

A CHEBBY IN THE NATIONAL DRIVEWAY & LESSON IN HEALTHCARE MESSAGING

✘ Barack Obama is bad and he's nationwide. And he's got a brand new ride. Check out the sled he has rolled up in the driveway of the South Portico of the White House (image by Mark Knoller). I guess when you own GM it ain't that hard to get a Chevrolet.

Say what you will about NASCAR, they are the absolute masters of brilliant product placement, fan involvement and brand messaging. They never miss an opportunity, and always have the discipline, to be on message, be consistent, sell their ideology and run a forceful and effective PR ship. Today, that ruthless efficiency was brought to the White House and Barack Obama. From the LA Times:

Wednesday afternoon President Obama appeared live on the ESPN2 show "NASCAR Now." The show originated from the White House because three-time NASCAR Sprint Cup champion Jimmie Johnson was being honored for, well, being a NASCAR champion, on the South Lawn of the White House.

"NASCAR Now" host Nicole Manske and talented analyst Brad Daugherty grilled our president about who might win the Sprint Cup championship this year and what he thought about Johnson. We were rewarded with a penetrating answer to that question that included the quote: "He looks like a pretty young guy."

Like I said, brilliant. NASCAR got their champion driver, Jimmy Johnson, in the White House, rolled his #48 Rick Hendrick

Lowe's/Kobalt Tools Chevrolet Impala up for some glamor shots and prime video footage and they managed to get it all covered by ESPN for their proprietary NASCAR show, NASCAR Now.

Now that, folks, is how you sell your product. Were it only that the Barack Obama White House had a fraction of these skills in selling their national healthcare policy. Not so much. In fact, it has been an astoundingly flimsy and ill conceived pitch almost from the start, and we still don't know what in the world Obama and the White House really stand for on the topic. As Adam Green at Open Left put it:

One could parse, and say Rahm's quote could still include the possibility of bipartisanship, but still: there's something called message discipline. The last four days have seen: statement, backtrack, statement, backtrack.

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Seriously. Can someone describe for me some master plan that might be at play here? If not, White House communications team – WTF?

No kidding. As Adam noted, Jon Stewart sums it up beautifully:

Mr. President, I can't tell if you're a Jedi – 10 steps ahead of everything – or if this whole health-care thing is kickin' your ass.

Well, so far, the smart money is on "kickin' your ass" because Obama and the White House message team has allowed wingnuts, Republicans, big moneyed healthcare corporate interests, and traitorous Blue Dogs to run the show. Time to right the messaging ship.

What kind of burn out you going to leave us with Mr. President, that of a champion or that of a nation let down?