

# The 'Six Degrees of Mitt Romney' Leads to Death?

✘ I honestly thought I'd seen it all when it comes to the shameless, dishonest, and outrageous tactics used by political campaigns. Sadly, I was proved wrong the other day when I watched the latest ad from *Priorities USA Action*, a super PAC supporting President Obama's re-election bid.

The video features an ex-employee of a company closed by Bain Capital (Mitt Romney's former private equity firm) airing his personal grievances against the GOP presidential candidate. *Priorities USA Action*, headed by former Obama administration spokesman Bill Burton, has actually used several such people in their advertising this year in order to portray Romney as a heartless, rich guy who couldn't care less about the lives of people who aren't equally heartless and rich.

The previous advertisements offered no frame of reference, of course, behind the simple logic of a struggling company's need to reorganize and consolidate in order to stay in business. I wouldn't have expected them to. After all, you can't effectively pull on the public's heartstrings when the facts reveal that these sympathetic people would have lost their jobs regardless of whether or not Mitt Romney and Bain Capital ever existed. Still, that's the way the game is played. Though disingenuous, those previous advertisements weren't all that out of the ordinary.

The latest ad, however, far exceeds the boundaries of decency – even in the realm of a political campaign.

In it, former employee of GST Steel, Joe Soptic, tells the story of how Bain Capital shut down the plant he worked for. He explains that because he was out of work, he lost his health insurance. He then describes how his wife became ill.

Next, he *speculates* that she *might* have felt sick for a long time and chose not to speak up about it because she didn't want to burden her family with the cost of uninsured healthcare. He explains that by the time she was diagnosed with stage-four cancer, there was very little that could be done for her and she passed away soon after. He ends the advertisement by saying, "I do not think Mitt Romney realizes what he's done to anyone, and furthermore I do not think Mitt Romney is concerned."

Now, I'm certainly sympathetic to anyone who has lost a loved one, but Joe Soptic should be ashamed of himself for letting a political organization use the memory of his dead wife to slander an individual. It's bad enough for Soptic to claim that someone he doesn't personally know is callous to human suffering, but it's far worse than that... Soptic egregiously assigned blame for his wife's death to someone who had absolutely nothing to do with it, seemingly for purely political purposes. That's absolutely outrageous and disgusting. And it's equally outrageous and disgusting that Bill Burton and the rest of the morally bankrupt people at *Priorities USA Action* would promote such a message.

Is this kind of trash honestly going to be the benchmark for this year's presidential campaign? Is it now fair game to use some *six degrees of separation*, twisted logic to accuse anyone of absolutely anything, including what is essentially being described as murder?

If you take a step back and actually digest the statement that is being made in the ad, the accusation is absolutely horrendous. Even if you ignore the fact that Mitt Romney had left Bain to work for the Olympics by the time Bain Capital closed GST Steel, it's horrendous. Even if you ignore the fact that Joe Soptic's wife wasn't diagnosed with cancer until five years after her husband had lost his job, it's horrendous. Even if you ignore the fact that Joe Soptic's wife was covered by her own job's insurance until she quit that job years

before she was diagnosed with cancer, it's horrendous. Even if you ignore the fact that Joe Sopic, by his own admission, still has no idea whether or not his wife experienced and ignored any warning signs of the cancer and chose not to see a doctor due to family finances, it's horrendous.

The accusation is horrendous because it implies that if someone loses their job, any unrelated hardship they experience throughout the rest of their life (including death) is somehow the fault of their former employer. If you think about it, the only other time this narrative turns up in the national media is during the aftermath of a workplace shooting, when investigators are piecing together the motives of a disgruntled, former employee who sought revenge against an old boss. And here it is actually being used as a political platform! It doesn't get any more shameful than that.

Even the unscrupulous comedian, Bill Maher, who donated \$1 million to *Priorities USA Action* earlier this year, has to be wincing at the kind of rancor his money has helped pay for. And if he's not, maybe someone should use the same logic as *Priorities USA Action* used to hold Maher responsible for the death of any former guests on his HBO show.

Perhaps the most disturbing part of this story is that *Priorities USA Action* isn't just some independent, maverick organization. It's the super PAC that President Obama himself publicly endorsed and directed his donors to. It's the super PAC comprised of former members of his administration. Such an association warrants the media to call on the president himself to condemn the use of such an appalling tactic.

You can bet the media would be all over Mitt Romney if his leading super PAC, *Restore Our Future*, was using the same methods.