

# DEFAMATORY POLITICS IN AMERICA; Not Letting The Facts Get In The Way of A Vicious Attack Against Candidates and Whistle Blowers

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Increasingly, politics is a game driven by often-invented beliefs and myths that are firmly detached from facts and their interpretation.

The parties and their factions live not only in parallel universes but worlds of information that are driven mostly but what they think will work in pandering to their bases and the public.

Even as progressives complain that Barack Obama has moved right even if he occasionally talks left, the hard-core right-wing see him a black revolutionary shaped by Reverend Wright's black liberation theology with allusions to Malcolm X and Kenyan communists thrown into the mix to "prove" their case.

Never mind that Obama threw his one time mentor Wright under the bus in 2008, or that his policies rarely speak of the needs of a black community suffering under the burden of high joblessness, foreclosures and growing poverty.

In fact, real black revolutionaries like Cornell West and so many others find the President a sell-out and embarrassment even if their community embraces him more as an identity issue.

The recent plan by Wall Street trader Ed Ricketts to recycle the alleged Obama-Wright conspiracy into an defamatory political ad campaign spoke more to his ignorance and fears than any truth-based assessment. Had the New York Times not exposed it, this \$10 million dollar race-based smear would have moved forward.

Because it was exposed, even Mitt Romney who hasn't met a right wing talking point he won't embrace, had to distance himself from it,

As Charles Blow wrote in the Times, "It called for using Wright to "increase the unease" and "inflame the questions" among independents using the episode "that's never been properly exploited." How I love the use of sinister verbs.

There was one description of the president that truly seized me:

"The metrosexual black Abe Lincoln has emerged as a hyper-partisan, hyper-liberal, elitist

politician with more than a bit of the trimmer in him.”

This sentence is just so deliciously ridiculous, insulting and incendiary — perfect Republican fodder.

Let’s dissect it, shall we? Scalpel!”

How proud this News Dissector was to find a mainstream media maven finally resorting to dissection. (Hopefully it will prompt AdBusters to issue a new warning about the dangers of cooptation!) Blow blew the “logic” behind this crusade away.

But it almost doesn’t mater. This proposed campaign—and there will be other—was not offered up as part of any real debate or perspective but as a political weapon of denigration. It was a lie but its promoter knew that many, out of prejudice or ignorance would believe is true.

These campaigns are a tools of mass distraction to fog understanding, not advance it. They play to already dumbed down base instincts. Unfortunately, as a tactic it is not ljust embraced by wack jobs.

A whole industry of campaign political consultants immersed in negative research and manipulative advertising has mainstreamed it.

Willy Horton, meet Ed Ricketts.

This same smarmy approach is often increasingly used in the courts where well-heeled

companies DELIBERATELY file gratuitous and flawed law suits against adversaries including journalists who are exposing their practices, or alerting the public to their scams and schemes.

This has been happening to a colleague of mine> Aaron Krowne created the ML-Implode websites to offer evidence of financial fraud while documenting how it brings down companies that “implode” after using sleazy techniques to enrich themselves often with government support through agencies like HUD that also victimize borrowers seeking home loans.

When writers posted whistle blowing articles on his site showing how millions were being ripped off—even as the FHA and other agencies insured the loans thus minimizing any all risks for the scammers—he was sued and forced into court to defend his site and work as a journalist at considerable expense

The charges were bogus but it didn’t matter, Defending malicious lawsuits costs as much as filing them, and its hard for a small independent website to finance that even when they are 100% right.

As Krowe explained about the companies with llawyers for hire trying to shut him down, *“They get an effectively 100% loan without FHA knowing it, so there are no proper risk controls for this type of financing. The home price may also be inflated without limit (beyond the 3% downpayment amount). And of course, neither the seller or lender ever face any risk, which falls on FHA (and implicitly, the taxpayers).”*

Wouldn't you think the FBI or the Justice Department would rush to his side? Forget it. They had enabled these practices in the first place and have been lax in enforcing what laws there are.

What happened next is too detailed for this column—I will write others—but when a blogger exposed an unethical business practice used against homeowners as a “scam”—a word the IRS had itself used—a rich principal in the company accused of misconduct, filed a so-called SLAPP suit in a Maryland court against ML-Implode for libel and damages.

And not just against the blogger but the website that carries articles by knowledgeable journalists!

They even got—bought, it seems—an Indian tribe to join their suit to make it appear more credible.

They first tried to get an injunction against him—in effect, a prior restraint of free speech. It cost Aaron's company \$50,000 to stop it.

At the same time, the big bucks operator behind the suit, was boasting privately in emails, that he wanted to “bankrupt” ML-Implode, while admitting that he knew the injunction attempt had virtually no chance of passing (10% was his exact number). Of course this is all de facto bad faith. (The irony: The company Aaron exposed later imploded.)

But that, too, didn't matter because ML-Implode ran out of money. The firm was forced to withdraw, and then the court declared ML-Implode in default.

Says Krowne who is still fighting a legal battle that has become increasingly technical, as many fights like this tend to become, “If this result stands, it will probably be the first time in history a media outlet of any kind has been penalized for speaking out against a “business” that *itself* acknowledged it had already been outlawed by the US Congress at the time it filed suit for libel.”

Hello Charles Blow at the NY Times, any interest in dissecting this one?

The attempt to smear Obama was so blatant and racist that it could easily be exposed, But legal battles like this one go on every day in the obscure language of law suits filed to silence free speech.

They often work because the legal system—like the society we live in—is so unbalanced with wealth in so few hands, that truth is smothered in obscure legal rulings that the press doesn't cover and the public can't possibly understand.

You can find out more from this ML-Implode Resource page:

<http://ml-implode.com/sfdpacampaign.html>

*News Dissector Danny Schechter blogs at [newsdissector.net](http://newsdissector.net). In addition to Blogothon, Cosimo Books has also just published his “Occupy: Dissecting*

*Occupy Wall Street.” His latest film is Plunder the Crime of our Time on the financial crisis as a crime story. ([plunderthecrimeofourtime.com](http://plunderthecrimeofourtime.com).) He hosts News Dissector Radio Hour on Progressive Radio Network (PRN.fm), Comments to [dissector@mediachannel.org](mailto:dissector@mediachannel.org)*

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