

# Hope and Change, R.I.P.

☒ President Obama tells White House reporters that he's running a serious campaign based only on issues, that nothing he's done is "out of bounds." This raises a question: Who are you going to believe – your eyes and ears or the President of the United States?

In just the last month or so, the president's team, or his allies, have done everything they could to slime Mitt Romney. It's how they hope to distract voters from Mr. Obama's dismal economic record. In that pursuit, they produced an ad that links Romney to the death of a steelworkers wife; they intimated that Mitt Romney is a felon; their party's leader in the United States Senate leveled an unsubstantiated charge that Romney paid no income tax in 10 years; and the vice president, who had been talking about GOP supposed plans to "unchain Wall Street" took on a southern accent, and told a crowd which included many African Americans that, "They're gonna put ya'll back in chains."

To the president, apparently none of this is "out of bounds" – but if any of it is, don't blame me, he says.

At an impromptu news conference at the White House, a reporter asked the president about his campaign labeling Romney a felon. Not true, he said. "Nobody accused Mr. Romney of being a felon," the president told reporters.

And technically, he's right. Nobody actually said, "Mitt Romney is a felon." But the president's deputy campaign manager came pretty close, and President Obama knows it.

Last month, Stephanie Cutter, introducing a subject absolutely nobody cares about, said if Romney misrepresented his position at Bain Capital to the Security and Exchange Commission (when he was running the Salt Lake City Olympics) that "is a felony."

You see how unfair Mr. Obama's critics can be. She never said Mitt Romney is a felon. She said he might be guilty of a "felony." This may be a distinction without a difference to most reasonable Americans. To the president, it's simply setting the record straight, and certainly not "out of bounds."

Then a reporter asked about that slimy ad put out by Priorities USA Action, a Democratic Super Pac, which ties Romney to the death of a Kansas City steelworker's wife. The man lost his job and insurance after Bain shut down the plant; his wife contracted cancer and died.

"I don't think that Governor Romney is somehow responsible for the death of the woman that was portrayed in that ad," the president said.

What a guy! Barack Obama actually came out and publicly acknowledged that Mitt Romney is not responsible for the death of that woman, who, by the way, had her own insurance even after her husband lost his, and who died of cancer seven years after Romney left Bain.

The president also made sure to point out that the ad wasn't put out by his campaign.

Right again, Mr. President. He didn't put out the ad, but a hit man who used to work for him at the White House did. And Mr. Obama could have at least denounced the ad, as "out of bounds" – something liberals as well as conservatives had done. But not Barack Obama. He never said the ad crossed a line of decency. And when given the opportunity at the news conference he still wouldn't condemn it. Acknowledging the obvious, that Mitt Romney is not responsible for the woman's death, was as far as he would go.

Harry Reid never came up at the news conference. You remember Harry Reid, the leader of the United States Senate, who – *on the floor of the Senate* – said he had a secret source who told

him Mitt Romney hadn't paid any taxes in 10 years.

The president, through his flack Jay Carney, said that was a matter between Reid and Romney, as if Team Obama wasn't pulling Harry Reid's strings.

This is a president who lets his henchmen do all the dirty work while he innocently tells reporters that "we don't go out of bounds."

This is the same president who put on a show leading us to believe he would be a different kind of politician.

At the 2004 Democratic National Convention, Senator Obama said, "There is not a liberal America, not a conservative America, there is a United States of America."

Four years later, running for president, he said, "One of the things we have to change in our politics is the idea that people cannot disagree without challenging each other's character and each other's patriotism."

But when he realized it would be a tough re-election fight, he didn't hesitate to tell voters that Republicans want "Dirtier air, dirtier water, less people with health insurance." If this isn't "out of bounds" what is?

And we haven't even gotten to the conventions yet.

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