

How about that job, Mr. President?

President Obama was having a discussion about the State Dept.'s H1B1 Visa Program (which allows U.S. employers to hire foreigners for jobs that cannot be filled by Americans). This prompted a woman to ask him why her husband, who is a semiconductor engineer and now unemployed for going on two years, cannot find work in his chosen field. The President seemed surprised about the situation and proceeded to talk about how strange that was considering there were so many jobs available for people with such skills.

So surprised was he in fact, that he asked her to send him her husband's CV and he would check it out! Now while I would like to be charitable and ascribe only the best motives to the President's offer, there is this little nagging notion in the back of my brain that clamors to get out and say, "I think this reveals an extraordinary lack of awareness of the dire straits that American companies and workers are in, and that goes for the highest of high-tech industries where we have a competitive advantage."

This transported me back in time to a few other presidents who were also *not completely connected* to the realities of life on the ground in these here United States. One was George H.W. Bush after marveling at supermarket bar code scanning devices (after they had been on the market for eons). The Presidency seems to create a nearly impervious bubble that encircles every occupant of the Oval Office, but some have been able to break free of it and truly tap into the people's consciousness and feel their pain.

I have no doubt that Mr. Obama is a thinking and feeling man and probably wishes everybody the best. The trouble is that wishes are a dime a dozen and do not hold the 'wisher' accountable. In order to truly DO something about someone's condition you must first understand how they got where they are and what created their situation in the first place. Empathy's good, but to act successfully on it requires knowledge and the will (and power) to change things. I guess this is why the President asked for the unemployed man's CV.

Now this is the spot where opponents of the President would jump in with both feet and wag an accusatory finger (or several) at him for totally mismanaging the economy. While this might give some momentary satisfaction and relieve some pent-up pressure, it won't necessarily change things.

After all, it takes more than one man to really foul things up, and only the most ideologically-driven among us believe that Mr. Obama is the chief architect of doom, who single-handedly decided to throw away generations of capitalism and send us on a collision course with the poorhouse.

No, 'it takes a village' of complicit men and women who are willing to ignore the consequences of their actions to bring us down. We'll need a very big brush if we're going to tar all the folks who've had a hand in turning our economy from the envy of the world into the basket case of the world.

They would include (in addition to the President): Congress, rigidly ideological labor unions, single-issue special interest groups, zealots of all stripes, companies who've outsourced our precious manufacturing jobs, the Federal Reserve, greedy profiteers, slackers and ourselves (for not voting or paying attention). Because I'm action-oriented, the President's encounter gave me an idea about how to drive the point about unemployment home to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

If the President really wants to add Personnel Manager-in-Chief to his business card, we ought to oblige him. Here's how we do it... Every unemployed, underemployed or person who's given up looking for a job should send their resumé to him! There's something pretty potent about millions of pieces of mail hitting the White House mailroom all at once. I may be wrong, but I think it would get his attention.

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