

## Dickens and Eastwood

Written by Bruce Enberg

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Do you feel lucky punk? Well, do you? Willard Romney isn't feeling lucky after finishing dead last in Tuesday's voting. He's hopping along on one foot as his ammo has largely been spent making himself dance. His one claim to credibility as a candidate was his business acumen. Yet in his expert opinion Detroit should have been allowed to fail ending car manufacturing in America forever.

The absolutely un-American thinking of billionaires and billionaire wannabes like Romney was made obvious to all by a Republican actor whose reputation rivals the sainted Reagan, except this one can act, and is intelligent.

The enthusiasm for Mitt's world view was so poor in Tuesday's Republican primaries that in some counties Romney received no votes at all. Desperate to somehow make himself relevant again, Mittens has come out in favor of indexing the minimum wage to inflation, and this drives people like Steve Forbes nuts. Forbes, whose inherited fortune makes somebody like Romney appear middleclass, credits this radical opinion to Romney still being insecure about his own wealth.

This isn't a new idea for Romney who ran with this position in 2008. Those on the hardcore right who believe that paying people anything at all costs jobs would like no minimum wage at all. The truth is that Republicans have been so successful in driving down wages over the past 30 years that the current minimum would need to double to bring it up to 1938 levels. New factory hires are lucky to get paid at this 1938 equivalent with no prospects of a raise. In 1938 unionized factory workers made several times the 25 cents/hour minimum wage. German factory workers today make nine times the 7.25 US minimum, and receive benefits that no American worker can ever hope to see.

Why the right doesn't embrace Romney's position on indexing the minimum wage is a mystery, as increasing a wage that low by a couple of points each year would just be a cruel joke anyway. The super rich and the corporations that the rich own like their cruel jokes.

Charles Dickens turned two hundred this week as we teeter on the edge of a new Dicksonian era. At least, if Republicans have their way; like Scrooge they argue that it's the natural order of things, and the only truly moral view to hold. They will tell you with a straight face that to help the poor in any manner is to do them a disservice, and this is parroted by the Republican base

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who believe all safety nets need to be removed.

No matter that most Americans are literally one slip on a banana peel away from a slide down from the middle class to the very bottom of poverty. The veneer of middle class “wealth” is so thin that this descent would only take an average of 90 days. Two thirds of Americans don’t have a thousand dollars cash for an emergency. Without “big government” to look out for them, these people who vote Republican and parrot the talking points are always standing on the edge of the abyss. And still they demand that the guard rails be taken down and the nets removed.

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