

RELEASE IN FULL

---

**From:** Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 5, 2012 11:13 AM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** FW: Bill Clinton is out of control

---

**From:** Toiv, Nora F  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 05, 2012 10:31 AM  
**To:** Mills, Cheryl D  
**Subject:** Bill Clinton is out of control

## POLITICO

### Bill Clinton is out of control

By: Roger Simon

June 5, 2012 04:14 AM EDT

Bill Clinton has to be the smartest guy in the room even when he's not in the room.

Clinton is not on Barack Obama's campaign staff, is not a trusted adviser, does not set Obama's strategy.

But Bill Clinton is pretty good at sabotaging Obama's strategy.

He did so last week when he went on television and said Mitt Romney had a "sterling" record while running Bain Capital.

The Obama message is exactly the opposite. The Obama campaign had just run a TV ad claiming that working Americans had been harmed by Bain Capital and included one man saying Bain had been a "vampire" that "sucked the blood out of us."

(Also on POLITICO: Clinton: Romney W.H.? 'Calamitous')

Whether you liked or hated the ad (I liked it), it attacked Romney on his strongest point: He is a good businessman who knows how to create jobs and, therefore, will be a good president.

But Bill Clinton did not like that ad.

"I think he had a good business career," Clinton said of Romney and added that "a man who has been governor and had a sterling business career crosses the qualification threshold."

Obama does not need Clinton undercutting him. The two are not close, but they are not supposed to be enemies. They have golfed together, they attend fundraisers together, their staffs talk and, oh, yeah, Clinton's wife is Obama's secretary of state.

There are two things going on here. First, Clinton has always been cozier with Wall Street than Obama. In January 1999, I was at a very odd event for then-President Clinton on the 106th floor of the World Trade Center.

Richard Grasso, then-chairman of New York Stock Exchange, stood up and said, "In my little corner of southern Manhattan, the Dow Jones industrial average during the course of President Clinton's tenure tripled. We have the lowest unemployment in 30 years, and 16 million jobs have been created!"

The crowd, which included a number of financial titans, cheered. This was a year after the Monica Lewinsky scandal broke and months after Clinton had been impeached, but Wall Street did not care. Bill Clinton had been good for The Street, and The Street liked him.

"I'm not sure I know what to say," Clinton said in his best "aw shucks" style. "That's the sort of thing they say for your funeral. I don't think we're there yet."

Times were good, Clinton got the credit and, today, he still has a lot of friends in business and high finance and these friends help fund his philanthropic endeavors.

Barack Obama has fewer friends in high finance. He inherited an economy devastated by a derivative bubble and a housing bubble and ravished by the unbridled greed of some Wall Street firms, which took taxpayer bailouts with one hand and gave themselves huge bonuses with the other.

So the two men have different views of how "sterling" The Street operates.

Second, there is the little matter of the 2008 Democratic presidential campaign. Hillary Clinton was the early favorite, but she lost to Barack Obama and Bill Clinton helped her lose.

He made one of the biggest strategic mistakes of her entire campaign: He insisted she seriously compete in South Carolina. Hillary's staff wanted to spend its time and resources elsewhere, judging that South Carolina, with its large black electorate, was unwinnable.

But Bill felt that with his Southern roots and proven appeal to black voters, Hillary could beat Obama there. And Bill campaigned all-out. In Dartmouth, N.H., an angry, finger-wagging Bill had called Obama's campaign a "fairy tale." Jim Clyburn, a highly respected black congressman from South Carolina, felt insulted and publicly told Bill to "chill a little bit" and "tone it down."

But Bill wouldn't listen. And at a primary day rally in Columbia, S.C., he pooh-poohed Obama's impending win by saying: "Jesse Jackson won South Carolina in '84 and '88," meaning, in other words, that Obama's South Carolina victory would be as insignificant for him as it was for Jackson.

This was widely viewed as racially insensitive. Jake Tapper of ABC News referred to it as "race-baiting."

Obama would crush Hillary Clinton in South Carolina by 28.9 percentage points, the first blowout of the primary campaign. African-Americans made up 55 percent of the voters, and 80 percent of them voted for Obama. "There was a recoil of people to Clinton tactics," Obama's campaign manager, David Plouffe, told me.

A top Hillary staffer told me: "It was so dramatic a loss for us and so dramatic a win for him that it gave permission for Ted Kennedy and Caroline Kennedy and [then-Arizona Gov.] Janet Napolitano to say with a clear conscience, 'We are going for him.'"

Moreover, the South Carolina victory made it very difficult for superdelegates to go with Hillary without looking as if they wanted to deny a black man the nomination.

So why would Bill be angry at Obama for Bill's mistake? Because we never blame ourselves for our mistakes, we blame those who profit from them.

At a fundraiser with Obama in New York Monday night, Clinton said that Obama deserved a second term because "the alternative would be, in my opinion, calamitous for our country and the world." But that's the thing about Clinton. When you invite him, you never know if the Good Bill or the Bad Bill will show up.

Some think Bill is trying to undermine Obama's campaign today because he wants to boost Hillary in 2016. I don't see that. If Obama loses this time, the Democratic nominee will face an incumbent Mitt Romney in 2016. If Obama wins this time, the nominee will run for an open seat. It's not certain which would be tougher to win.

Bill Clinton is a genuine political genius. But only when it comes to his own campaigns.

"As the campaign kicked off, there was a conscious effort to not have Bill out there," Hillary's campaign manager, Patti Solis Doyle, told me. "We used him strategically to raise money."

The Obama campaign wants to use Bill the same way. Raise money, tone it down and chill out.

*Roger Simon is POLITICO's chief political columnist.*

© 2012 POLITICO LLC