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Michael Giltz

Posted November 12, 2008 | 05:22 PM (EST)

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# Obama's Win and the Ten Lies The Right Is Spreading About It



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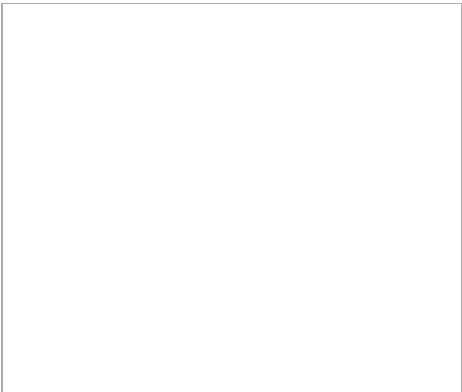
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During the final weeks of the election, when it became clear Barack Obama was going to win, the far right started a drumbeat of lies to minimize Obama's victory, downplay the viciously ugly campaign that McCain and Palin ran and trick the weak-kneed left into bungling this opportunity. You know something is up when Karl Rove, David Brooks, Sean Hannity and everyone else starts repeating a phrase like the United States is "a center-right country." (A lie knocked down by Robert Borosage.) Now that Obama's historic win is in the books, those lies

have become even more pronounced. Here are the top lies of the right and why you shouldn't fall for them.

## The Top Ten Right Wing Lies About Obama's Win

- 1. Obama's win wasn't that big
2. Obama only won because of the black vote and the fringe far left
3. Obama only won because he ran a center-right campaign
4. John McCain couldn't have won
5. Political parties almost never win three terms in a row
6. The US is a center-right country
7. Bush prevented a terrorist attack for seven years and if Obama doesn't prevent an attack for the next seven years then he has failed to protect us
8. John McCain's concession speech was notably gracious
9. Punishing Joe Lieberman would be petty
10. Sarah Palin is the future of the Republican Party



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**OBAMA'S WIN WASN'T THAT BIG** -- Obama only won by six points in the popular vote, they say. Shouldn't it have been much bigger? Sure he won, but it's not like Obama got a rousing endorsement. (This from the party where Bush squeaked out a win in 2004 by one state and 50.7% of the vote but immediately insisted it was a mandate.) Where to begin? The win by Obama and the Democrats was nationwide and significant on many levels. Obama won the biggest percentage of the popular vote for any Democrat since Lyndon Johnson in 1964. He's the first to win more than 50% since Carter in 1976. Virtually, [the entire country went more Democratic than Republican](#) -- except for the Old Confederacy, where the Republican Party still holds on to a narrow, poor strip. Obama was the first Democrat to win North Carolina since 1976 and the first to win Virginia and Indiana since 1964. The party win was even bigger, especially given this era of redistricting where kicking out an incumbent is tougher than ever. The Republicans lost big two elections in a row. Like Ronald Reagan in 1980, Obama won huge margins of victory from young people. Add in Hispanics and independents and Obama's win may presage a wave of loyal Democratic voters for years to come.

**OBAMA ONLY WON BECAUSE OF THE BLACK VOTE AND THE FRINGE FAR LEFT** -- This is an attempt to treat Obama's win as simply identity politics (black people voting for a black nominee because it was the first time they could) rather than a broad mandate from the country as a whole that saw Obama as the best candidate. The truth is that [Obama did better than John Kerry in virtually every demographic you can name](#), including white voters. The only two areas where Obama drew fewer votes than Kerry were the over 65 crowd and gays and lesbians. This was not an eked-out victory; it was a broad national success.

**OBAMA WON BECAUSE HE RAN A CENTER-RIGHT CAMPAIGN** -- That's the jaw-dropper from Karl Rove and others. The guy they were screaming was a socialist ran a "center-right" campaign. That's right, the guy who said he'd raise taxes on the rich and end the war in Iraq was pretending to be Reagan.

**JOHN MCCAIN COULDN'T HAVE WON** -- In this argument, the forces working to hand Democrats a victory were so overwhelming there was nothing John McCain or any Republican nominee could have done to change that. And when the economy went south, McCain's fate was sealed. It's the economy, stupid (plus the most despised President in 80 years if not ever, plus two wars, etc.) Well, by this logic it was a given that Gore would win in 2000 and there was nothing Bush could do to change THAT, either. It certainly shouldn't have been so close that one state (and a Supreme Court) could change the inevitable. In fact, nothing is inevitable. The simple truth is that McCain was often ahead in the polls for much of the general election season and especially after his convention. It was McCain's floundering that sent his poll numbers tumbling, not some inescapable tide of history. He didn't lose because the economy went south: McCain lost because the economy went south *and his reaction was a boondoggle of epic proportions*. McCain made three rash, hasty decisions when faced with a major crisis and all of them made voters rethink their attitude towards him. First, he faced a floor fight at the convention if he chose the running mate he wanted, Joe Lieberman. McCain caved and hastily settled on Governor Sarah Palin. She thrilled the base but in a general election you're supposed to reach out to moderates and independents. The more voters saw of Palin, the less they liked. And it was abundantly clear he'd only met her once and chatted with her on the phone briefly before offering her the VP slot. Second, when Russia and Georgia came to blows, McCain bombastically declared "We are all Georgians!" and seemed almost eager for another war. With America bogged down in two wars already, the prospect of a President who looked delighted at the possibility of committing US troops to a third war that didn't involve vital national interests frightened voters. Finally, when the economic meltdown occurred, McCain rashly pretended to "suspend" his campaign and suggested the next Presidential debate might have to wait. Obama simply stated the obvious: that a President needs to be able to do more than one thing at a time. McCain caved and un-suspended his campaign even though no deal had yet been struck and looked even more foolish when he had literally nothing to offer in DC. And all of this ignores Obama, who ran a flawless campaign and had to. McCain didn't need to do anything if Obama made a gaffe, any gaffe, really.

**POLITICAL PARTIES RARELY WIN THREE TERMS IN A ROW** -- This is a strange one I've heard lately. Its message is simple: if you've held the White House two terms in a row, holding it for a third term almost never happens. It's one more piece of the "McCain couldn't possibly win" argument. Except that it's not even remotely true. For seven elections from 1800 through 1824, the Democratic-Republicans held the White House. Thomas Jefferson won twice, James Madison won twice, James Monroe won twice and John Quincy Adams won once. That was followed by three elections in a row for the Democratic party -- twice with Andrew Jackson and once for Martin Van Buren from 1828 through 1836. Then the Republicans won four Presidential elections in a row from 1868-1880 thanks to Ulysses Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes and James Garfield. The

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Republicans won four in a row again from 1896 through 1908 with William McKinley, Teddy Roosevelt and William Howard Taft. Well, maybe the 20th century is different? Not really. The Republicans won three in a row from 1920-1928 with Harding, Coolidge and Hoover. Then the Democrats won five in a row from 1932-1948 with FDR and Truman. And of course Republicans won three in a row with Reagan and Bush in the 80s. (Some Dems would throw in Clinton and Gore as the most recent example, but that's another issue entirely.) It would probably have happened even more except for term limits.

**THE UNITED STATES IS A CENTER-RIGHT COUNTRY** -- [Robert Borosage does a great breakdown of demographics](#) to show how people who call themselves moderates (which is a bigger chunk than liberals or conservatives) lean left on major issues of the day. But don't get bogged down in exit polls and stats. Here's one fact: 39% of registered voters are Democrats, 32% are Republicans and 27% are independents. It's more likely that independents will pass Republicans in the next decade than Republicans catch up with the Democrats. Here's another simple reality check: the Democrats control a majority of state Houses, a majority of the Governor mansions, a majority of the House, a majority of the Senate and the Presidency. And they increased their dominance in every category. In what fantasy world are a significant majority of the voters registered Democrats and the Democrats control every level of government from the local to the national level and yet someone can argue with a straight face that the US is a "center-right country?"

**BUSH PREVENTED A TERRORIST ATTACK FOR SEVEN YEARS AND IF THERE'S A TERRORIST ATTACK IN THE NEXT SEVEN YEARS OBAMA WILL HAVE FAILED TO PROTECT US** -- That's a new doozy that does some pretty clever juggling of history. Bush prevented a terrorist attack for seven years on our soil? Um, except for when he *didn't* protect us and we suffered the worst terrorist attack on US soil in history. The Democrats took 9-11 as a sign to rally around a President whose election victory was suspect at best and give him their full support. The Republicans are already signaling that the moment any disaster might strike they're going to attack Obama as "weak" on defense and the good of the country be damned. By the standards of Bush, Obama gets a free pass for at least one terrorist attack. But this moronic "calendar" approach ignores the real test we should make. No leader can prevent bad things from happening. It's like hiring a fire chief and then blaming him because fires still occur. The test of a leader is not the impossible one of magically preventing bad things from ever happening again. It's how they respond to a crisis. Bush froze on 9-11 and then launched an unnecessary war that left tens of thousands of US soldiers dead or wounded, drained our national treasury to more than \$1 trillion and counting, failed to catch or kill the people responsible and has left Al Qaeda stronger than ever by every measurement. That's the failure of Bush, not the fact that 9-11 occurred in the first place.

**JOHN MCCAIN'S CONCESSION SPEECH WAS NOTABLY GRACIOUS** -- Every loser in a Presidential election is expected to say they fought a tough campaign, but the other guy won and now everyone should rally around the President-elect. That's not gracious; that's the LEAST anyone should do. John McCain did that and he did it fine. But it wasn't noble or remarkable or exceptional. Nonetheless everyone from Elizabeth Hasselback of *The View* to historian Doris Kearns-Goodwin raved about McCain and how gracious he was. Barbara Walters cooed that his concession speech was "elegant." As others have pointed out, this is in some ways an attempt to pretend that McCain's campaign was just "tough" and "hard fought," just like every other campaign. Jon Meacham of *Newsweek* insisted "McCain ran a noble campaign; it could have been far worse." Short of having people at his rallies lynch Obama in effigy, it's hard to see how McCain and Palin's campaign could have been any less noble or more nasty. McCain and Palin ran the nastiest, most divisive general election campaign since George Bush (who I supported) in 1988. Palin regularly impugned Obama's patriotism, McCain rallies featured people calling Obama a terrorist and demanding his death and McCain's ads were so laughably and transparently lies that the traditional media felt almost obliged to denounce them in every possible way. And McCain didn't just sell his soul during the general election. He sold it four years ago when he hitched his wagon to Bush because McCain cynically decided to support a guy he despised and abandon his principles as the only way he'd ever win his party's nomination.

**STRIPPING JOE LIEBERMAN OF HIS CHAIRMANSHIP WOULD BE PETTY** -- This, too, is a rather strange debate and [John Aravosis of Americablog weighs in on why it's so disastrous for the Democrats](#) to go soft on Joe. Lieberman was ready to run as VP for the Republican Party. When he didn't get it, he endorsed his old friend John McCain but promised

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by Michael Giltz

Democrats he would support McCain without attacking the Democratic nominee. Then he broke his promise and went on the campaign trail and spoke at the Republican convention, impugning Obama's patriotism at every turn. And this wasn't the first time Lieberman aligned with Republicans at the expense of Dems. It's one thing to support Bush's disastrous policy in Iraq. It's quite another to give Bush political cover by attacking any Democrat who questions Bush's policy as undermining the troops, as he did repeatedly. Why would anyone think they could malign and smear members of their own party and the Democratic presidential nominee and then turn around and expect lots of treats? Joe Lieberman could have easily and nobly supported McCain without attacking the Democrats. But he didn't. Only Democrats would debate whether a rogue Senator consistently undermining their party deserves every perk they can give him. Stripping Lieberman of his chairmanship isn't petty; it's common sense. I would never suggest using Karl Rove as a model for ethics or decency or just about anything. But he must be laughing right now. It is instructive to imagine if the roles were reversed and Lieberman were a Republican and to imagine what Rove and Hannity and Limbaugh would be saying about what should be done to him. I think their only debate would be over tar and feathering versus a good thrashing.

**SARAH PALIN IS THE FUTURE OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY** -- Actually, she represents the past. But if you're a Democrat, you should certainly hope the Republicans think so.

So what lies about the campaign and Obama's victory have you spotted?

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 **rockyb26** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of rockyb26](#) [permalink](#)

Great post! Thank you.


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 **keating5** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of keating5](#) [permalink](#)

One other issue about the turnout. It was lower than it could have been because the race just wasn't closely contested. It just wasn't. Everyone knew from the polls this was going to be a big win. Even Rove predicted Obama winning well in excess of 300 electoral votes. So, of course Obama's turnout wasn't quite as high as predicted. But his electoral tally was.

Pretty accurate system, I'd say.

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 **AbstractImp** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of AbstractImp](#) [permalink](#)

The republicans were in power, and ignoring warnings, when we were hit by the worst terrorist attack in our history.

Then they used this terrible event to steal our money and our rights.

No republican has told the truth since that day. . .

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 **Lee323** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Lee323](#) [permalink](#)

Excellent post!

I would like to reinforce one aspect of the #4 Lie..."McCain couldn't have won." Palin was a HUGE turnoff for the "Hillary women" and many moderate repub women!! If 50% of the 18 "million cracks" had gone over to McCain after the bitter democratic primary, there would be a different election result today. Furthermore, Palin was, as you mentioned, flagellating the "energized base" instead of bringing in moderates/independents. As much as McCain and Palin like to retrospectively downplay her drag on the ticket, it was obviously a huge factor when you consider all of the above.

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 **BaileyWo** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of BaileyWo](#) [permalink](#)

I disagree. I think Palin brought the base back and kept it close. Don't forget how disenfranchised the Christianist right-wing was feeling when all the party had to offer was Guiliani, Romni, that joke from Arkansas and McCain.

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 **SoD1** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of SoD1](#) [permalink](#)

And a theocratic, fatally uneducated Palin, is less of a joke hmm?  
Since that "base" that you mentioned chose two "Jokes "to run for the two most important position, the other 'choices not minder a joke were, the conclusion can only be the entire Republican Party and its followers are JOKES! Among many other conclusions, hmm?

Interesting as Excellent Evaluation of the Republican "Brotherhood", their helpers- helpers in the general media way of "twisting reality", Mr. Michael Giltz . And most American suspiciousness minds just believe without Questioning.  
I , would blame such apathy of the mind on the over-emphasis on Religion in the U.S. . AS usual, among other related reasons.

Best Regards!  
SoD1

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 **aloha43** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of aloha43](#) [permalink](#)

Don't forget:

11. Lied, broken promise, he had more money....bought the election.  
(A person has the right to change their mind, that doesn't mean it's a lie. And NO, he didn't buy the



election, WE THE PEOPLE donated our hard earned money to HELP Obama win!)

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 10:23 PM on 11/13/2008

[-] **BARRISTER** See Profile I'm a Fan of BARRISTER permalink

Obama NEVER promised to take Public Funding, NEVER!!

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 05:18 AM on 11/14/2008

[-] **ThirdPartyGal** See Profile I'm a Fan of ThirdPartyGal permalink

I have heard a few of the 'lies' here. But I have to differ. I think they are right McCain couldn't have won this. The public isn't educated to think past Republican and Democrat & considering they are told George Bush is to blame, they will likely vote Democrat. I don't think McCain could have won. And I do think McCain's speech on Election night was over the top awesome, especially when I heard his speech next to the previous speeches given by those who lost. The election campaign was down right dirty on both sides. I think they both went negative. Though it is a lie to think the country is "center right" still after they voted to put a far left president in the next administration. When all is said and done, the past few months have been 99.999% dirty politics no matter what party you fall in - republican or democrat.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 07:05 PM on 11/13/2008

[-] **silverball** See Profile I'm a Fan of silverball permalink

hmmmm....did we just experience the same election cycle in the usa???....."a far left president"???.....and when you say "they both went negative"...you are suggesting this was done equally....WRONG!!!.....mccain had a very good chance to win, but he ran a very rovia campaign and chose to appeal to the "base"....meaning the right wing evangelical whack balls....he sold his soul (and priciples) and did EVERYTHING he could to win....sounds a lot like king george, dontcha think?...

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[-] **Adjuster** See Profile I'm a Fan of Adjuster permalink

You're full of moose scat. Get lost.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 07:57 AM on 11/14/2008

[-] **Michael Giltz** See Profile I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz permalink

you're right that McCain had a very tough row to hoe. But even if he started ten yards back, didn't he hurt himself at every turn w a bad campaign? (and I supported him over bush in 2000.) and third parties are cool - with 27% registered independents, we could pass republicans in ten years.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 11:32 PM on 11/13/2008

[-] **laocoon** See Profile I'm a Fan of laocoon permalink

the argument about Bush protecting us is amazing. Clinton did a better job in his 8 years by any objective measure. the military failure of this administration on 9-11 is one of the worst in US history. 40 minutes after a second plane attack, the pentagon was left without an air cap and somehow managed no attempt at ground to air defense. That anyone could claim with a straight face that Bush is superior in protecting US is so ridiculous. this was a massive and unexplainable failure to take the most fundamental steps to defend your command center long after you know you are under attack. We mastered air tactics in WWII. We planned and perfected air defense for 50 years of cold war. Yet this administration was so inept it made no effort to defend the flag ship, the center from which any defense would need to be coordinated for 40 minutes after it had to know there was a multiplane air attack in progress. It is insulting to our intelligence to suggest Bush was any thing but a abject failure in defending us.

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[-] **Michael Giltz** See Profile I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz permalink

great points. Thx for reading.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 11:34 PM on 11/13/2008

[-] **ohioan73** See Profile I'm a Fan of ohioan73 permalink

In the 60s, people aged 1-25 were the 52%. They were called "baby boomers". If 52% is enough to mark a generation with the word "boom" then I would think that meant there were a frickin LOT of them. 52% is the majority. Period.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 06:40 PM on 11/13/2008

biabouman41 See Profile I'm a Fan of biabouman41 permalink

The notion that Preident elect Obama won because of the black vote implies that the vote by blacks is dismissable, also that by itself it forced Obama to victory. Fact is Sen. Kerry got 90% of the African American vote (and I believe Pres. Clinton got 92%) and Obama got 95%.

The other theory that was hot and heavy leading up to the vote was about the "Bradley effect". In fact as an Obama campaign volunteer I can tell you there was a reverse Bradley effect. As an example of my experience I will relate one call to a Florida voter Nov2 .I called and asked for a female voter by name, a male , whom I assumed was her husband answered and passed the call to her. I said this is Jim, a volunteer for Barack Obama's campaign for change. She said , in a very loud voice: "we are all Republicans here" The tone and volume of her response told me this was not normal, so I said to her: "well so is Colin Powell and William F Buckley's son and they support Obama" She giggled at this, and so I said: "I take it that you are an Obama supporter but can not say so at this point" She responded in a loud voice: "you are absolutely right" and terminated the call. I had several similar calls to both Florida and Virginia.

On a separate topic: If Liberman goes unpunished, I will not contribute to the DNC

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 03:50 PM on 11/13/2008

raygunnot See Profile I'm a Fan of raygunnot permalink

One more correction: The numbers are wrong. At this time, Obama is at 52.7% which rounds to 53%.

He leads McCain by 6.7% which rounds to 7%.

He now leads by almost 8.5 million votes.

All these numbers have been growing almost every day since election day, as late returns come in. So election day memes can need revision. Don't let them slide.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 03:46 PM on 11/13/2008

Michael Giltz See Profile I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz permalink

I will tweak the post. Thanks for making a great point - facts matter.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 11:35 PM on 11/13/2008

bassman4rent See Profile I'm a Fan of bassman4rent permalink

Ironically, the main reason that President-elect Obama was able to deflect GOP attacks was that they,(the campaign), had heard it all before in the primary. Well, maybe not the center right argument. How many times did Sen. Clinton say that her opponent was un-electable? While many among the Dems were wringing their hands about the fierceness and length of the primary campaign, I predicted (quite correctly I might add) that should he survive the Clinton onslaught, he would be a much stronger candidate in the general election.

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Chris Weigant - Huffpost Blogger I'm a Fan of Chris Weigant permalink



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On the terrorist attack thing -

Don't forget that the way many Republicans or right-wingers utter this line is, in itself, a lie. "There have been no terror attacks since 9/11, because Bush is such a studmuffin" or similar phrasings completely ignore the anthrax letters attack. Which has never been completely solved, on Bush's watch.

So I guess Obama will get TWO free passes from right-wing commentators... right?

Heh.

-CW

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 03:00 PM on 11/13/2008

michaelsmolder See Profile I'm a Fan of michaelsmolder permalink

And don't forget North Korea testing a Nuclear Bomb!

BTW Didn't they just execute, after a trial, the perpetrators of the Bali Bombing? (Implying that THEY know how to capture, try, and punish terrorist !... but we don't. )

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 12:10 AM on 11/14/2008

commonsenselives See Profile I'm a Fan of commonsenselives permalink

Not to mention the train bombings in Europe. Maybe if we had some decent intelligence around the world, we may have been able to prevent attacks on our allies

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 06:42 PM on 11/13/2008

bliss0027 See Profile I'm a Fan of bliss0027 permalink

why is it they never mention that there hadn't been an terrorist attack on US soil for 60 years until Bush took office?????????

is it really an accomplishment to have only had one terrorist attack against the country while in office??

WAY TO GO BUSH

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 05:33 PM on 11/13/2008

Lust4Lost See Profile I'm a Fan of Lust4Lost permalink

huh? the world trade center was bombed in march of 1993. had that car bomb been one parking stall over the entire complex full of people would have collapsed making it significantly worse than 9/11 was

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 10:07 AM on 11/14/2008

HypocrisyAlarm See Profile I'm a Fan of HypocrisyAlarm permalink

Doesn't OK City count as a terrorist attack, albeit domestic extremists?

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 02:47 AM on 11/14/2008

Michael Giltz See Profile I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz permalink

good points all. Obviously Bush isn't responsible for security in other countries but the idea al Qaeda has been stymied when they've been launching attacks in the UK, Spain, and elsewhere (not to mention the unexplained anthrax letters on our soil)? Hey when our friends are being killed hardly seems appropriate.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 11:40 PM on 11/13/2008

momof3inGA See Profile I'm a Fan of momof3inGA permalink

Excellent Article. Really. Outstanding.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 02:26 PM on 11/13/2008

Daveel See Profile I'm a Fan of Daveel permalink

Very good except one minor correction. John McCain was only ahead in the polls for two weeks (one really). After the Republican National Convention he led for one week and was tied for one week. Other than that Obama maintained a lead ranging from narrow to significant since he clinched the nomination.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 02:23 PM on 11/13/2008

ReelBusy See Profile I'm a Fan of ReelBusy permalink

Which essentially means McCain was in the lead at the end of the 3rd quarter and blew it in the last part of the game.

The one reason Joe L. will walk out clean and chairman is Obama wants to be liked and he has to get over that and be a real leader.

Real leaders choose their key followers and Joe Lieberman is not one of them. Bounce him now.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 04:19 PM on 11/13/2008

snogard5 See Profile I'm a Fan of snogard5 permalink

Let's look at the accomplishments of George W. Bush. An eight year tax holiday for the wealthiest among us. An astounding 2,688 straight days without a radical Islamic terrorist attack on US soil placing him a strong third behind forty-one other presidents who tied with perfect records and just behind Bill Clinton at 2,885 consecutive days. What a great guy.



Favorite Flag as abusive Posted 02:15 PM on 11/13/2008

Goddatunda See Profile I'm a Fan of Goddatunda permalink

I have yet to hear one Republican mention Bush's record # of days on vacation.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/03/11/politics/uwire/main3927378.shtml>

And with two wars going on, too.

I would consider that the most shameful part of his legacy, but there's so much more to choose from.

Great post. Sorry I got off-topic.

Favorite Flag as abusive Posted 04:00 PM on 11/13/2008

Michael Giltz See Profile I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz permalink

I forgot abt the endless vacations. It's amazing how many terrible aspects we can forget about. They do pile up so. Thx for reading.

Favorite Flag as abusive Posted 11:42 PM on 11/13/2008

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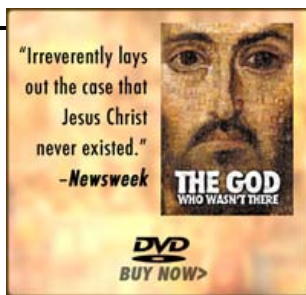
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