

ADIOS ARPAIO - THE FISCAL AND LEGAL CASE FOR REMOVAL OF SHERIFF JOE



America,
indeed the
nation, is in
a financial
and legal
moribund
lurch. No
longer, if
there ever
was, is there
taxpayer money

and ethics left on balance to be wasted on
entrenched politicians sucking at our tit. You
say your's is the worst? Well, then you do not
live in Maricopa County Arizona, the home of
Sheriff Joe Arpaio.

It is time for Sheriff Joe to go. ADIOS ARPAIO!
There is a fiscal, legal and moral case to do
so.

My friend Tim Murphy, of Mother Jones, laid out
the "bizarre" freak show nature of Arpaio's
current reelection campaign in superb detail.
But only part of the story was told,
understandable as there is SO much to tell in
the Arpaio saga. Here is the rest of, or at
least some of the rest of, the story.

Joe Arpaio did not magically come to be Sheriff
of Maricopa County. It happened because the two
previous occupants of the Sheriff's Office were,
shall we say, problematic on their own. There
was Dick Godbehere, who was, prior to being
Sheriff of the fourth largest county in the
United States, literally a lawn mower repairman.
No, I kid you not. And he served with the same
level of sophistication you would expect of a
lawn mower repairman.

Then came Tom Agnos, who was supposed to return “professionalism” to the Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO). But Agnos was a subservient Sun City resident who led the MCSO into not just the biggest cock-up in Maricopa county law enforcement history, but one of national and international proportion. The Buddhist Temple Murder Case where nine buddhist monks and acolytes were lined up and shot in the back of the head, execution style, at the Wat Promkunaram Buddhist Temple on the west side of Phoenix.

It was out of the Buddhist Temple Murders Joe Arpaio came to be. A group of prominent Phoenix trial attorneys, both criminal and civil, wanted an alternative to Tom Agnos and the whitewashing coverup he was conducting on one of the greatest coerced false confession cases in world history. The group of trial lawyers coalesced around the upstart primary candidacy of a local travel agent with a colorful background. Yep, one Joseph Arpaio.

Joseph Arpaio promised that initial group of trial lawyers he would clean up the MCSO, release the damning internal report of the gross misconduct that had occurred in the Temple Murder Case under Tom Agnos, which lead to at least four false and heinously coerced confessions, and that he would refuse, under all circumstances, to serve more than one term in office. It was a promise made and, obviously, a promise long ago broken.

To be fair, Arpaio did release the internal report on the Temple Murder



Case, which led to five plus million dollar settlement for some of the most wrongfully arrested souls in American history. But with that promise kept within a short time of taking office, Joe Arpaio breached the solid promise he made to the people who gave him the seed funding carrying him into office. And Arpaio has made a mockery of his word, as a man, ever since by repeatedly running for office and sinking Maricopa County into depths of depravity and fiscal distress beyond comprehension, from the vantage of the MCSO.

Arpaio's false pretenses to get elected have turned into the fodder of liability for the county he was supposedly elected to serve and protect.

How deep has Arpaio's liability effected the taxpayers, and residents, of Maricopa County? To the tune of at least \$50 Million dollars. AT LEAST. Because that figure not only does not count the costs of defense, and they are usually astronomical in the larger cases against Arpaio, because he never admits responsibility, but also does not consider Maricopa County is self insured and may not, necessarily, publicly disclose all smaller payouts. There may, or may not, be a lot more payout, or a lot more, we just don't know.

So, what is the ledger to date? Here it is in all its sick glory. \$50 Million dollars of unnecessary payout, all because of a man, who promised, and who was initially sponsored, and brought to election, by a group who wanted change and the diametric opposite of what came to be.

Here is the worse part: the \$50 Million figure is, by all appearances, devoid of the real and hard actual costs of defending all the action on which payout was made in that spreadsheet. Hard costs are known in the legal world as attorney fees, court costs, expert witness fees, service costs, evidentiary laboratory fees – in short, fees that can add up to millions in, and among, themselves, irrespective of the underlying root

liability payouts. In short, the \$50 Million you see in the ledger is but a fraction of the real cost of Joe Arpaio's criminally and civilly negligent insolence as Sheriff of Maricopa County. Nor does the figure, of course, include the losses that already should have come from the Deborah Brailard case, much less the Matty Atensio case.

Who is Matthew Atensio represented by? That would be by one prime example of tort liability counterbalance to egregious wrongdoing, Michael Manning. Who is Michael Manning? Well, Manning is the grinning man in the photograph above, with the somewhat soullessly dumbfounded Joe Arpaio at a charity fundraiser. Manning has a right to grin at the sight of the "Toughest Sheriff In America", because Michael Manning, alone, has taken the greatest portion of the nearly \$50 Million (and very much increasingly counting) toll on the taxpayers of Maricopa County, the narcissistic propaganda obsessed figurine Joe Arpaio has cost. And Manning and fellow Phoenix attorney Joel B. Robbins, have laid the wood to Sheriff Joe, and the worst is yet to com in the form of the Atensio litigation and other compelling cases (not to mention Brailard which should have settled and, now, instead awaits a larger jury verdict on already determined damages).

You think the moral and tort liability train fueled and paid by the taxpayers and citizens of Maricopa County has sailed into the sunset? Oh no. There are mountains of liability and taxpayer's coffer's payouts on the horizon. The only question is if the residents and voters of Maricopa County will wake up and end the madness now, or whether they will give yet another term of office to the Most Liable and Wasteful Sheriff In American History".

The dedicated folks at "Adios Arpaio" have done yeoman's work in identifying, registering, and encouraging tens of thousands, if not more of, not just latino, but voters of all colors and stripes, to vote in this election. A heroic

effort.

But where does that leave the citizens of Maricopa County? Arguably still short against the self promoting dynamo that is Sheriff Joe Arpaio. It is a living monument to the benign destruction caused by hyped belligerence, ignorance and apathy in a designated and restricted electorate. Joseph Arpaio came into office as the the promised one term agent of well meaning, and will leave, to the shame of Maricopa County as perhaps the most disgraceful official ever elected in the county. The only question is, whether that is now or four years from now.

Will morality and justice be delayed? By the real signs on the ground in Arizona, as opposed to national hype, probably no. It will, nevertheless, be an everlasting blemish on the character of the electorate of Maricopa County. It wasn't as if you, and actually we, didn't know.

The better question is what becomes of the righteous Adios Arpaio movement? Honestly, if this level of awareness and action had been brought here in relation, early on, to the Scott Norberg deaths at the Maricopa County Jail facilities run by Joe Arpaio, perhaps soooo much more death, destruction and liability could have been avoided. Not to detract from anything, everything, existing now, that did not then, in the way of putting a stop to Arpaio, is it enough? No, likely the current effort, much less this post, is not.

But, then, let it not be said there was not effort and argument made between then and now. There is a man, Arpaio, who should be removed from office and, if the electorate's voice is willing to suffer exactly that, a remedy for the corpse of Matty Atensio, who died for Jesus's sins, but so far, apparently, not Arpaio's sins. Like an imperious "Wall Street Bankster".

Where is the bullshit in Maricopa County going to end? Will the truth of the civil, criminal

and moral liability of "The Toughest Sheriff in Town" be exposed? Only the voters of Arizona, who are not half as stupid as generally portrayed, will decide.

I sincerely hope intelligence and discretion win out over appearance and material duplicity. But, then again, such would not seem to be the characteristic of the modern Arizona electorate. It is a screwed up place in a screwed up time.

But, if the Leader of the Free World, Barack Obama, much less Joe Biden, cannot even be bothered to haul at least one of their self serving ass here to Arizona, when the election and morals are on the line, in a state in the process of turning from Red to Blue under the absentee watch, then why exactly should lifelong Democrats here give a flying fuck about the national ticket? Seriously, tell me why?

So, there is no national action, to even respectably mention, in Arizona. Arizona has been left to fend for itself as being useless and worthless by a craven two party system of two hollow jackasses but, even more significantly, by a national press system of court jester reporters, stenographers, and thin skinned puppet stringed mopes who cannot tell the difference between themselves and the common political flaming jackasses they cover. There is a national press who shouts "Semper Fi" while selling out everything they were trained and hired to do. I know several will read this, the question is who among them will adopt it, who will ignore it, and who will whine like pathetic thin skinned poseurs? Boo yah bitches, I am waiting. Show us your colors; if you cannot now in the heat of battle, then when? Answer up.

Which leaves us where we entered, with Sheriff Joe Arpaio. Arpaio is a blight upon Maricopa County. Unelect him. Adios Arpaio.

There are further vignettes to be painted regarding Arpaio. Here are a couple of particularly poignant ones. Arpaio And Thomas: The Most Unethical Sheriff And Prosecutor In

America Conspire To Abuse Power And Obstruct Justice oh, and not to mention the seminal “House Judiciary Cuffs Joe Arpaio, The Most Abusive Sheriff In America“. Read and know both if you want to know Sheriff Joe.

Unelect this guy!

RICK SCOTT, FLORIDA REPUBLICAN LEGISLATURE USED BLATANTLY PARTISAN TACTICS TO SUPPRESS DEMOCRATIC VOTES

Florida Governor Rick Scott has done his best to prevent Democrats voting in the 2012 Presidential Election. First, Scott and his Republican legislature undertook a purge of Florida’s voting lists that was so biased against minorities (who tend to vote Democratic) that the state was sued by the Department of Justice for violating the National Voter Registration Act. The purge was so overly aggressive that there are now reports of multiple military personnel being disenfranchised by the State of Florida for the 2012 election. In addition, Scott and his Republican co-conspirators in the legislature dramatically cut back on early voting hours in Florida.

Marc Caputo of the Miami Herald has been following voting issues in Florida closely. He has posted the results for how many Floridians voted early this year, as seen in the table [here](#).

Early vote numbers:

Party	EV Total	%
DEM	1,109,262	46%
REP	862,277	36%
IND	440,133	18%
TOTAL	2,411,672	

Absentee vote:

Party	AB Total	%
REP	885,675	43%
DEM	806,310	39%
IND	365,736	18%
TOTAL	2,057,721	

Combined:

Party	EV Total	%
DEM	1,915,572	43%
REP	1,747,952	39%
IND	805,869	18%
TOTAL	4,469,393	

Note that Democrats had a very much larger turnout than Republicans for early voting but Republicans had the advantage in absentee voting.

Caputo noted that the changed law for 2012 cut early voting hours back from 14 days to 8 days. However, Floridians responded to the cutback by turning out in almost as big numbers and despite waits of 8 hours or more at some locations, there were 2.4 million early votes this year compared to 2.6 million in 2008.

One of Caputo's most important observations about the changes in Florida's voting laws concerns the relative treatment of early voting and absentee voting:

Guess which type of voting Republicans specialize in? Absentee ballots. Democrats do better at in-person early voting. Though more fraud-prone, absentee ballot voting wasn't touched in the election law Scott signed that shortened early voting days.

What? Fraud in a type of voting Republicans

prefer? Yes, there are major vote fraud cases of absentee ballot fraud going on from the very northern part of the state in Madison County to the south in Miami-Dade County. But of course, despite claiming that their voter roll and early voting hour changes were aimed at assuring a fair election free of fraud, Scott and his lackeys left untouched the easiest route to fraud, which just so happens to also be the form of pre-election voting that their side prefers. Their moves now stand as a clear indicator that Florida's Governor and legislature have no qualms about suppressing the votes of their opponents while enabling fraud on their own side.

We can only hope that the people of Florida wake up to these disgusting tactics before voting in the 2014 gubernatorial election.

SICK OF THE ELECTION JIZ VIRTUALLY SPEAKING TRASH TALK

If there were more days remaining, say maybe seven, perhaps there would be reason to throw some politics in here for discussion. But, no, there are, as I write this blarney, only four days left in our long national nightmare. So, enough of the yankee doodle dandies in their gold Rolls Royces, and car elevators, enough of the relentless ads and horserace discussion, let us instead talk football.

But this week it will not just be here, Marcy and I will also be appearing with Jay Ackroyd on Blog Talk Radio Sunday at 9pm EST [note corrected time] and other times adjusted accordingly moving ever westward. To talk about the election? Nope, enough of that, we will be talking trash about football baybee! So come

join us, here is a link to the audio feed on the net and if you are in Second Life, you can find us there as well. Even better, you too, my friends and friendettes can call in and yammer with us by dialing (646) 200-3440 during the show. Can't promise how many get through, because I am a rookie at this, but what the heck give it a try. Exciting!

With that public service announcement out of the way, let's get down to business. First up is, of course, the student athletes. The game of the week finally does not have to do with the Blighted Irish. This week it is without question Alabama at LSU. Both teams have big and nasty defenses, but the Crimson Tide has a quietly cold blooded efficient offense, and I think, coupled with the defense, it will be too much for LSU. The other critical showdown is Oregon at USC. Can Matt Barkley and the Trojans get their mojo back and spoil the Ducks' season? Maybe, the game is in the Coliseum and the Men of Troy have a lot of weapons in the offensive skill positions. But their O-line is not up to usual par, nor is the defense. And, as I witnessed in person a couple of weeks ago, the Quackers are big, fast and badass; I'm sticking with the boys with the billed beaks. Lastly, an honorable mention to Colin Klein and Kansas State, who host the always dangerous Oklahoma State.

On to the pros. The big cheese here is the Cardinals at Packers. Okay, not really, the Pack will light up and then crush the Cardinals in Lambeau and send the once promising season for Arizona further down the toilet. The game I am strangely hooked on is Miami at Indianapolis. The Fish are WAY better than anybody thought. Philbin can coach, Tannehill can throw, and Reggie Bush can be a featured back. Oh, and the defense is quietly awesome. Miami looks to be for real; but so too do the Colts and Andrew Luck. No clue which way this one will go, but maybe a slight edge to the Fish because of the D.

The third game on the slate for discussion is Pittsburgh at the Giants. Really, this is probably the best game of the week. Good/Bad Eli and Big Ben both came out of the 2004 draft, and both have a couple of Super Bowl wins. Both teams traditionally have punishing defenses. Fun fact: "This is the first time quarterbacks in opposite conferences with multiple championships are meeting in a regular-season game since Joe Montana's 49ers beat Jim Plunkett's Los Angeles Raiders in 1985." The game is in the Meadowlands where emotions will be running high from Sandy. Everything points to a win for the Gents, but the Stillers are starting to gel after a rough start to the season, and I think they may pull off an upset.

Hard to see Dallas having much for the Falcons in Atlanta. A better question is who in the world will win between the Saints and Eagles down in Nawlins on Monday Night? Both teams have been quite sucky to date. I don't think any team in history has given up more yards on defense through the first seven games than the Saints, and Drew Brees is getting uncharacteristically hammered behind a porous O-line. Mark Ingram has been close to a bust at running back. It ain't pretty down in the Big Easy. Nor has it been for Mike Vick and the Iggles. His and Any Reid's jobs may truly be on the line. Both teams are desperate for a win, but I think Philly is a better team and will take the win.

Lastly, the Circus is up and running in Abu Dhabi this weekend. Sebastian Vettel had some problems with the brakes on his Red Bull in practice and spent most of the time in the garage. Qualifying is underway as I post – and it has just wound up. Lewis Hamilton was fast and took pole. Mark Webber will join him on the front row, with Vettel and Maldonado in the second row. Jenson starts from a disappointing P6 and Alonso is all the way back in P7 and Massa in P9. Two oddities may affect the final grid by tomorrow: Vettel stopped his car on the track as qualifying ended, and that is usually a penalty. Secondly, Ferrari was working beyond

permissible hours last night in the garage, and that may yet cast Alonso and Massa. We shall see.

The Yas Marina Circuit is the most expensive track on the calendar, and it is indeed beautiful. It is also a pretty fine track for racing. Here is a nice video overview by CNN from when Yas Marina first opened in 2009. Should be an excellent race and it goes off at 8 am EST Sunday morning (think I have that right, it is the stupid daylight savings time change day).

So, that is it for this weekend. Music above is the original promo video of Elected by Alice from 1972 and it is pretty fun. Rip it up!

AND THEY'RE OFF! 4 GOPERS MAKE BID FOR 2016 OVER MITT'S STILL-WARM BODY



I'm
not
really
sure
why
the
pundit
s are
wastin
g time
decidi
ng

whether Nate Silver is a wizard or a washed out baseball junky. There's another fairly clear sign that insiders believe Obama will win this election: the number of 2016 GOP contenders who are shifting into campaign mode.

Chris Christie can be forgiven for boosting up Obama's image as President the last week of the campaign. After all it makes him look Presidential. More importantly, it'll ensure NJ gets lots of quick federal attention. (Though it did remind me that Christie used his coming out party at Mitt's RNC to talk about Chris Christie.)

Jeb! was a bit more circumspect, spending a Mitt campaign appearance bitching that Obama blames his brother for ... things his brother did.

"His entire strategy is to blame others – starting with my brother, of course," Bush said during a campaign rally for Mitt Romney in Coral Gables, Fla.

"Basically, he blames every possible thing rather than having the humility to be able to reach out and to find common ground."

But the most amusing bid for the 2016 front-runner position comes from Paul Ryan's unnamed backers (though Governor Kasich is quoted by name) inventing reasons why Ryan wouldn't fulfill the other position he's running for (Congressman)—including that his newfound popularity would fracture the Republican caucus or that Democrats would make him cast difficult votes. So, these anonymous advisors say, Ryan should instead write a book or become a Professor or lobby or think tank.

Anything for an opportunity to make public use of PowerPoint.

That is why some of Ryan's biggest boosters are considering whether it wouldn't be better for Ryan to resign from the House. He could write a book – "saving America" is a theme often bandied about – or teach at a university.

After all, on the campaign trail, Ryan is as much lecturer as campaigner. Aides routinely set up giant video screens so

Ryan can use visual aids to walk audiences through the minutiae of budget politics. Graphs and charts are as common as yard signs and American flags at some events, with Ryan settling into his role as explainer in chief.

Yet curiously, those aides mention a 2016 Presidential bid at least 4 [Update—oops! 5] times in the article.

...future President Ryan?

...biding his time until a presidential run of his own.

a leading White House contender in 2016...

...forcing him to take sides on measures that could come back to haunt him during a presidential bid.

Ryan's allies aren't ruling out a bid for the top spot for their friend.

5 mentions of the next Presidential cycle, about a guy who's on the ticket for this cycle.

And finally there's this "accidental" email sent by Newt's people:

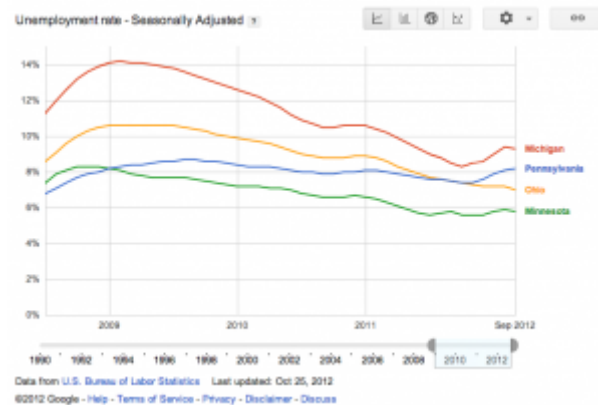
"The truth is, the next election has already been decided. Obama is going to win. It's nearly impossible to beat an incumbent president," advertiser Porter Stansberry wrote in the email to Gingrich supporters. "What's actually at stake right now is whether or not he will have a third-term."

You gotta get an early start, I guess, if you'll be 73 when you run again.

It's all rather ghoulish, this campaigning to take over Mitt's position as the party's standard bearer before the race has even been called.

I don't feel all that bad for Mitt, though. After all, he has participated in the weird custom of posthumously baptizing people, basically converting people after they're dead. Republicans, apparently, follow the opposite strategy, burying you while you're still technically alive.

CREEPING UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE NEW BATTLEFIELDS: PA AND MI



The big news of the campaign, once you get beyond Mitt's

kabuki storm assistance and auto bashing, is that PA and MI are battlegrounds again.

Maybe.

First, Restore Our Future PAC announced \$2 million ad buys in both states. The the Obama campaign announced they'd buy ads as well.

Today, the Detroit News has a poll showing Mitt within 2.7% of Obama (though polling ended on the 29th, when Mitt's deceitful auto binge began). In fact, while Romney and Ryan were "not campaigning" yesterday, Ann Romney was, here in Grand Rapids.

Some commentators suggest this is just Mitt's

effort to open up new battlegrounds as it becomes clear he won't win OH and might not win VA (or FL, but that would be game over for him). That is, Mitt has to look viable, and by moving into MI and PA, he can sustain narratives that he still has a shot.

That may be what's going on.

But it pays to look at what has been going on with the unemployment rate in both MI and PA (I've included OH for comparison and MN because it often gets thrown into these discussions).

MI's unemployment rate is up 1% off its recent low in April (the downtick this month, and some of last month's uptick, is probably due to the way the auto companies handled model year layoffs). Part of the uptick is probably due to Rick Snyder's austerity plans; part is probably due to Obama's failure to provide real mortgage relief.

PA's unemployment rate is up .8% from its recent low in May. Here, too, Republican governor Tom Corbett has pursued austerity measures. In addition, PA is exposed to the Euro-related decline that has hurt much of the Northeast.

The point, though, is that both these states have the makings of a battleground state—including a white working class population that can swing with economic tides—plus rising unemployment. Obama is still ahead in both. A few more ads about the auto bailout—indeed, Mitt's deceitful attacks on GM and Chrysler generally—will probably move MI back towards Obama. And the Philadelphia area was spared the worst of Sandy, staving off the possibility that Pennsylvania would have unimpeded voting while the Democratic Southeast would have floods. So it's still most likely Obama will win both by comfortable margins.

But one thing makes movement towards Mitt more realistic here than in, say, MN. The economy is getting worse again. And in spite of all Mitt's unforced errors in recent days, and in spite of the way that Snyder and Corbett's state level

policies—which mirror those Mitt would adopt at the federal level—have almost certainly exacerbated unemployment, voters may still turn to Mitt as an alternative to a stalled recovery.

Mitt's play in MI and PA is probably a ploy to look viable. But there are a lot of unemployed workers in both states who will help him along.

WHY DOES MITT HATE PROFIT?

[I posted substantially this post yesterday, but the BlogGods ate it along the way. So I'm reposting.]

Along with the deceitful attack on Italians who make better car company owners than GOP Private Equity types and the Lee Iacocca spin, Mitt has rolled out a radio version of attack on the auto bailout. From Greg Sargent, here's part of the script:

Barack Obama says he saved the auto industry. But for who? Ohio, or China? Under President Obama, GM cut 15,000 American jobs. But they are planning to double the number of cars built in China – which means 15,000 more jobs for China.

And now comes word that Chrysler plans to start making jeeps in – you guessed it – China. What happened to the promises made to autoworkers in Toledo and throughout Ohio – the same hard-working men and women who were told that Obama's auto bailout would help *them*?

The ad continues Mitt's deceptive insinuation that GM and Chrysler aren't also adding jobs in the US, which they are doing.

But it does something else. It takes a decidedly anti-profit stance.

You see, there are two reasons car companies are so gung-ho to enter (or re-enter, in the case of Jeep) the Chinese market. First, because it's growing; when I was working in China, auto people considered the rising Chinese middle class to be 300 million—almost an entire US full of population. And most of them were just aspiring to buy their first car. That's a whole lot of first time car buyers to sell to, as compared to US consumers, who are driving less and replacing their cars at a slower pace given more durable cars.

The other reason to go to China? Profit margins are bigger there than here. When I was in Shanghai in the mid-2000s, the profit margin on Buick Regals was about \$2,000, as compared to the roughly \$200 profit margin on a similar car here. The margins are closer now (because manufacturing in the US has gotten cheaper and in China has gotten more expensive), but China still offers good profit margins. Selling Buick Regals or Jeeps in China allows GM and Chrysler to accept lower margins on cars here.

By selling high margin cars in China, US companies can be more competitive here, meaning they will be able to expand sales and therefore production here, too.

All this is implicit in Sergio Marchionne's response to Mitt's ignorant rantings.

Together, we are working to establish a global enterprise and previously announced our intent to return Jeep production to China, the world's largest auto market, in order to satisfy local market demand, which would not otherwise be accessible. Chrysler Group is interested in expanding the customer base for our award-winning Jeep vehicles, which can only be done by establishing local production. This will ultimately help bolster the Jeep

brand, and solidify the resilience of U.S. jobs.

Marchionne notes 1) you can't sell in China unless you build in China, 2) selling in China makes the Jeep brand stronger, 3) making the Jeep brand (and its profit margins) stronger makes it easier to keep up US production.

Marchionne's implicit point should be where this discussion is heading: free trade hasn't worked out to be fair trade. China—and Japan and Korea—still protect their markets, meaning if you want to sell there, you've got to make cars there.

Mitt has promised to get tough on China. But his series of auto ads have made no mention—not a peep!—of how he'll reverse this practice and make it possible for Jeep to export cars made in Toledo. Indeed, when Obama launched a trade dispute over auto parts in September, Mitt scoffed at the effort (and ignored Obama's decent and sustained effort launching trade disputes, one of which pertaining to specialty steel recently won at the WTO).

“The president may think that announcing new trade lawsuits less than two months before the election will distract from his record, but American businesses and workers struggling on an uneven playing field know better,” Mr. Romney said in a speech to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in Los Angeles.

Mitt Romney wants to attack American companies for going where profits are. And he's doing so without discussing why that's necessary.

That makes him neither a tough guy nor a good businessman.

LEE IACocca: MITT WILL MAKE IT EASIER FOR AUTO COMPANIES TO EVADE TAXES ON CARS BUILT IN CHINA

As part of its effort to pretend that Mitt would be good for the auto industry, the campaign had Lee Iacocca sum up why Mitt would be good for the auto industry.

The first paragraph of specifics reads:

When Mitt Romney is president, he will reduce our nation's corporate tax rate to 25 percent from 35 percent – currently the highest combined tax rate in the industrial world – so that American car companies can compete on a level playing field at home and abroad. He will also stop the extra tax automakers are forced to pay when they want to bring home their profits to reinvest in the United States. President Obama could have done this the day he took office since his party controlled both houses of Congress, but he chose not to. [my emphasis]

Obama, of course, has a tax credit specifically for manufacturing companies, meaning under Obama the auto companies would pay less than under Mitt.

But the other part—particularly against Mitt's egregious claims that the auto bailout has helped Chrysler and GM move production overseas—is even more ridiculous.

Iacocca says Mitt would be better for the auto companies because he'd allow the auto companies to repatriate profits from overseas without paying taxes.

But that assumes, of course, they're making profits overseas. It would mean they were doing precisely the thing Mitt is attacking—moving into new markets, like China.

So on the same day Mitt attacks Chrysler and GM for making and selling cars in China, generating greater profit it can use to support workers here, his campaign sends out a post boasting that Mitt would require Chrysler and GM to contribute less domestically on the profits they made by making and selling cars in China.

ITALIAN AUTOMAKER BRINGS ABOUT CHRYSLER SUCCESS AFTER GOP PRIVATE EQUITY FAILURE

I've been a bit tardy in responding to Mitt's latest cynical ploy, to pretend that rather than expanding production and jobs in both OH and MI, Chrysler is outsourcing production to China.

The Detroit News' David Shepardson has a good fact check on Mitt's latest ad here. Greg Sargent rounds up OH papers mocking Mitt's claims here.

But there's an angle on Mitt's claims that has been missed. His ad says,

Obama ... sold Chrysler to Italians who are going to build Jeeps, in China.

As Shepardson notes, Chrysler used to build Jeeps in China for the Chinese market. Ford builds cars in China for the Chinese market. GM

builds cars in China for the Chinese market (GM also exports Chinese-built subcompacts to Latin America). Chrysler's return to the world's largest car market is smart business, something any viable global brand needs to do.

If it's a moral failing for Presidents to preside over private car companies trying to compete in China, then Mitt has a problem with St. Reagan, during whose Administration Jeep first made groundbreaking entries into the Chinese market.

And if Mitt has a problem with Chrysler (or Ford or GM) building cars in China to sell in China, then he had better prepare to get far tougher with China than he has threatened to do so far. China still slaps huge tariffs on cars made outside of the country, so to be viable in the world's largest automotive market, you have to build in China. That is the crux of the argument American car companies (and Midwestern politicians) have been making for decades: while the US allows imports from all countries, Japan and Korea and now China make it very difficult to export to those countries. This is not fair trade.

But I'm most offended by Mitt's insinuation that selling Chrysler to an Italian company—he doesn't mention Fiat by name—was disloyal.

Recall Chrysler's recent history. Chrysler's most recent strong point was the early 2000s, when it succeeded in developing nifty (albeit gimmicky) cars with shortened development cycles (think PT Cruiser). But as Daimler took more control over Chrysler, it invested less in the brand. GOP Private Equity firm Cerberus bought its first 80% of the company in 2007 and picked up the rest in 2009.

Cerberus had no intention of bringing Chrysler back to its former strength. Rather, it wanted to strip out the finance side of the company (it was investing in GMAC at the same time) and sell off the rest. But with the impending financial crisis, it never managed to pull off the trick

(though it did get a bank bailout in the very last days of the Bush Administration). Meanwhile, it virtually put the Chrysler model development on autopilot while it tried to find a way to cut its losses.

Thus, when it came time for bailouts, there didn't seem much to bail out at Chrysler. Unlike GM, which really had started making a turnaround, Chrysler had no product in the pipeline to suggest it would be worth bailing out (though it did have a few super efficient factories in the US).

Choosing to bailout Chrysler was the most difficult decision Obama made during the auto bailout. I'm not even sure I would have chosen to bail it out. And it was difficult precisely because a bunch of Republican vulture capitalist types—people like former VP Dan Quayle and former Treasury Secretary John Snow—had stripped the company.

[youtube]SKL254Y_jtc[/youtube]

In came Fiat and its Steve Jobs-like CEO Sergio Marchionne. As it scrambled to start filling the Chrysler product pipeline again, it kept up the brand—and sales—with the kind of compelling advertising not seen from an American car company in decades. That bought it time to bring in Fiat's own popular cars—like the 500—and start making Chrysler back into a car—rather than finance—company.

And it's working. Today, Chrysler announced profits up 80%.

Chrysler Group LLC posted an 80 percent rise in quarterly net income on Monday on stronger new vehicle sales, continuing the U.S. automaker's comeback from its 2009 bankruptcy.

Chrysler, majority owned by Italy's Fiat SpA (FIA.MI), also reaffirmed its outlook for the year. Fiat will issue its earnings on Tuesday.

Net income in the third quarter rose to \$381 million from \$212 million a year earlier. Net revenue increased 18 percent to \$15.48 billion.

Globally, Chrysler's auto sales rose 12 percent to 556,000 vehicles in the quarter.

"We've changed the conversation at Chrysler Group," said Sergio Marchionne, chief executive of both Chrysler and Fiat.

Mitt Romney may disdain the Italian company that focused Chrysler on making cars again. But the comparison couldn't be more stark. Cerberus—a bunch of GOP PE guys that differ from Bain Capital not in philosophy but probably in IQ—ran Chrysler into the ground as it tried to strip everything but the finance out of the company. Fiat came in and started building cars again.

And now, as it returns to viability, it's entering back into the Chinese market the way almost every other company does: by building in China.

That's a success story. But Mitt, I guess, would like to bring Chrysler back to the PE approach of stripping the company rather than building it up.

Update: Marchionne refutes Mitt's bullshit:

We also are investing to improve and expand our entire U.S. operations, including our Jeep facilities. The numbers tell the story:

- *We will invest more than \$1.7 billion to develop and produce the next generation Jeep SUV, the successor of the Jeep Liberty – including \$500 million*

directly to tool and expand our Toledo Assembly Complex and will be adding about 1,100 jobs on a second shift by 2013.

- *At our Jefferson North Assembly Plant, where we build the Jeep Grand Cherokee, we have created 2,000 jobs since June 2009 and have invested more than \$1.8 billion.*
- *In Belvidere, where we build two Jeep models, we have added two shifts since 2009 resulting in an additional 2,600 jobs.*

With the increase in demand for our vehicles, especially Jeep branded vehicles, we have added more than 11,200 U.S. jobs since 2009. Plants producing Jeep branded vehicles alone have seen the number of people invested in the success of the Jeep brand grow to more than 9,300 hourly jobs from 4,700. This will increase by an additional 1,100 as the Liberty successor, which will be produced in Toledo, is introduced for global distribution in the second quarter of 2013.

WHEREIN DC SIR LANCELOTS TURN THEIR TAIL AND FLEE LIKE CANDYASS SIR ROBINS

Attention Americans:

Those brave elected and appointed representatives who represent YOU in the Federal Government are fleeing! Well, granted, I guess that doesn't really account for the elected members of Congress who have been diddling and twiddling their thumbs, among other things, for a while now in order to suck at the tit of corporate cash, while doing nothing for you on the record at their elected jobs (no, Darrell Issa's dog and pony show doesn't count) and throw it around to perpetuate a fraud on you.

But, as they say in movies, that is something completely different.

No, here is the notice I take just a little umbrage with:

Non-emergency employees (including employees on pre-approved paid leave) will be granted excused absence (administrative leave) for the number of hours they were scheduled to work unless they are:

required to telework,
on official travel outside of the Washington, DC, area,
on leave without pay, or
on an alternative work schedule (AWS) day off.

Telework-Ready Employees who are scheduled to perform telework on the day of the announcement or who are required to perform unscheduled telework on a day

when Federal offices are closed to the public must telework the entire workday or request leave, or a combination of both, in accordance with their agencies' policies and procedures, subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements.

Emergency Employees are expected to report to their worksites unless otherwise directed by their agencies.

As friend of the blog, Timothy Shorrock, noted:

No government Monday. A state of anarchy will reign!

I'm with Tim, we are all SO SCREWED!

Okay, and I'm going to take a flyer that Mr. Shorrock agrees, the nation may not only survive, but actually prosper without the usual cabal of corrupt con men and bloodsuckers that generally run things in Washington DC on a "normal" day. Call me crazy, but I am going out on that limb.

Here is my issue: They are all bozos on that bus. Pretty much all of the NOAA, CNN and other data intensive models have been predicting this likely Sand path for days.

Our Men in Havana, er, I mean men and women in DC, are just figuring this out now??? Perhaps the usual rhesus monkey brains were otherwise occupied still figuring out the Administration's housing policy.

And, look at the directive. What does it really say? That the poohbahs suggest common workers, just being notified a couple of hours before they go to sleep, do what they were already doing, or already had the option to do, and work from home. For any others unable to do so, the suggestion is they take leave.

In short, the real backbone of the federal government, the regular workers, are being

treated in a tardy and tawdry manner.

By the 1% MOTUs. Shocking, no?

So, while the politicians who are not already cravenly out of town on your dime are absent, even the remaining Knights of The Pinhead Table run like crazed Sir Robins.

Ain't that America?

Uh, yeah, so tomorrow will be different from exactly what other day you federal jackasses??

Because, Congress, the DOJ, the SEC, the FEC, the NLRB, and all the rest, BEFORE SANDY, were soooooo totally responsive to the needs and desires of their constituents.

On a serious note, this hurricane is pretty clearly a grave matter for human safety. Care SHOULD be taken. The projected damage had the DC/Eastern Virginia/Maryland area in the cone of danger in nearly every projection.

The federal government waited until now to tell regular workers, the real backbone of our functioning government to, paraphrasing "stay at home if you have that already available, or otherwise work as best you can.

That is loathsome from a leadership of cowardly and craven Sir Robins. And, on the remote chance you do not understand what a "Sir Robin" is, watch the video.

YEP, JONATHAN CHAIT WAS WRONG

A number of weeks ago, I disputed Jonathan Chait's claim that Obama would have a poorer chance in the last three debates.

| The VP Debate: the Angry Old Man

Chait argues, first of all, that Joe Biden will try to refute Paul Ryan's budget kabuki, which will end up making the Vice President look like an angry old man.

[snip]

And when Biden delivers lines like the one from his DNC (after 9:00 in the video)...

My dad never failed to remind us that a job is a about a lot more than a paycheck. It's about your dignity. It's about respect. It's about your place in the community. It's about being able to look your child in the eye and saying 'honey, it's going to be okay.'

... He credibly addresses men and women who otherwise aren't being spoken to in this election.

If Joe Biden is an angry old man, he's a lot like the angry old men who will swing this election.

The Town Hall where the questions voters want answered finally get asked

Then there's the Town Hall debate, where real people rather than a crusty old PBS host get to ask the questions. Chait thinks Obama will fail here because he'll spend time filleting Mitt rather than answering questions.

[snip]

But one of the problems with the last debate was precisely in the stupid choice of questions Jim Lehrer asked.

[snip]

I would expect that the questions from real people will be far more favorable

to Obama because the things voters care about provide Obama to describe where he has been successful and where the guy who brags about creating \$9/hour jobs he admits don't pay the bills tends to fail.

Plus, some of Mitt's biggest campaign gaffes have come when he responded to regular questions with douchbag answers—the "corporations are people" problem. Obama may be standoffish, but Mitt is standoffish and tone deaf when speaking with real people. And that, too, should serve Obama.

Debating RomneyShambles

Then there's the foreign policy debate, an area where even Republicans recognize Mitt's weaknesses. Chait thinks this will go badly because it won't provide Obama an opportunity to talk about domestic issues.

And then the final debate centers on foreign policy. Obama can try to use some of the questions to turn to domestic policy, but that risks a scolding from host Bob Schieffer.

But unless Mitt pulls another total Etch-a-Sketch—even from the content of his speech today—he's going to say really stupid things, such as playing up Russia as our worst enemy.

More importantly, just about every foreign policy—except torture—that Mitt aggressively embraces is unpopular with voters. Mitt almost certainly will call for starting a new war, while Obama will claim (not entirely credibly) to have ended two wars. Even on trade, where Obama's championing of three new trade deals, Mitt could tack left of Obama, he

has chosen instead to accuse Obama of not supporting free trade.

I was right on the money on some points—Biden did use that same line from the debate. The questions from real people were better than the questions from moderators. Mitt looked pathetic when arguing that Iran has no access to the sea.

I was wrong about others: I apparently underestimated Mitt's willingness to etch-a-sketch on foreign policy. I underestimated how much both candidate would insist on discussing domestic issues in the last debate. I underestimated how pathetic Mitt's efforts to pander to his binders full of women would be.

But it's quite clear that every one of these debates was better than Obama's performance in the first one. By most measures, Biden and Obama won all three. And it's clear that that was partly because of the format. (And Raddatz, Crowley, and Schieffer were better than Lehrer.)

I make this point not to say I told Chait so. Rather, because the entire lefty twittersphere read Chait's essay and adopted it as convention wisdom. Why?

There was good reason after the first debate to observe that Obama tanked it, badly. But to suggest that Obama wouldn't be better in responding to real voters? In discussing foreign policy?

There were complaints after the first debate that Democrats didn't have as many hacks willing to lie about Obama's performance as the GOP has on their side. That has borne out.

But another part of the problem is Democrats' willingness to worry about poor analysis.