



Written by [Ralph R. Reiland](#) on August 8, 2014

## Obama vs. “The Top”

“If you look at what’s happened over the last four or five years, the folks who don’t have a right to complain are the folks at the top,” President Obama stated in a recent interview with the *Economist* magazine.

It’s surprisingly clumsy and unscholarly for Obama to use the words “don’t have a right” in that comment, given that he taught law for 12 years at the University of Chicago and is an experienced wordsmith and writer (Obama’s “principal accomplishment before becoming president was to write two autobiographies,” writes John Guardiano in his column “Barack Obama: Narcissist-in-chief” at The Daily Caller).



To be less polarizing and more in step with the U.S. Constitution, Obama could have said “the folks who don’t have a reason to complain are the folks at the top.”

The switch to “don’t have a reason” from “don’t have a right” would make Obama’s statement more accurate, given that we have the right under the First Amendment to complain and protest, whether we’re right or wrong and whether we’re “at the top” or stuck at the very bottom like the poorest of the poor in *Les Miserables*.

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In 1789, the First Congress of the United States proposed 12 amendments to the Constitution. Ten of the proposed 12 amendments were ratified by three-fourths of the state legislatures two years later and the ratified articles became the first 10 amendments of the Constitution — the Bill of Rights.

Amendment I: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

Those “at the top,” in short, have “the right” to peaceably assemble, gripe, and protest at their country clubs or across the street from the White House at Lafayette Park in order to publicize their grievances.

“The rich,” in fact, like those in every other income bracket, have both a right and a reason to complain about Obama’s designated period of supposed good times, “the last four or five years,” the years of the slowest U.S. economic recovery from a recession since World War II.

President Obama also stated the following in the *Economist* interview: “Oftentimes, you’ll hear some hedge-fund manager say, ‘Oh, he’s just trying to stir class resentment.’ No. Feel free to keep your house in the Hamptons and your corporate jet, etcetera. I’m not concerned about how you’re living. I am concerned about making sure that we have a system in which the ordinary person who is working hard and is being responsible can get ahead.”

Note the rhetorical contrast between “some hedge-fund manager” with no right to complain and the



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non-hedgers who are “ordinary,” “responsible,” and “working hard.” In this clichéd portrayal, the hedge-fund manager is out of the ordinary, irresponsible, and slothful, basically an over-paid desperado with more money than he needs and from whom some additional piles of wealth and income should be commandeered and redistributed.

Also note Mr. Obama’s instant comeback of “No” to the accusation that he’s promoting class resentment, followed immediately by his focus on the extraordinary and super-opulent possessions of the hedge-fund manager (“No. Feel free to keep your house in the Hamptons and your corporate jet, etcetera”), extravagant and showy possessions that can be expected to elicit a degree of knee-jerk jealousy and resentment.

“I’m not concerned about how you’re living,” Obama says to “the rich” and the hedge-fund manager with the corporate jet and the house in the Hamptons. But for some reason, the inventory of all their luxurious and unnecessary possessions seem like they’re always ready-to-go in Mr. Obama’s frontal lobes, filed in the umbrage drawer.

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