

Can Romney Lie His Way To The Presidency?

By Dan Payne November 2, 2012



Mitt Romney speaks at a campaign event at Wisconsin Products Pavilion at State Fair Park, Friday, in West Allis, Wis.

Mitt Romney's pollster declared angrily months ago, "We're not going to let our campaign be dictated by fact-checkers." He and Romney's campaign have held true to that prediction.

Romney's outright lies, reversals, contradictions, contortions and distortions are so numerous, so cynical, so lacking in respect for voters, one veteran of national campaigns said, "If he wins, it changes everything I know about American politics."

Let's stop pretending both candidates are guilty of similar transgressions, because they are not. The real offender is Romney, who just makes stuff up. Warning: This is a very long list:

Lie No. 1: Chrysler's moving jobs to China. In his newest, most cynical lie, Romney is running a heavy volume of TV and radio ads telling Ohio auto workers that Chrysler is going to move production of Jeeps to China. Chrysler vehemently and swiftly denied it, declaring it has "no intention of shifting production of its Jeep models out of North America to China."

In reality, Chrysler is expanding its Jeep production in North America, including in Ohio. Its profits have allowed the car maker to consider selling Jeeps in China, the world's largest auto market.

Romney's campaign said it saw it in Bloomberg News; The Washington Post discovered that a blogger on Bloomberg's website had written that Fiat, the majority owner of Chrysler, was thinking about building Jeeps in China.

As of this writing, Romney's false TV and radio spots remain on the air.

Lie No. 2: He would've saved the auto industry. Despite writing a column for The New York Times, "Let Detroit Go Bankrupt," Romney's now telling Ohioans that he would have saved the American auto industry through "managed bankruptcy." Even the conservative Detroit News praised President Obama and referred to Romney's "wrong-headedness on the auto bailout... he was wrong in suggesting the automakers could have found operating capital in the private markets."

Lie No. 3: Ordering the bin Laden raid was a piece of cake. Romney said that authorizing the killing of Osama bin Laden was such a simple act that "even Jimmy Carter would've given that order." In fact, Obama's ordering the raid was opposed by his secretary of defense, Vice President Biden and his No. 2 military adviser.

Intelligence sources were not certain bin Laden was in the compound, a short distance from an elite training center for Pakistani army officers. One member of Seal Team Six, the team that executed the raid, wrote a book about it and said: "Not every president would have ordered the raid that killed Osama bin Laden."

Lie No. 4: No apology tour. "The president began what I have called an apology tour, of going to various nations in the Middle East and criticizing America," Romney says often and is parroted by Fox News. In December, Michael Cohen, a columnist for Foreign Policy's Election 2012 Channel, called the "apology tour" claim "a lie that has been reiterated so often that it has become conventional wisdom on the right."

In fact, in France, Obama criticized Europeans for "not recognizing the good that America so often does in the world; there have been times where Europeans choose to blame America for much of what's bad."

Lie No. 5: Magical tax cuts that cut the deficit. Romney says his tax cut plan will not add to the deficit. He plans to lower tax rates by 20 percent for everyone, repeal the estate tax and Alternative

Minimum Tax, not add any new revenue to the system, and not raise taxes on households making less than \$200,000. Romney's plan removes \$5 trillion from the federal treasury while he adds another \$2 billion to the Pentagon budget. He argues that his budget will reduce the long-term budget deficit because he will close tax loopholes and deductions, although he refuses to say which ones and by how much.

The nonpartisan Tax Policy Center analyzed Romney's proposal and concluded it didn't add up. No one outside of Romney headquarters can do the math.

Lie No. 6: Flat-out false on new jobs. "We have fewer people working today than we had when the president took office," Romney said. This is flat-out false. The Bureau of Labor statistics reported that Obama has actually created a net positive 125,000 jobs; there have been 868,000 jobs created in the private sector. The biggest job losses have been in government, where Romney wants to make even deeper cuts.

Lie No 7: Blunt on birth control. "I don't believe employers should tell someone whether they could have contraceptive care or not," Romney said. Back in March, when Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri introduced a bill that would allow employers to deny contraceptive coverage to employees, Romney said: "Of course I support the Blunt amendment."

Lie No. 8: Oily deception. Romney: "Oil production is down 14 percent this year on federal land." Romney cherry-picked 2011 because drilling on public lands did fall 14 percent, but the Obama administration has approved more drilling permits than any previous administration. Romney conveniently ignores that drilling went down under Bush Jr. and rose under Obama. Romney wants more offshore drilling along the coasts of Virginia and the Carolinas.

Lie No. 9: Energy independence = Hello, more fracking and coal. After saying, as governor, "I believe the world is getting warmer, and I believe that humans have contributed to that," he's now a climate change denier. Buoyed by major contributions from Big Oil and the Koch brothers, he promises "energy independence" requiring offshore drilling for oil (on the East Coast) and repeal of "restrictive" environmental safeguards on fracking of natural gas with more chemicals in the water supply. Guided by politics, rather than science, he's for more coal mining ("I love coal!").

Lie No. 10: Slippery on Keystone. Romney says the president blocked the Keystone pipeline, depriving Americans of crude oil. In fact, Keystone has been carrying oil to an Illinois refinery since 2010. What Obama delayed is the Keystone XL extension, designed to carry Canadian oil to a deepwater port at Houston, where it could be sold on the world market.

Lie No. 11: Triple flips on immigration. Romney has flipped, flopped and flipped again on the 6-7 million illegal immigrants in the U.S. In a 2007 "Meet the Press" interview, he said that he supported permanent residency or citizenship for the illegal immigrants currently in the U.S., as long as there was not a "special pathway" to citizenship. But he hardened into an immigration hawk during the recent Republican primaries, calling for tough immigration laws that would lead to "self-deportation."

In June he refused to say if he'd revoke the president's executive order that allows young illegal immigrants to avoid deportation as long as they meet certain standards. With polls show him getting clobbered in the Hispanic-American community, Romney now says he supports the Obama policy.

Lie No. 12: Suddenly for affirmative action. He said that when he became governor, he initiated "a concerted effort to go out and find women who had backgrounds... to become members of our cabinet. I went to a number of women's groups and said, 'Can you help us find folks?' and they brought us whole binders full of women." Romney did not ask women's groups for resumes; a nonpartisan coalition of women's groups went to him with names of qualified women and insisted that he hire more females. Since when did Romney start believing in what Republicans degrade as "affirmative action" and "quotas"?

Lie No. 13: "Refocus" (that is, cut) Pell Grants. "I want to make sure we keep our Pell Grant program growing." It's simply false. Romney and his running mate would cut Pell Grants for about 1 million low-income students. Romney has been vague on the issue, using, as The Nation's George Zornick writes, "ominous budget-speak" that he wants to "refocus" Pell Grant dollars to "place the program on a responsible long-term path," but VP candidate Paul Ryan's budget would cut Pell Grants.

Lie No. 14: Failure rate Bain could love. He said "about half of [the green firms the Obama administration invested in] have gone out of business." He misses this one by a mile. The Department of Energy has approved 33 loans worth about \$16 billion. So far there have been three failures (Solyndra, Beacon and Abound), which works out to a failure rate of 9 percent.

Lie No. 15: The brass of Ryan. Former President Bill Clinton said "it takes some brass" for Romney and Ryan to attack Obama for doing what they're doing. In fact, the \$716 billion reduction in Obamacare is a savings from reduced payments to hospitals and physicians that were overcharging. Ryan's plan includes the same \$716 billion of savings, but he gets it from turning Medicare into a voucher and shifting rising health care costs to seniors.

Lie No. 16: Pants On Fire on welfare. Romney has claimed that Obama removed the work requirement from the welfare law. "You wouldn't have to work and wouldn't have to train for a job. They just send you your welfare check," a Romney ad says. Truth is, Obama merely allowed governors to create harder or broader work requirements. That was such "a drastic distortion" it earned the "Pants On Fire" (most inflammatory claim) award from the Pulitzer Prize-winning PolitiFact website.

Lie No. 17: Day One as CEO. Romney apparently believes he will be CEO, not president, on his first day in office. He has variously promised to approve completion of the Keystone Pipeline, without proper environmental impact understanding or emergency measures; issue executive orders to halt implementation of the Affordable Care Act — that that will go straight to the Supreme Court; introduce tax cuts for "job creators," also known as millionaires and billionaires; classify China as a "currency manipulator," which allows him to impose tariffs on Chinese imports that he believes are killing U.S. jobs — ignoring that China owns a mountain of U.S. debt; reduce the deficit; repeal job-killing regulations; and end the Obama era of big government. Whew, all in one day.