



# Obama's Biggest Mistake

*After Insisting Four Times His Biggest Mistake Was Not Telling A Story, Obama Changes His Answer To Immigration Reform On Univision*

**TODAY, WHILE SPEAKING ON UNIVISION, OBAMA SAID THE BIGGEST MISTAKE OF HIS FIRST TERM WAS NOT PASSING IMMIGRATION REFORM**

**Obama: "My Biggest Failure So Far Is We Haven't Gotten Comprehensive Immigration Reform Done."** UNIVISION's JORGE RAMOS: "What is your biggest failure?" OBAMA: "Well, Jorge as you remind me, my biggest failure so far is we haven't gotten comprehensive immigration reform done, so we're going to be continuing to work on that. But it's not for lack of trying or desire." (President Barack Obama, [Univision Town Hall](#), Miami, FL, 9/20/12)

**EVERY OTHER TIME HE HAS BEEN ASKED, OBAMA HAS CLAIMED THE BIGGEST MISTAKE OF HIS FIRST TERM WAS NOT TELLING A STORY TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE**

## *One*

**Obama Thinks His Challenges Exist Because He Forgot To Tell A "Story."** "He was especially alive to the power of a story to influence the American public. He believed he had been elected chiefly because he had told a story; he thought he had had problems in office because he had, without quite realizing it, ceased to tell it." (Michael Lewis, "Obama's Way," *Vanity Fair*, 9/12)

## *Two*

**Obama Said He Is Trying To Tell The Story Of His Presidency Better On The Campaign Trail.** TIME's MICHAEL SCHERER: "You said that one of the mistakes you see in the first term was not telling that story better. What does it mean to tell the story better in the next four years?" OBAMA: "...And that's a story that I'm doing my best to tell during the campaign. That's a story that I will continue to try to tell, if I'm fortunate enough to have a second term, in inaugurations, in States of the Union. I want to make sure that people understand that I've got a focus on growing this economy, not growing the public sector, but doing enough to ensure that we've got the best workers in the world, we've got the best technology in the world, and we're competitive in the 21st century." (Michael Scherer, "What He Knows Now: Obama on Popularity, Partisanship and Getting Things Done in Washington," [TIME](#), 8/30/12)

### *Three*

**Obama Said The Biggest Mistake Of His First Term Was Not Telling A Story To The American People.** “Mr. Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama sat down Thursday with ‘CBS This Morning’ anchor Charlie Rose in the White House Blue Room, where they discussed the failures and successes of his administration as he heads into another election, among other things. ‘The mistake of my first term – couple of years – was thinking that this job was just about getting the policy right. And that’s important, but, you know, the nature of this office is also to tell a story to the American people that gives them a sense of unity and purpose and optimism, especially during tough times.’” (Lindsey Boerma, “Obama Reflects On His Biggest Mistake As President,” [CBS](#), 7/12/12)

**Obama: “In My First Two Years, I Think The Notion Was, ‘Well, He’s Been Juggling And Managing A Lot Of Stuff, But Where’s The Story That Tells Us Where He’s Going?’”** “‘When I think about what we’ve done well and what we haven’t done well,’ the president said, ‘the mistake of my first term - couple of years - was thinking that this job was just about getting the policy right. And that’s important. But the nature of this office is also to tell a story to the American people that gives them a sense of unity and purpose and optimism, especially during tough times.’ Mr. Obama acknowledged the dissonance between others’ perception of his strength as an expert orator, and his own. ‘It’s funny - when I ran, everybody said, well he can give a good speech but can he actually manage the job?’ he said. ‘And in my first two years, I think the notion was, ‘Well, he’s been juggling and managing a lot of stuff, but where’s the story that tells us where he’s going?’ And I think that was a legitimate criticism.’” (Lindsey Boerma, “Obama Reflects On His Biggest Mistake As President,” [CBS](#), 7/12/12)

### *Four*

**Obama: “Beyond That, I Also Think That Over The First Two Years I Was So Focused On Policy And Getting The Policy Right, That Sometimes I Forgot Part Of My Job Is Explaining To The American People Why We’re Doing This Policy And Where We’re Going.”** OBAMA: “Beyond that, I also think that over the first two years I was so focused on policy and getting the policy right, that sometimes I forgot part of my job is explaining to the American people why we’re doing this policy and where we’re going. And so I think a lot of people started trying to figure out, well, how do all these pieces fit together. The auto industry has been saved, and that was a good thing. Well, that saved a million jobs, but people weren’t sure how did that relate to our housing strategy, or how did that relate to health care. And so I think that was something that I could have done better.” (President Barack Obama, [Remarks At The University Of Maryland Town Hall](#), 7/22/11)

- **When Asked About His Regrets, Obama Said “I Could Have Told The American People More Clearly.”** “Sounding like a job applicant asked to name his faults, Obama also said he could have ‘told the American people more clearly’ how dire the nation’s economic situation was, and that he was ‘so focused on ... getting the policy right’ he failed to explain why he was taking the steps he took.” (Michael A. Memoli, “Regrets? Obama Has Had A Few,” [Los Angeles Times](#), 7/22/11)