



Written by [Ralph R. Reiland](#) on September 30, 2012

Super Rich and a Little Quirky

“Let me tell you about the very rich,” wrote F. Scott Fitzgerald in “The Rich Boy,” a short story modeled on his friend and Princeton classmate Ludlow Fowler. “They are different from you and me. They possess and enjoy early, and it does something to them, makes them soft where we are hard, and cynical where we are trustful, in a way that, unless you were born rich, it is difficult to understand. They think, deep in their hearts, that they are better than we are because we had to discover the compensations and refuges of life for ourselves. Even when they enter deep into our world or sink below us, they still think that they are better than we are. They are different.”



That pretty much describes the problem Mitt Romney has had during the entire campaign, the perception among many, in both parties, that he’s soft, and cynical, a limp and bendable chameleon, and that he’s too rich to understand the lives, work and problems of everyday people, that he thinks he’s better than the rest of us even when his performance is sorely lacking.

Romney’s “I like being able to fire people who provide services to me” statement didn’t help to lessen the rich boy image, even if he was talking in that case about the benefits of maximizing consumer choices, buyer sovereignty, and overall efficiency and productivity in the marketplace — or, more directly related to his job at Bain Capital, if he was speaking about saving a company from bankruptcy by firing the deadwood — unfortunately, people tend to focus on the 100 employees who were fired rather than the company’s renewed competitiveness and the 1,000 jobs that were saved.

Romney’s “Corporations are people, my friend” statement also didn’t help in dispelling the detached and rich persona. It gave Mr. Obama the opening to vigorously declare at campaign rallies, repeatedly, that “Corporations aren’t people — people are people!”

Elizabeth Warren, questionable Cherokee and current candidate in Massachusetts for the U.S. Senate, took the criticism a step higher in emotion at the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte. “No, Governor Romney, corporations are not people,” she bellowed. “People have hearts, they have kids, they get jobs, they get sick, they cry, they dance, they live, they love, they die!”

What else could Warren have added to the list if she had been allocated a few more minutes on the convention floor? People get their cats neutered and gutters cleaned, they wreck their cars, they take Prozac, they buy feathers and go to powwows, they shoot ducks, they play pool and drink beer, they don’t trust politicians, they carve pumpkins, they still smoke pot at Pink Floyd concerts, they swear at Chinese strings of twinkle lights at Christmas when they’re trying to decorate a tree, they like a chargrilled porterhouse with fries better than tufu with organic prunes, they bet on ballgames, and at the end, if they run out of money, they become Walmart greeters.



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In fact, Romney's "Corporations are people, my friend" line was an instant response to hecklers who were interrupting his speech and shouting that corporations should be taxed, not people. Romney was simply stating that taxes on corporations are paid by people, by shareholders, employees and consumers, people who dance, get sick, have hearts, get jobs, cry, live, love and die.

Well, as Will Rogers said, "My father was one-eighth Cherokee and my mother one-fourth Cherokee, which I figure makes me an eighth cigar-store Injun."

But the Principal Chief of the North Alabama Cherokee Tribe, Jim Pell, said the math and percentages don't matter. "It isn't the quantity of Cherokee blood in your veins that is important, but the quality of it, your pride in it," he explained. "I have seen full-bloods who have no idea of the great legacy entrusted to their care."

That sounds like Chief Jimmy Pell might not have been as full-blooded as Runabout Young Pheasant. It's tricky, getting the genuine Indian thing right, the bingo licenses, just like it's not always easy to translate what the very rich are trying to say.

Remember when oil billionaire J. Paul Getty said a few words about money and being considerate and caring? "It's rude and inconsiderate to overtip," he said. "It only makes it more difficult — and embarrassing — for people who are not as rich as I am."

It's words like that, then and now, that drive people like Chris Matthews and Rachel Maddow completely and stutteringly crazy.

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