



Written by [Mary McHugh](#) on August 31, 2010

## NBC Nightly News Williams Grills Obama on Birth Certificate, Religious Affiliation Polls

NBC's Nightly News last Sunday, August 29, featured an interview in New Orleans on the 5th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, between reporter Brian Williams and President Barack Obama. After bringing up Katrina, the BP Gulf oil spill, the economy, and the New York City mosque at Ground Zero, Williams finally asked the President about the lingering questions concerning his birthplace and his religion.



**Williams:** Mr. President, you're an American-born Christian.

**Obama:** Mm-hmm.

**Williams:** And yet increasing, and now significant numbers of Americans in polls — upwards of a fifth of respondents — are claiming you are neither. A fifth of the people just about, believe you are a Muslim....

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**Obama:** (Interrupting) ... those two things — American-born and Muslim are not the same. So ... but I understand your point.

**Williams:** — either or the latter. And the most recent number is the latter. This has to be troubling to you. This is, of course, all new territory for an American President.

**Obama:** Well, look — the, ah, the facts are the facts....

The President then went on to carefully not revisit any of those citizenship or religious facts. He stated instead that these issues have been a problem throughout his political life, and that he had dealt with them first during his run for the U.S. Senate. "And yet," he said to Williams, "we ended up winning that senate seat in Illinois because I trusted in the American people's capacity to get beyond all this nonsense...." What he terms "this nonsense" is nevertheless impacting the perception that Americans have of him.

The polls in question included a [CBS poll](#) from last April indicating that 30 percent of those associating themselves with the Tea Party, and 20 percent of those polled who do not, believe that Barack Obama was born in another country and is not a U.S. citizen. The non-partisan [Pew Research Center's poll](#), conducted before the New York City mosque controversy, found that nearly one in five people, or 18 percent, believed that Obama was Muslim. In March of 2009, only 11 percent thought so, and only 34 percent believed he was a Christian. In addition, a [CNN poll](#) taken just this July 16-21 of 1,018 adults, including 335 Democrats and 285 Republicans (with a 3-percentage-point margin of error) revealed that 6 out of 10 polled were uncertain that Barack Obama was born in the U.S.

During the course of Sunday night's interview, Mr. Obama went on under William's continued questioning to vary the same theme regarding his birth certificate and religion: "And so I will always



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put my money on the American people and I'm not going to be worrying too much about whatever rumors are floating on out there. If I spend all my time chasing after that, then I wouldn't get much done."

And again: "Well ... Brian, I would say that I can't spend all my time with my birth certificate plastered on my forehead. It is what ... the facts are the facts. And so it's not something that I can, I think, spend all my time worrying about and I don't think the American people want me to spend all my time worrying about it."

Maybe Barack Obama does not want to worry about these issues, but his reference to Americans not wanting him to spend his time worrying about them did not sit well, made as it was in the face of his (minimum) 45 rounds of [golf](#) played since becoming President, and his recent sixth vacation in eight months during a time of war, recession, and joblessness.

The fact is that these issues are not going away quietly with interviews such as these, and with sites such as [World Net Daily](#) sponsoring birth certificate [billboards](#) and running a [3-part series](#) on the matter by actor Chuck Norris. Neither does YouTube help, with several video [references](#) (sample, below), especially to the President's association with the country of Kenya. Barack Obama tries to continue blasé about his facts and this controversy, but the polls indicate that more Americans are beginning to wonder.

*Photo: President Barack Obama greets members of the audience as he arrives to speak at Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans on Aug. 29, 2010, on the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina: AP Images*



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