

They Return, Taxing Credibility & Patience

Written by Alex Baer

Tuesday, 24 July 2012 17:00 - Last Updated Tuesday, 24 July 2012 17:07

Willard Romney has been on the road again. There's a picture of him in a working warehouse, standing behind a modest podium sporting this sign: "Putting Jobs First."

Too bad he didn't have that same attitude at Bain: It would have saved many workers, families, and taxpayers a lot of pain.

But, then, you take a vulture capitalist -- surely a *bane* of our modern existence -- and link it up tight with *pain*, hey presto! *Bain!*

If you think there are too many loopholes in the tax codes for billionaires to drive 18-wheelers filled with gold through, you haven't seen anything yet. Just check out the loopholes in Willard's alibi -- *whoops, sorry, ladies and gentlemen of the voting jury* -- that is to say, his life story and beliefs.

Oh, sure -- endless flip-flopping and enough waffling to create a hundred roadside diners, instead of the standard politician's dozen or so. Meanwhile, we are to believe this story: He quit as head of a company-gutting, job-shattering, killer looting machine like Bain, retroactively, but was kept on the payroll for years. *See, everybody? He's just like us!*

And, no, we should not prod too deep for any facts, especially nothing noted on the campaign filing forms. (Memory lapses on *that* paperwork can morph into a few years of time spent in a highly secure, gated community -- a federally-run mansion, *aka* a "big house" of some sort.)

Other coincidences: You can't spell "Romney" without "money" and an (R) for Republican. Unless that (R) is for retro, in which case, it's not a nostalgic compliment -- not unless you like your meat odiferous, old, regurgitated, and badly spoiled. From birth.

Willard makes it too easy for critics of political theater: *The rich boy desperately tries to prove*

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he's like us, and prove his own self-worth, so he can one-up his daddy...

Haven't we already seen this *gawdawful* tragedy before? The program says it's all the same authors, writers, and advisors -- the same old hackneyed lines, too, ready to be jammed down our throats, in Act II.

Oh, sorry: In New-Speak, as in the ads, that should have been, "*Shining policies are awaiting, ready for sound presentation and smooth sailing, as creative policies once again breathe new life into our sails, and bolster our bright new future ahead!*"

(To which I can only say, **Bolshoi** -- and I don't mean ballet.)

Besides taxing our patience, Willard, your dodging reasonable tax return questions blasts your Suspicion Factor sky high, into a low Earth orbit, at least. As a recent editorial cartoon noted, what could be worse than having voters think you're an out-of-touch, tax-sheltering tycoon with something to hide? Why, *knowing* it, of course.

There's only one way to clear up such things: make a clean breast of things. Release more than the bare minimum of info. Embrace scrutiny. Become fully visible. (This last part is tough to pull off if there is no real "you" to be seen -- if there is no "there" there.)

The solution of transparency becomes its own new problem, of course, if there is something seriously wrong on the returns. Is it about that extra trillion stashed off shore? And then, failing to tithe at that mandatory, 10% rate -- and you, a Mormon officer, for heaven's sake, giving only 1 or 2 percent, based on your officially-declared income versus the whole banana?

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Mitt, my boy, as a helpful, objective aid: □ Pretend we are you, poking around in some entity or other that we know little about, unsure there's anything of any real value present, anything that

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can, frankly, be used to enrich our group -- the USA. □ We're just doing our due diligence and fact-finding here, guy. □ Just business, nothing personal. □ You of all people should know that!

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But, you know, Willard's not the only one playing footsie and the subject-changing game with tax returns. There are 518 members of Congress playing the same avoidance game with tax returns, albeit on a lower level.

McClatchy Newspapers, over the last three months, made requests to all 535 members of Congress to release tax returns. So far, 17 have done so; 518 members, or 97%, have not.

It appears we have a bumper crop of fidgety double standards about to come to a boil on the stove of public opinion. So much for openness, accountability, transparency, and a sense of fair play -- in *or* out of office.

Congress should think hard whether it wishes to share the rocky, slippery, uneven terrain on this taxing point with Willard, or just come clean sooner, rather than later, and enjoy bonus points with the public for having done so.

And, in Willard's case, wife Ann's comment on surrendering tax returns -- "We've given all you people need to know" -- has not helped. That "you people" comment has quickly left many with a "let them eat cake" impression, and a bad taste in the mouth -- one filled with bitter resentment at the encroachment of righteous entitlement, by the unthinkable violation from the great unwashed toward the high-born elite.

Add to that insight yet another, the somewhat recent stink over the Romneys' beliefs that it's fine for a rich wife with multiple mansions and staffs of maids, to stay home with offspring, but moms in more modest circumstances should get back to work as soon as possible after childbirth.

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There is something more than just a bit elitist in that view, smacking of lords and ladies of the manor versus the lowly-born, toiling and birthing in the fields.

Compounding these telling exposures of the real self to daylight by ongoing gaffes, telegraphing your sense of entitlement to stay above the ordinary fray, and not releasing tax returns to voter-shoppers, as **all** presidential candidates do?

That kind of attitude has caused people to come all unglued, and suddenly lose their heads, not all that long ago.

History, as you know, often repeats, both on- and off-shore.

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