

# AN AIRPLANE WINDOW ON MITT'S THINKING

Let me start by saying I'm grateful that Ann Romney—as well as the pilot and co-pilot who were in the cockpit of Ann's chartered plane where a fire broke out Friday, forcing them to make an emergency landing—are safe. I'm sure the entire episode was frightening and I'm happy that the pilots didn't panic about the fire.

But now that she is safe—but looking ahead to six more solid weeks of chartered air travel—I'm surprised by Mitt's problem solving process. The solution to this scare, Mitt says, is to make it possible to open windows on planes.

"I appreciate the fact that she is on the ground, safe and sound. And I don't think she knows just how worried some of us were," Romney said. "When you have a fire in an aircraft, there's no place to go, exactly, there's no — and you can't find any oxygen from outside the aircraft to get in the aircraft, because the windows don't open. I don't know why they don't do that. It's a real problem. So it's very dangerous. And she was choking and rubbing her eyes. Fortunately, there was enough oxygen for the pilot and copilot to make a safe landing in Denver. But she's safe and sound."

Never mind the obvious reasons you can't have windows that open on jets, never mind the additional problems introduced if you tried to have open windows in the cockpit, where the fire and smoke—and therefore the greatest risk—broke out.

I'm more interested in what this says about Mitt's problem solving.

If it were my spouse on the plane, I'd want to know the cause of the fire—preliminarily they

say electrical problems—and more importantly why it wasn't prevented. On a commercial jet, a pilot would have to follow a pre-flight protocol to try to identify any failures; did this charter? On a commercial jet, you'd have the maintenance schedules to track whether someone overlooked an electrical problem; did this charter jet?

The charter company Mitt uses most—Air Charter Team—is a broker. It doesn't operate or staff the planes involved. They contract out to other operators. They ensure the safety of the planes they deal with by contracting with a research company to grade the teams they use.

Air Charter Team has contracted with Aviation Research Group (ARG/US) to provide our customers with comprehensive safety information on the charter operators and pilots we utilize on your behalf. The report our company receives on each air charter operator and pilot gives us the background and safety information we need to make a sensible decision on who to use for your private jet charters.

[snip]

The CHEQ report (Charter Evaluation and Qualification report) has three major components that air charter companies use: historical safety ratings, current aircraft and pilot background checks, and on-site safety audits. Analysis of these components results in four potential levels of safety rating: DNQ, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. Each level reflects analysis and ranking based on increasing amounts of detailed information on the charter operator.

If it were my spouse who had had an emergency landing on a charter my campaign was using (and presumably would use for the next six weeks), I'd want to double check this assurance. Was Ann

on a Platinum graded plane? Were the reports in the plane's historical aircraft checks accurate?

That is, I'd want to know if the subcontractors my contracted service was using were fulfilling my needs. But not Mitt. This guy—a guy with a JD/MBA—thinks first of a way to minimize the damage from a fire that would be dangerous under any circumstances, rather than ensuring very obviously procedural means to try to avoid a fire were in place.

Such a method of problem solving—even a problem that affects him personally—doesn't say much about what kind of problem solving he'd do as a President.

Update: According to the pool reporter, Mitt was joking about the windows.

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## **HOW TO MAKE MITT'S TAX RATE LOOK 3.5% HIGHER THAN IT WAS**

As you've surely heard, Mitt has finally released his tax return for 2011 along with a statement signed by Pricewaterhouse Coopers and certified by its General Counsel, Diana Weiss, summarizing what he paid for a 20 year span of time: 1990-2009.

Mitt's campaign admitted this afternoon that he had paid more taxes than required this year to ensure he fulfilled an earlier statement that he always paid at least 13%. Had he deducted everything he could have, TPM figures, he'd have paid 12.2%. So we know what we're seeing was manipulated for public consumption.

Greg Sargent tells us another way it was manipulated: by taking an average of the rate paid each year, rather than taking his total

income and his total taxes and calculating that percentage. This has the effect of hiding the years when he paid almost no taxes on a whole lot of income.

Center for Tax Justice notes one reason this kind of average skews the PwC summary greatly.

Further, the summary provided by his lawyer is playing games by averaging Romney's 20-year tax rate. Including the years 1992-97 skewed his rate upwards because during those years, the capital gains rate was 28 percent instead of the 15 percent it is now. If they'd averaged only the last 15 years, his rate would have been much lower.

And we know that the averaging has skewed the tax rates. Consider the last bullet from the PwC letter:

Total federal income taxes owed, total state income taxes reported, and total donations deducted during the period represent 38.49% of your total adjusted gross income for the period.

You'd think, given the campaign's admission they were just averaging the tax rates overall, this would be the sum of those averages. But it's not:

Federal	20.20%	
State	8.36%	
Donations	13.45%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>42.01%</b>	38.49%

If you add up those three average amounts, it equals 42.01%. Yet PwC admits that the total is actually just 38.49%—over 3.5% lower than the summed averages.

Furthermore, there seems to be more funny business going on here. That last bullet is not including like categories: it adds up "total

income taxes **owed**,” “total state income taxes **reported**,” and “total donations **deducted**.” Why distinguish between what was (or is) owed at the federal level from what was reported at the state level?

That inconsistency of verbiage carries through to the base definitions earlier in the memo.

Each of the bullets defining the average—federal, state, and charitable deductions—takes the amount from “the federal income tax returns prepared **during the period**.” But when the memo confirms that the lowest rate Mitt ever paid was 13.66%, it refers to the “federal income tax returns as prepared,” without the “during the period” qualifier. This leaves open the possibility that Mitt has submitted some revised tax returns since that period—which ended in 2009. Given that there have been questions about Mitt’s residency, I wonder, too, why PwC didn’t take state amounts from state returns. Also, when the memo says “donations” in the last bullet, is it referring solely to charitable donations, or might it include gifts to his sons? Keep in mind, too, that it refers to amounts deducted, not amounts paid; Bain execs have long tithed stocks to the Mormon Church.

When TPM asked Mitt’s campaign whether they had amended earlier returns to come up with these results, they didn’t answer right away.

Did Romney artificially inflate his tax rate using the same strategy in other returns? That’s the biggest question raised by the disclosure of his move to take fewer deductions in 2011. The Romney campaign did not immediately respond to questions over whether Romney amended any of his previous returns.

At the very least, the 2nd and the last bullets both allow for the possibility that Mitt’s federal returns have been changed. Indeed, when you consider Mitt’s rate before the change in

capital gains had to have been far far higher, it may well allow for years when Mitt didn't pay any federal taxes, but has since revised his returns to pay at least 13.66%.

And in any case, we know that the averages given skew his tax and donation rates by at least 3.5%.

Update: This post was modified for clarity.

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## MITT'S DOES HAVE A VIEW OF WORKERS

While I'm happy that Paul Krugman is observing the same thing I did here—that Republicans don't care much about workers—I disagree with his observation that Mitt said nothing about workers in his RNC speech.

Lest you think that this was just a personal slip, consider Mr. Romney's acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention. What did he have to say about American workers? Actually, nothing: the words "worker" or "workers" never passed his lips.

Sure, he didn't actually utter the word "worker," but I maintain that this passage was the most telling of his entire RNC speech.

But today, four years from the excitement of the last election, for the first time, the majority of Americans now doubt that our children will have a better future.

It is not what we were promised.

[snip]

It's not just what we wanted. It's not just what we expected.

It's what Americans deserved.

You deserved it because during these years, you worked harder than ever before. You deserved it because when it cost more to fill up your car, you cut out movie nights and put in longer hours. **Or when you lost that job that paid \$22.50 an hour with benefits, you took two jobs at 9 bucks an hour and fewer benefits.** You did it because your family depended on you. You did it because you're an American and you don't quit. You did it because it was what you had to do.

But driving home late from that second job, or standing there watching the gas pump hit 50 dollars and still going, when the realtor told you that to sell your house you'd have to take a big loss, in those moments **you knew that this just wasn't right.**

**But what could you do? Except work harder, do with less, try to stay optimistic. Hug your kids a little longer; maybe spend a little more time praying that tomorrow would be a better day.** [my emphasis]

As I've noted, it's telling because Mitt has bragged about creating those \$9 jobs—the ones he admits you can't live off of. And it's telling because of the solution Mitt offers to people working dead-end jobs: pray, and trust that Mitt, as President, will make it better.

We now know that would involve trusting Mitt to do something for a bunch of people he believes don't work hard, even while he admits they're working two jobs to pay the bills.

A fundamental part of Mitt's election message is that Obama is responsible for the real and perceived decline in the American lifestyle that has been in decline for decades. He claims he will fix that.

But when you put all the things he believes together, it's clear he believes he will fix it by badgering people he admits are struggling under two jobs to work harder.

It doesn't make sense: the real answer has more to do with Mitt's own faults, with his own method of getting rich. But that's why it's important to note Mitt's contradictory understanding of real workers.

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## MITT ROMNEY GUILTY OF A HATE CRIME



Yes, I am absolutely serious about the implication in the title of this post.

I was scrolling through my twitter feed about lunchtime here, after doing some work, and found this exchange between two people I follow, Carrie Johnson and Dan Froomkin:





Well, after reading the article Froomkin referred to in his tweet, an AP report on an Amish hate crimes conviction handed down today, I thought there were clear parallels with Mitt Romney's known pattern of misconduct. Here is the key gist of the AP report on the Amish hair cutting hate crime:

Sixteen Amish men and women were convicted Thursday of hate crimes including forcibly cutting off fellow sect members' beards and hair.....A federal jury found Samuel Mullet Sr. guilty of orchestrating the cuttings of Amish men's beards and women's hair last fall in attacks that terrorized..

Hmmmm, where do I remember a completely similar, in every way, violation of a human individual's sanctity and rights to individualism and free expression, not to mention of course, forced hair cutting, under the Constitution of the United States? Oh, yes, it was from the once and always juvenile and self entitled Mitt Romney:

Many of today's principals would be likely to throw the book at a student who pinned down a classmate and clipped his hair, as Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney did as a high school senior in 1965.

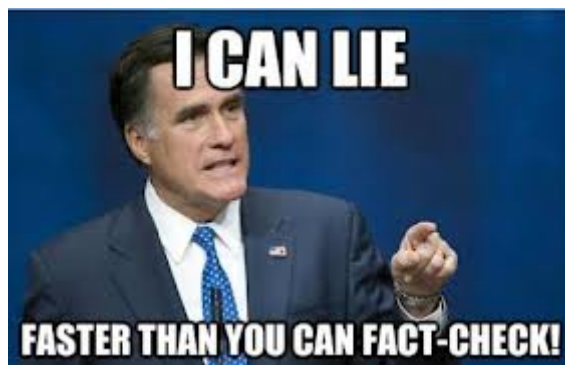
Romney was not disciplined at the time. If such an attack happened in the public schools of 2012, it would probably lead to suspension and might also be referred for expulsion, a number of local school leaders said following a Washington Post report of the incident involving Romney.

Yes, one would hope that "today's principals" might treat the brutish otherism and hatred of Willard "Mitt" Romney a bit different today. But, seriously, the same intellectual, moral and character deficits that are present now, were present to any competent mind then. Mitt

Romney's hate crime conviction worthy act was not mere misguided words, as so many engaged in at during those times, but instead it was a violent and injurious physical felonious assault. You can call it partisan to say this, and you would be a bloody ignorant and simpering fool to do so. I trust most of you in the national, main stream media, who actually have the time and claimed IQ to actually read this and react intellectually.

This is the "intellect" and "mind" that now seeks to lead the, still, most powerful nation on earth? Mitt Romney would be headed to federal prison if past were but falsely discarded prologue.

Mitt Romney is now, and always has been, a self important, self entitled, brutish chameleon that blithely does whatever he wants, and is willing to say whatever it takes, to get over on others. That is not a leader; it is the mark of a congenitally entitled power mad, craven, flip flopping, and hollow shill.



It is the mark of a man who is a pliable and troubled soul in need of

counseling, and the antithesis of a leader for the enlightened and informed free world. Which also kind of explains Mr. Romney's craven and supremely self serving attempt to try to capitalize on the death of US ambassador Chris Stevens while the event was still very much in play as an United States foreign relations interest.

That is not the mark of a leader, it is the mark of a cowardly lout. Such was, and is, the best the GOP had to offer in their self proclaimed can't lose year of destiny.

For any halfway informed citizen, and certainly for the supposedly intelligent members of the political press, the foregoing are some things you ought to consider and report. To report a false horserace that is serving to yourself (as Romney always is to himself) is one thing; but to ignore facts in craven servitude thereof is yet another. I know leading members of the press will see this, where will you go? Have you even the small balls to follow on?

There are choices in the political landscape. They may be constrained to where it is a choice between the lesser of two very much evils. That is indeed the choice before the nation today. The problem is the evils are painted as equal, and that is a lie.

Where will the national press go? I think I know, and I suspect it is to feign ignorance. But just to make the stakes clear, if the national press covered the facts and results of Matthew Shephard, and now are willing, through AP or otherwise, to report on the Amish hair cutting hate crime, then YOU NEED to make the analogy to the current man who is guilty of the same effective conduct and hate crime, and who now seeks to be elected President of the United States.

Really, it is the *least* you can do national press. Can you keep up national press? Can you truly exercise your duty of fair reportage and duty to the American people? Can you? Show your work.

Can the major media pick up on the resolute similarity, and absolute analogy, of these cases? I am not sure the national media has that root awareness, nor public responsibility in their bones.

It will be interesting to see where the national press really stand. I have no illusions of intelligence in that regard. We shall see.

Gosh, silly me, for condoning, much less expecting, such honesty.

[Impossibly perfect graphic by the one and only twolf. Seriously, twolf is our friend; follow him!]

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## TIM PAWLENTY GIVES MITT THE BAIN TREATMENT

Here's part of how Mitt would make money at Bain Capital: He'd get a organization that had real value. He'd suck that value out of the organization. It would go into debt. And often, before the organization lost too much of its value, Mitt and Bain would cash out.

That's sort of what Tim Pawlenty is doing now. For just over a year, Pawlenty has enjoyed a prestigious position serving as the Co-Chair of the GOP's favorite to become President of the United States. As I vaguely recall (the speech itself, as with all things T-Paw, put me to sleep), he got a prime speaking slot at the RNC.

And now, with Mitt's campaign in debt, and its value sinking quickly, Pawlenty has cashed out. He's moving onto the next lucrative gig, serving as CEO of the Financial Services Board.

Here's what the banksters' lobbying group has to say about the kind of leader who bails out on an organization just 8 weeks before its big day.

"Tim's leadership, vision and ability to find common ground make him the right choice to represent the broad membership of the Financial Services Roundtable," said Tim Wilson, the group's chairman and CEO of Allstate.

"He is exactly the kind of leader we need to continue to improve our industry's reputation, advocate firm-

but-fair regulation and help maintain our global leadership of the financial markets.”

These sleazebags all deserve each other. Mitt deserves being abandoned with his value in decline. T-Paw has just gone from selling one discredited looter to selling them all. And the banksters now have a charisma-impaired guy with no loyalty leading their fight.

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## MITT: HOSTAGE SITUATIONS ARE ELECTORAL “OPPORTUNITIES”

MoJo has released the full Romney donor video. And like Josh Marshall, I was immediately struck by this passage (after 3 minutes in—this is my transcription). This is in response to a donor suggesting that if Mitt could get the Iranians to agree to drop their pursuit of a nuclear bomb.

And the American people are not concentrated at all on China, on Russia, Iran, Iraq. This President’s failure to put in a place a Status of Forces Agreement allowing 10-20,000 troops to stay in Iraq—**unthinkable**. And yet in that election—in the Jimmy Carter election—the fact that we had hostages in Iran, I mean that was all we talked about then. And we had the two helicopters crash in the desert, that was the focus and so him solving that made all the difference in the world.

I’m afraid today if you simply got Iran to agree to stand down a nuclear weapon

they'd go, "hold on."

By the way, if something of that nature presents itself, **I will work to find a way to take advantage of the opportunity.** [my emphasis]

Now, like Marshall, I think this explains why Mitt jumped on the Libyan attack so quickly.

Though there's even more here. Mitt **seems** to suggest that Reagan solved the Iranian hostage crisis. That's an allegation that has been made, but it's not something that people like Mitt discuss in public.

And consider how MoJo came to publish this entire video: James Carter IV—Jimmy's grandson—helped track the video down. He specifically mentioned Mitt's attacks on his grandfather as part of his motivation.

But Carter also confirmed there is a personal side to the backstory of the campaign video: he was especially motivated, he said, because of Romney's frequent attacks on the presidency of his grandfather, including the GOP candidate's comparisons to the "weak" foreign policy of Carter and Barack Obama.

"It gets under my skin — mostly the weakness on the foreign policy stuff," Carter said. "I just think it's ridiculous. I don't like criticism of my family."

This passage certainly sounded like very calculated criticism of the Carter family.

I suggested in June that Sheldon Adelson was probably willing to dump so much on Mitt's campaign, after working so hard to defeat him in the primary, to purchase an Administration that would serve Likud's interests. I even reflected on what a nice October Surprise Adelson's money could buy.

Rest assured, if Adelson were to present Romney with such a surprise, Romney would be waiting to take advantage of it.

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## **MITT'S EFFORTS AT DISENFRANCHISEMENT DROWN IN GROVER NORQUIST'S BATHTUB**

PA's Supreme Court just sent the state's voter ID law back to the Commonwealth judge with instructions that, unless the state can ensure that all voters who want a voter ID can get it in time for the election, then the judge must issue an injunction against use of the IDs for November's election.

Thus, we will return the matter to the Commonwealth Court to make a present assessment of the actual availability of the alternate identification cards on a developed record in light of the experience since the time the cards became available. In this regard, the court is to consider whether the procedures being used for deployment of the cards comport with the requirement of liberal access which the General Assembly attached to the issuance of PennDOT identification cards. If they do not, or if the Commonwealth Court is not still convinced in its predictive judgment that there will be no voter disenfranchisement arising out of the Commonwealth's implementation of a voter identification requirement for purposes of the upcoming election, that court is obliged to enter a preliminary injunction.

As DDay notes, this likely means the judge will have to issue the injunction, given some of the barriers to getting an ID.

The state Supreme Court set the standard that access to ID cards must be extremely easy and generous in order for the law to go forward.

That's pretty clearly not the case now. There are a limited amount of PennDOT offices available to administer ID cards, and 13 of them are only open once a week. Up until a couple days ago it took two trips to the PennDOT offices to get the ID. With many of the potentially disenfranchised voters elderly, disabled, not close to a PennDOT office and/or with no access to a vehicle, clearly there's a hardship here for the eligible voters, presumably enough to enjoin the law.

This comes just a few weeks after a panel of Federal judges threw out Texas' voter ID law because it is too hard—and too expensive—for people to get an ID.

Like any fixed cost, the \$22 (minimum) EIC applicants will have to pay to obtain prerequisite documentation weighs disproportionately on those living in poverty. Moreover, while a 200 to 250 mile trip to and from a DPS office would be a heavy burden for any prospective voter, such a journey would be especially daunting for the working poor. Poorer citizens, especially those working for hourly wages, will likely be less able to take time off work to travel to a DPS office—a problem exacerbated by the fact that wait times in DPS offices can be as long as three hours during busy months of the year. US Ex. 10 at 1. This concern is especially serious given that none of Texas's DPS offices are open on weekends or past



6:00 PM, eliminating for many working people the option of obtaining an EIC on their own time. See U.S. Ex. 361. A law that forces poorer citizens to choose between their wages and their franchise unquestionably denies or abridges their right to vote.

In both cases, the small number of ID offices, their inconvenient hours, and the lines (See Ari Berman's picture of one in Philadelphia) impose too high a cost on franchise. As a result, Republicans won't (in TX) and probably won't (in PA) be permitted to suppress the vote as they had wanted to this November.

Of course, the underlying problem is that states have cut back on services to the point where Republicans can't even disenfranchise people efficiently enough under the law.

This is not over yet—the judge in PA can still certify an inadequate DOT network hunky dory in PA.

But for the moment it appears Mitt's disenfranchisement is being drowned in Grover Norquist's bathtub.

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## MITT HIDES WITH THE MOOCHERS IN UT

[youtube]MU9V6e0F038[/youtube]

In the last several weeks, Mitt's campaign has suffered one after another self-inflicted wounds. Here's how the horse race pundits summarize the damage.

All campaigns have their ups and downs, but the last three weeks for Mitt Romney have been about as brutal as we can remember for any presidential candidate,

especially this close to the election. First, the biggest speech of Romney's life got overshadowed by the Clint Eastwood stunt. Then came President Obama's significant bounce in the polls after the two political conventions. After that, Romney found himself on the defensive for his reaction to embassy attacks in Egypt and Libya. Next, Politico reported about infighting and disorganization inside the Romney campaign. Finally, all of these events were capped off yesterday by the surreptitiously recorded video of Romney – provided to the liberal magazine Mother Jones and later to NBC News – telling wealthy donors that “47%” of the country “who are dependent on government” and “who believe they are victims” will vote for Obama no matter what.

I find this latest video useful because—in my goal to make Mitt the poster child for everything that is wrong with our looting-for-profit economy—it has made even charitable pundits like Jonathan Chait see him as the sneering plutocrat he is.

The revelations in this video come to me as a genuine shock. I have never hated Romney. I presumed his ideological makeover since he set out to run for president was largely phony, even if he was now committed to carry through with it, and to whatever extent he'd come to believe his own lines, he was oblivious or naïve about the damage he would inflict upon the poor, sick, and vulnerable. It seems unavoidable now to conclude that Romney's embrace of Paul Ryanism is born of actual contempt for the looters and moochers, a class war on behalf of his own class.

Which is why I find Byron York's concerns so

curious: Mitt has largely left the campaign trail.

He had one public appearance on his schedule Monday, Sept. 17, a speech to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in Los Angeles.

He had one appearance scheduled Sunday, an airport rally in Pueblo, Colo., but it was canceled after a small plane crash there killed one person.

Romney had no public events Saturday. On Friday, he attended a single rally, at Lake Erie College in Painesville, Ohio. On Thursday, he attended a single rally, at a park in Fairfax, Va. On Wednesday, he was scheduled to hold a single campaign event at his headquarters in Jacksonville, Fla., but instead appeared at a hastily organized press conference to denounce President Obama's response to the embassy crises in Libya and Egypt. On Tuesday, Romney had one event, a speech to the National Guard Association convention in Reno, Nev. And on the day before that, another single rally, in Mansfield, Ohio.

Today, Mitt is visiting one of his three homes—and some of his Mormon donors—in UT.

Even as Mitt's campaign is falling apart, he's spending time in what will probably be his strongest state, purportedly to raise money.

Perhaps this reflects an effort within his campaign to revamp the campaign. Perhaps—as Charlie Pierce predicted—his campaign has gone almost dark to dream up the nastiest campaign imaginable.

Maybe Mitt has simply lost his will to fight, as he struggles to come to grips with the fact that people don't believe he's entitled to the Presidency just because he had the misfortune of being born a very rich white man.

But I wonder whether it isn't something else, though.

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## **I'LL TAKE MIDDLE CLASS "POCKETS OF PROSPERITY" FOR \$250,000, PLEASE**

Yesterday, Mitt's advisor said that the campaign press corps lived in "pockets of prosperity" that prevented them from understanding the realities of the harsh economy.

The adviser, granted anonymity to criticize a press corps the campaign still relies on every day, went on to blame a "green room, green zone kind of divide," saying the national press, most of whom live in New York or DC, "pockets of prosperity," are isolated from the realities of the harsh economy – and therefore, unable to grasp Romney's message.

He had a point, if you ignore that press corps' bubbles are nowhere as exclusive as Mitt's bubble.

Except that one of those members of the press corps—undeniably a resident of the DC bubble insulated from the realities of the harsh economy—just caught Mitt treating people making between \$100,000 and \$250,000 a year (as well as those below it) as middle class.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: You know Democrats are going to be wanting to get much more detail from you on how you're going to pay for your tax cuts. We've heard that at the Democratic Convention.

President Clinton said your math doesn't work. I know you dispute what President Clinton said and what the Democrats that say that you're going to have a \$2,000 tax hike on middleclass families. I know you dispute that. You cite your own studies. But one of the studies you cite by Martin Feldstein at Harvard shows that to make your math work, it could work, if you eliminate the home mortgage, charity, and state and local tax deductions for everyone earning over \$100,000. Is that what you propose?

MITT ROMNEY: No, that's not what I propose. And, of course, part of my plan is to stimulate economic growth. The biggest source of getting the country to a balanced budget is not by raising taxes or by cutting spending. It's by encouraging the growth of the economy. So my tax plan is to encourage investment in growth in America, more jobs, that means more people paying taxes. So that's a big component of what allows us to get to a balanced budget.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: But his study, which you've cited, says it can only work if you take away those deductions for everyone earning more than \$100,000.

MITT ROMNEY: Well, it doesn't necessarily show the same growth that we're anticipating. And I haven't seen his precise study. But I can tell you that we can lower our rates—

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Well, you cited the study, though.

MITT ROMNEY: Well, I said that there are five different studies that point out that we can get to a balanced budget without raising taxes on middle income people. Let me tell you, George, the fundamentals of my tax policy are these. Number one, reduce tax burdens on

middle-income people. So no one can say my plan is going to raise taxes on middle-income people, because principle number one is keep the burden down on middle-income taxpayers.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Is \$100,000 middle income?

MITT ROMNEY: No, **middle income is \$200,000 to \$250,000 and less.** [my emphasis]

To be fair, this is the same kind of myth Obama propagates when protecting just those under \$250,000 from higher taxes. And the quote seems to suggest that Mitt considers both those in the \$200-250K as well as those below it as middle class.

Still, anyone who considers those making \$250,000 a year middle class must be in a pocket of prosperity.

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## MITT CRITICIZES POCKETS OF PROSPERITY FROM BANK ACCOUNTS OF LOOTING

One of Mitt's advisors—hiding his own identity, but not his affiliation with the campaign of a man who has a car elevator—just said this:

The adviser, granted anonymity to criticize a press corps the campaign still relies on every day, went on to blame a “green room, green zone kind of divide,” saying the national press, most of whom live in New York or DC, “pockets

of prosperity,” are **isolated from the realities of the harsh economy – and therefore, unable to grasp Romney’s message.**

Instead, they are preoccupied by concerns akin to war reporters relaxing in the green zone: “Too much chlorine in the pool, the parties are going on too late, why can’t we get the right flavors of Haagen Dazs? Most people aren’t living in that world.” [my emphasis]

It is a fair criticism. Most of the reporters following Romney around have DC or NY as their base. So they either live in a world that has benefited from 11 years of massive government stimulus or has been bailed out for the last 4 years. And that hurts their coverage of economic matters. Moreover, because most live in a town for which the primary industry is politics, they cover it as politics, the horse race.

Now, Mitt doesn’t happen to have a house in NY or DC. Rather, his sense of place—his view of the economy—comes from his bank accounts in the Cayman Islands and Bermuda, purchased with profits made from looting the drivers of prosperity and hiding them behind a veil of cowardice. That’s the place from which Mitt views the economy.

And so it’s not surprising his advisors don’t understand that, after seeing Mitt boast of creating \$9/hour jobs even while admitting those jobs don’t provide a living wage, voters have begun to change their mind about whether Mitt is better for the economy than Obama. It’s not just that reporters are reporting on Mitt’s gaffes and lies. It’s also that the people who do live in the real economy are none too impressed by a guy whose advice for people working in precisely the kind of job Mitt has created is “to pray.”

That is, as distanced from the real economy as campaign reporters may be, Mitt and his team are even further divorced from the real world. So

they don't even realize that two different sets of people are turning away from their campaign: the reporters, based on campaign fuck-ups, and real people, based on a solid sense of what could turn around their lived economic struggles.