

October 30, 2013

Charles Krauthammer was on the Daily Show with Jon Stewart last week. It is not often a guest gets the whole program, but Charles did. We have links so you can watch. [Daily Caller](#) with the story.

On Wednesday's edition of Comedy Central's "The Daily Show," Washington Post columnist Charles Krauthammer faced off against left-leaning show anchor Jon Stewart on conservative ideology and the way it is presented.

In this rare appearance on Stewart's program, Krauthammer was promoting his new book, "Things That Matter: Three Decades of Passions, Pastimes, and Politics," and explained how in working on the book he realized when he had made the transformation from liberal to conservative.

STEWART: Thirty years — do you ever look back on some of these writings and think, 'What was I thinking?'

KRAUTHAMMER: It's worse than that. The worst part of writing the book was going all the way back and reading the million words I'd written. By the end of this process I was near suicidal. I couldn't believe I had written some of that stuff.

STEWART: So, what has the growth process been like?

KRAUTHAMMER: The growth process? Well, I was once a liberal.

STEWART: So the early writings showed hope?

KRAUTHAMMER: And then came change. ...

John Fund posts on the sting used to catch the White House minion who tweeted nasty items about Valerie Jarrett.

President Obama's aides went to extraordinary lengths to uncover the identity of a senior official who was using Twitter to make snarky comments about White House staffers. Suspicion gradually centered on Jofi Joseph, the point man on nuclear nonproliferation at the National Security Council. So at a meeting in which everyone was in on the scam an inaccurate but innocuous news tidbit was revealed. When Joseph used his anonymous Twitter handle #natlsecwonk to broadcast the tidbit he was caught and promptly fired. He was not fired for revealing any secrets, but for making disparaging comments about thin-skinned administration players ranging from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel.

What apparently intensified the campaign to identify the "snarker" was a comment about Valerie Jarrett, the senior Obama adviser who has her own Secret Service detail and appears to exercise an inordinate amount of power behind the scenes. Joseph tweeted "I'm a fan of Obama, but his continuing reliance and dependence upon a vacuous cipher like Valerie Jarrett concerns me."

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"I think Barack knew that he had God-given talents that were extraordinary. He knows exactly how smart he is. . . . He knows how perceptive he is. He knows what a good reader of people he is. And he knows that he has the ability — the extraordinary, uncanny ability — to take a thousand different perspectives, digest them and make sense out of them, and I think that he has never really been challenged intellectually. . . . So what I sensed in him was not just a restless spirit but somebody with such extraordinary talents that had to be really taxed in order for him to be happy. . . . He's been bored to death his whole life. He's just too talented to do what ordinary people do."

Up against a court flatterer of that caliber it's no surprise that Jarrett has outlasted almost everyone who was in Obama's original White House team — from chief of staff Rahm Emanuel to political guru David Axelrod to Press Secretary Robert Gibbs. All are known to have crossed her, and all are gone. As one former Obama aide once told me: "Valerie is 'She Who Must Not be Challenged.'"

When the revealing histories of the Obama White House are written it will be fascinating to learn just how extensive her role in the key decisions of the Obama years was.

Bret Stephens on president bystander.

Is there a method to President Obama's style of leadership, his methods of decision-making, his habits of attention, oversight and follow-through? In recent months I've been keeping a file of stories that might suggest an answer. See what you think.

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"They added that the president was briefed on and approved of broader intelligence-collection 'priorities,' but that those below him make decisions about specific targets."

—The Wall Street Journal, Oct. 28, 2013

"HealthCare.gov is the highest-profile experiment yet in the Obama administration's effort to modernize government by using technology, with the site intended to become a user-friendly pathway to new health insurance options for millions of uninsured Americans.

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"For the people who go out, on to the edge, to represent our country, we believe that if we get in trouble, they're coming to get us, that our back is covered. To hear that it's not, that's a terrible, terrible experience."

— Gregory Hicks, former deputy chief of mission in Libya, on "60 Minutes," Oct. 27, 2013

Call Mr. Obama's style indifferent, aloof or irresponsible, but a president who governs like this reaps the whirlwind—if not for himself, then for his country.

Stephens is from the Journal. Here's [Richard Cohen](#) from the Washington Post. one of his fans no less.

Where is [Casey Stengel](#) when we need him? In 1962, as the manager of the brand new and determinedly hapless New York Mets — 40 wins, 120 losses — he looked up and down his bench one dismal day and wondered, “Can’t anybody here play this game?” That phrase kept coming at me recently as I watched the impressively inept performance of the Obama administration in both foreign and domestic policy. On a given day, this administration makes the ‘62 Mets look good.

This is a surprise — at least to me. If Barack Obama has an image, it is of the infinitely cool, cerebral leader. The man can give a rousing speech, but he is, at heart, a planner and a plodder. Both of his presidential campaigns were exercises in micromanagement — digital all the way. Obama was the better candidate, but he had, by far, the better organization.

Yet this same man has lately so mishandled both domestic and foreign policy that he is in mortal peril of altering his image. This unsettling and uncharacteristic incompetence became shockingly clear when Obama failed to come to grips with the Syrian civil war. I did not agree with the president’s do-nothing policy, but at least it was both a policy and intellectually coherent. What followed, though, was both intellectually incoherent and pathetically inconsistent — a “red line” that came out of nowhere and then mysteriously evaporated and a missile strike that was threatened and then abandoned. It was a policy so wavering that if Obama were driving, he would be forced to take a breathalyzer.

The debacle of the Affordable Care Act’s Web site raised similar questions about confidence. This was supposed to be Obama’s Big Deal. The president has other accomplishments — navigating out of the Great Recession was no minor feat — but restoring the status quo does not get your face on Mount Rushmore. It takes achievement, a program — something new and wonderful. The Affordable Care Act was supposed to be it. ...

And [Jennifer Rubin](#). She's not a fan.

The list is growing every week: The IRS scandal, the deteriorating security situation in Libya, spying on German Chancellor Angela Merkel, spying on journalists and the Obamacare mess. Those are just a few of the things we have been told at one time or another that President Obama he didn’t know about before learning about them in the media. Note to media: You have a critical job in briefing the president, so err on side of over-inclusion.

Then there are the things he had wrong or knew better but said anyway: There is a [fatwa in Iran](#) against nuclear weapons, “You will get to keep your health-care plan,” the Benghazi attack was related to an anti-Muslim video, and no predecessor had been compelled to negotiate a budget deal in the context of a potential government shutdown.

This prompts several questions: Who is running the government? Why is the president content not to know so many things? At this point one has to conclude he is intentionally ignorant. If he really wanted to be in the loop, people who didn’t inform him would be fired and the pace of “I didn’t know” excuses would slow. Instead it’s ticked up. Perhaps he refuses to hear bad news. Maybe his second-term team is hopelessly incompetent. Whatever the reason, Obama’s

ignorance is no longer (if it ever had been) a valid excuse. His continual cluelessness is an indictment now of his administration's collapse.

But it also got me wondering. There may be a whole list of things of which the president is unaware or confused that accounts for his erratic performance. Perhaps he does not know that.

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The list goes on. You would think the president at some point would be embarrassed to be the least-informed man in Washington, D.C.

Daily Caller

[Charles Krauthammer squares off against Jon Stewart on the merits of conservatism](#)

by Jeff Poor



On Wednesday's edition of Comedy Central's "The Daily Show," Washington Post columnist Charles Krauthammer faced off against left-leaning show anchor Jon Stewart on conservative ideology and the way it is presented.

In this rare appearance on Stewart's program, Krauthammer was promoting his new [book](#), "[Things That Matter: Three Decades of Passions, Pastimes, and Politics](#)," and explained how in working on the book he realized when he had made the transformation from liberal to conservative.

STEWART: Thirty years — do you ever look back on some of these writings and think, 'What was I thinking?'

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STEWART: So, what has the growth [process](#) been like?

KRAUTHAMMER: The growth process? Well, I was once a liberal.

STEWART: So the early writings showed hope?

KRAUTHAMMER: And then came change.

Stewart went on to challenge Krauthammer on conservative ideology. According to "The Daily Show" anchor, conservatives can easily prove their arguments against government by being impediments to [successful](#) government, which he suggested was going on now with the likes of Texas Republican Sen. Ted Cruz.

[**This is the link to a Weekly Standard article with videos of Krauthammer's visit with Jon Stewart.**](#) You'll have to watch 30 second commercials, but it is worth it.

The Corner

[**Obama's Valerie Jarrett: Often Whispered about, But Never Challenged**](#)

by John Fund

President Obama's aides went to extraordinary lengths to uncover the identity of a senior official who was using Twitter to make snarky comments about White House staffers. Suspicion gradually centered on Jofi Joseph, the point man on nuclear nonproliferation at the National Security Council. So at a meeting in which everyone was in on the scam an inaccurate but innocuous news tidbit was revealed. When Joseph used his anonymous Twitter handle #natlsecwonk to broadcast the tidbit he was caught and promptly fired. He was not fired for revealing any secrets, but for making disparaging comments about thin-skinned administration players ranging from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel.

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Obama, but his continuing reliance and dependence upon a vacuous cipher like Valerie Jarrett concerns me.”

Jarrett, an old Chicago friend of both Barack and Michelle Obama, appears to exercise such extraordinary influence she is sometimes quietly referred to as “Rasputin” on Capitol Hill, a reference to the mystical monk who held sway over Russia’s Czar Nicholas as he increasingly lost touch with reality during World War I.

Darrell Delamaide, a columnist for Dow Jones’s MarketWatch, says that “what has baffled many observers is how Jarrett, a former cog in the Chicago political machine and a real-estate executive, can exert such influence on policy despite her lack of qualifications in national security, foreign policy, economics, legislation or any of the other myriad specialties the president needs in an adviser.”

Delamaide believes the term “vacuous cipher” that was applied to Jarrett stung so much because it could be used as a metaphor for the administration in general. He writes that what “has remained consistent about the Obama administration is that vacuity — the slow response in a crisis, the hesitant and contradictory communication, a lack of conviction and engagement amid constant political calculation.” The stunning revelation that President Obama wasn’t kept properly apprised of problems with Obamacare’s website is just the latest example of how dysfunctional Obama World can be.

Whether Jarrett’s influence is all too real or exaggerated is unknowable. What is known is the extent to which she has long been a peerless enabler of Barack Obama’s inflated opinion of himself. Consider this quote from *New Yorker* editor David Remnick’s interview with her for his 2010 book *The Bridge*.

“I think Barack knew that he had God-given talents that were extraordinary. He knows exactly how smart he is. . . . He knows how perceptive he is. He knows what a good reader of people he is. And he knows that he has the ability — the extraordinary, uncanny ability — to take a thousand different perspectives, digest them and make sense out of them, and I think that he has never really been challenged intellectually. . . . So what I sensed in him was not just a restless spirit but somebody with such extraordinary talents that had to be really taxed in order for him to be happy. . . . He’s been bored to death his whole life. He’s just too talented to do what ordinary people do.”

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WSJ

[The Unbearable Lightness of Obama](#)

The president didn't know the NSA was spying on world leaders, but he's found time for at least 146 rounds of golf.

by Bret Stephens

Is there a method to President [Obama](#)'s style of leadership, his methods of decision-making, his habits of attention, oversight and follow-through? In recent months I've been keeping a file of stories that might suggest an answer. See what you think.

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—*The Wall Street Journal, Oct. 28, 2013*



One of at least 146 rounds of golf this president has played.

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"Tensions between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia have grown sharply in recent months. President [Barack Obama](#) authorized the CIA to provide limited arms to carefully vetted Syrian rebels, but it took months for the program to commence. . . .

"One Western diplomat described Saudi Arabia as eager to be a military partner in what was to have been the U.S.-led military strikes on Syria. As part of that, the Saudis asked to be given the list of military targets for the proposed strikes. The Saudis indicated they never got the information, the diplomat said."

—*The Wall Street Journal, Oct. 21, 2013*

"Besides the Syrian government's gains, there was mounting evidence that Mr. Assad's troops had repeatedly used chemical weapons against civilians.

"Even as the debate about arming the rebels took on a new urgency, Mr. Obama rarely voiced strong opinions during senior staff meetings. But current and former officials said his body language was telling: he often appeared impatient and disengaged while listening to the debate, sometimes scrolling through messages on his [BlackBerry](#) or slouching and chewing gum."

— *New York Times, Oct. 22, 2013*

"On Saturday, as the shutdown drama played out on Capitol Hill, President Obama played golf at Fort Belvoir in Virginia."

— *Washington Post, Sept. 28, 2013*

"For French President François Hollande, it seemed like the perfect response: a lightning-quick strike on Syria to punish the government for an alleged chemical weapons attack.

"But with President Obama's surprise decision to ask Congress for a go-ahead on military action, Hollande has found himself embroiled in political controversy abroad and at home. Instead of vaunting Hollande as a warrior charging off to do battle, critics say he now looks more like a sidekick who was left in the lurch by his American ally."

—*Washington Post, Sept. 6, 2013*

"The essence of Eisenhower's hidden hand, of course, is that there was real work going on that people didn't know at the time. If that's true now, then Obama really is emulating Ike. If, on the other hand, he's simply doing nothing or very little, that would be passivity, not hidden-hand leadership."

—*Eisenhower biographer Jim Newton, quoted in New York Times, July 15, 2013*

"In polo shirt, shorts and sandals, President Obama headed to the golf course Friday morning with a couple of old friends, then flew to Camp David for a long weekend. Secretary of State [John Kerry](#) was relaxing at his vacation home in Nantucket.

"Aides said both men were updated as increasingly bloody clashes left dozens dead in Egypt, but from outward appearances they gave little sense that the Obama administration viewed the broader crisis in Cairo with great alarm."

—*New York Times*, July 5, 2013

"The president had a truly disturbing habit of funneling major foreign-policy decisions through a small cabal of relatively inexperienced White House advisors whose turf was strictly politics. Their primary concern was how any action in Afghanistan or the Middle East would play on the nightly news, or which talking point it would give Republicans."

— *Vali Nasr*, "The Dispensable Nation," April 2013

"Mr. Obama's reluctance to put American forces on the ground during the fight, and his decision to keep America's diplomatic and C.I.A. presence minimal in post-Qaddafi Libya, may have helped lead the United States to miss signals and get caught unaware in the attack on the American mission in Benghazi. Military forces were too far from Libya's shores during the Sept. 11 attack to intervene."

—*New York Times*, Nov. 17, 2012

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Washington Post

[A question of competence](#)

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Something went wrong. People could not sign up. Why? Not sure. Who's at fault? Apparently no one. An act of God. Something that could never have been foreseen. Another president might have had someone in the White House calling every day — no, twice a day — to make sure the program was going to work. But no, it was a shock to everyone, and when the White House rolled out its gigantic cake — maestro, some music please — no one jumped out.

Pathetic.

Here, I must mention that bit of theater in which [various world leaders wax indignant](#) about their [telephone conversations being bugged](#) by the [National Security Agency](#) (NSA). This is not Obama's doing since the program predated his time in office. But the decibel level of the outrage does suggest that in Germany, France, Brazil and elsewhere, Obama's standing is not what it once was. He and America are no longer held in either awe or respect, and the bugging program, instead of seeming a necessary evil, looks both clumsy and silly. Bugging Angela Merkel's personal phone — she who once said that when she thinks of Germany she thinks of “well-sealed windows” — puts at risk the poor NSA listener. He must be catatonic by now.

But the reaction of the bugged has been nothing compared to the bleat of anger coming from the Middle East. The Saudis, who usually whisper their differences, have severely [upped the volume](#) and now [talk dismissively of Obama and America](#). They didn't like the way we washed our hands of [Egypt's Hosni Mubarak](#), a steadfast and durable ally, and then dealt with the [Syrian civil war in such a wobbly fashion](#). In recent days, the kingdom has [rejected a seat on the U.N. Security Council](#) and, in the person of its [intelligence chief, Prince Bandar bin Sultan](#), has said the U.S.-Saudi relationship is strained. Bandar, a former ambassador to Washington, can hardly be dismissed as anti-American.

Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy, and in the long run Riyadh and Washington were always going to make an odd couple. But the current spat is not about values but about reliability and performance. The Obama administration has botched Syria and, in the Saudi (and Israeli) view, cannot be trusted to deal firmly with Iran. An erratic presidency has made the world a bit less safe.

History will someday provide perspective and say, possibly, that Syria and Obamacare did not matter. I doubt it. At the least, they help validate the once-frivolous Republican charges of incompetence. A competent president would beware. As Casey Stengel might note, strike three is coming up.

Right Turn

What didn't Obama know and for how long?

by Jennifer Rubin

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IN YOUR HEART

You know he's clueless

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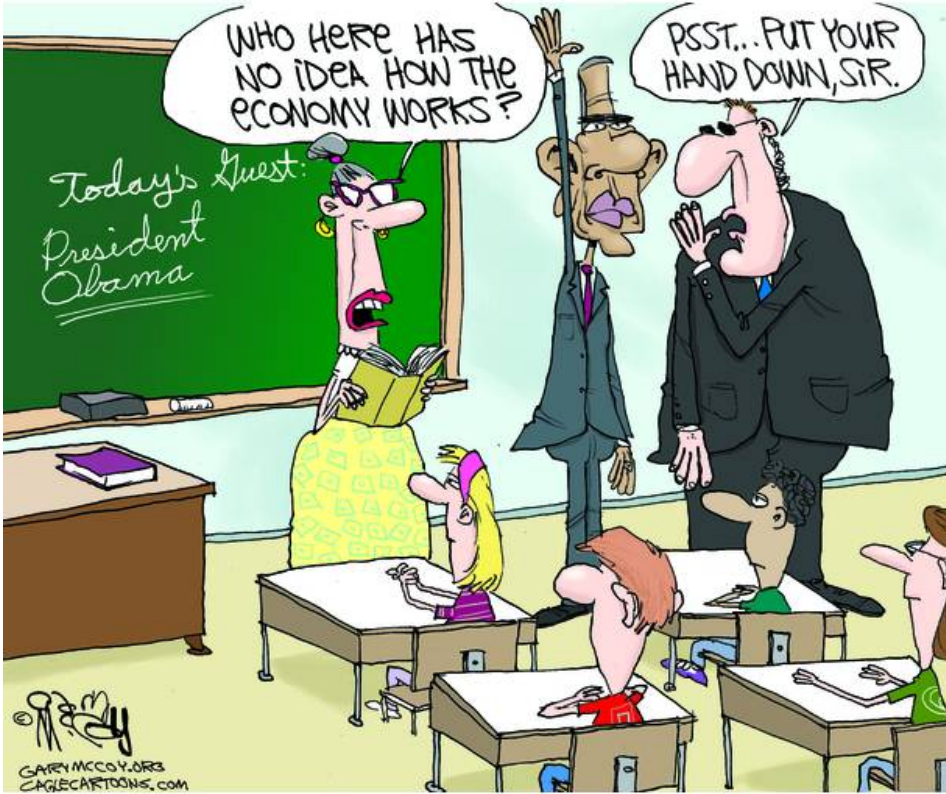
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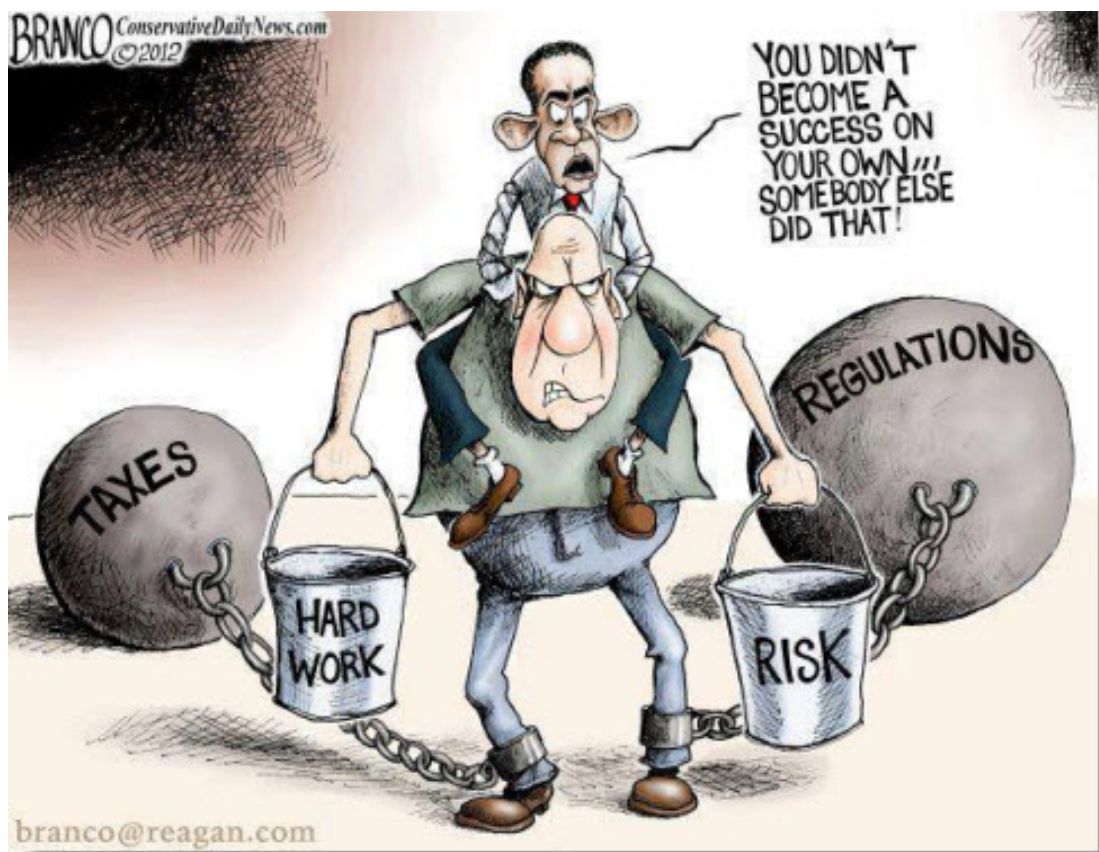
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"CHEATING? NAW, I JUST SUSPENDED THE RULES UNTIL 2015."





JUST LIKE REN & STEMPY

AS CLUELESS, BUT DANGEROUS

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BRAINS!



BRAINS!



BRAINS!



BRAINS!



BRAINS!





...SO THE WHITEHOUSE IS LIKE A PRISON, SEE, AND I'M LIKE PAM GRIER IN "THE BIG DOLL HOUSE," OKAY? AND THEN WE'RE ALL IN THE SHOWERS GETTIN' SOAPY AND FRISKY AND...

I WONDER IF I COULD CHEW OFF MY OWN ARM TO ESCAPE?