



Written by [Ralph R. Reiland](#) on February 7, 2012

## Cage Fighting on the Campaign Trail

Why, especially, would someone who has it made in the shade like Mitt Romney, with a good family, good health, good looks, good houses (a \$12-million beach front compound in the LaJolla section of San Diego and a \$10 million home on Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire), and a net worth he estimates to be somewhere “between \$150 and about \$200-and-some-odd million dollars,” want to turn himself into a piñata for a year of ugly campaigning?



Said Thomas Jefferson in a letter to Martha Jefferson Randolph in 1800, “Politics is such a torment that I would advise everyone I love not to mix with it.”

Actually, the aforementioned houses understate the Romney lifestyle. Two other Romney mansions were sold in 2009: a \$3-million home on the outskirts of Boston and a \$5-million ski lodge on the slopes in Deer Valley, Utah. Additionally, an application has been filed in San Diego to quadruple the living space at the beachfront compound in LaJolla.

To move away from all that, even for a night, in order to roll around in the mud with Newt Gingrich for several hours seems to me to be a bit of madness.

Adding to the craziness, you hose off the mud and wake up the next morning to a headline at the Huffington Post that says, “Mitt Romney: ‘I’m Not Concerned About The Very Poor.’”

That’s the kind of headline Occupiers love to read about the one-percenters, a confirmation of the caricature of the rich as callous money-grubbers who couldn’t care less if the rest of us end up as cannon fodder or wage slaves.

It makes Romney sound like the editorial writers at the *Wall Street Journal* who referred to Americans who pay no federal income taxes as “lucky duckies” because they don’t make enough money to be eligible for the federal income tax, as if a family of four living on \$20,000 a year and exempt from the federal tax is luckier than a Wall Street bankster who pockets \$20 million and pays \$3 million in federal income taxes.

With a thrill going up his leg as he read the Huffington Post headline, Chris Matthews at MSNBC piled on, declaring that Mitt Romney doesn’t care about the poor and now he’s treating Newt Gingrich like he’s one of the poor.

In any case, the Huffington Post headline was more sensational than accurate. Here’s what Romney really said during a CNN interview: “I’m in this race because I care about Americans. I’m not concerned about the very poor. We have a safety net there. If it needs repair, I’ll fix it. I’m not concerned about the very rich. They’re doing just fine. I’m concerned about the very heart of America, the 90 percent, 95 percent, of Americans who are right now struggling.”



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The “fix it” wasn’t just a throwaway line. For the past decade, Romney has maintained that the minimum wage should be indexed for inflation, essentially boosting the minimum wage each year to keep up with price hikes and prevent the purchasing power of wages at the bottom from eroding.

That’s not a popular position among Republicans. The conservative Club for Growth, for instance, says it’s “disappointing to hear that the leading candidate for the Republican nomination believes that the government can set the price of labor better than the free market.”

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