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## Axelrod, Axelrod, and the Colorado Model

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David Axelrod was transformed from Barack Obama's campaign strategist to his senior policy advisor. Did the fact that a master of gritty politics, well-placed leaks, underhanded so-called Astroturf groups (fake "grassroots" citizens groups that are actually formed and funded by powerful interest groups), peddler of false stories elicit any commentary from the commetariat? No. Does the fact that he - not Hillary Clinton or Joe Biden - has been all over the airwaves articulating the administration's policies, cause any concern considering that he was able to bypass the Senate confirmation process despite clearly serving in a very powerful executive role?

Does it concern anyone that a man who knows how to run campaigns has been put in such a powerful position to help run America-and the world, for that matter? No and no.. Does the fact that he occupies the office closest to the Oval Office raise eyebrows? No. But all these are signs that Barack Obama's goal from Day One of the Age of Obama was to be reelected-and that he would have by his side a master of campaigning to help him prepare to win a second term.

Now comes further proof that the reelection campaign is in full-swing. Huffington Post, the left-wing website that helped Barack Obama win the election and that rarely (if ever) has a kind word for bipartisanship or Republicans, has hired Ethan Axelrod, David Axelrod's son [as the editor](#) of its forthcoming Denver site. Politico seems to think there is little reason to look askance at this development since Ethan will not be based in Washington

This is ridiculous.

As anyone who has lived in America over the last 10 years realized, the world is now flat - as Tom Friedman harps. With the growth of the internet, a person pecking away anywhere can effect national politics. But even taking Politico's benign view of Axelrod's Denver location, are they oblivious to the fact that Colorado has become the epicenter of a new type of campaign strategy: one that relies on leaks to newspapers, frivolous lawsuits, unsubstantiated claims widely pushed on the internet, character assassination, social networking via the internet, to drive Republicans from office and elect left-wing Democrats in their stead? Do their political reporters or editors read, for example, the [Weekly Standard](#), that had a superb article penned by Fred Barnes that described this new type of "Colorado Model"?:

There's something unique going on in Colorado that, if copied in other states, has the potential to produce sweeping Democratic gains nationwide..

Colorado is where this model is being tested and refined. And Republicans, even more than Democrats, say that it's working impressively. (For Republicans, it offers an excuse for their tailspin.) Jon Caldara, president of the Independence Institute, a conservative think tank based in Denver, says Republicans around the country should be alarmed by the success of the Colorado Model. "Watch out," he says, "it's coming to a state near you."

Eric O'Keefe, chairman of the conservative Sam Adams Alliance in Chicago, says there are seven "capacities" that are required to drive a successful political strategy and keep it on offense: the capacity to generate intellectual ammunition, to pursue investigations, to mobilize for elections, to fight media bias, to pursue strategic litigation, to train new leaders, and to sustain a presence in the new media. Colorado liberals have now created institutions that possess all seven capacities. By working together, they generate political noise and attract press coverage. Explains Caldara, "Build an echo chamber and the media laps it up."

First, there are the think tanks such as Bighorn and Bell and supposedly nonpartisan political advocacy groups like the Colorado clone of *MoveOn.org* called *ProgressNowAction.org*, founded in 2005. Another clone, this one a local version of Media Matters known as Colorado Media Matters, was created two years ago to harass journalists and editorial writers who don't push the liberal line.

Barnes examines the infrastructure of this new style of campaigning in the article that provides a blueprint for electoral success. One of the key building blocks is a powerful internet presence, such as one provided by the Huffington Post.

Colorado is the laboratory for this type of dirty campaigning. Axelrod *files* knows this and he now knows that his son will be at the center of this type of campaigning. Consider it Ethan's graduate school in the practice of sleazy, anything to win, politics.

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