

October 24, 2013

Jennifer Rubin on the absentee presidency.

... This is a president who set up a system in which he imagines he is relieved of responsibility. Someone else's job. Not his problem. Didn't know. Doesn't matter why. He 's "madder" than anyone he keeps telling us, but not mad enough to make certain senior advisers tell him what is going on. He wants to be the victim (I'm mad!) and not the boss (Why didn't I know this? Anyone who acts that way is fired!). This is intentional ignorance, inexcusable in a president.

Obama likes worlds of his own creation. That is what a memoir is and to a large extent that is what a campaign is — a narrative about your presidency. He is always infallible in his own yarns. The other side is evil and the facts are on his side. That, however, is a make-believe world. Here in this world, he is not a problem-solver, does not engage with opponents and wrestle with conflicting goals, and has no interest in getting his hands dirty. He's too big for the presidency, apparently. He's the inspirer, the slayer of the Republicans. ...

The Federalist lists the eight biggest falsehoods in the rose garden infomercial on healthcare.

*... **Falsehood #1:** "I'm joined today by folks who've either benefited from the Affordable Care Act already, or who are helping their fellow citizens learn about what this law means for them and how they can get covered."*

According to Byron York, some of the people who were behind President Obama hadn't actually benefitted from ObamaCare. For example, the White House description of Nathaniel Hojnacki stated that he was "planning to enroll after he had explored his coverage options on the DC exchange." York counted at least three other people there who had not yet "benefited" from ObamaCare.

***Falsehood #2:** "Despite all [of the problems with the website], thousands of people are signing up and saving money as we speak."*

Does the President have a live feed that shows him real-time updates on how many people are saving money on healthcare.gov? And if so, why doesn't he share it with the rest of us?

Getting information out the Administration about enrollment in healthcare.gov has been like pulling teeth—from an alligator. Thus far all we know is that 500,000 people have at least started applications for insurance via the federal and state exchanges. We don't know how many have completed the application process.

And completing an application doesn't mean you will qualify for insurance. The data insurers have received from the exchanges are often riddled with errors, making it impossible to determine if the applicants qualify for insurance, let alone save money.

Enroll Maven, a website that tracks enrollment in the ObamaCare exchanges based on news reports, can confirm only 167 people have actually enrolled in an insurance plan on the

healthcare.gov. Chances are slim and none that Obama has any idea how many people have enrolled and have saved money, and slim is headed for a death spiral. ...

The Dallas Morning News carried an AP story that illuminates some of problems with the roll out.

Crammed into conference rooms with pizza for dinner, some programmers building the Obama administration's showcase health insurance website were growing increasingly stressed. Some worked past 10 p.m., energy drinks in hand. Others rewrote computer code over and over to meet what they considered last-minute requests for changes from the government or other contractors.

As questions mount over the website's failure, insider interviews and a review of technical specifications by The Associated Press found a mind-numbingly complex system put together by harried programmers who pushed out a final product that congressional investigators said was tested by the government and not private developers with more expertise.

Project developers who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity — because they feared they would otherwise be fired — said they raised doubts among themselves whether the website could be ready in time. They complained openly to each other about what they considered tight and unrealistic deadlines. One was nearly brought to tears over the stress of finishing on time, one developer said. Website builders saw red flags for months.

A review of internal architectural diagrams obtained by the AP revealed the system's complexity. Insurance applicants have a host of personal information verified, including income and immigration status. The system connects to other federal computer networks, including ones at the Social Security Administration, IRS, Veterans Administration, Office of Personnel Management and the Peace Corps. ...

Here's the big news! LA Times reports on British Medical Journal touting bacon. Well, sort of.

The British Medical Journal has issued a clarion call to all who want to ward off heart disease: Forget the statins and bring back the bacon (or at least the full-fat yogurt). Saturated fat is not the widow-maker it's been made out to be, writes British cardiologist Aseem Malhotra in a stinging "Observations" column in the BMJ: The more likely culprits are empty carbs and added sugar.

Virtually all the truths about preventing heart attacks that physicians and patients have held dear for more than a generation are wrong and need to be abandoned, Malhotra writes. He musters a passel of recent research that suggests that the "obsession" with lowering a patients' total cholesterol with statins, and a public health message that has made all sources of saturated fat verboten to the health-conscious, have failed to reduce heart disease.

Indeed, he writes, they have set off market forces that have put people at greater risk. After the Framingham Heart Study showed a correlation between total cholesterol and risk for coronary artery disease in the early 1970s, patients at risk for heart disease were urged to swear off red meat, school lunchrooms shifted to fat-free and low-fat milk, and a food industry eager to please consumers cutting their fat intake rushed to boost the flavor of their new fat-free offerings with added sugar (and, of course, with trans-fats). ...

Daily Beast says someone at the white house actually got fired. The offense; truth telling tweets.

A White House national security official was fired last week after being caught as the mystery Tweeter who has been tormenting the foreign policy community with insulting comments and revealing internal Obama administration information for over two years.

Jofi Joseph, a director in the non-proliferation section of the National Security Staff at the White House, has been surreptitiously tweeting under the moniker @natsecwonk, a Twitter feed famous inside Washington policy circles since it began in February, 2011 until it was shut down last week. Two administration officials confirmed that the mystery tweeter was Joseph, who has also worked at the State Department and on Capitol Hill for Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Joe Biden. Until recently, he was part of the administration's team working on negotiations with Iran.

During his time tweeting under the @natsecwonk name, Joseph openly criticized the policies of his White House bosses and often insulted their intellect and appearance. At different times, he insulted or criticized several top White House and State Department officials, including former National Security Advisor Tom Donilon, Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes, Secretary of State John Kerry, and many many others.

The Daily Beast saved a long record of @natsecwonk's tweets prior to the shutting down of his Twitter feed.

"I'm a fan of Obama, but his continuing reliance and dependence upon a vacuous cipher like Valerie Jarrett concerns me," he once tweeted.

"Was Huma Abedin wearing beer goggles the night she met Anthony Wiener? Almost as bad a pairing as Samantha Powers and Cass Sunstein," he tweeted on another occasion, insulting a top Clinton aide, a then Congressman, and two White House senior officials in one tweet.

Andy Malcolm closes our week with late night humor.

Conan: Facebook is preparing for its launch in the Jewish state of Israel by changing the "Like" button to the "Could Be Worse" button.

Conan: At an Olympic exhibition game, the U.S. and Canadian womens' hockey teams got into a full-on, all-female brawl. Olympic referees ruled the incident, "unsportsmanlike," "unprofessional" and "super-hot."

Right Turn

Obamacare and the absentee presidency

by Jennifer Rubin

It is the president's signature achievement, arguably his only one. It's going to roll out at a time when the GOP is bruised and looking for a counterattack. It is going to be a big mess; brutal press coverage will follow. It will provide confirmation for the GOP that Republicans were right all along about the president's treasured program. And you, the secretary responsible for the program, don't tell the White House?! In any other administration this would be inconceivable, but in the current one Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius might be telling the truth when she says the president — you guessed it — learned about the Obamacare debacle from the media.

Consider how, if true, this deprived the president, the Democrats and the country of critical information that might, for example, have avoided the shutdown. Perhaps the president would have found an excuse to delay the rollout and gotten something for it from the Republicans. Maybe he wouldn't have played hardball. It's unclear whether knowing the Obamacare fiasco was coming would have changed the course of events, but the president was not allowed to make the decision because he lacked the requisite information; the shutdown followed and now the debacle comes as a big surprise. I can't imagine why any president would keep a secretary around who botched his most important initiative and then kept it from him.

This follows the explanation given about the Internal Revenue Service scandal in which the president claimed to be in the dark and the White House counsel said it was her job to keep things like that from the president. You ask what CEO says, *"Don't tell me — let me be blindsided by the media!"*?

Well, this president apparently operates that way. He and his close-knit advisers insist on a bad-news-ban around the Oval Office. Obama operates in a world without critical information — and that is his *defense* to two debacles. Critics understate the reluctance and inability of this president to lead and to govern. Primarily in the foreign policy context, his style has been characterized as dithering if not incoherent. But something more endemic and more worrisome is going on than simply "reluctant commander in chief" (although he certainly is that, too).

This is a president who set up a system in which he imagines he is relieved of responsibility. *Someone else's job. Not his problem. Didn't know. Doesn't matter why.* He's "madder" than anyone he keeps telling us, but not mad enough to make certain senior advisers tell him what is going on. He wants to be the victim (*I'm mad!*) and not the boss (*Why didn't I know this? Anyone who acts that way is fired!*). This is intentional ignorance, inexcusable in a president.

Obama likes worlds of his own creation. That is what a memoir is and to a large extent that is what a campaign is — a narrative about your presidency. He is always infallible in his own

yarns. The other side is evil and the facts are on his side. That, however, is a make-believe world. Here in this world, he is not a problem-solver, does not engage with opponents and wrestle with conflicting goals, and has no interest in getting his hands dirty. He's too big for the presidency, apparently. He's the inspirer, the slayer of the Republicans.

Unfortunately, we need a president who does his assigned job — that would be *executing* the laws. (In England they divide head of state and head of government, but Obama doesn't have the luxury of a powerless monarchy.) If he's not willing to do what is required, he should empower someone else (Vice President Joe Biden?), and then he can speechify and vilify opponents to his heart's content. For now, however, as on Benghazi, Libya, the IRS and now Obamacare, he is AWOL when the going gets tough.

Maybe then we should thank Sebelius for this insight into the absentee presidency.

The Federalist

The Eight Biggest Falsehoods in Obama's Rose Garden Speech

The President mounts a factually challenged defense of Obamacare.

by David Hogberg

I was on a radio program yesterday where the host compared President Obama's [speech](#) on the ObamaCare exchanges to an infomercial hosted by the late Billy Mays.

There are of course some big differences. Unlike healthcare.gov, OxiClean actually works. Most important, Mays didn't stuff his pitches with statements that were outright falsehoods. By my count there were at least eight such statements in Obama's speech.

Falsehood #1: *"I'm joined today by folks who've either benefited from the Affordable Care Act already, or who are helping their fellow citizens learn about what this law means for them and how they can get covered."*

According to [Byron York](#), some of the people who were behind President Obama hadn't actually benefited from ObamaCare. For example, the White House description of Nathaniel Hojnacki stated that he was "planning to enroll after he had explored his coverage options on the DC exchange." York counted at least three other people there who had not yet "benefited" from ObamaCare.

Falsehood #2: *"Despite all [of the problems with the website], thousands of people are signing up and saving money as we speak."*

Does the President have a live feed that shows him real-time updates on how many people are saving money on healthcare.gov? And if so, why doesn't he share it with the rest of us?

Getting information out the Administration about enrollment in healthcare.gov has been like pulling teeth—from an alligator. Thus far all we know is that 500,000 people have at least started applications for insurance via the federal and state exchanges. We don't know how many have completed the application process.

And completing an application doesn't mean you will qualify for insurance. The data insurers have received from the exchanges are often riddled with errors, making it impossible to determine if the applicants qualify for insurance, let alone save money.

[Enroll Maven](#), a website that tracks enrollment in the ObamaCare exchanges based on news reports, can confirm only 167 people have actually enrolled in an insurance plan on the healthcare.gov. Chances are slim and none that Obama has any idea how many people have enrolled and have saved money, and slim is headed for a death spiral.

Falsehood #3: *"For the vast majority of Americans—for 85 percent of Americans who already have health insurance through your employer or Medicare or Medicaid, you don't need to sign up for coverage through a website at all—you've already got coverage."*

That 85 percent includes a lot of people who are losing their coverage. What the president left out is that about ten percent of that group—roughly 30 million Americans—has insurance on the individual market. Millions of them are having their policies cancelled because those policies don't meet ObamaCare standards. Thirteen thousand people in the individual market in [Pennsylvania](#) have received a letter cancelling their insurance as have 800,000 in [New Jersey](#), 300,000 in Florida and 160,000 in [California](#). Thousands have also received such letters in Alabama, North Carolina and other states, but exact numbers aren't available. In short, these are people who will have to buy insurance, many of them no doubt on the ObamaCare exchanges' websites.

Falsehood #4: *"[The exchanges are a] state-wide group plan that spreads risk between sick people and healthy people, between young and old, and then bargains on your behalf for the best deal on health care. What we've done is essentially created competition where there wasn't competition before."*

That's funny, because if you go to [finder.healthcare.gov](#), you can find all sorts of different companies offering different policies in the individual markets of most states. You can find the same thing at places like [ehealthinsurance.com](#). When multiple companies offer different products in a market, there's a word for that. It's "competition."

Indeed, as I've explored the offerings on various state exchanges, the pattern that has emerged is one of *less choice*. For example, on the Connecticut exchange, Access Health CT, I [found](#) 16 plans for someone my age (43). But on [ehealthinsurance.com](#) there are 53 plans for someone my age in Connecticut. For a 29-year-old male on the Washington, D.C.'s DC Health Link, there are 31 plans available. On [finder.healthcare.gov](#) there are 59 plans in the D.C. area. If anything, ObamaCare exchanges are *reducing* competition.

Falsehood #5: *"We know that nearly one-third of the people applying in Connecticut and Maryland, for example, are under 35 years old."*

Regarding Maryland, that is incorrect. According to the [Baltimore Sun](#), "those under 35 [make] up a third of those exploring [Maryland Health Connection's] website." "Exploring" means they have "created profiles on the marketplace's website...Officials did not say how those demographics compare to those of people who have applied for or enrolled in coverage."

For Connecticut, what Obama said was true, but it leaves out a rather crucial bit of information. There were only 1,157 [applicants](#).

Falsehood #6: *“And all told, more than half a million consumers across the country have successfully submitted applications through federal and state marketplaces.”*

According to a Bloomberg [article](#), “Almost 500,000 Americans have submitted applications for health insurance” through the exchanges. Almost means “less than”, not “more than.” Nor have they all successfully submitted applications. More “than 300,000 people have been able to *either start or complete* an application for insurance on the 14 independent, state-run exchanges.” [Italics added].

Falsehood #7: *“The point is the essence of the law, the health insurance that’s available to people, is working just fine. In some cases, actually, it’s exceeding expectations. The prices are lower than we expected.”*

This is one of the most misleading talking points that Obama and his Administration seem to repeat endlessly. When someone says prices are lower than expected, one needs to ask “As compared to what?” The Administration is comparing the prices of exchange policies to the prices generated by a [model](#) from the Congressional Budget Office. That is, Obama is NOT comparing exchange prices to prices of insurance policies currently on the market. Studies that have made such a comparison, like a [recent one](#) by the Heritage Foundation, find that the exchanges result in substantial increases in premiums in most states.

Falsehood #8: *“So don’t let problems with the website deter you from signing up or signing your family up, or showing your friends how to sign up, because it is worth it. It will save you money.”*

Let’s test that theory, shall we? Say you are a 30-year-old living in Los Angeles (zip code 90001) earning \$40,000 annually and you have purchased the best-selling policy on ehealthinsurance.com which has a monthly premium of \$105. That policy will no longer be offered in 2014, so you check out your options on [Covered California](#). There the cheapest policy is from L.A. Care and costs \$174 a month. At \$40,000 you won’t be eligible for any subsidy (subsidies stop at about \$31,670 in that area), so you’ll be paying the full premium. In short, you’ll be paying 66 percent more for your insurance. Maybe Obama was referring to a different person. He wasn’t referring to you.

So if you are unhappy that you are losing your insurance and dissatisfied with your choices on the exchange, your recourse is pretty well non-existent. You could go without insurance, but even then you’ll still have to pony up some money to pay the individual mandate fine. And that’s one more important difference between Obama and Bill Mays. Mays’ offers often came with a money-back guarantee.

Dallas Morning News

Programmers saw red flags while building Obamacare website

by Jack Gillum and Julie Pace

Crammed into conference rooms with pizza for dinner, some programmers building the Obama administration's showcase health insurance website were growing increasingly stressed. Some worked past 10 p.m., energy drinks in hand. Others rewrote computer code over and over to meet what they considered last-minute requests for changes from the government or other contractors.

As questions mount over the website's failure, insider interviews and a review of technical specifications by The Associated Press found a mind-numbingly complex system put together by harried programmers who pushed out a final product that congressional investigators said was tested by the government and not private developers with more expertise.

Project developers who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity — because they feared they would otherwise be fired — said they raised doubts among themselves whether the website could be ready in time. They complained openly to each other about what they considered tight and unrealistic deadlines. One was nearly brought to tears over the stress of finishing on time, one developer said. Website builders saw red flags for months.

A review of internal architectural diagrams obtained by the AP revealed the system's complexity. Insurance applicants have a host of personal information verified, including income and immigration status. The system connects to other federal computer networks, including ones at the Social Security Administration, IRS, Veterans Administration, Office of Personnel Management and the Peace Corps.

President Barack Obama on Monday acknowledged technical problems that he described as "kinks in the system." He also promised a "tech surge" by leading technology talent to repair the painfully slow and often unresponsive website that has frustrated Americans trying to enroll online for insurance plans at the center of Obama's health care law.

But in remarks at a Rose Garden event, Obama offered no explanation for the failure except to note that high traffic to the website caused some of the slowdowns. He said it had been visited nearly 20 million times — fewer monthly visits so far than many commercial websites, such as PayPal, AOL, Wikipedia or Pinterest.

"The problem has been that the website that's supposed to make it easy to apply for and purchase the insurance is not working the way it should for everybody," Obama said. "There's no sugarcoating it. The website has been too slow. People have been getting stuck during the application process. And I think it's fair to say that nobody is more frustrated by that than I am."

The online system was envisioned as a simple way for people without health insurance to comparison-shop among competing plans offered in their state, pick their preferred level of coverage and cost and sign up. For many, it's not worked out that way so far.

Just weeks before the launch of HealthCare.gov on Oct. 1, one programmer said, colleagues huddled in conference rooms trying to patch "bugs," or deficiencies in computer code.

Unresolved problems led to visitors experiencing cryptic error messages or enduring long waits trying to sign up.

Congressional investigators have concluded that the government's Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, not private software developers, tested the exchange's computer systems during the final weeks. That task, known as integration testing, is usually handled by software companies because it ferrets out problems before the public sees the final product.

The government spent at least \$394 million in contracts to build the federal health care exchange and the data hub. Those contracts included major awards to Virginia-based CGI Federal Inc., Maryland-based Quality Software Services Inc. and Booz Allen Hamilton Inc.

CGI Federal said in a statement Monday it was working with the government and other contractors "around the clock" to improve the system, which it called "complex, ambitious and unprecedented."

The schematics from late 2012 show how officials designated a "data services hub" — a traffic cop for managing information — in lieu of a design that would have allowed state exchanges to connect directly to government servers when verifying an applicant's information. On Sunday, the Health and Human Services Department said the data hub was working but not meeting public expectations: "We are committed to doing better."

Administration officials so far have refused to say how many people actually have managed to enroll in insurance during the three weeks since the new marketplaces became available. Without enrollment numbers, it's impossible to know whether the program is on track to reach projections from the Congressional Budget Office that 7 million people would gain coverage during the first year the exchanges were available.

Instead, officials have selectively cited figures that put the insurance exchanges in a positive light. They say more than 19 million people have logged on to the federal website and nearly 500,000 have filled out applications for insurance through both the federal and state-run sites.

The flood of computer problems since the website went online has been deeply embarrassing for the White House. The snags have called into question whether the administration is capable of implementing the complex policy and why senior administration officials — including the president — appear to have been unaware of the scope of the problems when the exchange sites opened.

Even as the president spoke at the Rose Garden, more problems were coming to light. The administration acknowledged that a planned upgrade to the website had been postponed indefinitely and that online Spanish-language signups would remain unavailable, despite a promise to Hispanic groups that the capability would start this week. And the government tweaked the website's home page so visitors can now view phone numbers to apply the old-fashioned way or window-shop for insurance rates without registering first.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee was expected to conduct an oversight hearing Thursday, probably without Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius testifying. She could testify on Capitol Hill on the subject as early as next week.

Uninsured Americans have until about mid-February to sign up for coverage if they are to meet the law's requirement that they be insured by the end of March. If they don't, they will face a penalty.

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., plans to introduce legislation to delay that requirement because: "It's not fair to punish people for not buying something that's not available," Rubio told "CBS This Morning" on Tuesday.

On Monday, the White House advised people frustrated by the online tangle that they can enroll by calling 1-800-318-2596 in a process that should take 25 minutes for an individual or 45 minutes for a family. Assistance is also available in communities from helpers who can be found at LocalHelp.HealthCare.gov.

LA Times

[Time to end the war against saturated fat?](#)

by Melissa Healy

The British Medical Journal has issued a clarion call to all who want to ward off heart disease: Forget the statins and bring back the bacon (or at least the full-fat yogurt). Saturated fat is not the widow-maker it's been made out to be, writes British cardiologist Aseem Malhotra in a stinging "Observations" column in the BMJ: The more likely culprits are empty carbs and added sugar.

Virtually all the truths about preventing [heart attacks](#) that physicians and patients have held dear for more than a generation are wrong and need to be abandoned, Malhotra writes. He musters a passel of recent research that suggests that the "obsession" with lowering a patients' total cholesterol with statins, and a public health message that has made all sources of saturated fat verboten to the health-conscious, have failed to reduce heart disease.

Indeed, he writes, they have set off market forces that have put people at greater risk. After the Framingham Heart Study showed a correlation between total cholesterol and risk for coronary artery disease in the early 1970s, patients at risk for heart disease were urged to swear off red meat, school lunchrooms shifted to fat-free and low-fat milk, and a food industry eager to please consumers cutting their fat intake rushed to boost the flavor of their new fat-free offerings with added sugar (and, of course, with trans-fats).

The result is a rate of [obesity](#) that has "rocketed" upward, writes Malhotra. And, despite a generation of patients taking statins (and enduring their common side effects), the trends in cardiovascular disease have not demonstrably budged.

Malhotra cites a 2009 [UCLA](#) study showing that three-quarters of patients admitted to the hospital with acute myocardial infarction do not have high total cholesterol; what they do have, at a rate of 66%, is metabolic syndrome -- a cluster of worrying signs including [hypertension](#), high fasting blood sugar, abdominal obesity, high triglycerides and low HDL ("good" cholesterol).

Meanwhile, research has shown that when people with high LDL cholesterol (the "bad" kind) purge their diet of saturated fats, they lower one kind of LDL (the large, buoyant particles called

"Type A" LDL), but not the small, dense particles ("Type B" LDL) that are linked to high carbohydrate intake and are implicated in heart disease.

Recent research has also shown that [Mediterranean diets](#) -- admittedly skimpy on red meat but hardly light on saturated fats -- have outpaced both statins and [low-fat diets](#) as a means of preventing repeat heart attacks. Other research suggests that the saturated fat in dairy foods may protect against hypertension, inflammation and a host of other dysfunctions increasingly linked to heart attacks.

"It is time to bust the myth of the role of saturated fat in heart disease and wind back the harms of dietary advice that has contributed to obesity," writes Malhotra.

Whether physicians at the front lines of health have gotten the message, a change in thinking is evident, at least, among some of medicine's leaders. But it's not easy to tune out years of what Malhotra calls "the mantra that saturated fat must be removed to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease."

"When saturated fat got mixed up with the high sugar added to processed food in the second half of the 20th century, it got a bad name," noted UC San Francisco pediatric endocrinologist Robert Lustig. On the question of which is worse -- saturated fat or added sugar, Lustig added, "The [American Heart Assn.](#) has weighed in -- the sugar many times over."

Real food includes saturated fat, Lustig said, and real food lives up to the principle that food should confer wellness, not illness. "Instead of lowering serum cholesterol with statins, which is dubious at best, how about serving up some real food?"

Daily Beast

[White House Official Fired for Tweeting Under Fake Name](#)

Jofi Joseph, an official in the National Security Staff at the White House, was fired last week after being caught as the tweeter behind @natsecwonk, a feed that's been leaking internal information since 2011.

by Josh Rogin

A White House national security official was fired last week after being caught as the mystery Tweeter who has been tormenting the foreign policy community with insulting comments and revealing internal Obama administration information for over two years.

Jofi Joseph, a director in the non-proliferation section of the National Security Staff at the White House, has been surreptitiously tweeting under the moniker @natsecwonk, a Twitter feed famous inside Washington policy circles since it began in February, 2011 until it was shut down last week. Two administration officials confirmed that the mystery tweeter was Joseph, who has also worked at the State Department and on Capitol Hill for Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Joe Biden. Until recently, he was part of the administration's team working on negotiations with Iran.

During his time tweeting under the @natsecwonk name, Joseph openly criticized the policies of his White House bosses and often insulted their intellect and appearance. At different times, he insulted or criticized several top White House and State Department officials, including former National Security Advisor Tom Donilon, Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes, Secretary of State John Kerry, and many many others.

The Daily Beast saved a long record of @natsecwonk's tweets prior to the shutting down of his Twitter feed.

"I'm a fan of Obama, but his continuing reliance and dependence upon a vacuous cipher like Valerie Jarrett concerns me," he once tweeted.

"Was Huma Abedin wearing beer goggles the night she met Anthony Wiener? Almost as bad a pairing as Samantha Powers and Cass Sunstein," he tweeted on another occasion, insulting a top Clinton aide, a then Congressman, and two White House senior officials in one tweet.

Joseph's snark was not confined to his Obama administration colleagues. He also took aim at senior Republican figures and lowly GOP Hill staffers.

"So when will someone do us the favor of getting rid of Sarah Palin and the rest of her white trash family? What utter useless garbage," he tweeted last October.

During the 2012 Presidential campaign, he lashed out at conservative journalists and members of the presidential campaign staff of Mitt Romney

"@MiekeEoyang Come on, I expected better of you. @jrubinblogger is CRAZY unhinged while @noonanjo is an overweight paid Romney shill," he tweeted, referring to the Washington Post's conservative blogger Jen Rubin and Romney campaign national security staffer John Noonan.

For many in the foreign policy community reacting Tuesday night, the revelation that Joseph was the mystery tweeter @natsecwonk was a shock because Joseph was well known among policy wonks and his wife, Carolyn Leddy, is a well-respected professional staffer on the Republican side of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

But inside the administration, there was little sympathy for the man who they feel had betrayed their confidence while taunting them all the while.

"My friends call me Batman," he once tweeted.

A White House spokesman confirmed that Joseph no longer works there but declined further comment.

IBD

Late night humor

by Andrew Malcolm

Conan: Facebook is preparing for its launch in the Jewish state of Israel by changing the “Like” button to the “Could Be Worse” button.

Conan: This week was Columbus Day. Finally, a chance for government workers to catch a break and stay home with their families.

Letterman: Columbus thought he landed in India. Actually he landed in the Bahamas. If he were alive today Columbus would be running an Italian cruise ship.

Conan: Microsoft has a major cell software update to cut driver distractions. All part of its new slogan, “Microsoft: Leave the Crashing To Us.”

Conan: A Florida woman was arrested at a Home Depot for trying to hire a hitman. So, basically it’s easier to find a hitman at Home Depot than someone who works there.

Conan: According to a new survey, 25% of men say they’ve watched porn online. The survey also revealed that 75% of men are liars.

Conan: CNN had an editorial claiming “Americans are too dumb.” I was going to read it, but then I saw a “12 craziest cat twerking videos” and clicked that instead.

Letterman: Everyone complaining about the ObamaCare sign-up. I got on, had no trouble, signed right up. And I ordered six months of Mexican Viagra.

Conan: At an Olympic exhibition game, the U.S. and Canadian womens’ hockey teams got into a full-on, all-female brawl. Olympic referees ruled the incident, “unsportsmanlike,” “unprofessional” and “super-hot.”

Conan: A new study says eating bacon can lower a man’s chances of getting a woman pregnant. Scientists call it alarming. Men call it “win-win.”

Conan: Researchers are in the process of creating an underwater wi-fi network. Finally, a way for people to tweet, “I’m drowning.”

Conan: John McCain said the partial government shutdown was “one of the most shameful” things he’s seen as a Senator. And that’s from a guy who saw Lincoln get shot.

Conan: Jamie Foxx has reportedly been cast in a movie about Martin Luther King Jr.. Apparently, it was between him and Ben Affleck.

Letterman: In town now is Libyan al Qaeda member Abu al-Libi. Here for his trial for terrorist activities. Also he’d like to see ‘Jersey Boys.’

Letterman: People say in a government default we’d have lost the ability to borrow. Not just that. We’d also lose our membership in Sam’s Club.

Letterman: No murders in New York City for an entire week. I thought it was because of the government shutdown. Now people say New Yorkers are committing their murders out of town.

Conan: Today President Obama called for a new era of bipartisan cooperation. Obama said that because he likes to start off each speech with a joke.

Conan: In Paraguay, a 99-year-old woman and a 103-year-old man got married after being together for 80 years. When asked the secret to keeping their passion alive, they said having no recollection of who the other person is.

Conan: 7-Eleven will soon begin selling a \$50 bottle of wine. 7-Eleven says the wine pairs very nicely with its 1962 Hot Dog.

Conan: Disney reveals one of its princesses is bi-sexual. Even more shocking, Disney revealed that one of its princes is straight.

Conan: Looks like Lindsay Lohan got a new tattoo of a triangle. Either that, or she crashed into a freshly painted "Yield" sign.





WHITE HOUSE GLOSSARY



