



# So Much For The Walk

## *Team Obama Refuses To Denounce "Inaccurate" Priorities USA Ad*

### OBAMA'S CAMPAIGN STAFF IS MUM ON HIS SUPER PAC'S LATEST ATTACK AD

**HOPE:** In 2007, Obama Called Upon His Opponents To Own Up To Outside Group Expenditures On Their Behalf. OBAMA: "[Y]ou can't say yesterday, you don't believe in 'em, and today, you're having three-quarters of a million dollars being spent for you. You can't just talk the talk." (Sen. Barack Obama, Remarks At A Campaign Event, [Oskaloosa, IA](#), 12/22/07)

- **Obama:** "I don't just talk the talk; I walk the walk. ... I've been doing this all my life..." (Sen. Barack Obama, Remarks At A Campaign Event, [Oskaloosa, IA](#), 12/22/07)
- **December 2007: Obama Used Robert Gibbs As An Example Of How A Candidate Would Have Influence Over An Outside Group Like A 527 Or Super PAC.** "Obama continued with incredulity: 'The fact is this is somebody who worked for John Edwards, for the last who knows how many years, who's a good friend and colleague of Edwards, who's now running a 527 that is running ads on behalf of John Edwards. [Laugh] You're telling me he has no influence over him? That's not true. If [Obama communications director] Robert Gibbs started running a 527 and I called Robert Gibbs and said, 'Stop running ads on my behalf,' are you suggesting I would have no influence over Robert Gibbs?'" (Ben Smith and Lisa Lerer, "Obama Questions Edwards' Toughness," [Politico](#), 12/23/07)

**CHANGE:** Priorities USA Has An Ad Featuring A Former Steelworker Who "Appears To Blame Romney For the Death Of His Wife." "Joe Soptic, a former steelworker, makes yet another appearance in a pro-Obama ad, this time for the Super PAC Priorities USA Action. We have examined this case before, and for the benefit of readers we repeat our main points from an earlier column that awarded the Obama campaign One Pinocchio for the use of this case study against presumptive GOP nominee Mitt Romney. Most controversially, Soptic this time appears to blame Romney for the death of his wife after he lost his health insurance when the steel plant closed.." (Glen Kessler, "New Anti-Romney Ad: Same Steelworker, Tougher Message," The Washington Post's [FactChecker](#), 8/7/12)

- **The Washington Post's FactChecker: "Four Pinocchios."** (Glen Kessler, "New Anti-Romney Ad: Same Steelworker, Tougher Message," The Washington Post's [FactChecker](#), 8/7/12)
- **CNN: "Ad Linking Romney To Death Of The Wife Of A Laid Off Steelworker Inaccurate."** (Brianna Keller, "Ad Linking Romney To Death Of The Wife Of A Laid Off Steelworker Inaccurate." [CNN](#), 8/7/12)

### *Senior Obama Staff "Decline To Criticize" The Attack*

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**Obama Campaign Advisor Robert Gibbs “Declined To Criticize A Super PAC Ad That Suggests Mitt Romney Indirectly Caused A Woman’s Death.”** “President Barack Obama’s campaign adviser Robert Gibbs on Wednesday declined to criticize a super PAC ad that suggests Mitt Romney indirectly caused a woman’s death when a Bain plant was closed.” (Kevin Cirilli, “Robert Gibbs Mum On Priorities Bain Ad,” [Politico](#), 8/8/12)

- **Gibbs: “This Is An Ad By An Entity That’s Not Controlled By The Campaign.”** GIBBS: “This is an ad by an entity that’s not controlled by the campaign. I certainly don’t know the specifics of this man’s case. I do think there is a lot of concern in the country about what happens when people lose their jobs.” (MSNBC’s [“Morning Joe.”](#) 8/8/12)
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**“Stephanie Cutter, Obama’s Deputy Campaign Manager, Also Declined To Condemn The Priorities Ad, And Used A Question About It To Shine A Negative Light On Romney’s Business Record.”** (Kevin Cirilli, “Robert Gibbs Mum On Priorities Bain Ad,” [Politico](#), 8/8/12)

- **Cutter: “You Do Know That We Don’t Have Anything To Do With Priorities USA.”** CUTTER: “You do know that we don’t have anything to do with Priorities USA. By law, we’re not allowed to coordinate with them, and by law, we don’t have anything to do with their ads. I don’t know the facts of when Joe’s wife got sick or when she died.” (CNN’s [“Starting Point.”](#) 8/8/12)
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**Obama Press Secretary Jen Psaki: “I Can’t Speak To The Ad.”** CNN’s WOLF BLITZER: “Do you want to associate or disassociate yourself with this pro-Obama Super PAC ad?” PSAKI: “Well, Wolf, As you know, we have about as much to do with Priorities ads as we do with Michael Phelps winning gold medals last week. I can’t speak to the ad.” (CNN’s [“Situation Room.”](#) 8/7/12)

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**Yesterday, Obama Press Secretary Jay Carney Told Reporters To Ask Him About It “Tomorrow.”** Q: “But if you see it and you’re responding to ads by a conservative super PAC, couldn’t you respond to one about the super PAC.” CARNEY: “By all means, ask me tomorrow. I said, I’m simply saying that I have not seen this, so how could I possibly assess it without seeing it?” Q: “But you can -- will you assess it later?” CARNEY: “If you ask me tomorrow, sure.” ([White House Press Briefing](#), 8/7/12)

## THE STAR OF PRIORITIES ATTACK AD WAS IN AN OBAMA AD IN MAY

**Joe Soptic, The Star Of The Priorities USA Ad, Was Featured In An Obama Ad In May That Called Romney A “Vampire.”** “Joe Soptic, the star of a new Priorities USA Action ad attacking Mitt Romney and a former employee of GST Steel, implies that Romney killed his wife — but it’s not the first charge he’s leveled at the presumptive Republican nominee. Soptic was featured in the controversial ad aired by the Obama campaign in May that called Romney a ‘vampire’ — a charge that drew condemnation from Democrats, including Newark Mayor Cory Booker.” (Zeke Miller, “Man In Super PAC Ad Starred In Controversial Obama Ad,” [BuzzFeed](#), 8/8/12)

- **“Soptic Has Also Appeared On At Least One Conference Call For The Obama Campaign, Before Taping Spots For The Officially Sanctioned Pro-Obama Super PAC.”** (Zeke Miller, “Man In Super PAC Ad Starred In Controversial Obama Ad,” [BuzzFeed](#), 8/8/12)
- **“The Longstanding Relationship With Soptic Strains The Obama Campaign’s Evasiveness On**

**The Priorities Ad, In Which Aides Have Said They Can't Comment On It Because They Are Unfamiliar With The Facts.”** (Zeke Miller, “Man In Super PAC Ad Starred In Controversial Obama Ad,” [BuzzFeed](#), 8/8/12)