

# Obama to Blue-Collar America: Adios!

☒ When I was a kid growing up in the Bronx in the 1950s I knew a lot more about the Yankees than I did about politics. In fact, I didn't know anything about politics, except for one thing: I knew we were Democrats.

My father was a blue-collar worker and like all "working class" men he voted a straight Democratic ticket. We lived in a lower middle class neighborhood and pretty much all the men were FDR blue-collar guys. I never took a survey, but I'm pretty sure there wasn't a Republican within miles of our tenement.

That's how it was back then. Not anymore.

Now, an opinion piece on the New York Times Web site by veteran political reporter Thomas Edsall tells us that for the first time the Democratic Party will "explicitly abandon the white working class."

The blog goes on to explain that, "All pretense of trying to win a majority of the white working class has been effectively jettisoned in favor of cementing a center-left coalition made up, on the one hand, of voters who have gotten ahead on the basis of educational attainment – professors, artists, designers, editors, human resources managers, lawyers, librarians, social workers, teachers and therapists – and a second, substantial constituency of lower-income voters who are disproportionately African-American and Hispanic."

But before President Obama and his team decided to abandon white working class Americans, they pretty much decided to abandon him, along with a lot of other Democrats. For decades, white blue-collar workers have been jumping ship. And for good reason.

For years now, white men without college degrees have felt that the Democratic Party didn't care about them and their families. Take affirmative action. A black kid gets to check off the race box on his college or job application and gets an automatic boost – even if his parents are professional people. The white kid whose father works in a coal mine isn't entitled to affirmative action. How is that kid privileged?

Sure Democrats are always telling blue-collar workers how much they care about them, but then the president – paying due respect to his progressive base – refuses to okay an oil pipeline from Canada to the United States that would have put tens of thousands of blue-collar Americans to work. Why? The pipeline might hurt the environment.

Then there's the gnawing feeling that the Democratic elites – college professors, journalists, the Hollywood ditzocracy – seem to enjoy blaming America for all sorts of sins and apologizing for the country's supposedly oppressive role in the world. If that's the case, the "unsophisticated" blue-collar guy wonders, why are so many people trying so hard to get to America?

The divorce between the Democratic Party and blue-collar workers isn't exactly amicable, but since it's been coming for a long time both sides understand that they just can't live with each other anymore. Call it irreconcilable differences.

My blue-collar Democratic Party father isn't with us anymore. I'm guessing if he were, he'd be a Republican.

(Update: The Obama campaign team has issued a statement saying it is not abandoning white blue-collar voters.)

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# The Dumbest Media Question I've Ever Heard

☒ You know the expression, “You can’t make this stuff up”? Well, over the weekend CNN gave us just such a moment – an example of bias so blatant and so unprofessional that when I first heard it I thought I was watching a Saturday Night Live comedy routine.

It happened at a news conference in Honolulu, at the end of the APEC summit. CNN White House correspondent Dan Lothian brought up the weekend GOP debate and told the president that several candidates said in their view waterboarding is not torture. “I’m wondering,” Lothian asked the president, “if you think they’re uninformed, out of touch, or irresponsible.”

(I suspect many of you reading this will think I made that up. [Click here](#) and see it for yourself.)

I actually laughed when I heard the question. Bias is usually much more subtle, and not nearly as funny. The president just stood there, silent, for a few seconds. Even he seemed stunned at the unvarnished bias of the question. I got the impression he wanted to say, “Come on, man. I know you guys love me – and for good reason – but this is downright embarrassing.” Instead, he smiled and asked if it was a multiple-choice question – then said he thought the Republicans were wrong, that waterboarding is torture. Fine.

My sources tell me that these are a few more questions Dan Lothian may ask the president as the campaign heats up:

“Mr. President, Dan Lothian here from CNN. First I want you to know that we all love you at CNN and think Republicans are Nazis. Now to my question: Do you agree that they’re Nazis or do you think they’re simply morons?”

“Mr. President, should Herman Cain be executed for raping those women?”

“B. I hope you don’t mind Barack if I simply call you B, my main man. Mitt Romney is a Mormon. Should he even be allowed to run for president, especially given the fact that he has 19 wives? And if he wins, should he be allowed to serve? I would say, no, B Man. You agree, right?”

“Good morning, Mr. President. Here’s some coffee and cupcakes I brought to the press conference for you. Question: We took a vote at CNN and decided that the U.S. government should put your face up there on Mt. Rushmore with those other guys who were president. Are those who oppose this great idea uninformed, out of touch, or irresponsible?”

You think someone at CNN will take Mr. Lothian aside and say, “Honest reporters don’t do what you did, so don’t do it anymore!” Neither do I.

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## Who Can Beat Obama?

✘ According to the latest Rasmussen poll only 16 percent of likely voters think the country is heading in the right direction. A staggering 77 percent think we’re heading the wrong way. This, of course, is very bad news for president Obama. But he can still win re-election. Not because of anything he’s accomplished. If he wins, he’ll have the Republicans to thank.

Even with Herman Cain leading in the latest polls, Mitt Romney is still seen as the candidate with the best chance of beating Obama. But conservatives don’t trust Romney. Here’s what George Will says about him:

“Romney, supposedly the Republican most electable next November, is a recidivist reviser of his principles who is not only becoming less electable; he might damage GOP chances of capturing the Senate. Republican successes down the ticket will depend on the energies of the Tea Party and other conservatives, who will be deflated by a nominee whose blurry profile in caution communicates only calculated trimming.”

Romney, as I've said in this space before, not only is not a principled conservative, he's not principled at all, not when it comes to politics, anyway. James Carville calls him a “serial windsock.” When a conservative like George Will and a liberal like James Carville agree, that's news. When they agree that Mitt Romney stands for nothing but his own success, that's potentially bad news for the Republican Party.

The fix is easy, say the conservatives. Don't nominate Romney. Pick a real conservative. It sounds good but this is where problems come in for the Republicans: Which conservative can win the independent vote, which would be needed to beat Obama? I can't think of any.

Rush Limbaugh says he wants the most conservative candidate to win the nomination – because the most conservative candidate can beat Obama. Rush is a smart guy, but does he really think that Bachmann can win the independents and beat Obama? Or that Santorum can? Or Perry? Cain is popular at the moment but I fear he'd come up the loser in a debate with Obama. Newt Gingrich is the only conservative in the race who not only would beat Obama in a debate, but has the gravitas to be president. But if the polls are right, he can't win his own party's nomination let alone the general election.

Reasonable people differ on such things but I think this is a weak Republican field. I remain on Team Buckley: I want the most viable conservative candidate to win the nomination; the one who could actually beat Obama. I'm not at all sure who that is.

But I am sure of this: Reports of Barack Obama's political demise – like those of Mark Twain's death – are greatly exaggerated.

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## We're Approaching the Tipping Point

☒ Of all the new poll numbers on all sorts of subjects that have come out recently, one number in particular caught my eye. It's from the latest CBS News/New York Times poll and it tells us that a whopping 66 percent of Americans believe that wealth should be more evenly spread around in this country.

Or to put it another way, two-thirds of Americans think that rich people have too much money – and that everyone else doesn't have enough.

Or to put it still another way, we're approaching a tipping point in this country, if we haven't already reached it. In science, a tipping point is the point at which a system is displaced from a state of stable equilibrium into a different state. The tipping point here is the one that takes us from capitalism to socialism.

It's bad enough when about half of Americans don't pay any federal income tax and get all the goodies – like national security and interstate highways – for free. We can understand how that creates an entitlement mentality. But now we have a *majority* of Americans who think that wealth is not fairly distributed in this country – and they want some of that money. This explains why, according to the same poll,

two-thirds of Americans are in favor of raising taxes on millionaires.

This is how re-distribution of the wealth works: the government takes from the so-called rich and gives it to everyone who isn't rich. Never mind that the rich may have more intelligence or more talent than the rest, or that they simply might have a more marketable skill. And never mind the simple fact that it's their money – no matter how they got it, as long as they got it legally. So what, say the 66 percent. They have it and we want it!

They sound a lot like the Occupy Wall Street protestors, which explains why nearly half of those polled say the demonstrators represent the feelings of most Americans.

As depressing as these numbers are, they're gold nuggets for President Obama who, as I've written before, will run his campaign for re-election pretty much on just one issue: Republicans only care about rich people. They don't care if everyone else loses their home, can't afford food and dies in the street.

President Obama, at heart, is a ruthless left-wing politician. Despite his lofty rhetoric and engaging smile, he will happily divide Americans based on their net worth. He won't care about turning Americans against each other. He has seen these poll numbers and with unemployment holding steady at over 9 percent, they surely have given him hope.

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# It's NOT the Economy Stupid, It's Theology

✘ What if a panel of the top 100 economists in America went to Barack Obama and said: "Raising taxes on the so-called rich is not a good idea. Not now, anyway. The money you would get from them will not put a dent in the deficit ... and it won't stimulate the economy. In fact, it will hurt the economy. The money they would give to the government will no longer be there to hire new employees. In fact, increasing the taxes on the very people who create jobs might result in higher, not lower, unemployment in this country."

What do you think President Obama would do if he got that advice? I think he'd try to raise taxes on the rich anyway. For liberal Democrats like Mr. Obama, raising taxes on the wealthy isn't really about economics. It's about politics – and theology.

I have noted before in this space, George Bernard Shaw's famous observation that "Any government that robs Peter to pay Paul, can always depend on the support of Paul." And since there are a lot more Pauls out there than Peters, the president figures class warfare is a good political strategy as he kicks off his re-election campaign.

He may be right. According to the latest CBS News/New York Times poll, 56 percent of Americans think taxes should be increased on households earning \$250,000 a year or higher to help lower the deficit; only 37 percent disagree.

Most Americans, however, are abysmally ignorant of how the economy works. I wonder if they'd be in favor of tax hikes on the so-called rich, if their boss at some small business said, "Sorry, I just got a tax hike and I can't afford to keep you on the payroll any longer."

As for the theology part ...

Liberal Democrats think raising taxes on people who make a lot of money is a matter of social justice. If you have more money "than you need," they figure – spread it around to those who don't have as much, as candidate Obama told Joe the Plumber. Liberals – even those who don't take religion all that seriously – see higher taxes on the wealthy as a moral issue. (That is, when they're not cynically calculating how many of those Pauls they can get to vote for them with their "tax the rich" message. As far as they're concerned, Peter can go to hell.)

I have no problem with this philosophy – in church. Give all you want to the less fortunate. But people who have taken risks, who have marketable talents, who work hard for their money, have no obligation to share it with everyone who isn't doing as well – and that includes the kind of people who never took education seriously and who as adults may lead dysfunctional lives. Helping the working poor is one thing. Helping losers is something else all together. That may not sound terribly "Christian" but that's not my concern.

So as the campaign heats up, Republicans might want to consider a brand new strategy: Give President Obama everything he wants in his latest stimulus plan – the one he keeps telling us that Congress must pass "right now." And when the economy tanks, hang the mess around Barack Obama's neck, because that's just where it belongs. Then pray that the American people have enough sense to elect a Republican House, Senate and president who will undo the damage that Mr. Obama and his liberal pals in Congress have done.

From my keyboard to God's ears ...