea Party members who are suspicious of anyone the Missouri GOP establishment might anoint.

Should Akin leave the race and be replaced by Wagner, both candidates would have to petition a court to get off the ballot before September 25. But state election laws would allow a swap in which Wagner took Akin's place and he reclaimed the Republican nomination for his House seat. His current district leans strongly Republican; he would be likely to hold it against a Democratic opponent this fall.

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Joel Kotkin writes on the new class war.

... Obama's core middle-class support, and that of his party, comes from what might be best described as "the clerisy," a 21st century version of France's pre-revolution First Estate. This includes an ever-expanding class of minders — lawyers, teachers, university professors, the media and, most particularly, the relatively well paid legions of public sector workers — who inhabit Washington, academia, large non-profits and government centers across the country.

This largely well-heeled "middle class" still adores the president, and party theoreticians see it as the Democratic Party's new base. [Gallup surveys reveal](#) Obama does best among "professionals" such as teachers, lawyers and educators. After retirees, educators and lawyers are the two biggest sources of campaign contributions for Obama by occupation. Obama's [largest source of funds among individual organizations](#) is the University of California, Harvard is fifth and its wannabe cousin Stanford ranks ninth.

Like teachers, much of academia and the legal bar like expanding government since the tax spigot flows in the right direction: that is, into their mouths. Like the old clerical classes, who relied on tithes and the collection bowl, many in today's clerisy lives somewhat high on the hog; nearly one in five federal workers [earn over \\$100,000](#).

Essentially, the clerisy has become a new, mass privileged class who live a safer, more secure life compared to those trapped in the harsher, less cosseted private economy. ...

... The GOP, for its part, now relies on another part of the middle class, what I would call the yeomanry. In many ways they represent the contemporary version of Jeffersonian farmers or the beneficiaries of President Lincoln's Homestead Act. They are primarily small property owners who lack the girth and connections of the clerisy but resist joining the government-dependent poor. Particularly critical are small business owners, who Gallup identifies as "the least approving" of Obama among all the major occupation groups. Barely one in three likes the present administration.

The yeomanry diverge from the clerisy in other ways. They tend to live in the suburbs, a geography [much detested](#) by many leaders of the clerisy and, likely, the president himself. Yeomen families tend to be concentrated in those parts of the country that have more children and are more apt to seek solutions to social problems through [private efforts](#). Philanthropy, church work and voluntarism — what you might call, appropriately enough, the Utah approach, after the state that leads in philanthropy.

The nature of their work also differentiates the clerisy from the yeomanry. The clerisy labors largely in offices and has no contact with actual production. Many yeomen, particularly in business services, depend on industry for their livelihoods either directly or indirectly. The clerisy's stultifying, and often job-toxic regulations and "green" agenda may be one reason why people engaged in farming, fishing, forestry, transportation, manufacturing and construction overwhelmingly disapprove of the president's policies, [according to Gallup](#). ...

[Karl at Hot Air](#) posts on the goals of Eastwood.

... Eastwood was not "rambling." He improvised within a structure, making a clear and concise case for dumping Obama.

Eastwood's approach to this performance was not accidental. Eastwood is — by reason of his resume — the foremost expert in the world on Clint Eastwood fans. Harry Callahan may have understood that a man has to know his limitations. Eastwood knows his... and he also knows his strengths. A man does not produce and star in dozens of Clint Eastwood movies without having thought deeply about and received the benefit of copious market research into what appeals to people about Clint Eastwood.

From the standpoint of political science, it would be fair to hypothesize that appeals to both [disaffected and libertarian voters](#) (which is something of a feat) in a way that Mitt Romney could never hope to do. More colloquially, it would be fair to suggest that Eastwood appeals to the sort of people who gravitated to H. Ross Perot in the Nineties. He appeals to people who distrust institutions, who think that conventional politics fails the American people. The sort of people for

whom Harry Callahan, Will Munny, Frank Horrigan, Luther Whitney and Walt Kowalski have an emotional resonance.

So why would Eastwood deliver a conventional political speech? Had he delivered his material as a series of slick-sounding zingers, it would have been the sort of speech the media expected from Chris Christie's keynote address. But that would have been: (a) not in keeping with the Romney campaign's softer approach; and (b) diminishing and disappointing to Eastwood's target audience. Most of the chattering class failed to grasp this. Some on Team Romney failed to grasp this. But the evidence coming in, both [anecdotally](#) and from [polling](#), suggests Eastwood still has his finger on the popular pulse in a way pols and pundits never will.

Mark Steyn with more on this saying, "Play Clinty For Me."

Like [William F. Gavin](#), I hugely enjoyed Clint Eastwood's turn last night, but I'm not sure I agree that it was "unintentionally hilarious" and that "he forgot his lines, lost his way." Clint is a brilliant actor, and a superb director of other actors (and I don't just mean a quarter-century ago: In the last five years, he's directed eight films). He's also, as Mr. Gavin observed, a terrific jazz improviser at the piano — and, in film and music documentaries, an extremely articulate interviewee. So I wouldn't assume that the general tenor of his performance wasn't exactly as he intended. The hair was a clue: No Hollywood icon goes out on stage like that unless he means to.

John Hayward [writes](#):

"The intended recipient was not Mitt Romney, the convention delegates, or even Republican voters, but rather wavering independents. Clint was there to tell them it's OK to find Obama, his ugly campaign operation, and his increasingly shrill band of die-hard defenders ridiculous. It's OK to laugh at them."

I'm not sure he could have pulled that off if he'd delivered a slick teleprompted pitch. ...

Jim Treacher has another off the charts demonstration of Prez Narcissist. The tribute to Neil Armstrong has a picture of The One looking at the moon.

NY Post

[Look who parks their cash at Bain](#)

by Deroy Murdock

Democrats convened in Charlotte, NC, will double down on their claim that Bain Capital is really the Bain crime family. They will accuse Republican nominee Mitt Romney and Bain's other "greedy" co-founders of stealing their winnings, evading taxes and lighting cigars with \$100 bills on their yachts.

But Bain's private-equity executives have enriched dozens of organizations and millions of individuals in the Democratic base — including some who scream most loudly for President Obama's re-election.

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- * Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (\$2.2 million)
- * Indiana Public Retirement System (\$39.3 million)
- * Iowa Public Employees' Retirement System (\$177.1 million)
- * The Los Angeles Fire and Police Pension System (\$19.5 million)
- * Maryland State Retirement and Pension System (\$117.5 million)
- * Public Employees' Retirement System of Nevada (\$20.3 million)
- * State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio (\$767.3 million)
- * Pennsylvania State Employees' Retirement System (\$231.5 million)
- * Employees' Retirement System of Rhode Island (\$25 million)
- * San Diego County Employees Retirement Association (\$23.5 million)
- * Teacher Retirement System of Texas (\$122.5 million)
- * Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (\$15 million)

These funds aggregate the savings of millions of unionized teachers, social workers, public-health personnel and first responders. Many would be startled to learn that their nest eggs are incubated by the company that Romney launched and the financiers he hired.

Leading universities have also profited from Bain's expertise. According to Infrastructure Investor, Bain Capital Ventures Fund I (launched in 2001) managed wealth for "endowments and foundations such as Columbia, Princeton and Yale universities."

According to BuyOuts magazine and S&P Capital IQ, Bain's other college clients have included Cornell, Emory, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Notre Dame and the University of Pittsburgh. Preqin reports that the following schools have placed at least \$424.6 million with Bain Capital between 1998 and 2008:

- * Purdue University (\$15.9 million)
- * University of California (\$225.7 million)
- * University of Michigan (\$130 million)
- * University of Virginia (\$20 million)

* University of Washington (\$33 million)

Major, center-left foundations and cultural establishments also have seen their prospects brighten, thanks to Bain Capital. According to the aforementioned sources, such Bain clients have included the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Doris Duke Foundation, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Ford Foundation, the Heinz Endowments and the Oprah Winfrey Foundation.

Why on Earth would government-union leaders, university presidents and foundation chiefs let Bain oversee their precious assets?

"The scrutiny generated by a heated election year matters less than the performance the portfolio generates to the fund," California State Teachers' Retirement System spokesman Ricardo Duran said in the Aug. 12 Boston Globe. CalSTRS has pumped some \$1.25 billion into Bain.

Since 1988, Duran says, private-equity companies like Bain have outperformed every other asset class to which CalSTRS has allocated the cash of its 856,360 largely unionized members.

Is Bain really a gang of corporate buccaneers who plunder their ill-gotten gains by outsourcing, euthanizing feeble portfolio companies and giving cancer to the spouses of those whom they fired? If so, union bosses, government retirees, liberal foundations and elite universities thrive on the wages of Bain's economic Darwinism.

If, however, these institutions relish the yields that Bain Capital generates by supporting start-ups and rescuing distressed companies, 80 percent of which have prospered, then this money is honest — and Team Obama isn't.

Orange County Register

Racist dog whistles and the men who hear them

by Mark Steyn

American racism is starting to remind me of American alcoholism. At the founding of the republic, in the days when beer was thought of as "liquid bread" and a healthy nutritional breakfast, Americans drank about three-to-four times as much as they do now. Today the United States has a lower per capita rate of alcohol consumption than almost any other developed nation, but it has more alcoholism support groups than any other developed nation — around 164 groups per million people. France, which drinks about 50 percent more per capita than America, has one-twentieth the number of support groups. The French and Italians enjoy drinking, the English and Irish enjoy getting drunk, and Americans enjoy getting drunk on ever more absurd stigmatizatory excess. At Walmart they card you if you "appear to be under" — what is it up to now? 43? 57? And the citizenry take this as a compliment: Well-preserved grandmothers return from failed attempts to purchase a bottle of wine with gay cries of, "I was carded at Costco! They've made my weekend!"

And so it goes with American racism: The less there is, the more extravagantly the racism-awareness lobby patrols its beat. The Walmart carding clerks of the media are ever more alert to those who "appear to be" racist. On MSNBC, Chris Matthews declared this week that

Republicans use "Chicago" as a racist code word. Not to be outdone, his colleague Lawrence O'Donnell pronounced "golf" a racist code word. When Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell observed that Obama was "working to earn a spot on the PGA tour," O'Donnell brilliantly perceived that subliminally associating Obama with golf is racist, because the word "golf" is subliminally associated with "Tiger Woods," and the word "Tiger" is not-so-subliminally associated with cocktail waitress Jamie Grubbs, nightclub hostess Rachel Uchitel, lingerie model Jamie Jungers, former porn star Holly Sampson, etc. So by using the word "golf" you're sending a racist dog whistle that Obama is a sex addict who reverses over fire hydrants.

While we're on the subject of GOP white supremacists, former Secretary of State Condi Rice spoke movingly of her rise to the top from a childhood in segregated Birmingham, Ala. But everyone knows that's just more Republican racist dog-whistling for "when's Bull Connor gonna whistle up those dogs and get me off stage?" Meanwhile, over at The Huffington Post, Geoffrey Dunn, author of "The Lies Of Sarah Palin" (St. Martin's Press, 2011, in case you missed it), was scoffing at Clint Eastwood's star turn at the convention – "better known as the Gathering of Pasty White People," added Mr. Dunn, demonstrating the stylistic panache that set a-flutter the hearts of so many St. Martin's Press commissioning editors. Warming to his theme, Mr. Dunn noted that Clint had been mayor of "the upscale and frighteningly white community" of Carmel, California.

To judge from his byline photo, Geoffrey Dunn is not only white but "pasty white." So, too, is Lawrence O'Donnell. If I recall correctly from the last time I saw his show (1978 – the remote had jammed), Chris Matthews is not just "pasty white" but "frighteningly white." I happen to be overseas right now, so perhaps that's the reason that all these "upscale and frighteningly white" American liberals seem even crazier than usual in their more-anti-racist-than-thou obsessions. To me, the word "Clint" is racist dog-whistling for "Play 'Misty' For Me," which is racist dog-whistling for "Erroll Garner," which is racist dog-whistling for "black pianist way better than Liberace." Clint took "The Bridges Of The Frighteningly White Madison County" and gave it a cool Johnny Hartman soundtrack. Clint introduced the world to Roberta Flack's killer song "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face."

But, as Geoffrey Dunn can explain, that's racial code for "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face I Was Pleasantly Reassured By How Pasty White It Was." Also, Clint starred in "The Eiger Sanction," a mountaineering thriller set on an Alp that was "upscale and frighteningly white."

On the matter of those racist dog whistles all these middle-age white liberals keep hearing, the Wall Street Journal's James Taranto put it very well: "The thing we adore about these dog-whistle kerfuffles is that the people who react to the whistle always assume it's intended for somebody else," he wrote. "The whole point of the metaphor is that if you can hear the whistle, you're the dog." And a very rare breed at that. What frequency does a Mitch McConnell speech have to be ringing inside your head for even the most racially obsessed Caucasian NBC anchorman to hear the words "PGA tour" as "deep-rooted white insecurities about black male sexuality"? That's way beyond dog-whistling, and somewhere between barking mad and frothing rabid.

Still, now that "golf" and "Chicago" – along with "Clint," "Medicare," "debt," "jobs," "foreign policy" and "quantitative easing" – are all racist code words, are there any words left that aren't racist? Yes, here's one:

"Negrohood."

Not familiar with it? New York Assembly candidate Ben Akselrod used it the other day in a campaign mailer to Brooklyn electors, arguing that his opponent "has allowed crime to go up over 50 percent in our negrohood so far this year."

Like Messrs Dunn, Matthews and O'Donnell, Ben Akselrod is frighteningly pasty white, and a Democrat, and so presumably has highly refined racial antennae. Had a campaign staffer suggested that Mr. Akselrod's opponent was wont to wear "plus-fours" and had a "niblick," obviously such naked racism would have been deleted in the first draft. But the more subtly allusive "negrohood" apparently just slipped through.

Mr. Akselrod now says it was a "typo." Could happen to anyone. You're typing "neighborhood," and you leave out the "i," and the "h" and "b," and the "o" and "r" get mysteriously inverted. Either that, or your desktop came with Al Sharpton's spellcheck. And then nobody at the campaign office reading through the mailer spotted it. Odd.

It's only the beginning of September. So we've got two more months of this. I don't know how it will play in the negrohoods of Chicago – whoops, sorry, I apologize for saying "Chicago" – but let me make a modest observation from having spent much of the past few months traveling round foreign parts. When you don't have frighteningly white upscale liberals obsessing about the racist subtext of golf, it's amazing how much time it frees up to talk about other stuff. For example, as dysfunctional as Greece undoubtedly is, if you criticize the government's plans for public pensions, there are no Chris Matthews-types with such a highly evolved state of racial consciousness that they reflexively hear "watermelon" instead of the word "pensions." So, instead, everyone discusses the actual text rather than the imaginary subtext. Which may be why political discourse in the eurozone is marginally less unreal than ours right now: At least they're talking about "austerity"; over here, we're still spending, and more than ever.

Time's Mark Halperin wrote this week that "Obama can't win if he can't swing the conversation away from the economy." That's a pretty amazing admission. The economy is the No. 1 issue on the minds of voters, and, beyond that, the central reality of Obama's America. But to win the President has to steer clear. That doesn't leave a lot else. Hence, the racism of golf, the war on women, the carcinogenic properties of Mitt Romney. Democrat strategy 1992: It's the economy, stupid. Democrat strategy 2012: It's the stupidity, economists.

National Review

Akin's Options

by John Fund

One name that is never mentioned from the podium here at the Tampa convention is Congressman Todd Akin, the hyper-controversial GOP Senate nominee from Missouri. But in innumerable side conversations, lots of folks are talking about him.

Many Missouri delegates are furious at how Akin was treated by the GOP establishment after his controversial remarks about rape and pregnancy earlier this month. Others just wish people could move on and get to the campaign against Democratic senator Claire McCaskill. Representative Billy Long, a GOP congressman from Springfield, Mo., says that if he had to bet, "I think that Todd Akin will continue in the race, and you are either with him or for Claire McCaskill."

But behind-the-scenes efforts to figure out a way to have Akin exit from the Senate race before the final deadline of September 25 continue unabated. Mary Matalin, a former adviser to Dick Cheney, made some of those moves public this past Sunday on ABC's *This Week*. She urged that Akin drop out, to be replaced by Ann Wagner, a former co-chair of the Republican National Committee, who is the GOP nominee for Akin's vacant House seat.

Akin "may be dug in, but he's not going to have a shovel to continuing digging, because he's not going to have any money," Matalin told ABC. "We're going to win Missouri. Ann Wagner is going to end up being our candidate. The party is going to get Ann Wagner in."

Wagner aides hotly dispute that their candidate is involved in any negotiations about switching races. But sources close to Akin acknowledge that he is monitoring developments in the race, including campaign donations and his standing in the polls, and that it isn't out of the question he will change his mind.

Should Akin decide that his sliding poll numbers — he now trails McCaskill by ten points and many of his own supporters want him to exit the race — dictate dropping out, he will certainly want a say in who replaces him. John Brunner, a wealthy businessman, and Sarah Steelman, a former state treasurer, both challenged him in the GOP primary and are viewed as unacceptable by Akin forces. On the other hand, Wagner is respected in the Akin camp and a sufficiently conservative presence to satisfy Tea Party members who are suspicious of anyone the Missouri GOP establishment might anoint.

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Several influential social conservatives who met in Tampa before the RNC convention began are trying to talk Mike Huckabee, the 2008 presidential candidate whose endorsement boosted Akin to a surprise win in the Senate primary this year, to intervene. On primary night, Akin thanked God, his wife, and Mike Huckabee for his triumph. Since then, Huckabee has staunchly defended Akin and denounced the "shabby" treatment of him by party leaders.

But many Huckabee supporters are urging him to speak to Akin because his slipping poll numbers put at risk a key victory social conservatives need. God may not be available to call Todd Akin, but Mike Huckabee certainly is.

New Geography

The Unseen Class War That Could Decide The Presidential Election

by Joel Kotkin

Much is said about class warfare in contemporary America, and there's justifiable anger at the impoverishment of much of the middle and working classes. The Pew Research Center recently dubbed the 2000s a ["lost decade" for middle-income earners](#) — some 85% of Americans in that category feel it's now more difficult to maintain their standard of living than at the beginning of the millennium, according to a Pew survey.

Blaming a disliked minority — rich business folks — has morphed into a predictable strategy for President Obama's Democrats, stripped of incumbent success. But all the talk of "one percent" versus "the ninety nine percent" misses new splits developing *within* both the upper and middle classes.

There is no true solidarity among the rich since no one is yet threatening their status. The "one percent" are splitting their bets. In 2008 President Obama received [more Wall Street money than any candidate in history](#), and he still relies on Wall Street bundlers for his sustenance. For all his class rhetoric, miscreant Wall Streeters, particularly big ones, [have evaded big sanctions](#) and the ignominy of [jail time](#).

Obama enjoys great support from the [financial interests](#) that benefit from government debt and expansive public largesse. Well-connected people like Obama's financial tsar on the GM bailout, Steven Rattner, who is also known as a [vigorous defender](#) of "too big to fail."

The "patrician left" — a term that might have amused Marx — extends as well to Silicon Valley, where venture capitalists and techies have opened their wallets wider than ever before for the president. Microsoft and Google are two of Obama's top three organizational sources of campaign contributions. Valley financiers are not always as selfless as they or their admirers imagine: Many have sought to feed at the Energy Department's bounteous ["green" energy trough](#) and all face regulatory reviews by federal agencies.

The Republicans have turned increasingly to those patricians who depend on the more tangible economy. If you make your living from digging coal or exploring for oil wells, even if you don't like him, Romney is your man. This saddles the GOP with the burden of being linked to one of America's [most hated interests](#): oil and gas companies. Almost as detested is the biggest source of Romney cash, [large Wall Street banks](#). (In contrast, Democratic-leaning industries, such as Internet-related companies, enjoy relatively high public support.)

With the patriarchy divided, the real action in the emerging class war is taking place further down the economic food chain. This inconvenient reality is largely ignored by the left, which finds the idea of anyone this side of Bain Capital supporting Romney as little more than "false consciousness."

Obama's core middle-class support, and that of his party, comes from what might be best described as "the clerisy," a 21st century version of France's pre-revolution First Estate. This includes an ever-expanding class of minders — lawyers, teachers, university professors, the media and, most particularly, the relatively well paid legions of public sector workers — who inhabit Washington, academia, large non-profits and government centers across the country.

This largely well-heeled “middle class” still adores the president, and party theoreticians see it as the Democratic Party’s new base. [Gallup surveys reveal](#) Obama does best among “professionals” such as teachers, lawyers and educators. After retirees, educators and lawyers are the two biggest sources of campaign contributions for Obama by occupation. Obama’s [largest source of funds among individual organizations](#) is the University of California, Harvard is fifth and its wannabe cousin Stanford ranks ninth.

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Essentially, the clerisy has become a new, mass privileged class who live a safer, more secure life compared to those trapped in the harsher, less cosseted private economy. As California Polytechnic economist Michael Marlow [points out](#), public sector workers enjoy greater job stability, and salary and benefits as much as 21% higher than of private sector employees doing similar work.

On this year’s Labor Day, this is the new face of unionism. The percentage of private-sector workers in unions has dropped from 24% in 1973 to barely 7% today and in 2010, for the first time, the public sector accounted for an [absolute majority of union members](#). “Labor” increasingly means not guys with overalls and lunch pails, but people whose paychecks are signed by taxpayers.

The GOP, for its part, now relies on another part of the middle class, what I would call the yeomanry. In many ways they represent the contemporary version of Jeffersonian farmers or the beneficiaries of President Lincoln’s Homestead Act. They are primarily small property owners who lack the girth and connections of the clerisy but resist joining the government-dependent poor. Particularly critical are small business owners, who Gallup identifies as “the least approving” of Obama among all the major occupation groups. Barely one in three likes the present administration.

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Obama supporters sometimes trace the loss of largely white working-class support — even to the somewhat less than *simpatico* patrician Romney — to “false consciousness.” A recent [Daily Kos article](#), charmingly entitled “The Masses are Asses,” chose to wave the old bloody shirt of

racism, arguing that whites “are the single largest, and most protected racial group in this country’s history.”

Ultimately this division — clerisy and their clients versus yeomanry — will decide the election. The patricians and the unions will finance this battle on both sides, spreading a predictable thread of half-truths and outright lies. The Democrats enjoy a tactical advantage. All President Obama needs is to gain a rough split among the vast group making around or above the national median income. He can count on overwhelming backing by the largely government dependent poor as well as most ethnic minorities, even the most entrepreneurial and successful.

Romney’s imperative will be to rouse the yeomanry by suggesting the clerisy, both by their sheer costliness and increasingly intrusive agenda, are crippling their family’s prospects for a better life. In these times of weak economic growth and growing income disparity, the Republicans delude themselves by claiming to ignore class warfare. They need to learn how instead to make it politically profitable for themselves.

*Joel Kotkin is executive editor of NewGeography.com and is a distinguished presidential fellow in urban futures at Chapman University, and contributing editor to the *City Journal* in New York. He is author of [The City: A Global History](#). His newest book is [The Next Hundred Million: America in 2050](#), released in February, 2010.*

Hot Air

[Just how wrong did the media get Clint Eastwood?](#)

by Karl

Admittedly, I am late to evaluating Clint Eastwood’s RNC performance. However, the fact that the pundit class is still critiquing it days later is one indicator of how shrewd it was as political theater. Accordingly, it is worth noting just how wrong some of the Eastwood analysis has been, even from those defending the speech.

The harsh, conventional wisdom about Eastwood’s decidedly unconventional approach to the convention is that it was the ramblings of a senile old man. Even many of Eastwood’s defenders have described it as rambling. This likely makes Eastwood’s day.

After all, who is Clint Eastwood? He is one of the [top actors, directors and producers of motion pictures](#) in the world. Most of the world — and almost certainly everyone tuning in to the RNC Thursday night — knows this. Yet most of the analyses of his RNC appearance are based on the notion that we were not witnessing acting. That mass suspension of disbelief may be the highest tribute Eastwood will ever be paid as an actor. If you think the Eastwood on stage was the only Eastwood there is, [watch him](#) promoting *J. Edgar* on *The Daily Show* last November. I have little doubt he will be equally sharp promoting *Trouble With the Curve* in the next few weeks.

Moreover, as a [director](#), Eastwood has a reputation of knowing exactly what he wants. Also, he does not prefer to do many takes: “The big question, for me, is how to do it *** so the actors can perform at their very best and with the spontaneity that you’d like to find so that the audience will

feel like those lines have been said for the very first time, ever. Then you've got a believable scene." That approach is entirely consistent with Eastwood's talent as a jazz pianist, someone who enjoys improvising within a framework. The fact that Eastwood's performance was not loaded into a teleprompter does not mean it was unplanned.

If you doubt that Eastwood was not simply winging it, don't watch his performance — [read the transcript](#). There may be no better indicator of just how intentional Eastwood's performance is than to compare the visual impression he gave with the text delivered.

Eastwood begins with a touch of [Admiral James Stockdale](#), but Clint answers the question of why he is there. The fact is that everyone really knows why Clint is there — to make a political statement. But Eastwood, in mentioning that Hollywood is perhaps not as monolithic as the stereotype suggests, is making a subtle suggestion to the audience he wants to reach: you may be part of some left-identifying group, but it's okay to disagree and there may be other quiet dissenters in your group.

Eastwood then introduces the [dramatic device](#) of the empty chair, which in this context also echoes the political metaphor of the empty suit. This has been remarked upon, particularly as an echo of comedic dialogs from people like Bob Newhart, so I won't dwell on it here, although it reappears below.

Eastwood then proceeds to use this comedic device to deliver — as [Mark Steyn](#) noted in passing — some of the toughest political attacks on President Obama heard during the entire RNC. A number of the traditional speakers strove to play on swing voters' disenchantment with the failed promises of Hope and Change. But notice how tired and traditional that just sounded in your head. Mitt Romney (likely with help from a professional political speechwriter) did it pretty well: "You know there's something wrong with the kind of job he's done as president when the best feeling you had was the day you voted for him." But did anyone do it as powerfully and emotionally as Eastwood's segue from everyone — himself included — crying with joy at Obama's historic victory to the tears we now shed over 23 million still unemployed, which Clint bluntly called a national disgrace?

This was the first part of Eastwood's simple and effective argument. Eastwood points out — in a prodding, joking manner — that Obama was elected to bring peace and prosperity, but failed to bring either. That Eastwood may disagree with the GOP on some war issues is perfectly alright in this context, because, as suggested earlier and explored further below, Eastwood is not really targeting Republicans.

Eastwood then arrives at his Joe Biden joke: "Of course we all know Biden is the intellect of the Democratic party. Just kind of a grin with a body behind it." That last part is not accidental in a performance featuring an empty chair. But the first part is even more dangerous. For the last 3+ years, we have been accustomed to having Biden as safe material for humor, while Obama has been kept off-limits. Eastwood leverages the latter into the former, suggesting that Sheriff Joe is the real brains of the operation. Ouch! No wonder Team Obama got annoyed enough to respond.

Having delivered these punches regarding our dire situation with velvet gloves, Eastwood then does the softest of sells for the Romney/Ryan ticket. As [Jesse Walker](#) noted, it was almost more

of a pitch for Not Obama. Again, there was nothing accidental about the nature or placement of this speech withing Clint's imagined dialogue.

Eastwood concludes by summing up the GOP case to undecideds and rebutting the main point Dems seem to advance for Obama. First, "[p]oliticians are employees of ours... And when somebody does not do the job, we got to let 'em go." Second, "we don't have to be metal [sic] masochists and vote for somebody that we don't really even want in office just because they seem to be nice guys or maybe not so nice guys if you look at some of the recent ads going out there."

Eastwood was not "rambling." He improvised within a structure, making a clear and concise case for dumping Obama.

Eastwood's approach to this performance was not accidental. Eastwood is — by reason of his resume — the foremost expert in the world on Clint Eastwood fans. Harry Callahan may have understood that a man has to know his limitations. Eastwood knows his... and he also knows his strengths. A man does not produce and star in dozens of Clint Eastwood movies without having thought deeply about and received the benefit of copious market research into what appeals to people about Clint Eastwood.

From the standpoint of political science, it would be fair to hypothesize that appeals to both [disaffected and libertarian voters](#) (which is something of a feat) in a way that Mitt Romney could never hope to do. More colloquially, it would be fair to suggest that Eastwood appeals to the sort of people who gravitated to H. Ross Perot in the Nineties. He appeals to people who distrust institutions, who think that conventional politics fails the American people. The sort of people for whom Harry Callahan, Will Munny, Frank Horrigan, Luther Whitney and Walt Kowalski have an emotional resonance.

So why would Eastwood deliver a conventional political speech? Had he delivered his material as a series of slick-sounding zingers, it would have been the sort of speech the media expected from Chris Christie's keynote address. But that would have been: (a) not in keeping with the Romney campaign's softer approach; and (b) diminishing and disappointing to Eastwood's target audience. Most of the chattering class failed to grasp this. Some on Team Romney failed to grasp this. But the evidence coming in, both [anecdotally](#) and from [polling](#), suggests Eastwood still has his finger on the popular pulse in a way pols and pundits never will.

The Corner **[Play Clinty For Me](#)** by Mark Steyn

Like [William F. Gavin](#), I hugely enjoyed Clint Eastwood's turn last night, but I'm not sure I agree that it was "unintentionally hilarious" and that "he forgot his lines, lost his way." Clint is a brilliant actor, and a superb director of other actors (and I don't just mean a quarter-century ago: In the last five years, he's directed eight films). He's also, as Mr. Gavin observed, a terrific jazz improviser at the piano — and, in film and music documentaries, an extremely articulate interviewee. So I wouldn't assume that the general tenor of his performance wasn't exactly as

he intended. The hair was a clue: No Hollywood icon goes out on stage like that unless he means to.

John Hayward [writes](#):

The intended recipient was not Mitt Romney, the convention delegates, or even Republican voters, but rather wavering independents. Clint was there to tell them it's OK to find Obama, his ugly campaign operation, and his increasingly shrill band of die-hard defenders ridiculous. It's OK to laugh at them.

I'm not sure he could have pulled that off if he'd delivered a slick teleprompted pitch. As Mr. Hayward suggests, the hard lines packed more of a punch for being delivered in the midst of a Bob Newhart empty-chair shtick from the Dean Martin show circa 1968. Indeed, they were some of the hardest lines of the convention and may well prove the take-home ("We own this country . . . Politicians are employees of ours . . . And when somebody does not do the job, we've got to let them go"), but they seemed more effective for appearing to emerge extemporaneously from the general shambles.

The curse of political operatives is that they make everything the same. A guy smoothly reading platitudinous codswallop while rotating his head from the left-hand teleprompter to the right-hand teleprompter like clockwork as if he's at Centre Court watching the world's slowest Wimbledon rally is a very reductive idea of "professionalism." Even politicians you're well disposed to come across as slick bores in that format. Which is by way of saying Clint is too sharp and too crafty not to have known what he was doing.

Oh, and next time 'round, he should sing.

Incidentally, I'm not generally in favor of what Rob Long would call "working blue," but, if you're going to do it, doing anatomically impossible sex-act cross-talk with an invisible presidential straight-man in front of the Republican Convention is definitely the way to go.

Daily Caller

[Obama pays tribute to Neil Armstrong, the only way he knows how](#)

by Jim Treacher

We all know the world revolves around [The Greatest President in the History of Everything](#). So it makes sense that all the other celestial bodies were placed in the sky to shine down upon him.

This is not a Photoshop. This was actually posted on [Obama's official Tumblr page](#):



Neil's spirit of discovery lives on in all the men and women who have devoted their lives to exploring the unknown—including those who are ensuring that we reach higher and go further in space. That legacy will endure—sparked by a man who taught us the enormous power of one small step.

—President Obama on the passing of Neil Armstrong

Sure, Neil Armstrong walked on the moon. But only to tidy it up, so that one day it would be a suitable resting place for Obama's kingly gaze.

Hat tip to [Sooper Mexican](#), who notes that this is [a stock image from last April](#). That's how Team Obama thinks: "Hey, we got any pictures of the boss looking at the moon? Any way we can make this all about *him*?" And that attitude starts at the top. Just ask Queen Elizabeth, as she's deleting all the Obama videos from the iPod he gave her...



