



## A Dan Mitchell Debate Fantasy

By: Daniel J. Mitchell – October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012

---

In this modern era where we're all supposed to share our innermost thoughts, I've openly discussed my fantasies.

I confessed to the world, for instance, that I have a fantasy that involves about one-half of the adults in America. And I've also admitted to a fantasy involving Gov. Rick Perry of Texas.

Now I'm fantasizing about something new, and it's all the fault of the Cato Institute. In a violation of the Constitution's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment, I have to watch tonight's presidential debate in order to add my two cents to Cato's live-blogging of the clash between Obama and Romney.

That got me thinking about some of my least-favorite episodes from past debates, and this moment from 1992 is high on my list (I had to watch that debate because my then-wife worked for the Bush Administration and I had to offer some insincere moral support).

The clip is a bit over three minutes, but it will only take a minute or so to see why this was such an unpleasant segment.

Here's my latest fantasy. If there's a similar question tonight, I hope either Romney or Obama gives the following response:

I'm not your daddy and you're not my child. I'm running to be the President of the United States in order to oversee the legitimate executive branch responsibilities of the federal government. And I hope to reduce the burden of government to give you opportunities, not to take care of your needs. You're an able-bodied adult. Take responsibility for your own life and provide for your own needs.

But I don't expect my fantasy to get fulfilled. If a question like this is asked, both Obama and Romney almost surely will express sympathy and support.

The good news is that there have been a few politicians in American's history who have been willing to say the right thing. Here's a quote from Barry Goldwater that warms my heart.

I have little interest in streamlining government or in making it more efficient, for I mean to reduce its size. I do not undertake to promote welfare, for I propose to extend freedom. My aim is not to pass laws, but to repeal them. ... I will not attempt to discover whether legislation is "needed" before I have first determined whether it is constitutionally permissible. And if I should later be attacked for neglecting my constituents' "interests," I shall reply that I was informed that their main interest is liberty and that in that cause I am doing the very best I can.

The bad news is that he got his you-know-what kicked in the 1964 election.

On the other hand, America did elect a president who said during his inauguration that "government is not the solution to our problem, government is the problem."

And a 2011 poll showed that Americans—unlike their European counterparts—do not believe it is government's job to guarantee that "nobody is in need."

In other words, Julia, the fictional moocher woman created by the Obama campaign, is not representative of America. At least not yet.