

August 6, 2013

John Fund thinks the IRS investigation is making progress.

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Mark Steyn contemplates the "transition" being managed by H & H (Huma and Hillary).

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*So, if she's so smart, what has she accomplished? Let us put aside her Muslim Brotherhood family background – let us put it aside in the same corner as Anthony Weiner's infidel penis, the Muslim Brotherhood being one of the few things on the planet rising even more spectacularly than Anthony. Instead, consider merely the official résumé. Huma Abedin's present employment is as "head of Hillary Clinton's transition team." Mrs. Clinton, you may recall, was once Secretary of State. This was way back in January. Since then, she has been "transitioning away from government to become more involved in her family's charitable foundation." You can't make a "transition" without a "transition team." Well, not in America. Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands recently abdicated and managed to transition away from being Queen back to the non-Queen sector without benefit of a "transition team." But it would be entirely unreasonable to expect U.S. Cabinet officials to attempt the same tricky maneuver.*

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**Mark** with a Corner post on the closing embassies.

Today, across Africa, Araby and Asia, from Nouakchott to Dhaka, the diplomatic facilities of the United States are closed. There’s a Tsarnaev out there, somewhere – could be the Mahgreb, the Levant, the Horn of Africa, the Indian sub-continent – who knows? So, as Richard Fernandez writes, “Shelter in place, this time globally.”

Maybe it will work. Maybe by the end of the day there will be, unlike Benghazi a year on, men in custody. But if not? Daniel Pipes:

Don’t know about you, but I find this pre-emptive cringing unworthy of a great country, even humiliating. Why do we allow a bunch of extremist thugs to close us down, rather than the reverse? For what purpose do we pay for the world’s best military and largest intelligence services if not to protect ourselves from this sort of threat?

He’s right: This is unseemly and, for a supposedly serious power, deeply damaging. You can always tell the US consulate from those of other western governments pretty much anywhere on the planet – from the line of US citizens outside the gates shuffling slowly but patiently along the sidewalk in hopes of penetrating the security perimeter before everybody goes home for the day. It’s not a consulate or embassy as those terms were traditionally understood; it’s a fort. That’s why the municipal authorities prefer new ones to be built out on the edge of town as far away as possible, rather than wrecking and disfiguring everything in the heart of downtown.

So we no longer fly the flag on Main Street, but build ugly, impenetrable fortresses walled off from the communities they’re meant to be part of – the antithesis of “diplomacy”, in many respects. So Daniel’s question deserves an answer: What’s the point of building fortresses if they “pre-emptively cringe” before terrorist threats?

The United States is “sheltering in place” across the entire Muslim world. How is that not a victory for our enemies – and one bought without having to blow up a single thing?

**Matthew Continetti** with a tour de force as he writes about the suck up culture of the NY Times as displayed in their latest interview with the president.

I have been studying the transcript of the recent New York Times interview of President Barack Obama. It is a remarkable document—remarkable not for the facts it contains, but for the way it reveals the mentalities of the participants. Remarkable, too, in so far as the transcript allows a curious reader to see, in detail, how journalism is manufactured. Through a process of extraction, distillation, production, transportation, and marketing no less sophisticated than the

*global supply chain that brings Southeast Asian textiles to your neighborhood big-box store, a rambling, snobbish, and platitudinous discussion between three well-compensated Washingtonians is transformed into “news” stories such as “Obama Says Income Gap Is Fraying U.S. Social Fabric,” “Obama Says He’ll Evaluate Pipeline Project Depending on Pollution,” and—in a brilliant but assuredly non-ironic instance of begging the question—“Obama Intends to Let Health Care Law Prove Critics Wrong by Succeeding.””*

*I use quotation marks to surround the word “news” because none of the stories that resulted from the Times interview contained information I did not already know. Income inequality has been the president’s justification for higher taxes and spending since at least 2005, when he spoke at Galesburg, Ill., for the first time as a senator. Earlier this summer, in a ballyhooed speech at Georgetown University, he announced the criteria by which he would decide the fate of the Keystone Pipeline. “Proving the critics wrong by succeeding” is more of an aspiration than a thought or deed: a form of self-assertion, a challenge to opponents, a boast—the mental equivalent of listening to amped-up music before Coach O delivers a motivational speech to the team.*

*A sort of pep talk to the liberal bourgeoisie, Democrat and Republican, is what the New York Times under Jill Abramson has become. One reads it to confirm rather than challenge one’s perceptions of the world. No mystery what those perceptions are: The Republicans are no good, the president is doing the best he can, equality marches on, America is powerless to influence other countries, illegal immigration has no downside, the government should not be trusted except when it regulates the economy, “institutional” (i.e., invisible) racism plagues contemporary society, traditional religion is a curiosity, etc. Reading the transcript of the president’s interview is valuable because it allows you to see just how self-contained the bobo world is. The paper and its intended audience, in this case the president, form a closed circuit.*

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*... The Times has participated in an act of political evasion breathtaking in its shamelessness. One might object that the range of topics was limited to the subject of the president’s speaking tour on the economy. But if that were the case, why did the Times agree to such ground rules in the first place? Aren’t the readers of the New York Times interested in hearing President Obama’s answers to tough questions about the various controversies at home and crises abroad? Perhaps they are not. Perhaps they are far more interested in having their public morality, their view of the world, of who is bad and who is good, of what is important and what is not, confirmed for them in a series of advertisements for President Obama and the Democratic Party. Perhaps they are more interested in sitting back and watching, passively, as the president shifts the public’s attention away from scandal and turmoil, and defines his domestic opponents in preparation for budget and debt fights. Perhaps readers of the Times and writers of the Times and editors of the Times are not interested in information per se. What interests them is affirmation.*

*“Thanks, guys. Appreciate you,” the president says as the reporters leave the room. Of that I have no doubt.*

**Fortune** with a good post on the jobs report.

*... Industry-wise, retail, as well as restaurants and bars, have accounted for the largest share of the job gains: In July, the retail industry added 47,000 jobs and 352,000 over the past 12*

months. Within leisure and hospitality, employment in food services and drinking places rose by 38,000 in July and 381,000 over the year.

To be sure, there are more low-wage jobs in the economy overall than there are high-wage jobs. Nonetheless, low-wage jobs have made up more of the recent job gains than usual. Retail, restaurant, and bar workers make up about 22% of the overall workforce. But in July, those categories accounted for over 52% of the job growth. ..

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## National Review

### [A Slo-Mo IRS Cover-Up](#)

***When Obama condemns “phony scandals,” we can assume investigators are getting warm.***

by John Fund

Back on May 13, President Obama reacted heatedly to news that the IRS had delayed and harassed conservative groups applying for nonprofit status. “I have got no patience with it, I will not tolerate it, and we will make sure that we find out exactly what happened on this,” he told reporters

How is the president living up to that pledge? At best, meh. At worst, we are seeing a slow-motion cover-up. In a speech he made last week, he railed against an “endless parade” of “phony scandals” that are slowing down the nation’s business. In other words, nothing to see here, it’s time to “move on.”

Last Sunday, Treasury Secretary Jack Lew appeared on *Fox News Sunday* and backed up the president. He did damage control on recent congressional testimony by IRS lawyer Carter Hull that implicated the office of William Wilkins, the IRS’s chief counsel and an Obama political appointee — Wilkins is by no means the “rogue” low-level bureaucrat the administration first blamed for the scandal. Also, consider this timeline of IRS activity in the spring of 2010, as midterm elections loomed and the tea-party groups targeted by the IRS began seeing their applications for nonprofit status slow-walked or put into deep freeze.

April 23, 2010: Wilkins visits President Obama in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. That room is traditionally the only part of the White House where a president discusses political matters.

April 24, 2010: IRS Commissioner Douglas Shulman visits the White House

April 25, 2010: Wilkins’s Office of Legal Counsel sends the IRS units that handle exempt organizations’ applications “additional comments on the draft guidance” that it had prepared for approving or denying applications from tea-party groups.

Even though President Obama personally assigned Lew the job of finding out “exactly what happened on this,” Lew proved evasive last Sunday in answering the questions that Fox’s Chris Wallace asked about the investigation.

WALLACE: Have you asked William Wilkins, the IRS chief council appointed by President Obama, what involvement he or his office had in all of this?

LEW: Chris, to be clear — there’s 1,600 lawyers in the chief council’s office, and there was no suggestion that this went to the one political person in that office. There’s no evidence of it. There has been no evidence of it.

WALLACE: Well, wait a minute, have you asked him?

LEW: Chris, I’m leaving the investigation to the proper people who do investigations. I don’t think it’s appropriate for me to do the investigation.

WALLACE: Has somebody in the Treasury Department asked William Wilkins what he knew about this?

LEW: Chris, there is no evidence that this went to any political official.

WALLACE: Well, there hasn’t been an investigation. The Justice Department investigation isn’t complete. The inspector general never conducted an investigation. He conducted an audit. So, who — where is the investigation?

LEW: An awful lot of time has gone into asking a lot of questions of a lot of people. I’m not saying it’s done, and we will cooperate with all of the ongoing investigations. We have and will.

It looks as if the investigations Lew is so detached from or unwilling to discuss will have to expand. National Review Online’s Eliana Johnson has reported that IRS official Lois Lerner, now on paid administrative leave over her role in the nonprofit scandal, apparently colluded with an official in the Federal Election Commission’s office to influence an FEC commissioner’s vote on the legality of actions by a conservative nonprofit group. Reporting on the e-mails she obtained (uncovered by the House Ways and Means Committee), Johnson wrote this week:

The correspondence suggests the discrimination of conservative groups extended beyond the IRS and into the FEC, where an attorney from the agency’s enforcement division in at least one case sought and received tax information about the status of a conservative group, the American Future Fund, before recommending that the commission prosecute it for violations of campaign-finance law. Lerner, the former head of the IRS’s exempt-organizations division, worked at the FEC from 1986 to 1995, and was known for aggressive investigation of conservative groups during her tenure there, too.

To add to that, Representative Darrell Issa, chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform committee, sent a letter on July 29 to Russell George, the inspector general for the IRS. In it, he asked George to expand his audit of the IRS to include charges by 78 conservative groups and individuals that the IRS not only slow-walked and harassed new applicants for nonprofit status, but it also actively engaged in “deliberate targeting of existing conservative public-policy organizations.”

IRS employee Cindy Thomas told Issa's investigators, as Issa lays out in the letter, that a memorandum prepared for a meeting with Lois Lerner in 2011 lists as a potential "next step" the referral of "the organizations that were granted exemptions to the [IRS's Review of Operations unit] for follow-up." Hillary Goehausen, another IRS employee, told Issa's staff that the scrutiny of conservative nonprofits that already had tax-exempt status wasn't based on any of their current activities but merely on the *potential* for future abuses.

Issa told George he is "troubled by evidence that IRS may have conducted unnecessary audits and systematic post hoc reviews of . . . certain groups that have long possessed tax-exempt status."

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## **Jewish World Review**

### **[Where will Hillary and Huma transition next?](#)**

By Mark Steyn

Let us put aside, as he so rarely does, Anthony Weiner's spambot penis, and consider his wife and putative First Lady. By universal consent, Huma Abedin is "smart, accomplished" (The Guardian), "whip-smart" (The Week), "accomplished" (Time), "smart and accomplished" (The Daily News) – oh, and did I mention "accomplished" (Forbes)?

So, if she's so smart, what has she accomplished? Let us put aside her Muslim Brotherhood family background – let us put it aside in the same corner as Anthony Weiner's infidel penis, the Muslim Brotherhood being one of the few things on the planet rising even more spectacularly than Anthony. Instead, consider merely the official résumé. Huma Abedin's present employment is as "head of Hillary Clinton's transition team." Mrs. Clinton, you may recall, was once Secretary of State. This was way back in January. Since then, she has been "transitioning away from government to become more involved in her family's charitable foundation." You can't make a "transition" without a "transition team." Well, not in America. Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands recently abdicated and managed to transition away from being Queen back to the non-Queen sector without benefit of a "transition team." But it would be entirely unreasonable to expect U.S. Cabinet officials to attempt the same tricky maneuver.

In 2001, Bill Clinton was struggling with his own "transition back to private life." He was reported by his ever-reliable New York Times stenographer Adam Nagourney to be having difficulty "trying to place his own telephone calls." The telephone is a technology many older people can

have problems with, particularly if they had a full-time staff to place their calls throughout the Nineties. The 1890s, that is. So, alone in retirement at Chautauqua, a bewildered Bill would pick up the speaking tube and bark, "Hello, Central, get me Jennifer Flowers." Fortunately, he was able to make a full recovery, and has since earned (according to CNN) \$89 million in "speaking fees." But few others could manage their "transition" quite that adroitly. So, for the past six months, the smart, accomplished Huma Abedin has been the executive supremo of Mrs. Clinton's "transition team."

Is this a grueling, time-consuming burden? Is this why Anthony Weiner's shorts find themselves alone in the small hours burning the midnight oil? No. Politico's Maggie Haberman recently broke the exclusive news that Miss Abedin is taking "extended vacation time from her job." This is not because the Clintons are naturally revolted at having their good name sullied by association with a sick pervert and his creepy enabling wife, but because, as you eventually discover if you plough deep into Miss Haberman's story, "Hillary Clinton has close to no schedule next month." She is now transitioning from her transition to her summer in the Hamptons, and presumably that requires an entirely different kind of transition team, to bring the beach towels and mix the margaritas.

Let us take it as read that "Head of Hillary Clinton's Transition Team" is a meaningless title. Many societies have offices of state whose origins are lost in the mists of time. In London, David Cameron's Cabinet includes a man who holds the position of Lord Privy Seal. "Lord Privy Seal" would make an excellent ceremonial title for Anthony Weiner's penis, but is, in fact, one of the most ancient gigs on the planet. Prior to 1307, his job was done by the Keeper of the Wardrobe. But the Keeper of the Wardrobe felt that, what with having to keep the wardrobe, he didn't also have time to keep the privy seal, so a new post was created. Today, the Lord Privy Seal is a position reserved for a valued confidante the Prime Minister wants in his Cabinet but without a department to run. Someone "smart" and "accomplished," so to speak. But it's one thing to have a job title rendered meaningless by the intervening seven centuries, and another to invent it out of whole cloth the day before yesterday, and have the media pass it off to their readers with a straight face. Presumably, Ye Lord Keeper of Ye Transition provides some valuable service for Mrs. Clinton, but, if so, it would be nice if Maggie Haberman could let us in on it.

What else has Huma Abedin accomplished? She was Hillary's right-hand gal in the 2008 campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. Which Hillary lost. So, not much of an accomplishment there. Subsequently, she was deputy chief of staff at the State Department, a job so demanding she latterly combined it with some private-sector consulting. What accomplishments does the State Department have to show for the Clinton-Abedin years? Secretary Clinton, as her supporters like to brag, "traveled a million miles." "One is always nearer by not keeping still," wrote the poet Thom Gunn. So, Mrs. Clinton flew a million miles – to "reset" our relationship with Russia, and lead from behind in the Arab Spring. This weekend, America's embassies in Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Jordan, and a bunch of other places will be shut down because everybody hates us. Meanwhile, Putin has embraced the first American defector to Moscow in decades, and is all but egging Obama to pull out of the G20 Summit and the insufficiently LGBT-friendly Russian Olympics. As Hillary in her more reflective moments must surely wonder about those million miles, "What difference, at this point, does it make?"

What accomplishments does Miss Abedin's husband have for his lifetime in "public service"? Other than the \$3 million Park Avenue apartment that mysteriously came his way after his enforced return to the private sector. Carlos Danger's pitch to the electors of New York is that

they need him: His gifts are so extraordinary, his talent so prodigious, his skill-set so indispensable that, like all great men weighed in the scales of history, he must be taken, as Cromwell said, warts and all. Cometh the hour, cometh the man. Yet his time in Congress left no trace whatsoever. The most ridiculous thing about Anthony Weiner is not the tumescence of his Tweets but the flaccidness of his résumé.

Any day now, Hillary Clinton, having spent 20 minutes in the private sector, will be needing a new “transition team” to help her transition into replacing President Obama. He’s “smart” and “accomplished,” too. He had a million bucks of elite education – Occidental College, Columbia University, Harvard Law School – and became a “community organizer.” His wife went to Princeton and became a 350-grand-a-year diversity outreach coordinator, a job so vital to the University of Chicago Hospitals that, when she quit to become First Lady, they didn’t bother replacing her. This is what it means to be “smart” and “accomplished” in the hyperpower at twilight.

My old boss Conrad Black recently pointed out that “the economy can’t recover as it did in the past until more people are adding value” – making and doing, something real. Instead, 40 percent of Americans perform minimal-skilled service jobs about to be rendered obsolete by technology, and almost as many pass their productive years shuffling paperwork from one corner of the land to another in various “professional services” jobs that exist in order to facilitate compliance with the unceasing demands of the microregulatory state. The daily Obamacare fixes – which are nothing to do with “health” “care” but only with navigating an impenetrable bureaucracy – are the perfect embodiment of the Republic of Paperwork.

But nobody adds lack of value like America’s present leadership class – diversicrats, community organizers, and “power couples” comprising somebody handling the transition of a government official and somebody handling the transition in his boxers. If this is “smart” and “accomplished,” no wonder Putin’s laughing his head off.

## **The Corner**

### **The Cringing Superpower**

by Mark Steyn

Today, across Africa, Araby and Asia, from Nouakchott to Dhaka, the diplomatic facilities of the United States are closed. There’s a Tsarnaev out there, somewhere – could be the Mahgreb, the Levant, the Horn of Africa, the Indian sub-continent – who knows? So, as Richard Fernandez writes, “Shelter in place, this time globally.”

Maybe it will work. Maybe by the end of the day there will be, unlike Benghazi a year on, men in custody. But if not? Daniel Pipes:

Don’t know about you, but I find this pre-emptive cringing unworthy of a great country, even humiliating. Why do we allow a bunch of extremist thugs to close us down, rather than the reverse? For what purpose do we pay for the world’s best military and largest intelligence services if not to protect ourselves from this sort of threat?

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the planet – from the line of US citizens outside the gates shuffling slowly but patiently along the sidewalk in hopes of penetrating the security perimeter before everybody goes home for the day. It's not a consulate or embassy as those terms were traditionally understood; it's a fort. That's why the municipal authorities prefer new ones to be built out on the edge of town as far away as possible, rather than wrecking and disfiguring everything in the heart of downtown.

So we no longer fly the flag on Main Street, but build ugly, impenetrable fortresses walled off from the communities they're meant to be part of – the antithesis of “diplomacy”, in many respects. So Daniel's question deserves an answer: What's the point of building fortresses if they “pre-emptively cringe” before terrorist threats?

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## Washington Free Beacon

### The Court Reporters

#### *The New York Times fails its readers—and the country*

by Matthew Continetti

I have been studying the transcript of [the recent New York Times interview of President Barack Obama](#). It is a remarkable document—remarkable not for the facts it contains, but for the way it reveals the mentalities of the participants. Remarkable, too, in so far as the transcript allows a curious reader to see, in detail, how journalism is manufactured. Through a process of extraction, distillation, production, transportation, and marketing no less sophisticated than the global supply chain that brings Southeast Asian textiles to your neighborhood big-box store, a rambling, snobbish, and platitudinous discussion between three well-compensated Washingtonians is transformed into “news” stories such as “[Obama Says Income Gap Is Fraying U.S. Social Fabric](#),” “[Obama Says He'll Evaluate Pipeline Project Depending on Pollution](#),” and—in a brilliant but assuredly non-ironic instance of begging the question—“[Obama Intends to Let Health Care Law Prove Critics Wrong by Succeeding](#).”

I use quotation marks to surround the word “news” because none of the stories that resulted from the *Times* interview contained information I did not already know. Income inequality has been the president's justification for higher taxes and spending since [at least 2005, when he spoke at Galesburg, Ill., for the first time as a senator](#). Earlier this summer, in [a ballyhooed speech at Georgetown University](#), he announced the criteria by which he would decide the fate of the Keystone Pipeline. “Proving the critics wrong by succeeding” is more of an aspiration than a thought or deed: a form of self-assertion, a challenge to opponents, a boast—the mental equivalent of listening to amped-up music before Coach O delivers a motivational speech to the team.

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except when it regulates the economy, “institutional” (i.e., invisible) racism plagues contemporary society, traditional religion is a curiosity, etc. Reading the transcript of the president’s interview is valuable because it allows you to see just how self-contained the bobo world is. The paper and its intended audience, in this case the president, form a closed circuit.

My favorite moment is when the president mentions someone he’s been talking to. “I had a conversation a couple of weeks back with Robert Putnam,” Obama says, “who I’ve known for a long time.” Putnam is a renowned sociologist, and the ability to drop his name is a requirement for membership in elite circles. What makes this name-drop special is that Obama not only assumes the reporters know who Putnam is, he amplifies his snobbery by mentioning that the author of *Bowling Alone* and *American Grace* has been a personal acquaintance for years, as though that in itself is an achievement, as though that somehow makes the sentence he is about to utter more meaningful.

Just then, though, one of the *Times* reporters, Michael D. Shear, interrupts the president and says what has to be one of the most beautiful and revealing sentences ever to appear on Nytimes.com: “He was my professor actually at Harvard.” Almost every word of this sentence is an act of social positioning worthy of Castiglione. “My” conveys ownership, possession, and intimacy; the “actually” is a subtle exercise in one-upmanship, implying a correction of fact or status, and suggesting that Shear, [who seems to have taken a course with Putnam while pursuing a graduate degree at the Kennedy School](#), is on closer terms with him than the president of the United States of America; and of course the big H, “Harvard,” before whose authority all must bow down.

The president’s response is just as priceless. “Right,” he says, pausing, and one can easily imagine the look of annoyance on his face as he reacts to Shear’s gratuitous lunge into the spotlight. He then makes it clear exactly who is in charge. “I actually knew Bob”—note that it’s “Bob” we’re talking about now—“when I was a state senator and he had put together this seminar to just talk about some of the themes that he had written about in ‘Bowling Alone,’ the weakening of the community fabric and the impact it’s having on people.” Put that in your pipe and smoke it, Mike.

The “Peter Principle,” which holds that individuals rise to the precise level where they are incompetent, is well known. But it is time to coin the Putnam Principle, which I take to hold that the number of softball questions a reporter asks is in direct proportion to the power of the Democrat to whom he is speaking. If the reporter is talking to a Republican, conservative or liberal, he will be as adversarial as possible. But a Democratic congressman is far more likely to receive scrutiny than Nancy Pelosi. And on average Pelosi will have to answer tougher questions than the president. There are exceptions: Ed Henry, Jonathan Karl, and, when he was White House correspondent, Jake Tapper all could be counted on to get under the president’s skin. Bret Baier’s 2010 interview with the president was tough and informative. Needless to say, he never interviewed Obama again.

The Putnam Principle applies to the *Times*. Here are the questions Shear and his colleague Jackie Calmes asked the president. See if you’d have any trouble answering them: “Why shouldn’t we expect that you’re going to leave behind an economy that’s fragile, continued income inequality, and a weakened middle class?” “Do you worry that that could end up being your legacy simply because of the obstruction that—and the gridlock doesn’t seem to end?” “You said it yourself in the speech that Washington has taken its eye off the ball. Do you have any—are you culpable at all in that?” “Do you wish you were giving a speech like this earlier and

done it more often?” “Is there any part of your agenda moving forward that you think you are willing to move to the backburner so that you can spend more time on the economy?” (Don’t hurt yourself on the backburner as you are moving forward, Mr. President.) “How can you—how are you going to—what exactly can you do between now and the end of the year to overcome the Republicans’ opposition and change that, to end sequester?” “Have you yielded anything from your outreach to the Republicans?” “And do you still have hope for a 10-year deal by the end of the year?” “What are you looking for in a [Federal Reserve] chairman?” “And there were reports yesterday that you are very close to naming Larry Summers as the new Fed chairman. True?” “Do you want to say who?” “And do you still have a timeline for announcing that?” “Is there anything that Canada could do or the oil companies could do to offset that as a way of helping you to reach that decision?” (What can they do to make your life easier?) “Could that offset concerns about the pipeline itself?” “There’s been a lot of folks out there on the Republican side who claim that somehow you’ve exceeded your authority on this. Is there anything to that?” “Did you consult with your lawyer?” “What are you going to be doing to build support [for Obamacare]?” “Are you going to be getting out on the road?” “March on Washington coming up soon. Are you going to do anything to mark it?” And “are you planning on being a part of the 50th anniversary?”

What is most striking about these questions is how many of them concern an upcoming personnel decision that, while significant to the economy, is at the moment of interest only to squabbling factions of liberals. Here too the circuit cannot be broken. Most of the other questions are constructed so as to provide the president an opportunity to attack the GOP and restate his accomplishments and goals. Edward Snowden, Lois Lerner, James Rosen, Mohamed Morsi, Bashar Assad, Nouri al-Maliki, Vladimir Putin, Hasan Rouhani, and Hamid Karzai are not mentioned. Eliot Spitzer, Anthony Weiner, and Bob Filner are not mentioned. Indeed, hardly a single event or personality that has occupied the public imagination over the last six months is mentioned. The exception is Trayvon Martin, who the president references toward the end of the exchange. The only other proper names to appear in the transcript are Larry Summers, Ben Bernanke, John Kerry (in relation to the Keystone Pipeline), Robert Putnam, “Jackie,” and “Mike.”

The *Times* has participated in an act of political evasion breathtaking in its shamelessness. One might object that the range of topics was limited to the subject of the president’s speaking tour on the economy. But if that were the case, why did the *Times* agree to such ground rules in the first place? Aren’t the readers of the *New York Times* interested in hearing President Obama’s answers to tough questions about the various controversies at home and crises abroad? Perhaps they are not. Perhaps they are far more interested in having their public morality, their view of the world, of who is bad and who is good, of what is important and what is not, confirmed for them in a series of advertisements for President Obama and the Democratic Party. Perhaps they are more interested in sitting back and watching, passively, as the president shifts the public’s attention away from scandal and turmoil, and defines his domestic opponents in preparation for budget and debt fights. Perhaps readers of the *Times* and writers of the *Times* and editors of the *Times* are not interested in information per se. What interests them is affirmation.

“Thanks, guys. Appreciate you,” the president says as the reporters leave the room. Of that I have no doubt.

## Fortune

### July's jobs bummer: Want fries with that?

*Even though the unemployment rate dropped in July, many of the new jobs were for low pay.*

By Nin-Hai Tseng



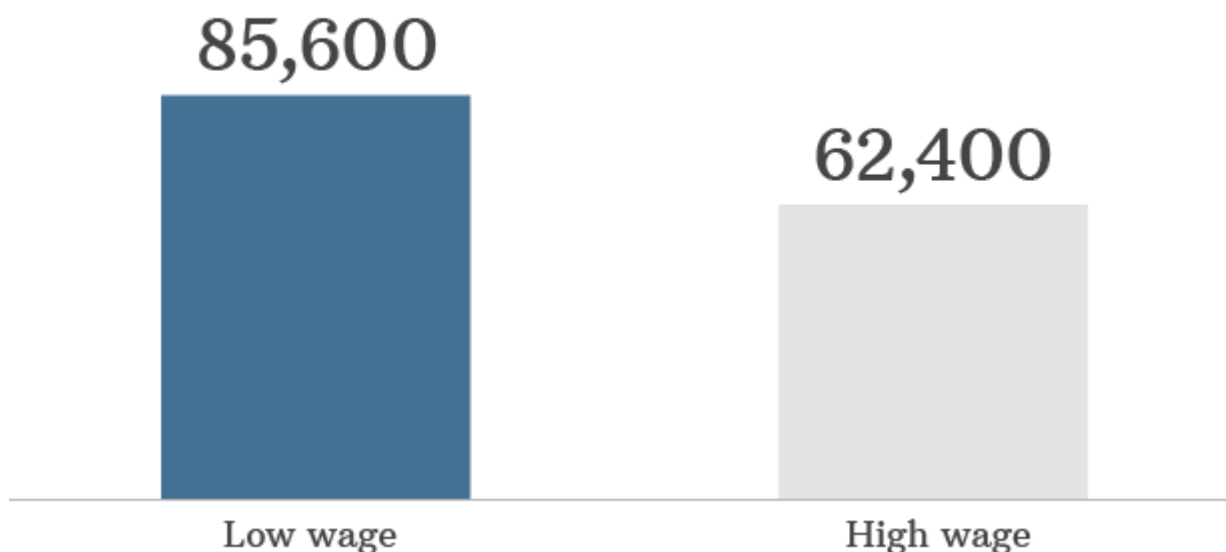
PHOTO: JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

FORTUNE -- July's report on the state of America's job market, released Friday, marked the 34<sup>th</sup> month in a row in which the economy created jobs at a slow and steady clip. This is better news than very few or no jobs created at all, but it's best to judge by quality vs. quantity.

While the economy [generated 162,000 jobs](#) last month, the bulk of those jobs is neither highly paid nor full-time work. This suggests why the economy isn't growing as fast as the pace of job creation. Here's a closer look:

**Want fries with that?**

## Job gains in major categories



NOTE: JULY 2013

SOURCE: BLS

Industry-wise, retail, as well as restaurants and bars, have accounted for the largest share of the job gains: In July, the retail industry added 47,000 jobs and 352,000 over the past 12 months. Within leisure and hospitality, employment in food services and drinking places rose by 38,000 in July and 381,000 over the year.

To be sure, there are more low-wage jobs in the economy overall than there are high-wage jobs. Nonetheless, low-wage jobs have made up more of the recent job gains than usual. Retail, restaurant, and bar workers make up about 22% of the overall workforce. But in July, those categories accounted for over 52% of the job growth.

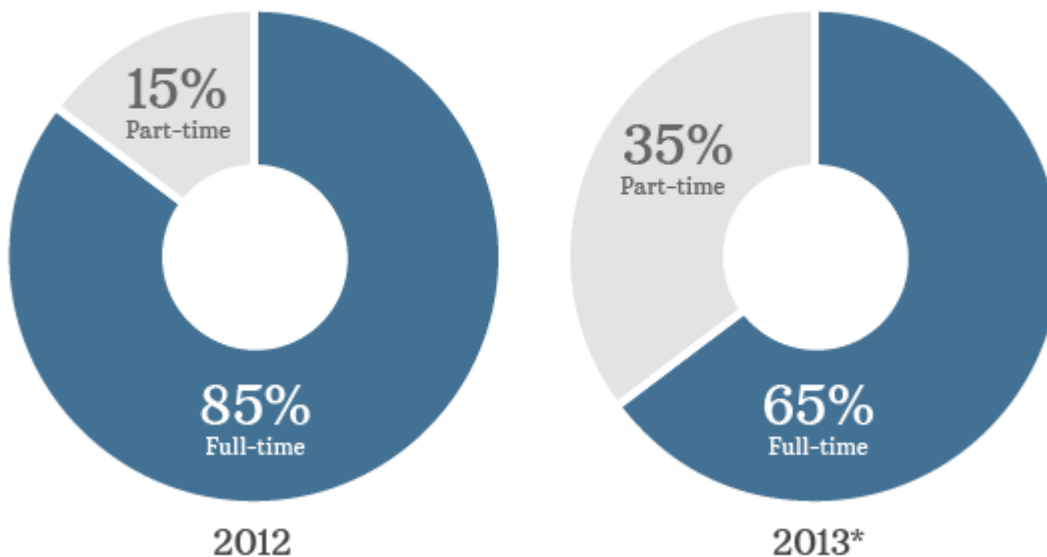
"I don't think we are becoming an economy of retail and restaurant workers," says Heidi Shierholz, a labor economist at the Economic Policy Institute. "But what is absolutely true is that low-wage jobs have had disproportionate growth in the economy."

All this makes for a troubling trend, given that consumer spending drives the U.S. economy: Whereas the average weekly pay of U.S. workers overall is \$824, leisure jobs pay \$349 a week, while retail pays only slightly more at \$520 a week.

Good jobs are much harder to come by these days: Take manufacturing, for instance. We often hear that [U.S. manufacturing](#) could turn the U.S. economy around. Manufacturing jobs that pay an average of nearly \$1,000 a week added just 6,000 jobs in July. The health care industry used to be the bright spot in an otherwise weak jobs market, but growth in that area is shrinking. So far, health care has added an average of 16,000 jobs a month, compared with an average monthly increase of 27,000 in 2012.

### Less work to go around

## More jobs are part-time



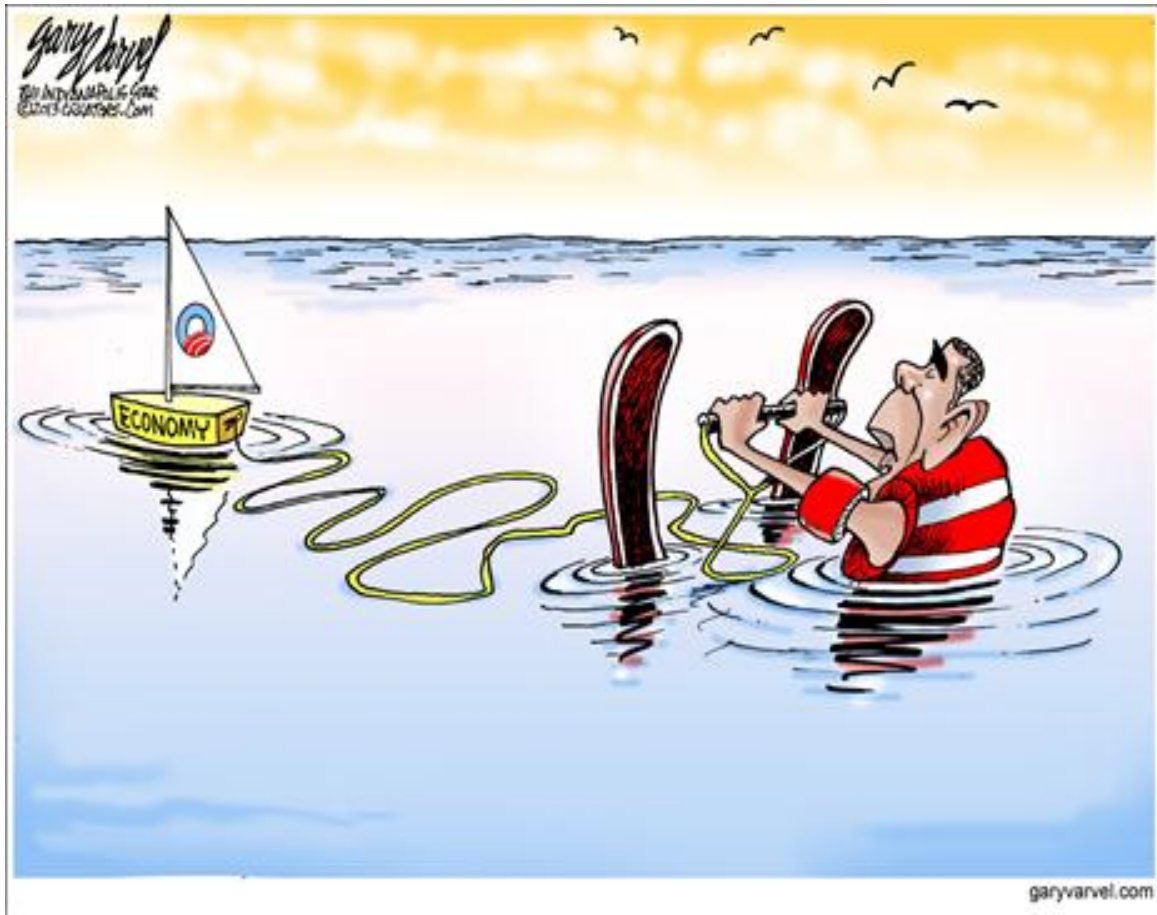
\*THROUGH JULY 2013

SOURCE: BLS

A not-so-great job is indeed better than no job, but is part-time work any better? The number of people with part-time jobs who want to work full-time totaled 8.2 million in July, up slightly from the month before. And the number of people who landed part-time jobs in July was far larger than those who were hired as full-time workers, 170,000 vs. 90,000.

[Part-time jobs](#) generally offer less job security and few, if any, health and retirement benefits. And when workers aren't sure how much or where they might work tomorrow or next year, they're less likely to spend.







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