

# Is This the GOP Shutdown – Or President Obama's?

☒ I interviewed George Carlin many years ago when I was still with CBS News. We hit it off. He was both funny and very smart. Very liberal, too, but that never came out in our interview. One of his points was that we humans had made a mess of things and he wanted the world as we know it to end. He wanted a big meteor to destroy the planet. And for good measure he wanted it to sail right through the hole in the ozone layer. But he wanted Los Angeles, where he lived, to be the last to go. Why? Because, he told me, he wanted to watch the destruction, one city at a time, on CNN.

George was a strange cat.

I ran into him later that night (in Aspen, Colorado) and he said something like, “Hey Bernie, I’ve been thinking about our interview. And you know what it comes down to for me? I root for chaos.”

I think he really did. But part of it was an act. He had a family. I’m sure he didn’t want to see them go up in smoke. But I’ve been thinking about that line, about why some people root for chaos. And it hit me: You know who else is rooting for chaos? President Barack Obama.

First, a few words about the Republicans. They didn’t think this government shutdown thing through. They picked a fight they couldn’t win. They went into battle with the President of the United States but they didn’t have a battle plan. They didn’t have an end game. And now, if the polls are right, they’re getting the lion’s share of the blame for the shutdown. You can’t blame that on the liberal media.

But it didn’t have to happen. All the president and his equally hyper-partisan pal Harry Reid over in the senate had

to do was throw the Republicans a bone. Give them something. Anything. And there would have been no shutdown. The president could have said, "Ok, let's repeal the tax on medical devices." But he wouldn't do it. He could have said, "Congress gets no special treatment, no subsidies." But he wouldn't do that either.

In a few weeks we'll have a showdown on raising the debt ceiling. Republicans want any increase tied to spending decreases. The president has already indicated he won't compromise on that one either.

Barack Obama is rooting for chaos because he knows most Americans won't blame him. And that is his only hope for capturing the House next year. And if he manages to pull that one off, he will make good on his campaign promise – *to fundamentally transform the United States of America.*

And while the so-called mainstream media are predictably telling us all about the shutdown at Yellowstone and how the panda-cam went offline, they're telling us precious little about why the president is so obstinate.

What I have just written is clearly my opinion. It's commentary. It's not irrefutable fact. But hard news reporters could take those ideas and turn them into legitimate questions. They could ask serious non-partisan political thinkers if the president is refusing to compromise for political gain. They could ask if they believe he's prepared to throw the American economy under the bus hoping it will benefit him in 2014? Is this part of his plan to transform America? And then they could ask: Is the president of the United States rooting for chaos?