



## Mitt Romney Throws Hat Toward Ring, Warns of Abyss. « If We Republicans Choose Donald Trump... »

Par [William Boardman](#)

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*"I'm not here to announce my candidacy for office.... America will remain, as it is today, the envy of the world.... If we Republicans choose Donald Trump as our nominee, the prospects for a safe and prosperous future are greatly diminished.... A person so untrustworthy and dishonest as Hillary Clinton must not become president.... I understand the anger Americans feel today.... Mr. Trump is directing our anger for less than noble purposes.... This is the very brand of anger that has led other nations into the abyss." – [Mitt Romney, Hinckley Institute of Politics](#), Salt Lake City*

Mitt Romney, former Republican candidate for president, showed up in public again on March 3 to make a non-announcement announcement of his candidacy before rambling into a [semi-coherent, 18-minute speech](#), the main purpose of which seemed to be to attack Donald Trump – or so it was widely reported: "a detailed, thorough and lacerating assault on Mr. Trump,... [a diatribe," according to the New York Times](#). Nonsense – Romney's disjointed comments wandered all over the place, as the brief, condensed version above indicates. Romney had no message, he had several, overt and covert, that all boiled down to a final, political prayer: "God bless us to choose a nominee who will make that vision [of greatness] a reality." Will we never outgrow American infantile exceptionalism?

In other words, Romney wasn't engaged in leadership, he wasn't taking any kind of a stand on any sort of principle, he was just indulging himself in mealy-mouthed pandering rooted in mostly cheap-shot attacks on the scapegoat du jour for his political class. Even granting the accuracy of his Trump trash-talk, it was still just trash-talk. Trumpery remains ascendant and Romney proffered no alternative. As [Glenn Greenwald in The Intercept](#) has excellently documented:

... flamboyant denunciations of Trump by establishment figures make no sense except as self-aggrandizing pretense, because those condemning him have long tolerated if not outright advocated very similar ideas.... Trump is self-evidently a toxic authoritarian demagogue advocating morally monstrous positions, but in most cases where elite outrage is being vented, he is merely a natural extension of the mainstream rhetorical and policy framework that has been laid, not some radical departure from it. He's their id.... [They resent] what he reflects: the unmistakable, undeniable signs of late-stage imperial collapse, along with the resentments and hatreds they have long deliberately and self-servingly stoked but which are now raging out of their control.

Greenwald goes on to cite specific illustrations of the sham horror of establishment Romnoids over Trump's embrace of stuff like American torture, American war and American war crimes, American assassinations, or American punishment of civilian populations. There is no need to revisit these issues that Greenwald covers in detail very well. (The faux umbrage of establishment moralists reminds one of the scene in Casablanca, in which the corrupt Captain Renault asserts, "I'm shocked, shocked to find that gambling is going on here," and then accepts his winnings/bribe.) With persuasive precision, Greenwald makes the rational case that we're swamped with political hypocrisy, but he only hints at another, deeper context for this Romney drive-by shouting.

"the very brand of anger that has led other nations into the abyss"

What did Romney intend to mean by that rather isolated sentence? The apparent antecedent is "the anger Americans feel today." After several snide asides about Trump, Romney adds: "This is the very brand of anger that has led other nations into the abyss."

What other nations? What abyss? What is Romney actually talking about? Is he hinting at Nazi Germany? He doesn't say, he only shakes his fearstick in our faces, then leaves us to scare ourselves into submission with our own paranoid projections. Incredibly, without showing the slightest comprehension, Romney claims: "I understand the anger Americans feel today." If he did understand even some of the widespread, multi-faceted, innumerable sources for American anger, he would have to be hopelessly obtuse not to understand also that he and most of the people he knows are all causes of that anger, and that the anger is wholly justifiable. [Romney is a very rich man](#) who pays a lower tax rate than his secretary and, so far as public policy is concerned, sees absolutely nothing wrong with that, or the special tax break that makes it possible. But [Romney is not known for public policy coherence, much less coherence](#) about any looming "abyss."

Romney doesn't get it, none of them get it. It's misleading, irrelevant, stupid, even dishonest to say anything as vapidly portentous as: "This is the very brand of anger that has led other nations into the abyss." That is not reality. That is a prediction of a future abyss. The reality is that we are already in the abyss, and we've been sinking deeper and deeper into the abyss for 35 years or more now: no matter how much any of us scream, no matter what we scream about, we are a psychologically frozen nation locked into a metaphorical silent scream as unchanging and so far immutable as the Edvard Munch 1893 painting, "The Scream," a version of which sold in 2012 for \$119 million, enough to make anyone scream unheard in the deepening abyss.

All our individual screams together only begin to describe the abyss

Here's my scream (no more rational analysis for now):

It's just a scream, incomplete, random, subject to change tomorrow, different from yesterday, never comprehensive, never finished, seldom answered, endlessly expanded, like the abyss itself, a Mobius strip of rorschach blots and more deliberate insults to mind – the Supreme Court gets to pick your President – and body – if you're a woman we don't care who rapes you as long as you carry his baby to term and stop all this nonsense about controlling your own body, why should you have more rights than poor people who get their bodies sent to pointless wars by rich people who just go on getting richer because you're using up ammunition and equipment that they get to sell to all the sides fighting over nothing, like in Yemen, where the Saudis have run out of hospitals to bomb so they're using

American cluster bombs on schools and churches, leftovers from Iraq or Syria or Yugoslavia or Flint

– no, wait, they didn't cluster bomb Flint, they poisoned the water, they're still pumping poisoned water, and making damn sure the consumers pay for it, some of the highest rates in the country, for poisoned water – that's value-added! – that's the Republican way to which Democrats acquiesce, who cares really about Flint or poor people or black people, black lives don't really matter or someone would listen to them, but not when the leadership class has become the lootership class and even the "political revolutionaries" are more about money out of politics and not about American troops out of more than a hundred foreign countries helping to prop up dictators who will foment terrorists and others who will never know what it's like to be American and middle class and to go decades without any improvement in living standard, but at least they took away your jobs and your homes and your pensions, or if they didn't, they will, or they'll try to – what, are you one of those people who wants bankers to go to prison for stealing your future?

– good luck with that, not to mention your kids over their heads in education debt in a country where education used to try to teach people to think for themselves, not just become dependent profit centers for an ever smaller elite that complains about paying 70% of the country's taxes when it gets only 95% of the country's income, how is that fair when we're the ones maintaining the world's largest military to preserve the global abyss and here at home cops can't shoot unarmed black people fast enough to distract them from the celebrity rape-a-thon where Bill Cosby is now the black Bill Clinton on his way back to the White House where opportunity and interns beckon and the abyss abides, and we abide in an abyss so varied and changing we can reassure ourselves it's really different places and not just one big abyss, but it is.

No wonder the Mitt Romneys of the world can look into the abyss they've made and not see themselves, just like they can look in a mirror and not see Donald Trump. That's an inner abyss.

*William M. Boardman has over 40 years experience in theatre, radio, TV, print journalism, and non-fiction, including 20 years in the Vermont judiciary. He has received honors from Writers Guild of America, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Vermont Life magazine, and an Emmy Award nomination from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.*

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Articles Par : [William Boardman](#)

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