



What They Are Saying

"It Was Not A Strong Performance" By Obama

OBAMA UNABLE TO DEFEND HIS FAILED POLICIES AND BROKEN PROMISES

Politico's Mike Allen: "Mitt Romney Had The Night Of His Life." POLITICO's JIM VANDEHEI: "Are we wrong, are we wrong in assessing, in watching this debate, that Mitt Romney had a strong performance vis a vis Barack Obama?" POLITICO's MIKE ALLEN: "It's more than that. Mitt Romney had the night of his life. There's now a level playing field in this race. I'm getting e-mails from around the country, top political people, saying this is a new race. Democrats very quiet tonight. Republicans gleeful. The best e-mail that I got was somebody said that the President almost looked annoyed that he had been president for the last four years. Not only did Mitt Romney win with the people who were listening, with the clear, crisp, presentation of his data but even if you had the sound down, you would be able to tell the winner of the debate." (*Politico/CSPAN Post-Debate Analysis, 10/3/12*)

Politico's Glenn Thrush Regarding Obama: "He Got Punched In The Mouth Tonight." POLITICO's JIM VANDEHEI: "Tell me what your analysis says. Has it been posted yet? People get a sneak-peek via you." POLITICO's GLENN THRUSH: "I got to tell you man, I agree with that. I just heard the last tail of that point. I think all the soft interviews, the speaking to the crowds, 'I love you back stuff' has really worn on him. It has been 1400 days since he has been in an environment where he got punched in the mouth, and he got punched in the mouth tonight. And I think -- something to be said for being presidential. There is also something to be said for descending into the fray and really figuring out how to go after your opponent. I don't think he should have gone to the Hoover Dam on Monday." (*Politico/CSPAN Post-Debate Analysis, 10/3/12*)

- **CNN's John King: "You Have A Lot Of The President's Supporters Say He Got Spanked Tonight."** (CNN, 10/3/12)
- **CNN's Gloria Borger: "But It Also Means To Me That The Obama Campaign Can't Press The Delete Button Fast Enough On This Debate And They Will Go Out There And They Will Erase It."** (CNN, 10/3/12)
- **CNN's David Gergen: "We Had A Big Upset Here Tonight About 2-1. People Thought The President Would Win This First Debate And He Lost. Mitt Romney Came Prepared To Play, And He Drove The Debate."** (CNN, 10/3/12)

Time's Joe Klein: "Mitt Romney Won This Debate. Barack Obama Lost It. I Mean, He Got His Butt Kicked." "Well, I'm with all the other talking heads: Mitt Romney won this debate. Barack Obama lost it. I

mean, he got his butt kicked. It was, in fact, one of the most inept performances I've ever seen by a sitting President." (Joe Klein, "Obama's Debate Strategy: Unilateral Disarmament?" [Time](#), 10/3/12)

- **MSNBC's Chuck Todd: "They Know They Lost, And You Can Hear It In David Plouffe's Voice."** MSNBC's CHUCK TODD: "They're trying to sugar coat it a little publicly. What do you expect them to do? That's what a spin room is for, but they know they lost tonight, and you can even hear it in David Plouffe's voice." (MSNBC's "Presidential Debate 2012," 10/3/12)
- **The Washington Post's Chris Cilliza: "LOSERS - President Obama"** "LOSERS - President Obama: The incumbent just seemed something short of engaged in tonight's proceedings. Like his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention, Obama's debate performance seemed purposely restrained — striving for a workmanlike competence but achieving something well short of that. Obama's facial expressions seemed to alternate between grimly looking down at his podium and smirking when Romney said something with which he disagreed. Snapping at debate moderator Jim Lehrer — more on that later — didn't help Obama either." (Chris Cilliza, "Winners And Losers From The First Presidential Debate," [The Washington Post](#), 10/3/12)
- **Larry Sabato: "Hey Pres. Obama: Cancel All Golf Games. You Did Miserably Tonight. Lots Of Work Ahead For You."** (Larry Sabato, [Twitter Feed](#), 10/3/12)
- **The Associated Press' Bob Lewis:** "President appears flat-footed, unprepared, perhaps a bit distracted. No haymaker either side, but Romney's more aggressive, focused." (Bob Lewis, [Twitter Feed](#), 10/3/12)

ABC's Rick Klein: "Romney's Point-By-Point Critique Of President Obama's Record Was Sharp, Specific And Sustained." "Romney's point-by-point critique of President Obama's record was sharp, specific and sustained. He managed to steer the debate toward the central challenge of the Obama reelection campaign: the disappointment over his own unfulfilled promise." (Rick Klein, "Analysis: Mitt Romney Brought Debate To President Obama's Soft Spots," [ABC News](#), 10/3/12)

ABC's Jake Tapper: "It Was Not A Strong Performance By" Obama. ABC's JAKE TAPPER: "Well, I've covered President Obama for about six or seven years now and I've seen him inspire crowds of tens of thousands and then I also recall the summer of 2007 when he was listless and flat and uninspired and his campaign manager had to knock some sense in him and get him back in the game. Unfortunately for the Obama campaign that's the Obama I saw on the stage tonight. It was not a strong performance by him. And even Democrats and close Obama aides acknowledge that Romney was ahead on stylistic points, on zingers, they feel good about when Obama was talking to the camera, to the voters and they feel good that Romney, in their view, was doubling down on policies they think can help them win, but ultimately, I think performance wise, this was a strong night for Mitt Romney." (ABC's "[Your Voice: 2012 Presidential Debates](#)," 10/3/12)

- **[VIDEO: Jake Tapper: It Was Not A Strong Performance By Obama](#)**
- **ABC's Jake Tapper: "I'm Not Really Hearing Any Gushing Phone Calls Or Texts Talking About How The President Won. No, I'm Not."** ABC's GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: "And Jake Tapper, are the Obama aides trying to argue that the president won tonight?" ABC's JAKE TAPPER: "Some of them are, some of the lower to mid-level staffers are. I think they feel good on the policy front and I think that they do feel as Austin pointed out, that the president arguing that Romney was making a lot of promises but not really getting into any specifics, that that was strong and as I mentioned earlier, when president Obama spoke directly to camera, that was strong, as well. But

no, I'm not really hearing any gushing phone calls or texts talking about how the president won. No, I'm not." (ABC's "Your Voice: 2012 Presidential Debates," 10/3/12)

MSNBC's Ed Schultz: "Stunned" By Obama's Poor Performance. ED SCHULTZ: "I think the president created a big problem for him tonight, for himself. I don't think he explained himself very well on the economy. I thought he was off his game. I was absolutely stunned tonight. Rachel, you just mentioned about time, the president needs to get in and fight for that time. There's people that expect him to fight for that time." (MSNBC's "[Presidential Debate 2012](#)," 10/3/12)

- [VIDEO: MSNBC's Ed Schultz: "I Was Stunned Tonight" By Obama Poor Performance](#)
- **MSNBC's Rachel Maddow:** "I thought that in terms of individual exchanges I think what may have been most notable, there wasn't, I don't think, a single direct attack against Mr. Romney from President Obama." (MSNBC's "Presidential Debate 2012," 10/3/12)

NBC's Savannah Guthrie: David Axelrod Can't Say He Is Thrilled With The President's Performance. NBC's BRIAN WILLIAMS: "Savannah Guthrie, if we were courtroom lawyers, among the two of us, you're the lawyer, after all, we'd come off of a brief conversation there with David Axelrod, turn to the judge and say your honor, we have no choice but to assume that they are happy with the president's performance tonight. what you also are is a former white house correspondent. What's really going to go on? NBC's SAVANNAH GUTHRIE: "As a lawyer I might say that answer is non-responsive. He didn't come right out and say we're thrilled with the president's performance. of course he can't say that." (NBC, 10/3/12)

- **NBC's Savannah Guthrie: "No Question This Was Mitt Romney's Night" And President Obama Didn't "Close The Sale."** NBC's SAVANNAH GUTHRIE: "No question this was Mitt Romney's night on style, on kind of resetting where the campaign was. And that's a question I think we have to step out and ask ourselves. Did this night fundamentally alter the trajectory of the race? For Mitt Romney he needed to play for more time. Where the polls were going into this race, where the President was starting to open up a lead. He needed people not to close their minds and not give him a chance and tune him out. He may have gotten another chance. And President Obama needed to close the sale, and he didn't do that tonight." (NBC, 10/3/12)

Democrat Strategist Donna Brazile: "Mitt Romney Did Himself A Lot Of Good. He Came To Play." DONNA BRAZILE: "No, I think the tie will go to the president, because he is the incumbent. I do believe Mitt Romney did himself a lot of good. He came to play. He came to change the script in this campaign and he was able to do that tonight by talking about the things that he's done in a bipartisan fashion, but I think the president had to lay out what he will do in the future. He was able to do that, but tonight, Mitt Romney was a little bit more aggressive than the president." (ABC News' "Your Voice, Your Vote," 10/3/12)

- **CNN's Van Jones Regarding Mitt Romney: "Tonight He Was Presidential."** (CNN, 10/3/12)

The Denver Post's Tim Hoover: "Mitt Romney Came On Strong... While President Barack Obama Seemed Disinclined To Engage." "In a night characterized by a rambling debate format, Mitt Romney came on strong and stated his message more forcefully than in recent weeks, while President Barack Obama seemed disinclined to engage." (Tim Hoover, "Mitt Romney Comes On Strong Against President Obama In University Of Denver Debate," [The Denver Post](#), 10/3/12)

The Washington Post's Jerry Markon: "Republican Presidential Contender Mitt Romney Took The Offensive In The First Presidential Debate Wednesday Night..." "Republican presidential contender

Mitt Romney took the offensive in the first presidential debate Wednesday night, forcing President Obama to defend his record in a series of sharp exchanges in which Romney charged that the President's economic policies have "crushed" the middle class." (Jerry Markon, "Romney Goes On Offense, Forcing Obama To Defend Record," [The Washington Post](#), 10/3/12)

The Washington Post's Chris Cillizza: "If the main goal for Romney in this debate was to show he could stand on stage with the president and handle a wide-ranging discussion on economic policy, he did so with flying colors." (Chris Cillizza, "First Thoughts From The First Presidential Debate," [The Washington Post's The Fix](#), 10/3/12)

Political Analyst Stu Rothenberg: "What happened to Obama? The president didn't seem prepared." (Stu Rothenberg, [Twitter Feed](#), 10/3/12)

The Associated Press' Ben Feller: "Republican Mitt Romney was fiery and having fun. President Barack Obama came off as the professor without much pop." (Ben Feller, "Analysis: Romney The Challenger, Indeed," [The Associated Press](#), 10/4/12)

The Philadelphia Inquirer Headline: "Round One: Romney." (Kevin Riordan, "Round One: Romney," [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#), 10/3/12)

- **The Philadelphia Inquirer:** "Mitt Romney outran the incumbent, ran all over the moderator and ran away with the first debate of the presidential campaign Wednesday." (Kevin Riordan, "Round One: Romney," [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#), 10/3/12)

The Pittsburgh-Tribune Review's Salena Zito: "Romney never performed better and Obama never performed worse, the end." (Salena Zito, [Twitter Feed](#), 10/3/12)

- **Salena Zito:** "My personal 'focus group' of swing Dem voters from battleground states gave debate overwhelmingly to Romney a striking unanimous landslide." (Salena Zito, [Twitter Feed](#), 10/3/12)

The Seattle Times' Jim Brunner: "Romney on offense. Obama sounded too much like he was making excuses." (Jim Brunner, [Twitter Feed](#), 10/3/12)

NBC News' Luke Russert: "Romney needed to blunt Obama's momentum tonight, he didn't just stop him, he got a pick 6." (Luke Russert, [Twitter Feed](#), 10/3/12)

The Huffington Post's Mark Blumenthal: "CBS KN instant reaction poll: Big win for Romney. By 46-22 say think won, 56% have better opinion of Romney, Romney cares up from 30 to 63." (Mark Blumenthal, [Twitter Feed](#), 10/3/12)

ABC's Matthew Dowd: "I Think A Very Close Race Just Got A Lot Closer." DOWD: "Well, I think this -- we all try to make comparisons to these races to previous presidential races and this race has all along been so eerily familiar to 2004 and tonight I think was another example of that. It is as if -- very much like Bush-Kerry. Bush came in with a lead, not huge, but with a lead, but he came in to play for a draw and John Kerry came in to win. I think the exact same happened tonight. Mitt Romney came in to win this debate with passion and it looked as if the president came in, as long as I play for a draw, I keep a lead and go forward. And if that's the case, I think a very close race just got a lot closer." (ABC's "Your Voice: 2012 Presidential Debates," 10/3/12)

CBS's Nancy Cordes: "And Most Tellingly, Scott: I Haven't Gotten A Single E-mail From The Obama Campaign Yet, Contending That The President Was The Winner Tonight." (CBS, 10/3/12)