



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on August 25, 2012

Pew: Media Channeling Obama Campaign Attacks on Romney

A study by the [Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism](#) has concluded that the mainstream media are smearing GOP presidential contender [Mitt Romney](#). The Center's analysis of the media's "narrative" on Romney found that the reporting has portrayed him as a "vulture capitalist," as a super PAC [campaign ad says](#), who grew up with a silver spoon in his mouth and cannot understand what it's like to pay bills.



The media, channeling the Obama campaign meme, Pew reported, have presented Romney as a man who sent American jobs overseas, put Americans out of work, and laughed all the way to the bank.

The Data

[According to](#) Pew, the largest single segment of media coverage, 14 percent, "raised doubts about Romney's career at the Bain Capital private investment firm.... And the data show that much of this negative narrative came from citing the Obama campaign and its ads."

After that, Pew reported, comes the idea that Romney is out of touch: "a more personal narrative (13%) that Romney is a wealthy elitist, some of which came from the Obama camp, but which also came from journalists and outside experts."

And these two themes were closely followed by the narrative that Romney was an awkward campaigner (11 percent).

Pew also reported that the "vulture capitalist" theme lasted more than two months:

The idea that Romney was a hard-hearted capitalist and that Bain Capital was more about destroying jobs and making money for investors than building up the general economy was a persistent one over these 10 weeks.

That theme ranked as either the No. 1 or No. 2 narrative about Romney in seven of the 10 weeks studied.

In the coverage, journalists often noted that this was coming from the Obama camp. In mid-July, CBS News political director John Dickerson put it bluntly: "[Obama] wants to make Bain a four-letter word."

And some of this theme came directly from the president. In late-June remarks in Florida, Obama said that the Romney campaign "argue[s] that if you help corporations and wealthy investors maximize their profits by whatever means necessary, whether it be layoffs or outsourcing, union busting or whatever means available, that will automatically translate in jobs and prosperity to benefit everybody."

Another theme pushed for more than two months is the Romney-as-elitist idea. That "showed up consistently over the 10 weeks," [Pew reported](#). "Often these were sparked by stories about his personal wealth, whether they related to his expensive homes or the show horse owned by his wife." The report



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noted:

Shortly after the [New York Times published](#) a June 6 story featuring neighbors grumbling about Romney's California beach house, late night comedian Jimmy Fallon joked that the candidate's Secret Service team "is bothering the people who live by his beach house. Romney had a lot of questions about the complaint, such as 'Which beach house?'"

The theme that the GOP nominee lacks charisma or is prone to gaffes gained particular force the week of July 23-29, when he stumbled during an overseas tour, first by raising security concerns about the London Olympics and then by stepping onto the third rail of Mideast politics — the Israeli/Palestinian standoff.

Romney "is perhaps the only politician who could start a trip that was supposed to be a charm offensive by being utterly devoid of charm and mildly offensive," liberal host [Rachel Maddow quipped](#), quoting the London *Telegraph* newspaper.

The Offensive Against Romney

However obvious the bias against Romney in the report, the data don't really do justice to insinuations from Obama and the media. And one need not support the liberal Republican to find the attacks distasteful.

Of late, the worst has been [the accusation](#) that Romney is personally responsible for the death of a woman from cancer. A super PAC working for the Obama campaign conceived and launched the story, which even the ardently pro-Obama media denounced in no uncertain terms.

The advertisement from the radical leftist [Priorities USA](#) was even denounced by Clinton legman [Lanny Davis](#). "Davis says both Romney and Obama, and their supporters, have sponsored ads 'that make us all want to take a shower,'" [ABC News reported](#).

But when it comes to the cancer ad, he said the pro-Obama super PAC Priorities USA Action has gone too far. "[Priorities USA chieftain] [Bill Burton](#) needs to go back to ethics school," Davis said of the group's senior strategist, who is a former Obama White House spokesman. "He knows perfectly well that the ad is misleading and disgusting and he needs to apologize for it."

Two more baseless accusations against Romney are that he didn't pay taxes for between a decade and a dozen years and that he is, therefore, a felon.

The first came when leftist Sen. [Harry Reid](#) (D-Nev.) accused Romney, [during a speech](#) on the floor of the Senate in July, of ducking taxes for 12 years. [He repeated](#) the charge to the leftist Huffington Post later that month, but pared back the number of years to 10. Reid based his charged on an anonymous phone call. [He reiterated](#) the story on the Senate floor in August.

[According to](#) Politifact.com, "Reid has produced no evidence to back up his claim other than attribution to a shadowy anonymous source.... Reid has made an extreme claim with nothing solid to back it up. Pants on Fire!"

A second attack [came from](#) Obama's campaign, [which called](#) Romney a felon and flatly accused him of trespassing federal securities laws. This, too, was a lie. The *Washington Post*, hardly a bastion of Republicanism, [declared the charges false, as did](#) FactCheck.org.

So, to their credit, while the media have, as Pew reported, published and broadcast these lies for the president, they have also knocked down the most obvious.



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Attacking Mrs. Romney; Candidate a Racist

As [The New American reported](#) last month, a feminist scribe and others even attacked Mrs. Romney for wearing a \$990 blouse on television, even as they looked past the subject of expensive clothing when First Lady Michelle Obama wore a \$1,600 jacket.

The Democratic National Committee attacked Mrs. Romney, an equestrian enthusiast who rides [dressage](#) horses, partly as therapy for her [multiple sclerosis](#). Two ads from the Democrats [show the horse in its dressage routine](#) as a means of attacking Mitt Romney for “dancing around the issues.”

And it has been insinuated that Romney is a “racist.” A Democrat guest on [Lawrence O’Donnell’s The Last Word](#) on MSNBC [implied that Romney was a racist](#) because he used the words “kitchen cabinet” in referring to a close black adviser. Of course, [Mark Thompson](#), the host of [Make It Plain](#) on Sirius XM radio, didn’t use the word “racist.” Rather, he [dog-whistled](#) the term [by substituting](#) “culturally ignorant.”

When [Romney told](#) President Obama to take his “campaign of division and anger and hate back to Chicago,” a fellow named [Touré](#), the host of *The Cycle* on MSNBC, [accused Romney](#) of the “niggerization” of Obama by making him a “scary black man we have been trained to fear.” [Touré later apologized.](#)



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