



Written by [Jack Kerwick, Ph.D.](#) on August 31, 2012

Obama's Response to RNC: Has the President Lost Credibility?

The Republican National Convention is now over, but the race for the presidency isn't over by a long shot.

The Obama campaign spared not a moment to respond to Paul Ryan's and Mitt Romney's speeches. Yet the reply was at least as negative in character as it accused Ryan's and Romney's speeches of being. Rather than speak to the substance of his rivals' remarks, Barack Obama continued the same assault against the Republican candidates' characters that he has been waging for months.



In fact, even before Ryan and Romney gave their speeches to the RNC, Obama tried to undermine their credibility. On August 28, he cautioned audiences at college campuses in Iowa and Colorado against believing anything that his opponents say. "They will just fib," Obama stated.

He continued: "Sometimes they just make things up." But this they can afford to do, Obama explained, because "they've got a bunch of folks who can write \$10 million checks, and they'll just keep on running them."

According to Obama, such is his opponents' disregard for the truth that they are brazen enough to explicitly express their disdain for it. He remarked: "I mean, somebody was challenging one of their ads— they made it up — about work and welfare. And every outlet said this is just not true. And they were asked about it and they said — one of their campaign people said, 'We won't have the fact-checkers dictate our campaign. We will not let the truth get in the way.'"

For all of the accusations of dishonesty that he hurls against his rivals, Obama should take care to attend to the boulder in his own eye. Not only have the very fact-checkers that he cites debunked several of his own ads, Obama's account of the Romney campaign's response to fact-checkers is dishonest.

Neil Newhouse is the Romney campaign's pollster. While Newhouse did indeed say that his team refuses to permit fact-checkers to "dictate" their strategies, he never said anything about refusing to accommodate truth. What he actually said is that the so-called "fact-checkers" are as ridden with their own prejudices and biases as is anyone else. "These fact-checkers come to those ads with their own sets of thoughts and beliefs."

Obama's chief strategist, the notorious [David Axelrod](#), said on August 30 — before Romney's speech — that Romney and Ryan have supplied the public with nothing more or less than "a compendium of demonstrable lies." The president's critics — and fact-checkers — can say the same thing about him.

In not so many words, they *have* said the same thing about him.

Politics is a dirty sport, it is true, and politicians can be expected to hurl insults and untruths. However,



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it is not for nothing that the Obama campaign has been charged by its critics with engaging in ruthless, unscrupulous “Chicago-style” politics.

From the outset of this campaign season, even prior to Romney’s victory in the Republican presidential primaries, Obama made it clear that his sole objective would be to “destroy” Romney. At this time last year, Politico first reported that “Obama’s aides and advisers are preparing to center the president’s reelection campaign on a ferocious personal assault on Mitt Romney’s character and business background.” It quotes “a prominent Democratic strategist aligned with the White House” who said that “unless things change and Obama can run on accomplishments, he will have to kill Romney.”

When one considers that Obama is closing in on the completion of his first term in office and the economy over which he presides is in worse condition than the one he inherited, it makes sense that he should engage in the politics of personal destruction. But the allegations of dishonesty that he makes against Romney are at risk of falling flat because of his own strategy.

Obama has invested the lion’s share of his resources in depicting Romney as a “vulture capitalist.” As everyone now knows, Romney was the CEO of Bain Capital, a private equity firm, for several years. Obama has been relentless in his campaign to fashion an image of Romney that would recall Michael Douglas’s *Wall Street* character, Gordon Gekko. Gekko was a money hungry gazillionaire whose insistence upon putting “profits before people” eventually landed him in prison for two decades.

Yet the truth is that there isn’t a shred of evidence to substantiate Obama’s contention that Romney is anything at all like Oliver Stone’s villain. In fact, several distinguished Obama supporters have said as much.

From Newark Mayor Corey Booker to former Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell, from former President Bill Clinton to Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, Democratic politicians repudiated Obama’s assaults against Romney and Bain Capital with all of the readiness and forcefulness mustered by Republicans. They all recognized Bain to be a good company and Clinton went so far as to commend Romney for his “sterling” business record.

Even Obama-friendly territories like ABC, CNN, and the fact-checker for the *Washington Post* couldn’t refrain from exposing the bogus nature of Obama’s charges.

None of this stopped the Obama campaign, though. More recently, one of its SuperPAC committees released an ad in which it held Romney culpable for the death of a steel worker’s wife. According to the ad, Bain closed a steel factory while Romney was at its helm. Because of this, the employee no longer had medical insurance to care properly for his terminally-ill wife.

In spite of being over the top on its face, the ad is off for another reason: Romney wasn’t even at Bain during the time in question.

A couple of weeks ago, Vice President Joe Biden went beyond linking Romney to unjustified homicide to associating him with slavery. Addressing a largely black audience in Virginia, Biden said that Romney’s economic policies would have the effect of putting “y’all back in chains.”

Biden later said that he was talking about the effects that the deregulation of Wall Street will have on the middle class. But given the audience to whom he made his remarks and the contrived drawl with which he made them, it was clear to all who were paying attention what he was trying to imply.

Election Day isn’t until November. That leaves a lot of time for this race to get even dirtier.



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Photo: President Barack Obama waves as he boards Air Force One before his departure from Andrews Air Force Base, Md., Aug., 31, 2012: AP Images



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