



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on March 31, 2011

Democrat Talking Point: House GOP “Extreme”

So on March 29 readers of "[The Caucus](#)," the political blog of the *New York Times*, discovered something that has left House Republicans in high dudgeon. The Republicans are shocked — shocked! — to learn that their Democrat foes have conspired to call them "extreme" and are planning to blame the Republicans for an anticipated shutdown of the federal government that will occur if the Congress can't reach an agreement on a budget or at least another temporary extension of the last budget, which has had more lives by now than [Elfego Baca](#).



And how did the Republicans learn of this nefarious plot? Well, Sen. Charles Schumer of New York and some of his Democratic colleagues were about to conduct a conference call with reporters and, unbeknownst to the Senators, the lines were open and some of the reporters were already listening in when the Solons were in their pre-game huddle, discussing their game plan. Reporters heard Schumer, the Senate's third-ranking Democrat, in what the *Times* called a "talking-points tutorial," coaching his colleagues on what to say. According to the blog, Schumer instructed them to portray Republican John Boehner of Ohio, the Speaker of the House, as painted into a box by the Tea Party, and to describe the spending cuts being pushed by the Republican majority in the House as "extreme."

"I always use the word extreme," Schumer said. "That is what the caucus instructed me to use this week." Presumably, Schumer was referring to the Senate's Democratic Caucus and not the *New York Times*' political blog. When the Democrats realized the reporters were listening, they fell into what must have been a rare, but alas, short-lived silence. Then they began their press conference. They followed the script so closely that it calls to mind a line from the Elvis Presley recording, "[Are You Lonesome Tonight?](#)" They read their lines "so cleverly and never missed a cue."

"We are urging Mr. Boehner to abandon the extreme right wing," said Sen. Barbara Boxer of California,



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as she called on the House to compromise on the scale of spending cuts and to drop proposed amendments that would deny federal funding for Planned Parenthood and for government agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency. Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut spoke sorrowfully of the inordinate influence of a "relatively small extreme group of ideologues" who are "an anchor" dragging down the budget negotiation process. Singing from the same party hymnal, Sen. Thomas Carper of Delaware added his voice to the choir, crying out in prophetic lamentation against Boehner's "right wing extremist friends" and bemoaning the dastardly giving in to "the extremes of his party." Oh, my. As Archie Bunker used to say, "Why don't you write a letter to 'Dear Abie'?" (sic)

Or, as Julie London said, "Cry Me A River." But as tedious as the Democrats' rehearsed lines were, the Republicans turned the incident into a soap opera by pretending they had never heard such language before — notwithstanding that Schumer, according to his spokesman Brian Fallon, had already said the same thing on the Senate floor. Fox News went looking for the Republicans' horrified reaction to the "extreme" language and apparently didn't have to look very far.

"It just lends to the fact to what we've always known, that this is a political game," Rep. Allen West of Florida [told](#) the cable news channel. "It's about gamesmanship, it's about maneuvering, and it really is about politics. It's not about doing what is best for the American people, it's not about reducing the size and scope of the federal government so we can get back to have long-term, sustainable economic and job growth. I think Charles Schumer showed his hand. Now it's up to the American people to realize who are really the ones who are standing as an obstacle for us to move forward."

Well, well, well. One might get the impression from Mr. West's very proper indignation that Republicans never play a "political game" or subordinate "what is best for the American people" to their own versions of "gamesmanship." And, of course, they are not inclined to call their opponents names, are they? Heavens no! We haven't heard any Democrat called "pink" or "soft on Communism" for years. Not since the Soviet Union fell, anyway.

But all this talk about "extreme" really is a lot of immoderate hooey. Really, what is moderate about the demand to use taxpayer money to support the programs and policies of Planned Parenthood, the nation's foremost supplier of abortion "services"? And what is extreme about wanting to cut, for example, funding for the Corporation of Public Broadcasting, an effort Democrats have been bemoaning as though it were the moral equivalent of starving little children. Well, it is starving them intellectually, or at least stunting their mental growth, we are told, if those cuts threaten the continued on-air presence of Big Bird and Andrew Aardvark. Chances are those creatures and most Public Broadcasting System stations would survive without federal funding, but they make convenient props for politicians warning of a new Dark Ages for children if they are deprived of their favorite Muppets.

At a time when people are desperate for jobs, our national debt is passing the \$14 trillion mark and we are involved in three wars in the Middle East, politicians in need of adult supervision are holding press conferences with Andrew Aardvark. And these are the moderates, otherwise known as the "Committee to Give the [Golden Mean](#) a Bad Name." Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of Aristotle.



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