

**BARACK OBAMA
EXPOSED!**

Barack Obama: EXPOSED!

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Obama More Pro-Choice Than NARAL

Sen. Barack Obama (D.-Ill.) portrays himself as a thoughtful Democrat who carefully considers both sides of controversial issues, but his radical stance on abortion puts him further left on that issue than even NARAL Pro-Choice America.

In 2002, as an Illinois legislator, Obama voted against the Induced Infant Liability Act, which would have protected babies that survived late-term abortions. That same year a similar federal law, the Born Alive Infant Protection Act, was signed by President Bush. Only 15 members of the U.S. House opposed it, and it passed the Senate unanimously on a voice vote.

Both the Illinois and the federal bill sought equal treatment for babies who survived premature induction for the purpose of abortion and wanted babies who were born prematurely and given life-saving medical attention.

When the federal bill was being debated, NARAL Pro-Choice America released a statement that said, “Consistent with our position last year, NARAL does not oppose passage of the Born Alive Infants Protection Act... floor debate served to clarify the bill’s intent and assure us that it is not targeted at *Roe v. Wade* or a woman’s right to choose.”

But Obama voted against this bill in the Illinois senate and killed it in committee. Twice, the Induced Infant Liability Act came up in the Judiciary Committee on which he served. At its first reading he voted “present.” At the second he voted “no.”

The bill was then referred to the senate’s Health and Human Services Committee, which Obama chaired after the Illinois Senate went Democratic in 2003. As chairman, he never called the bill up for a vote.

Jill Stanek, a registered delivery-ward nurse who was the prime mover behind the legislation after she witnessed aborted babies’ being born alive and left to die, testified twice before Obama in support of the Induced Infant Liability Act bills. She also testified before the U.S. Congress in support of the Born Alive Infant Protection Act.

Stanek told me her testimony “did not faze” Obama.

In the second hearing, Stanek said, “I brought pictures in and presented them to the committee of very premature babies from my neonatal resuscitation book from the American Pediatric Association, trying to show them unwanted babies were being cast aside. Babies the same age were being treated if they were wanted!”

“And those pictures didn’t faze him [Obama] at all,” she said.

At the end of the hearing, according to the official records of the Illinois State senate, Obama thanked Stanek for being “very clear and forthright,” but said his concern was that Stanek had suggested “doctors really don’t care about children who are being born with a reasonable prospect of life because they are so locked into their pro-abortion views that they would watch an infant that is viable die.” He told her, “That may be your assessment, and I don’t see any evidence of that. What we are doing here is to create one more burden on a woman and I can’t support that.”

As a senator, Obama has opposed measures to criminalize those who transport minors across state lines for the purpose of obtaining an abortion.

At a townhall meeting in Ottawa, Ill., Joanne Resendiz, a teacher and mother of five, asked him: “How are you going to vote on this, keeping in mind that 10, 15 years down the line your daughters, God forbid, could be transported across state lines?”

Obama said: “The decision generally is one that a woman should make.”

Miss Carpenter is National Political Reporter for Townhall.com. She is the author of The Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy’s Dossier on Hillary Rodham Clinton, published by Regnery (a HUMAN EVENTS sister company).

Jonathan Livingston Obama

I've caught Obama fever! Obamamania, Obamarama, Obama, Obama, Obama. (I just pray to God this is clean, renewable electricity I'm feeling.)

Only white guilt could explain the insanely hyperbolic descriptions of Obama's "eloquence." His speeches are a run-on string of embarrassing, sophomoric Hallmark bromides.

In announcing his candidacy, Obama confirmed that he believes in "the basic decency of the American people." And let the chips fall where they may!

Obama forthrightly decried "a smallness of our politics" — deftly slipping a sword into the sides of the smallness-in-politics advocates. (To his credit, he somehow avoided saying, "My fellow Americans, size does matter.")

He took a strong stand against the anti-hope crowd, saying: "There are those who don't believe in talking about hope." Take that, Hillary!

Most weirdly, he said: "I recognize there is a certain presumptuousness in this — a certain audacity — to this announcement."

What is so audacious about announcing that you're running for president? Any idiot can run for president. Dennis Kucinich is running for president. Until he was imprisoned, Lyndon LaRouche used to run for president constantly. John Kerry ran for president. Today, all you have to do is suggest a date by which U.S. forces in Iraq should surrender, and you're officially a Democratic candidate for president.

Obama made his announcement surrounded by hundreds of adoring Democratic voters. And those were just the reporters. There were about 400 more reporters at Obama's announcement than Mitt Romney's, who, by the way, is more likely to be sworn in as our next president than B. Hussein Obama.

Obama has locked up the Hollywood money. Even Miss America has endorsed Obama. (John "Two Americas" Edwards is still hoping for the other Miss America to endorse him.)

But Obama tells us he's brave for announcing that he's running for president. And if life gives you

lemons, make lemonade!

I don't want to say that Obama didn't say anything in his announcement, but afterward, even Jesse Jackson was asking, "What did he say?" There was one refreshing aspect to Obama's announcement: It was nice to see a man call a press conference to announce something other than he was the father of Anna Nicole Smith's baby.

B. Hussein Obama's announcement also included this gem: "I know that I haven't spent a lot of time learning the ways of Washington. But I've been there long enough to know that the ways of Washington must change." As long as Obama insists on using Hallmark card greetings in his speeches, he could at least get Jesse Jackson to help him with the rhyming.

If Obama's biggest asset is his inexperience, then if by the slightest chance he were elected and were to run for a second term, he will have to claim he didn't learn anything the first four years.

There was also this inspirational nugget: "Each and every time, a new generation has risen up and done what's needed to be done. Today we are called once more, and it is time for our generation to answer that call." Is this guy running for president or trying to get people to switch to a new long-distance provider?

He said that "we learned to disagree without being disagreeable." (There goes Howard Dean's endorsement.) This was an improvement on the first draft, which read, "It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice."

This guy's like the ANWR of trite political aphorisms. There's no telling exactly how many he's sitting on, but it could be in the billions.

Obama's famed eloquence reminds me of a book of platitudes I read about once called "Life Lessons." The book contained such inspiring thoughts as:

"When was the last time you really looked at the sea? Or smelled the morning? Touched a baby's hair? Really tasted and enjoyed food? Walked barefoot in the grass? Looked in the blue sky?" (When was the

last time you fantasized about dismembering the authors of a book of platitudes?)

I can't wait for Obama's inaugural address when he reveals that he loves long walks in the rain, sunsets, and fresh-baked cookies shaped like puppies.

The guy I feel sorry for is Harold Ford. The former representative from Tennessee is also black, a Democrat, about the same age as Obama, and is every bit as attractive. The difference is, when he talks, you don't fantasize about plunging knitting needles into your ears to stop the gusher of meaningless platitudes.

Ford ran as a Democrat in Republican Tennessee and almost won — and the press didn't knock out his opponent for him by unsealing sealed divorce records, as it did for B. Hussein Obama. Yet no one ever talks about Ford as the second coming of Cary Grant and Albert Einstein.

Maybe liberals aren't secret racists expunging vast stores of white guilt by hyperventilating over B. Hussein Obama. Maybe they're just running out of greeting card inscriptions.

Ann Coulter is Legal Affairs Correspondent for HUMAN EVENTS and author of High Crimes and Misdemeanors, Slander, How to Talk to a Liberal (If You Must), and most recently, Godless.

Barack Obama's Whitewater?

Washington pundits are excited for a potential battle for the Democratic nomination for president between the “fresh-faced” freshman senator from Illinois, Barack Obama, and the consummate political insider, New York Sen. Hillary Clinton. However, new revelations about a corruption scandal involving Obama suggest he may have more in common with Hillary than he would like to admit.

As you may recall, in November, press reports surfaced regarding a questionable land deal between Obama and Antoin “Tony” Rezko, an indicted political fundraiser. The long and the short of it is that Obama approached Rezko with the idea to simultaneously purchase adjoining lots in Southside Chicago. Rezko obliged. Obama obtained his lot for a reduced price. Rezko later sold a portion of his property to Obama. All of this took place while Rezko was the subject of a federal corruption investigation.

Political handicappers have begun to assess what these revelations might mean to Obama's presidential aspirations, but personally, I'm not interested in the political fallout. The salient question ought to be what do Obama's dealings with Rezko tell us, if anything, about Obama's ethics.

First, Obama's dealings with Rezko reveal a politician oblivious to the expectations of at least the appearance of integrity for those in public office. At the time Obama entered into his dubious land deal, it was widely known that Rezko was the subject of a federal investigation for allegedly trying to collect nearly \$6 million in kickbacks from government deals. Obama and Rezko have been “friends” since 1990. Obama knew about Rezko's shady reputation and ought to have avoided the appearance of impropriety.

Second, Obama's dealings with Rezko suggest, at least, that Obama might be the kind of politician willing to peddle his influence. The Chicago Tribune reported that Obama purchased his land for \$300,000 less than the asking price, while Rezko's wife paid full price for the adjoining lot from the

same owner. Did Mrs. Rezko partially subsidize the purchase of Obama's new home? And what of the subsequent sale of a section of the Rezko property to Obama shortly thereafter?

Press reports suggest Rezko has raised as much as \$60,000 in campaign contributions for Obama. What has he received in return for his generosity? (Such relationships are never one-sided.) New revelations surfaced recently indicating that Rezko was successful in persuading Obama to award a coveted internship with his Senate office to a Rezko business associate. (Incidentally, the business associate, John Armanda, has donated \$11,500 to Obama's campaigns.) Is there more to this story?

Third, Obama's dealings with Rezko suggest that Obama may be willing to cast aside his professed sense of ethics for personal financial gain. Obama, through his dealings with an indicted political fundraiser, was able to purchase his luxurious home at a cut-rate price and expand his property. Obama acknowledged the deal was a mistake, but only after the media made hay of it.

In 1992, the Clintons came into the White House despite evidence of their shady real estate dealings in Arkansas, a scandal known as “Whitewater,” setting the tone for what would be the most corrupt presidency in our nation's history. Is this Rezko land deal Barack Obama's Whitewater? Let's find out sooner than later.

Mr. Fitton is the president of Judicial Watch, Inc., a conservative, non-partisan educational foundation, promotes transparency, accountability and integrity in government, politics and the law.

Obama's Voting Record Belies Moderate Image

In his televised response to President Bush's Iraq speech, Sen. Barack Obama (D.-Ill.) told Larry King he would be making his decision on a run for the White House "fairly soon."

Obama's decision today to seek the Democratic nomination will shine a spotlight on votes he made during his six years in the Illinois Senate—before coming to Washington, D.C., as a U.S. senator. Explaining these votes could be uncomfortable for Obama, who has never been made to answer for his controversial decisions there.

In his race for the U.S. Senate, not a single negative ad was run against him either during the seven-way Democratic primary or in the general election, in good part because Republican Jack Ryan unexpectedly dropped out of the race after a court unsealed embarrassing divorce documents that were highly publicized by the media. As a result, Obama faced weak Republican candidate Alan Keyes, who quickly came under attack from the media and was unable to act offensively in the campaign.

Now, basically untouched in these past political campaigns, Obama will likely flaunt his media-created image as a moderate Democrat capable of embracing both conservative and liberal ideals. But, as HUMAN EVENTS has shown in other articles, no matter what lip service Obama gives to conservative principles, at the end of the day he reliably comes down on the liberal side.

Below are some votes Obama made as a state legislator that pierce his moderate façade.

ABORTION

NO **SB 230 (1997)**
To prohibit partial-birth abortion unless necessary to save the life of a mother and makes performance of the procedure a Class 4 felony for the physician.

NO **HB 709 (2000)**
To prohibit state funding of abortion and induced miscarriages except when necessary to save the life of the mother.

Excludes premature births from funding except to produce a viable child when necessary to save the life of a mother. Would permit funding in cases of rape or incest when payment is authorized under federal law.

NO **SB 1661 (2002)**
A part of the Born Alive Infant Protection Package. Would create a cause of action if a child is born alive after an abortion and the child is then neglected through failure to provide medical care after birth.

CRIME

NO **SB 381 (1997)**
To require prisoners to pay court costs for frivolous lawsuits against the state.

NO **SB 485 (1999)**
To give no offer of "good time" for sex offenders sentenced to the County Jail.
*Obama was the only vote against this measure

UNIONS

YES **HB 3396 (2003)**
To make unionization easier by not requiring a secret ballot to organize if 50% of the eligible workers publicly sign a card of support for unionization.

YES **SB 230 (2003)**
Entitles a teacher who is elected as an officer of the state or national teacher's union to be granted a leave of absence for up to six years, or the period of time the teacher is serving.

YES **SB 1070 (2003)**
Allows college graduate assistants who teach college courses be eligible to join a union.

CHILD PROTECTION

PRESENT **SB 609 (2001)**
To restrict the location of buildings with "adult" uses (meaning pornographic video stores, strip clubs, etc.) within 1,000 feet of any public or private elementary or secondary school,

public park, place of worship, preschool, day-care facility, mobile park or residential area.

NO **HB 1812 (1999)**

To require school boards to install software on public computers accessible to minors to block sexually explicit material.

TAXES

NO **SB 1075 (1999)**

To create an income tax credit for all full-time K-12 pupils in an amount equal to 25% of qualified education expenses up to a maximum of \$500 per family.

YES **SB 1725 (2003)**

To restore the Illinois Estate Tax.

YES **SB 1733 (2003)**

To impose a Gas Use Tax on the purchase of natural gas from outside the state of Illinois for use or consumption in Illinois. Forces the delivering supplier to pay 2.4 cents per therm of gas, or the customer can elect to become a "self-assessing" purchaser and pay 5% of the purchase price or 2.4 cents per therm.

ELECTIONS

YES **SB 1415 (2003)**

To create public funding for supreme court races.

GAY RIGHTS

NOT VOTING **HB 581 (2003)**

Allows domestic partners to be allowed to assume the rights of a spouse or survivor with regards to pension benefits under the Chicago Teacher's pension system.

NO **SB 228 (1997)**

Changes the "Illinois Equal Opportunity Act of 1997" to stipulate, notwithstanding any law to the contrary, any unit of government or school district that gives benefits to same-sex couples under any criteria must give equal benefits to heterosexual couples.

DRUGS

YES **SB 880 (2003)**

To allow the purchase of 10 hypodermic needles from a pharmacy without a prescription.

PRESENT **HB 2000 (4659)**

To establish a zero-tolerance drug-testing policy for Department of Corrections Employees

BUSINESS

NO **SB 777 (1999)**

To end the unemployment insurance fund building tax.

NO **SB 879 (1999)**

To end the minimum contribution tax rate for the unemployment system.

NO **SB 795 (2001)**

To reduce employers' minimum contribution insurance rate.

YES **SB 796 (2003)**

To increase the Illinois minimum wage from \$5.15 per hour to \$6.50 per hour.

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Barack Obama and the Pertinent Precedents

Is America ready for a black president? That's like asking if country music is ready for Carrie Underwood. If you make it on "American Idol," you've got it made in America, and if you can have not one but two different black presidents on "24," ditto. Most citizens would probably breathe a sigh of relief if they woke up tomorrow to find that David Palmer, assassinated last season, had been resurrected and installed in the real Oval Office.

As it happens, art is following public inclinations rather than leading them. The truth is, America was ready for an African-American president more than a decade ago, when Colin Powell was raising pulse rates across the political spectrum. A poll in the fall of 1995 had him beating President Clinton by a margin of 51 percent to 41 percent. When he decided not to run, it wasn't because experts didn't think he could win.

Barack Obama is the Colin Powell of 2008 — a charismatic leader with a quintessentially American backstory and an appeal that transcends traditional divisions. That a Hawaiian-born son of a Kenyan father and a white mother, who grew up in Indonesia and has a name on loan from al Qaeda, could generate such broad excitement proves something Powell already demonstrated: Americans can surprise you.

It is a cliché to note that many of our most beloved celebrities — Michael Jordan, Oprah Winfrey and Tiger Woods — are black. But clichés sometimes develop only because they tell important truths: In this case, that white (and Hispanic and Asian) Americans have no trouble revering and identifying with successful members of a group that most whites once regarded as fundamentally alien, not to mention inferior.

The resemblance between Obama and Powell is unmistakable. Both rose in the world without the racially conscious approach of many African-American leaders, and without any particular debt to black interest groups. Both excelled in white-dominated

institutions — Powell in the U.S. Army, Obama at Harvard Law School, where he was the first African-American president of the Harvard Law Review.

Both have the knack of appealing to whites without evoking the slightest twinge of guilt. In fact, both do just the opposite, by demonstrating the enduring reality of the American dream — that here, someone with talent and drive can overcome obstacles that in other societies would be impassable. Both possess a quality of relaxed gravity and wisdom that is rare among political aspirants, even as they embody the can-do optimism Americans prize in their leaders.

The principal difference, however, is a big one: Powell, at the time he considered running, had been chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — or, as he put it, "the No. 1 person in the armed forces of the most powerful nation on earth." He had directed one of the most stunningly successful wars in history, when we evicted the Iraqi army from Kuwait.

Obama's achievements, on the other hand, are mostly in his future. With eight years in the Illinois legislature and two years in the U.S. Senate, he's not a political novice. Having been a faculty member of the University of Chicago Law School, where debate is a contact sport, he's not untutored in weighty issues. But far more than Powell — or any of his potential rivals for the presidency — he is an unknown quantity.

The way in which he resembles George W. Bush — his thin resume — is not one that will help him. It may be cancelled out, though, by the ways in which he conspicuously contrasts with the outgoing president—notably, being thoughtful, articulate and seemingly open to opposing views. Bush is the commander in chief. But it's Obama who gives the effortless impression of command.

His immediate challenge is to simultaneously assure Democratic partisans that he is liberal enough for them while convincing everyone else he is conservative enough for them. Being opposed to the Iraq war from the outset will give him latitude to depart

from party orthodoxy on other issues, if he has the vision and nerve — make that audacity — to do so.

In the end, Obama could be another John Kerry, whose military biography was not quite enough to counter his merciless depiction as another out-of-touch liberal. Or he could be another Ronald Reagan, who had to overcome demonization on his way to proving that Americans will take a chance on a philosophy they don't entirely share, if it comes with the right leader.

Mr. Chapman is a columnist and editorial writer for the Chicago Tribune.

Will GOP Be Ready for Obama Onslaught?

If Illinois Sen. Barack Obama becomes either the presidential or vice-presidential nominee for the Democrat Party, expect left-wing racial demagoguery against the Republican Party to be unleashed as never before.

The Democrat Party and the mainstream press will launch an effort unprecedented in its intensity to secure a victory for a ticket featuring Obama. Not only is Obama the most charismatic “main-event level” liberal figure since Bill Clinton, he offers the Democrats an opportunity to once and for all destroy any chance the GOP has of appealing to black voters.

As the press has frequently noted, Obama is the first African-American presidential candidate with a legitimate chance of being on a winning ticket. The Democrats see in Obama a man who can not only keep loyal Democrats on board, but also someone who can reach out to politically apathetic Americans, particularly Americans of color.

There are many non-whites in America who aren't particularly interested in politics, but who would love to see a candidate of color break through what they view as the ultimate “glass ceiling.” Much like Massachusetts Democrat Deval Patrick, who received the support of thousands of previously unregistered nonwhite voters in his successful bid to become the state's first black governor, Obama could encourage millions of previously non-voting minorities to help him make history.

In addition, Obama, like Patrick, could capture the imagination of white voters who feel that it is long overdue for candidates of color to have “a place at the table.” There are many non-ideological whites who happen to believe that America's racial wounds will never be healed until nonwhites have a presence at the highest levels of the private and public sector. So many “glass ceilings” have been broken in the American corporate realm that it's no longer news. A person of color becoming either president or vice president would not only be news, it will also be a confirmation in the minds of these non-ideological white voters of America's fundamental fairness.

The left and the press will do whatever it takes to ensure an Obama victory. Reporters will write stories implying that an Obama victory is an essential step on the road to racial equality. Major newspapers will write editorials pointing out that, if Obama wins during the year marking the 40th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination, it will be a sign that his dream is finally becoming reality. The nightly news broadcasts will run features about Republicans who have decided to cross party lines to back Obama.

In addition, every race-based controversy involving the GOP will be dredged up, highlighted, recycled and replayed. The media and the left will pound the electorate over the head with every action that can be characterized as red-state racial hate — from Barry Goldwater's libertarian objection to the 1964 Civil Rights Act to Trent Lott's “botched joke” about Strom Thurmond. The GOP will be characterized as the largest hate group in the United States, the party of Katrina, the party of oppression, the party of the water hose and the police dog. The Republican Party will be depicted as a demon-possessed entity — and the electorate will be told that the only way to exorcise those demons is by affirming their faith in the supposed savior, Barack Obama.

The GOP must be prepared for this obnoxious onslaught. The party must stand ready to defend its record on race. The Republicans must remind the electorate of its accomplishments: the appointment of the first black Secretary of State and the first black female Secretary of State, the selection of the most diverse Cabinet in U.S. history, the empowerment of communities of color through faith-based initiatives, the greatest movement of blacks into the middle class (during Ronald Reagan's two terms). In 2008, the Republicans cannot let the mainstream press and the Democrat Party rewrite history — because if they do, the GOP will be history.

Mr. Tucker is a Massachusetts-based freelance writer. He operates a blog called Notes from D.R.

Barack Obama Is Just Another Liberal

As Sen. Barack Obama (D.-Ill.) gathers increasing attention as a potential rival to Sen. Hillary Clinton (D.-N.Y.) for the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination, remarkably little attention has been paid to his record, which reveals him to be at least as liberal as Hillary.

While Obama has a knack for portraying himself as an even-handed politician, who is inspired by traditional religious values, he has earned 100% ratings from Americans for Democratic Action, NARAL Pro-Choice America, the National Organization of Women, the NAACP and the NEA.

HEDGED RHETORIC

To drum up support for his Senate bid in 2004, Obama wrote a letter to the *Windy City Times*, a publication targeted to Chicago's gay community. "I opposed DOMA [the Defense of Marriage Act] in 1996. It should be repealed, and I will vote for its repeal on the Senate floor," he vowed. "I will also oppose any proposal to amend the U.S. Constitution to ban gays and lesbians from marrying."

Obama told the paper that constitutional marriage amendment proposals were merely "an effort to demonize people for political advantage." At the same time, he pledged to work to "expand adoption rights" for same-sex couples.

In 2006, he followed through by voting against the Federal Marriage Amendment. "Personally, I do believe that marriage is between a man and a woman," he said, as he voted against defining marriage as between a man and a woman.

Obama has similarly hedged his pro-choice rhetoric, while consistently supporting the pro-choice cause. As a state senator in Illinois he twice voted "present" on an Illinois ban on partial-birth abortion and was "absent" on a third vote. In 2001, he voted "present" on a parental notification bill for minors and in 2002 he voted against a bill to protect babies that survived failed abortions.

In his 2004 race Senate, Obama accepted \$41,750

in campaign contributions from pro-choice interest groups.

These positions contrast with the Christian faith to which he frequently refers in public appearances. Obama's father, a Muslim who abandoned his faith for atheism, divorced Barack's mother when Barack was two. In his 2004 keynote address to the Democratic National Convention, Barack said that his mother's parents were a non-practicing Baptist and a non-practicing Methodist. She "grew up with a healthy skepticism of organized religion herself," he said. "As a consequence so did I."

After his mother remarried, Obama lived in Indonesia with his stepfather, who was conscripted into the Indonesian Army. He first attended a Catholic school there, then a Muslim school.

"In both cases," he writes in his new book, *The Audacity of Hope*, "my mother was less concerned with me learning the catechism or puzzling out the meaning of the muezzin's call to evening prayer than she was with whether I was properly learning my multiplication tables."

SUPPORTING SOCIALISM

As an Illinois senator, Obama introduced the "Bernardin Amendment," which would have inserted language from a pastoral letter by the late Roman Catholic Cardinal Joseph Bernardin into a universal health care program. The amendment contained Bernardin's line: "Health care is an essential safeguard of human life and dignity, and there is an obligation for society to ensure that every person is able to realize that right." The bill, which did not pass, was to be funded with money taken from tobacco companies.

Obama spoke of his faith in his keynote address at the 2006 Call to Renewal's "Building a Covenant for a New America" conference. He said that if it wasn't for the "particular attributes" of the black church, he may have never have become part of it. "Because of its past, the black church understands in an intimate

way the Biblical call to feed the hungry and clothe the naked and challenge powers and principles,” he said.

In the same speech, he asked Christians, Jews and Muslims to convene on Capitol Hill and give an “injection of morality” by opposing a repeal of the estate tax.

When speaking out against various tax cuts, Obama has likened the “Ownership Society” — which entails such things as personalized Social Security accounts, health savings accounts and school choice — to “social Darwinism.” In a November 2005 speech to the National Women’s Law Center, he said: “The idea here is to give everyone one big refund on their government — divvy it up into some tax breaks, hand them out, and encourage everyone to use their share to go buy their own health care, their own retirement plan, their own unemployment insurance, education, and so forth.”

“In Washington, they call this the Ownership Society,” Obama explained. “But in our past there has been another term for it — social Darwinism, every man and woman for him or herself.”

As an Illinois state legislator, Obama also supported raising taxes on insurance premiums and on casino patrons, retaining the state death tax and levying a new tax on businesses.

He voted against a bill that would add penalties for crimes committed as a part of gang activity and against a bill that would make it a criminal offense for accused gang members, free on bond or probation, to associate with other gang members. In 1999, he was the only state senator to oppose a bill that prohibited early prison release for criminal sexual offenders.

In 2001, he voted “present” on a measure to keep pornographic books and video stores 1,000 feet away from schools and churches, and in 1999, he voted against a requirement to make schools filter internet pornography from school computers.

Obama has spoken against the Iraq War since its inception, beginning with an October 2002 speech he gave alongside the Rev. Jesse Jackson. He went so far as to suggest that the war was a ploy to distract voters from domestic issues impacting minorities.

“What I am opposed to is the attempt by potential hacks like Karl Rove to distract us from a rise in the uninsured, a rise in the poverty state, a drop in the medium income, to distract us from corporate scandals and a stock market that has just gone through the worst month since the Great Depression,” he

said. “That’s what I am opposed to.”

Obama wrote in *The Audacity of Hope* that although he believed Saddam had chemical and biological weapons, coveted nuclear arms, scoffed at UN resolutions and butchered his own people, he sensed “the threat Saddam posed was not imminent” and “the administration’s rationales for war were flimsy and ideologically driven.”

In November 2003, he told the Chicago Sun-Times that if he were in the Senate he would not have voted for the President’s \$87.5 billion supplemental appropriations package for Iraq and Afghanistan. “I think it enables the Bush Administration to continue on a flawed policy without being accountable to the American people or to the troops who are making sacrifices,” he said.

His opposition to the war carries through today in his support for the call by Sen. Carl Levin (D.-Mich.) to pull U.S. troops out of Iraq four to six months after its enactment.

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Our First Muslim President?

The Los Angeles *Times* reported recently that Barack Obama's campaign seems to be modifying its earlier affirmation that "Senator Obama has never been a Muslim, was not raised a Muslim, and is a committed Christian who attends the United Church of Christ in Chicago."

In a statement to the *Times*, the campaign offered slightly different wording, saying: "Obama has never been a practicing Muslim." The statement added that as a child, Obama had spent time in the neighborhood's Islamic center.

His former Roman Catholic and Muslim teachers, along with two people who were identified by Obama's grade-school teacher as childhood friends, say Obama was registered by his family as a Muslim at both of the schools he attended.

If this is true, Obama could possibly be charged with being an apostate from Islam. This could give him a unique chance to speak out about the freedom of conscience and the human rights of those who leave Islam — for Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, ordered that apostates from Islam be put to death. Although this is frequently denied, his statement "Whoever changes his religion, kill him" appears in numerous authoritative Islamic sources.

So is Barack Obama under a death sentence? Probably not — particularly if he left Islam while still a child. This is a crucial point, for according to Islamic law an apostate male is not to be put to death if he has not reached puberty (cf. *'Umdat al-Salik* o8.2; *Hidayah* vol. II p. 246). Some, however, hold that he should be imprisoned until he is of age and then "invited" to accept Islam, but officially the death penalty for youthful apostates is ruled out.

Nevertheless, if he was ever considered a Muslim at all and is now a Christian, Obama could still seize this opportunity to speak out for the plight of people like Abdul Rahman and other Muslim apostates who have been threatened with death for exercising their freedom of conscience. However, I think that Barack Obama's candidacy and religious history are more likely to work to the advantage of the Left and the jihadists, even if he

flames out a la Howard Dean in 2004. For if the Islamic death penalty for apostasy is even allowed to come up in the mainstream media, smiling Islamic spokesmen will deny that Islam teaches this. They can even be honest and simply affirm that it doesn't apply to Obama at all, since he left Islam while still very young.

It is most likely that the media and Obama's campaign will ignore the apostasy law altogether, and tar anyone who brings it up as a "bigot." The propagandists of CAIR, MPAC et al are quite savvy at portraying themselves as victims in response to presentations of uncomfortable aspects of Islam. And it is virtually inconceivable that there will be protests in the Islamic world over his apostasy, or calls for his execution. The Cartoon Rage and Pope Rage riots were orchestrated from above. The people who orchestrated them know enough not to shoot themselves in the foot. They (as well as Obama's campaign) have a chance here to portray Obama as someone who was raised as a Muslim and thus has a keen understanding of the Islamic world and the Islamic mind — rather like the positioning of Bill Clinton as our "first black President." Muslim leaders worldwide will not be saying, "He was raised a Muslim. Isn't that terrible?" They're more likely to say, "He was raised a Muslim. Isn't that wonderful? At last, someone who can see our point of view." Given Obama's politics, it will not be hard to present him internationally as someone who understands Islam and Muslims, and thus will be able to smooth over the hostility between the Islamic world and the West — our first Muslim President.

Barack Obama's Muslim upbringing could become the linchpin of an attempt to present him as *the only candidate who can end the war on terror*. We can only hope that, if he does become President, he won't propose to do this only by means of various varieties of appeasement.

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The Perils of Obama

Sen. Barack Obama seems to be a nice guy. I won't say he's "articulate," because some African Americans hear that word and take offense. In fact, I won't give the senator any compliments other than the nice guy description, just to be on the safe side.

Is there any question that we are living in an age of hypersensitivity? Some of that, of course, is justified. When Sen. Joe Biden described Obama as "clean," it was a verbal disaster, adjectival Armageddon. "Clean"? As opposed to what?

Some whites thought the reaction to Biden's remark was overblown, but consider this: If someone described me, an Irish-American, as a "sober thinker," surely most Irish folks would raise a collective eyebrow.

But when President Bush said Sen. Obama was articulate, I'll confess to thinking he was giving the guy a genuine compliment. I mean who knew some African-Americans would find the "a" word offensive? Many of us are still confused.

According to some columnists, if you label a black person "articulate," you are implying that other blacks are not. You are expressing surprise that an African-American can actually speak English well. And that's condescending, is it not?

Well, I guess it could be. But Mr. Bush's tone wasn't condescending at all. So I chalk this one up to mild paranoia and/or a victimization play.

Many of us know people of all races who are professional victims. They see slights everywhere. The world is against them, and if you live in the world, so are you. These people are tough to deal with. Anything you say to them can and will be used against you.

Few want to deal with this victim mentality, and that's the danger in this articulate controversy. I know some white people who don't know what to say to black Americans so they completely disengage. They don't want to offend, and they don't really understand the "rules," so they play it cautiously.

This is not a good thing for America. All respon-

sible citizens should be trying to break down racial and religious barriers and work together. But, believe me, there is fear in the marketplace—fear along racial lines.

None of this, of course, is Barack Obama's fault, but he may suffer because of it. On Jan. 17, a Rasmussen poll had him tied among Democrats with Hillary Clinton in the presidential sweepstakes. Two weeks later, Obama was behind Hillary by 14 points in the same poll.

It is speculation, but all this word controversy stuff can't be helping Sen. Obama. For any candidate to be elected to high office, there has to be a certain comfort level with the folks. I don't know about you, but the articulation thing wasn't comfortable for me.

The solution here is for honorable people to give other people the benefit of the doubt. Sen. Biden made a mistake, but it was not born from malice. President Bush simply did nothing wrong. We have enough problems in this country without creating phantom annoyances. And that's about as articulate as I can be.

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Barack Obama: The Human Rorschach Blot

Barack Obama is like a small, shiny object. The easily fascinated can stare deeply into his blank sheen and see... their own reflections. He can be anything to anyone because he is nothing in particular. Yet listening to the leftstream media, one would have to conclude that the man is a multifaceted miracle.

He's a moderate. He's a third way. He's demographic fusion cuisine. He's a floor wax. He's a desert topping. He's everything you'd hoped for and whatever you need. That's the beauty of being unknown.

He's like that girl way over there at the other end of the bar — perfect, unknown, perfectly unknown, and improved mightily by distance and pent-up desire. Mentally, you're in love and three weeks into the relationship before you even make it halfway over to meet her.

Then you notice her eyes and think, “Man, which one do I look at when I speak, because they don't point in the same direction. And what's with the Adam's apple?” But at that point it's too late to turn around, because one of those eyes has seen you already. I think that's the way a lot of folks are going to feel about their Obamaphilia after a few months of campaigning have removed the gauze filter from his carefully blurred image.

If any of the fawning were asked to name his greatest accomplishment, could they name an accomplishment? Other than being elected to the Senate just two and a half years ago, and being simultaneously black and yet likeable to white folks, I mean.

For emphasis, let's examine a list of Obama's major accomplishments (so far):

1. Simultaneously black and yet likeable to white folks
2. Made the initials “B.O.” cool again
3. Good oral hygiene

That's it. He's the Wayne Brady of politics — everything white folks had been hoping for in at least one black person, the big payoff for all that tolerance and diversity babble. That may not be the politically correct thing to say, but it is an honest assessment of

exactly what pent-up desire is fueling Obamania among his white, liberal fan base.

Obama's resume and record (even just a record of firm opinions on important issues) are so thin that I really believed that early media talk of his running for President was an affectionate nicety — like a manager saying of a favored intern, “You'll be running this corporation before the summer's over!”

Yet here we are, just a year after such talk began, and the intern has announced that he's putting his resume in for the position. Well, I'll alert human resources.

Allegedly, his appeal rests with his “inspiring” story. Lord knows he's told his story enough: in two books, uncounted speeches and interviews and occasionally in explanations of why the story in the books seems to differ from the facts. (Obama was telling the “literary” truth, rather than getting bogged down in the literal truth.) Come to think of it, I should add a fourth bullet point to my list of Obama's major accomplishments (so far):

4. Telling his own story

The man's Jesus and John the Baptist all rolled into one — the Messiah that foretells his own coming. But what, really, is so inspiring about his story? He is alleged to have overcome the odds — to have succeeded in the face of oppression. But to see “black” as a synonym for “oppressed” is just a stereotype (oh, and the rationale behind affirmative action laws). And we all know that stereotypes are wrong. I keep waiting for some real tale of the adversity he's faced and I have yet to hear it.

As far as I can tell, this is his inspiring story of success despite oppression:

He overcame the oppression of being born to a well-off middle class white woman and a Harvard Ph.D. father, then he overcame the oppression of attending private schools his entire life. His story took a dark turn toward further oppression when he was admitted to Columbia University and then — gasp — Harvard Law School — where he was

practically lynched into the position of President of the Law Review by an overwhelming majority. Nay, an oppressive majority. From there, his life has just been a Hell of accolade and accomplishment.

The Boston Globe this week cited as an example of his oppression that children at his private school sometimes made fun of his unusual name. Please excuse me if I don't rush off to a sit-in on his behalf. As a child named "Mac" entering elementary school right about the time of McDonald's famous "Big Mac Attack" campaign and "Big Mac" jingle ("two all beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles and onions on a sesame seed bun" as I seem to recall), and who soon learned that Mac rhymes with "Quack!" and "Whack!" I would now like to announce my candidacy for the presidency of the United States based on my inspiring story. I still can't hear a quip about "special sauce" without thinking of the oppression of my fathers... or at least the Clinton administration. Get in line, crybaby.

The only real adversity I can find in his life is that his mother couldn't seem to stay married to the same man for much time and his father couldn't seem to marry just one woman at a time. And, again, if having a screwed up family is a primary political asset, we'll need to form a really long line. The only thing weirder than the average family would be a normal family.

Yet the CNN.com poll question for Saturday was "Does Barack Obama's life story inspire you?" (Surprisingly, most respondents said "No." So I am not alone in my underwhelming enthusiasm for the media darling.) If stories like Barack's are inspiring, then the field is plainly crowded with inspirational tales:

Mitt Romney: An eloquent son of a former governor of Michigan. Like Barack, he overcame his privileged background to become a successful politician. Although, if it's triumph over real adversity and prejudice that you want, consider that young Romney spent 30 months as a Mormon missionary in France! Now this is a man that has known struggle against the odds.

Joe Biden: Born to a used car salesman, he somehow found a talent for politics. He later overcame a devastating battle with congenital dihydrotestosterone-induced alopecia. Despite its ravages, Biden has bravely kept "plugging away" at politics ever since, chairing numerous televised hairings. Uh, I mean "hearings."

Tom Tancredo: Actually did come from a humble background, went to a humble school, became a public school teacher, married a public school teacher and yet went on to engineer a national political career. People don't like that story though, so let's focus on the fact that he was involved in public education and still became an unabashed conservative. Talk about overcoming oppression.

John Edwards: The son of a textile worker and a postal employee, grew up working class in rural North Carolina. He overcame this humble background to become a primping effete metrosexual millionaire trial lawyer. Perhaps picking leaders based on humble beginnings is not a foolproof system.

Dennis Kucinich: The son of an Ohio truck driver and a stay-at-home mom, Kucinich went on to overcome his obvious mental illness and the malnutrition of a vegetarian diet to become the member of Congress voted "most detached from world reality." Again, perhaps choosing leaders based on humble beginnings is not a foolproof system.

I could go on and on (and often do), but you get the idea. Barack Obama called his political aspirations "The Audacity of Hope," but really they're nothing so much as the audacity of hype.

Obama is just a human Rorschach Blot — a figure so devoid of definition and meaning that what his devotees see in him is more an insight into them than into him.

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Iran: Praying for Obama

We live in a dangerous world. According to the European Union, that world will become exponentially more dangerous in the coming years. An internal EU document leaked to the Financial Times states that Iran will likely go nuclear in the near future. “Attempts to engage the Iranian administration in a negotiating process have so far not succeeded,” says the document. “At some stage we must expect that Iran will acquire the capacity to enrich uranium on the scale required for a weapons programme.” The document also suggests that economic sanctions will be useless.

What is to be done? The European Union, as usual, has decided to stick its collective head in the sand. No surprise there. If Iran is to be stopped, of course, it will not be the EU that takes the leadership role — it will have to be the United States. “The price of greatness is responsibility,” explained Winston Churchill. The price of global leadership is global leadership.

Unfortunately, we are currently mired in an existential crisis of our own. The war in Iraq has undermined the will to use military force, even when military force is necessary. Just because we did not find massive stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq does not mean Iran is benign. Yet, like the Western powers after World War I, we prefer to watch as our enemies re-arm rather than stopping them when we can. The results, as they were in 1939, will be devastating.

All of which makes the presidential election of 2008 the most important election in recent memory. America teeters on the brink of a crippling European post-modernism.

The political embodiment of that post-modernism — that nihilistic resignation — is the modern Democratic Party. Senator Barack Obama of Illinois, the Democrats’ bright new star, is no more capable of global leadership than Jacques Chirac. Obama’s politics of “understanding” dictates that evil cannot be fought — it must be placated with psychobabble.

In his new forward to “Dreams From My Father,” Obama writes, “I know, I have seen, the desperation and disorder of the powerless: how it twists the lives of children on the streets of Jakarta or Nairobi . . . how easily they slip into violence and despair. I know that the response of the powerful to this disorder — alternating as it does between a dull complacency and, when the disorder spills out of its proscribed confines, a stead unthinking application of force, of . . . more sophisticated military hardware — is inadequate to the task.” This sounds like boilerplate rhetoric. It is not. It is the theory of appeasement, stated clearly and succinctly.

Obama’s adolescent insistence that everything can be talked out is matched in its idiocy only by his adolescent scorn for military sacrifice in general. In a speech in Iowa on February 11, Obama stated, “We ended up launching a war that should have never been authorized and should have never been waged — and to which we have now spent \$400 billion and have seen over 3,000 lives of the bravest young Americans wasted.” Wasted. This is the language of MoveOn.org, the language of Democratic Underground, the language of the 1960s radicals Obama claims to deplore.

This was no isolated incident. It reflects what Obama believes. After Obama sponsored legislation mandating a full troop withdrawal from Iraq by March 2008, Australian Prime Minister John Howard lashed out. Al Qaeda, Howard said, would be “praying as many times as possible” for Obama’s election in 2008. Obama’s response was breathtakingly ignorant and immature: If Howard is “ginned up to fight the good fight in Iraq,” spat Obama, “I would suggest that he call up another 20,000 Australians and send them to Iraq. Otherwise, it’s just a bunch of empty rhetoric.”

There are currently over 1,400 Australian troops dispatched to Iraq. Howard has a legitimate reason to declaim Obama’s politics: His country has hundreds of troops on the ground, and American policy

affects those troops. For Obama to dismiss Howard's opinion by insulting Australia's sacrifice is outrageous

And yet it is Barack Obama — a man who sees *aloe vera* as an actual foreign relations strategy, who routinely derides military sacrifice — whom the Democrats put forth as their hot new candidate for the 2008 presidential nomination.

Will America join Europe, sticking its head in the sand, enabling Islamism by ignoring it? Iran certainly hopes so. Like Al Qaeda, Iran's leaders must be praying every day that Americans turn to a candidate like Barack Obama.

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Who The Liberals Really Are

When the Democrats tell you who they are, what they think, and what they intend to do, believe them. When they claim (with Oscar-worthy straight faces) they “support the troops,” their history — both past and recent — betrays that vacuous claim.

Last week, Senator Barack Obama made his third big mistake, the result of a series of on-the-fly policy pronouncements. Mistake Number One was his statement that he’d move more aggressively into Pakistan if, as president, he had “actionable intelligence” about al Qaeda operating there. The statement itself was quite hawkish, so the mistake wasn’t on the policy, it was political: he ticked off his liberal base, which does not want escalated military action in Pakistan, or frankly, anywhere else. Mistake Number Two came when he tried to fix Mistake Number One: he said he’d take nuclear weapons “off the table.” This brought him back into the liberal lovenest, but just about everyone else thought it was “naïve and irresponsible.”

Then came the Third Big Mistake. He was asked about U.S. efforts in Afghanistan, and he said this: “We’ve got to get the job done there. And that requires us to have enough troops so that we’re not *just air-raiding villages and killing civilians*, which is causing enormous problems there.”

Throwing American troops down the stairs. It may have been the first time Obama has done it, but it’s not the first time his party has.

Another liberal Junior Senator repeatedly made wild accusations about the conduct of the American military in a different war:

“... they had personally raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blown up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks, and generally ravaged the countryside of South Vietnam in addition to the normal ravage of war, and the normal and very particular ravaging

which is done by the applied bombing power of this country.”

The year was 1971, the war was Vietnam, and the man was an aspiring politician (and president) named John Kerry.

The routine was the same: Accusing U.S. troops of widespread barbaric acts. Equating them with the savage beasts they were fighting. Essentially saying that they are no better than the enemies trying to kill them — and us.

Where else have you heard a similar tune recently? In the pages of *The New Republic*, a left-leaning publication, that ran columns from Iraq, written by an anonymous soldier, called “Baghdad Diarist.” In these columns, the soldier accused his fellow troops of “mocking and sexually harassing a woman whose face had been marred by an I.E.D.” and “one soldier of wearing part of an Iraqi boy’s skull under his helmet,” among other things.

The Weekly Standard raised some serious questions about those “reports,” forcing *The New Republic* to identify the writer as Pvt. Scott Thomas Beauchamp. The military then did its own thorough investigation and found that the allegations made by Beauchamp were “false.” Beauchamp himself signed statements recanting the stories as “exaggerations and falsehoods.”

It doesn’t take Sherlock Holmes to see an ugly pattern here. Liberals with a predilection for slanderously and maliciously skewering American troops in order to further their own agendas.

This is who the liberals are. This is what they believe. These are the “values” they would bring if they win the presidency and hence, the role of commander-in-chief.

At least Senator Hillary Clinton was smart enough to “decline to comment” on Obama’s remark about our troops in Afghanistan. But remember: she and Bill slashed military budgets when they were president the first time around. During his draft evasion days, he was on record as saying he “loathed” the

military. He was accused of using the military during times of personal political crisis, and only from politically safe heights of 30,000 feet.

John Kerry, 1971. Bill and Hillary Clinton, 1992-2000. Harry “the war is lost” Reid, 2007. The New Republic, a few months ago. Barack Obama, last week. They are all cut from the same cloth, singing the same refrain. And despite their self-serving and empty rhetoric to the contrary, it isn’t about “supporting the troops.”

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The Liberal Egotism of Barack Obama

Barack Obama's personality and speaking ability have made him a media darling since the 2004 Democratic convention. But campaigning in Iowa, his unfocused optimism has rapidly declined into the same old tired liberalism.

Obama — like all liberals — believes he knows what's good for you: in fact, better than you do.

Obama's standard stump speech, repeated over and over in Iowa, says in part that politicians shouldn't tell people what they want to hear but what they need to hear. Implicit in that is Obama's belief that he knows more than Iowans do about the issues that should be important to them.

At the Art Institute of Chicago last year, a student garnered attention when he fashioned a statue of Obama as Jesus. As I wrote in a previous column, the statue was "capped with a neon halo and lifting his hands in peace, the effigy... a physical enrichment of the senator's recently elevated public persona."

Analysts have jokingly referred to Obama as the "Messiah" due to pointed coverage of his "peaceful" message. Newspapers from the *New York Times* to the *Boston Globe* have scrounged up quotes from college classmates and friends that Obama "defus[ed] battles large and small" and "sometimes g[ave] warring classmates the impression that he agreed with all of them at once."

With so much positive coverage, it's easy to see how it could go to his head.

His approach to foreign policy increased popularity among Democrats and undecided voters. Moreover, he touts his 2003 vote against the invasion of Iraq as a foundational marker of wisdom against Hillary Clinton's vote for the war.

Earlier this year, he told audiences that faith had been "hijacked" in large part "because of the so-called leaders of the Christian Right...[were] all too eager to exploit what divides us."

Obama often speaks like a humanitarian, last week telling an Iowa audience that "hope is — that thing inside us that insists, despite all evidence to the

contrary, that something better is waiting for us around the corner." But his noninterventionist approach to foreign affairs and belief in socialized healthcare and entitlement programs proves he believes that government is superior to free will.

Obama's vision is dependent on his belief that people are fed up with President Bush and the Republican Party. But Obama is part of the Democratic Congress that is even lower than the President in popularity, with a 9% approval rating.

In addition to being a media darling, Oprah Winfrey's recent endorsement caused a wave of Obama publicity. Winfrey told an Iowa audience that "we need a leader who shows us how to hope again in America as a force for peace." Her speech sounded similar to a Sunday morning church sermon. But will Oprah deliver more than just publicity? Generally, celebrities don't deliver more than their own entourages. Oprah may be different.

The latest Des Moines *Register* poll has Obama with 32% to Clinton's 25% and veteran political reporter Robert Novak predicts Obama will come in first tomorrow night. If Obama beats Clinton in Iowa, his ego may be grown even more than hers is damaged.

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Obama Proves America Is Still Racist

Super Tuesday was certainly super for Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama. The less-than-one-term senator proved he was more than a flash in the pan with wins in Alabama, Connecticut, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota and Utah. Obama is a serious challenger for the Democratic nomination.

The media — and Obama’s supporters — would have us believe that Super Tuesday was super for America. Obama’s big showing, we are told, demonstrates that Americans have finally moved beyond the racial divisions of the past.

This is exactly wrong. Obama’s big showing demonstrates how far Americans still have to go when it comes to race.

Barack Obama is the Halle Berry of American politics — he’s a pretty, nonthreatening face who happens to be the right color and, therefore, demands our plaudits. Never mind that he was brought up by his white mother, went to a private high school and has spent about as much time facing down serious racism as Mitt Romney. He’s got African genes, and we’re all supposed to pull the lever for him to prove to ourselves that we’re not racists.

Let’s not kid ourselves: Obama’s candidacy is strictly about his skin color. If Americans were truly ready to move beyond race, they’d take a look at Obama The Candidate rather than Obama The Friendly Black Guy.

And here’s what they’d see:

Obama is a candidate whose empty bombast could float a fleet of hot air balloons. “We are more than a collection of Red States and Blue States,” Obama spouted on Super Tuesday during his victory speech. “We are, and always will be, the United States of America.” This prompted my 14-year-old sister to exclaim, facetiously, “So that’s why they call it the United States.” Obama is a modern day Warren G. Harding, of whom William McAdoo once said, “His speeches leave the impression of an army

of pompous phrases moving over the landscape in search of an idea. Sometimes these meandering words would actually capture a struggling thought and bear it triumphantly a prisoner in their midst until it died of servitude and overwork.” The only difference between Harding and Obama is that Obama’s speeches never actually capture a struggling thought — and if they did, they’d have to waterboard it for information. Obama’s speechmaking isn’t deep. It is profundity for dunces.

Obama is a candidate who knows less about foreign policy than Rick Salomon, who at least knows about Paris. He has suggested unilaterally invading Pakistan while inviting Muslim dictators to a sit-down, no questions asked. He points to the gap between “worlds of plenty and worlds of want” as the source of Islamic terrorism. He states that the real threat to peace in the Middle East isn’t Islamic extremism, it’s “cynicism.” He’s Pollyanna on steroids.

Obama is a candidate with the same amount of federal experience as Ken Salazar. Salazar is a Democratic senator from Colorado, elected in 2004. He has actually been involved in major legislation. He won his seat in a heated race — unlike Obama, who inherited his seat when Republican opponent Jack Ryan imploded due to a sex scandal. You probably haven’t heard of Ken Salazar. But you’ve heard of Barack Obama. That’s for one reason and one reason only: Obama’s race.

So before Americans punch the ballot for Obama and pat themselves on the back for their racial awareness, let’s get one thing straight: It’s the soft bigotry of low expectations that’s lifting Obama to unprecedented heights. If voters looked realistically at Obama, unblinded by the desperate desire to elect a nonmilitant African-American to the presidency, they’d scoff. And they’d have every right to do so. Obama is utterly unqualified to be president of the United States. If we elect him to the White House based on the misguided desire to feel good about our

own broadmindedness — if we ignore his emptiness in favor of his melanin — we deserve what we get.

Mr. Shapiro is a student at Harvard Law School. He is the author of Project President: Bad Hair and Botox on the Road to the White House, Porn Generation: How Social Liberalism Is Corrupting Our Future (Regnery, a HUMAN EVENTS sister company) and Brainwashed: How Universities Indoctrinate America's Youth (Thomas Nelson).

Obama vs. McCain: Round One to McCain

I have some news, Al Qaeda is in Iraq. Al Qaeda — It's called Al Qaeda in Iraq...I don't understand how Senator Obama would say he would go back to Iraq if Al Qaeda were there when Al Qaeda is there and everybody knows it," — Sen. John McCain on the campaign trail.

"It just seems like John McCain is talking about me a lot," — Sen. Barack Obama on the campaign trail.

Since the final Democrat primary debate, Senator John McCain began chiding Senator Barack Obama on his stance on fighting Al Qaeda in Iraq. Senator Obama fought back weakly saying, "I've got some news for John McCain — he took us into a war, along with George Bush, that should have never been authorized, and should have never been waged." If the debate continues to be about that in the general election, then advantage McCain.

Poor Senator Clinton. It seems as if the media has moved past her and crowned Obama the nominee of her party. Gone are the hopes and dreams of what President Clinton said would be the most "civil election" in American history. Americans don't want civil elections, they want tough elections and civil government but it's been so long since we've had that, many can't remember what it looks like.

No one believed a year ago that Hillary Clinton would fail to achieve the Democratic nomination. Many in the Democrat's leadership are worrying who will get the "short straw" and have to tell her the gig is up when she loses Texas, Ohio or both. Bill Clinton has long suffered her temper, so he's not doing it. But as luscious as this is to picture, the real story is the heating up of the exchanges between Obama and McCain.

The contrast between the man, who was a prisoner of war in Vietnam, when the child was being raised in Indonesia, is stark. Senator McCain's future depends on the country seeing him as the leader and Senator Obama as only a motivator. We saw a preview last week in the banter back and forth at cam-

paigned events.

Obama has to continue to say that we are losing in Iraq or that the Army has done its job but the Iraqi politicians have not. He uses either line to suit his mood. McCain has to continue highlighting the successes in Iraq militarily but has the tougher job of touting the provincial successes in self-governance. Though it is likely more success from General Petraeus and successful provincial elections in October are to come, until then, McCain will stand his ground with Obama while Obama will tie him to the "failed Bush policy in Iraq."

But the war is not the only thing that was talked about last week. McCain and Obama differentiated themselves on the economy as well. When President Bush was asked if we were in a recession during his press conference last week, he said we were in a slow-down but not a recession. Senator Obama mocked the president's remarks by saying, "People are struggling in the midst of an economy that George Bush says is not a recession but is experienced differently by folks on the ground."

Then Obama went after McCain, "We are not standing on the brink of recession because of forces beyond our control. This was not an inevitable part of the business cycle. It was a failure of leadership in Washington — a Washington where George Bush hands out billions of tax cuts to the wealthiest few for eight long years, and John McCain promises to make those same tax cuts permanent, embracing the central principle of the Bush economic program." Class warfare again and he doesn't even get his facts right. But he's the man of Hope and change, so facts don't matter when you are motivating people.

John McCain won the first round this week. The real challenge will be how McCain succeeds when he goes after Obama. Obama has achieved "movement status" which could burn out as fast as it started. When people look more closely at Barack Obama, they will see a light weight that can speak the words of Martin Luther King or President Kennedy, but has-

n't made the sacrifices. Many before him, including Senator John McCain, have sacrificed much so that Obama can be where he is today. But the "Audacity of Hope" guy is someone with almost no experience in government or anything else yet still thinks he should be president.

John McCain should win this battle, but a year ago most of us thought that Hillary Clinton and Rudy Giuliani would be the match up — a "Subway Series" for The White House.

The only constant in this election is the unreliability of predictions.

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BHO is no JFK

With several members of the now largely irrelevant Kennedy family endorsing the most radically left-wing, least experienced candidate in this year's race for president, perhaps it is time to introduce some reason into the ridiculous argument that Barack Hussein Obama is the new John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

JFK supported tax cuts, knowing they would spur economic growth. BHO thinks he can somehow tax us into prosperity.

JFK was a foreign policy hawk who stood up to the Soviet Union and let it be known that the United States of America was a superpower to be reckoned with. BHO is a foreign policy wimp whose proclivity toward appeasement in a very dangerous world would signal weakness to our enemies and invite them to attack us.

JFK told us to ask what we could do for our country. BHO tells us to expect that our country will do everything for us.

JFK was a genuine hero who very nearly died in World War II. The closest BHO has ever gotten to a war zone was when he was working as a "community organizer" on the mean streets of Chicago.

By the time JFK was elected to the presidency, he had already served six years in the U.S. House of Representatives and eight years in the U.S. Senate. BHO spent a few years in the Illinois State Legislature and lost a bid for a U.S. House seat before winning the 2004 U.S. Senate race. He spent one year in the senate before launching a bid for the presidency.

It is impossible to imagine JFK endorsing the radical idea that homosexuals should be allowed to marry each other, or even have the rights of marriage, as BHO believes.

It is also impossible to imagine JFK supporting the murder of the unborn. BHO's position goes much further.

With terrorism and the economy taking center stage in our politics, it was relatively easy for most Americans to allow the tragic 35th anniversary of

Roe v. Wade to slip past them on the 22nd of last month. One third of a generation — fifty million Americans — are not here because of this holocaust, and two generations now have no memory of a nation without legalized murder of the unborn.

For various political and financial reasons, today's Democrats — and far too many Republicans — are invested in keeping abortion legal in the United States. But few Americans with a conscience are willing to allow abortionists the right to kill a baby up to and beyond the moment of birth.

Barack Obama is.

Back in 2006, in a column about Barack Obama titled, "The Most Dangerous Man in America," I wrote, "Most important to the liberal extremists who run the Democratic Party, this man's moderate demeanor would successfully belie his leftist political ideology."

In a piece about moderate, pro-life Democrat Sen. Ben Nelson, D-NE, endorsing Obama for president, I pointed out that Obama was the most radically left-wing member of the United States Senate on the issue of the sanctity of life. As it becomes increasingly possible that this man could become president, it is time to examine the ramifications of Obama's position on the issue.

Jill Stanek, formerly a registered nurse at Christ Hospital in Oak Lawn, Illinois, led the fight in that state to stop the practice of killing babies born alive during an abortion. She testified in favor of legislation in the Illinois State Legislature that would give protection to such children. Barack Obama, then a state senator, opposed it.

When a similar piece of legislation worked its way through the U.S. Senate, even Hillary Clinton, Ted Kennedy and Barbara Boxer voted for it. These are among the most liberal, pro-abortion leaders in the Democratic Party, and they concluded that protection of a child who survives an abortion was no threat to Roe vs. Wade. Not so BHO. He believes an abortionist should have the right to kill a baby after he or she

has been born!

In this relativistic brave new world in which we now live, how long would it take medical science to begin experimentation or organ harvesting on newborns if BHO had had his way?

To paraphrase the late Lloyd Bentsen, on virtually any issue you can name, but especially on the issue of life, BHO is no JFK.

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Playing by Obama's Rules

To observe Democrats, savaging one of their heroines, is to understand why the party is unready to rule.

Consider: At the 1984 Democratic convention in San Francisco, an unknown member of Congress was vaulted into history by being chosen the first woman ever to run on a national party ticket.

Geraldine Ferraro became a household name. And though the Mondale-Ferraro ticket went down to a 49-state defeat, "Gerry" became an icon to Democratic women.

This week, however, after being subjected for 48 hours to accusations of divisiveness by Barack Obama, and racism by his agents and auxiliaries in the media, Ferraro resigned from Clinton's campaign. What had she said to send the Obamaites into paroxysms of rage?

She stated an obvious truth: Had Barack not been a black male, he probably would not be the front-runner for the nomination.

Here are the words that sent her to the scaffold.

"If Obama was a white man he would not be in this position. And if he was a woman (of any color) he would not be in this position. He happens to be very lucky to be who he is. And the country is caught up with the concept."

Note that Ferraro did not say race was the only reason Barack was succeeding. She simply said that being an African-American has been as indispensable to his success as her being a woman was to her success in 1984. Had my name been "Gerald" rather than Geraldine, I would not have been on the '84 ticket, Ferraro conceded.

In calling her comments racist, Barack's retinue is asserting that his race has nothing to do with his success, even implying that it is racist to suggest it. This is preposterous. What Geraldine Ferraro said is palpably true, and everyone knows it.

Was the fact that Barack is black irrelevant to the party's decision to give a state senator the keynote address at the 2004 convention? Did Barack's being

African-American have nothing to do with his running up 91 percent of the black vote in Mississippi on Tuesday?

Did Barack's being black have nothing to do with the decision of civil rights legend John Lewis to dump Hillary and endorse him, though Lewis talks of how his constituents do not want to lose this first great opportunity to have an African-American president?

Can political analysts explain why Barack will sweep Philly in the Pennsylvania primary, though Hillary has the backing of the African-American mayor and Gov. Ed Rendell, without referring to Barack's ethnic appeal to black voters?

What else explains why the mainstream media are going so ga-ga over Obama they are being satirized on "Saturday Night Live"?

Barack Obama has a chance of being the first black president. And holding out that special hope has been crucial to his candidacy. To deny this is self-delusion — or deceit. Nor is this unusual. John F. Kennedy would not have gotten 78 percent of the Catholic vote had he not been Catholic. Hillary would not have rolled up those margins among white women in New Hampshire had she not been a sister in trouble. Mitt Romney would not have swept Utah and flamed out in Dixie were he not a Mormon. Mike Huckabee would not have marched triumphantly through the Bible Belt were he not a Baptist preacher and evangelical Christian. All politics is tribal.

The first campaign this writer ever covered was the New York mayoral race of 1961. Republicans stitched together the legendary ticket of Lefkowitz, Fino and Gilhooley, to touch three ethnic bases. Folks laughed. No one would have professed moral outrage had anyone suggested they were appealing to, or even pandering to, the Jewish, Italian and Irish voters of New York. People were more honest then.

Obama's agents suggest that Ferraro deliberately injected race into the campaign. But this, too, is ridiculous. Her quote came in an interview with the

Daily Breeze of Torrance, Calif., not “Meet the Press.”

The attack on Ferraro comes out of a conscious strategy of the Obama campaign — to seek immunity from attack by smearing any and all attackers as having racist motives. When Bill Clinton dismissed Obama’s claim to have been consistently antiwar as a “fairy tale,” and twinned Obama’s victory in South Carolina with Jesse Jackson’s, his statements were described as tinged with racism.

Early this week, Harvard Professor Orlando Patterson’s sensitive nostrils sniffed out racism in Hillary’s Red Phone ad, as there were no blacks in it. Patterson said it reminded him of D.W. Griffith’s pro-KKK “Birth of a Nation,” a 1915 film.

What Barack’s allies seem to be demanding is immunity, a special exemption from political attack, because he is African-American. And those who go after him are to be brought up on charges of racism, as has Bill Clinton, Ed Rendell and now Geraldine Ferraro.

Hillary, hoping to appease Barack’s constituency, is ceding the point. Will the Republican Party and the right do the same? Play by Obama rules, and you lose to Obama.

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The Real Barack

Who is the real Barack Obama? No, this is not an analysis of the leading man's patriotism, plagiarism, race, or religion, because the reality on those blogosphere topics is simple. He is as patriotic — if not more so — than you and me. He is not a plagiarizer; that was merely the weakling Hillary Clinton trying to find a dent in his armor. He is a different race than past Presidents, but who really cares in this day in age besides a few crazies out there? And he is Christian — not Muslim, nor supportive of terrorists — despite what a group of bloggers and wack jobs out there want you to think.

Now that those issues are eliminated from the discussion, let's take a real look at the Senator from Illinois. By examining his voting record, analyzing his experiences, and evaluating his prior work, we can begin to determine if this is the man we want leading our country back to greatness.

Before I vetted him, Obama seemed like an ideal candidate. He is young, charismatic, optimistic, intelligent, and energetic. He exudes confidence, speaks well, debates finely, and listens just enough to be considerate but not indecisive, and can galvanize the public and unite people like nobody we have ever seen. But then there is the other side of him.

Obama was given an 8 out of 100 lifetime rating (meaning he is one of the most liberal lawmakers) by the American Conservative Union, a conservative group that issues a report card on the voting records of members of Congress. Likewise, the liberal group, Americans for Democratic Action, rated Obama's voting record in the Senate at 97.5 percent, near perfection for liberal Democrats. The National Journal even named Obama the most liberal Senator in 2007. So what exactly was he voting on that made his rankings so liberal?

Obama never voted for the Iraq War because he never had to — he was not elected to the United States Senate until 2004. However, he consistently rails on the war, saying that it was a distraction that prevented America from focusing on Afghanistan, it

was ill-advised, and that troops should be immediately, but gradually, redeployed leaving only a small number in the country to conduct counterterrorism operations and protect diplomats. Obama has supported most measures that call for troop withdrawals and/or reductions.

Obama supported comprehensive immigration legislation that would give illegal immigrants a chance for citizenship. He missed the vote (but said he would have voted NO) about legislation that called on the Bush administration to reduce Iranian influence on Iraq and to designate the Iranian revolutionary guard as a terrorist organization. In other liberal moves he once called for ending the embargo with Cuba (he later altered this statement), decriminalizing marijuana (he admits to past drug use in his autobiography and claims to now oppose the idea), and using all public funding for campaigns.

While an Illinois State Senator for eight years, Obama voted "present" 130 times instead of taking a definitive stand on the issue at hand. Hillary Clinton said this earlier in the month about his propensity to duck certain issues: "You cannot achieve the kind of changes we want by voting 'present' on controversial issues." Worse than his "present" votes however, was his vote in 2001 against a measure that would have expanded the penalties for some gang activity to include the death penalty.

Although he comes off as a clean lawmaker with little lobbyist influence, he has ties to indicted political fundraiser Tony Rezko, including a shady housing purchase by Obama and Rezko on adjacent properties. But let's get back to the votes, where we can clearly see where Obama stands on the issues.

In 2007 he voted against banning partial birth abortions, for expanding research on stem cell lines, against declaring English as the official language of the US Government, for the minimum wage hike, against raising the estate-tax exemption to \$5 million, and for the redeployment of troops out of Iraq by March of 2008. If these aren't liberal votes, I don't

know what are.

Senator Barack Obama is a decent and honorable man and has the potential of being a tremendous leader someday. But before you get caught up in his charisma and optimism, make sure you clearly understand where he plans to take the world's lone superpower. Experience especially in the area of foreign policy is increasingly important with the instability around the globe. Many rogue nations and world leaders would test the Senator early on in his administration making a determination about his leadership, wisdom, and judgment. A comprehensive examination of his quotes, votes, and experience, tells me that this man needs to be more vetted by the media and seriously challenged by Senator McCain on the issues that matters most to us as countrymen home and abroad.

Called "one of the most recognized conservative voices in America" by The Washington Post, Armstrong Williams is a pugnacious, provocative and principled voice for conservative and Christian values in America's public debate.

Obama Speech Raises More Questions

Sen. Barack Obama's recent speech, aimed at ending the controversy surrounding his relationship to his former pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright, fell well short of that goal. In fact, Obama raised more questions than he answered.

The speech — lasting longer than thirty minutes — showed Obama in a different setting. Instead of the upbeat, charismatic Obama chanting “change”, in this speech the candidate was at times uncomfortable, defensive and pandering.

At issue were the sermons Wright had delivered over the years in which he had condemned America and made several statements which placed him at the radical fringes of American politics. But all Obama could do was justify and urge voters to move past the issue.

“Did I know him to be an occasionally fierce critic of American domestic and foreign policy? Of course. Did I ever hear him make remarks that could be considered controversial while I sat in church? Yes. Did I strongly disagree with many of his political views? Absolutely...,” Obama said.

But if Obama strongly disagreed with those views in twenty years at that church, how did he express himself? Question one for Mr. Obama: If you strongly disagreed, how, when and where did you express it?

Sen. Obama pointed to those who ask — reasonably — why didn't he do what millions of others do every year: join another church? Obama said that if all he knew of Wright were “the snippets of those sermons” containing anti-white statements, he would be appalled. He then went on to defend Wright's character — praising him as a mentor, spiritual advisor, former U.S. Marine and helper of the poor — indicating those aspects of Wright were, to Obama, more important than the incendiary rhetoric. By which, we can only infer, that Mr. Obama believes this rhetoric is acceptable from someone with Mr. Wright's other supposed achievements.

A fundamental problem with Obama's speech is

that he apparently believes that Wright — even at his worst — speaks for the black community and is typical of those who preach in black churches.

Obama said, “Like other predominantly black churches across the country, Trinity embodies the black community in its entirety — the doctor and the welfare mom, the model student and the former gang-banger. Like other black churches, Trinity's services are full of raucous laughter and sometimes bawdy humor. They are full of dancing, clapping, screaming and shouting that may seem jarring to the untrained ear. The church contains in full the kindness and cruelty, the fierce intelligence and the shocking ignorance, the struggles and successes, the love and yes, the bitterness and bias that make up the black experience in America.”

Question two for Sen. Obama: Do you believe that Wright is typical of black preachers all across the nation? Those of us outside the black community lack any deep knowledge of black churches. The only black minister we are very familiar with was Martin Luther King, Jr. He never damned America.

Which leads to Question three for Sen. Obama: Do you believe that Mr. Wright should apologize for his damning of our nation?

Obama said of Wright, “I can no more disown him than I can disown the black community...” From which we are compelled to derive Question four: Does Sen. Obama believe that members of the black community who agree with Wright vastly outnumber those who do not?

“Given my background, my politics, and my professed values and ideals, there will no doubt be those for whom my statements of condemnation are not enough,” Obama said, adding that “never once in my conversations with [Wright] have I heard him talk about any ethnic group in derogatory terms.” Is that consistent with the admission that Obama knew of Wright's outrageous comments? It seems impossible that one can coexist with the other.

Why did Obama remain a member of a church so

opposite the unifying political rhetoric he proclaims daily?

Obama said “Some will see this as an attempt to justify or excuse comments that are simply inexcusable but I can assure you it is not. I suppose the politically safe thing would be to move on from this episode and just hope that it fades into the woodwork. We can dismiss Reverend Wright as a crank or a demagogue, just as some have dismissed Geraldine Ferraro, in the aftermath of her recent statements, as harboring some deep-seated racial bias.”

Does Obama believe Ferraro’s one comment — that Obama wouldn’t be in his position if he were a white man — is equal in kind or in quality — to the numerous, offensive remarks made by Wright? That would say a lot about his judgment. He defended Wright’s comments by way of “justified anger” from older blacks in America who endured the atrocities of segregation.

“That anger may not get expressed in public in front of white co-workers or white friends,” said Obama. “But it does find voice in the barbershop or around the kitchen table... And occasionally it finds voice in the church on Sunday morning, in the pulpit and in the pews.

“The fact that so many people are surprised to hear [it]... simply reminds us of the old truism that the most segregated hour in American life occurs on Sunday morning,” he said.

Its clear Obama believes he can’t “change” churches without offending the rest of the black community. If he can’t confront his own pastor, friend and mentor about these issues, how will he address the entire nation?

He quoted William Faulkner, saying, “The past isn’t dead and buried. In fact, it isn’t even past.” The usual mantra of “change” was abandoned for a purposeless focus — the same he usually harps on “the war that shouldn’t have been started in Iraq.” Obama wants to “transcend race” in one remark but then invites the division back in the next.

“And if we walk away now, if we simply retreat into our respective corners, we will never be able to come together and solve challenges like health care, or education, or the need to find good jobs for every American,” he said.

Here, he turns it around:

“... But the anger is real; it is powerful; and to simply wish it away, to condemn it without understanding its roots, only serves to widen the chasm of

misunderstanding that exists between the races... working together we can move beyond some of our old racial wounds.

In the white community, the path to a more perfect union means acknowledging that what ails the African-American community does not just exist in the minds of black people; that the legacy of discrimination — and current incidents of discrimination, while less overt than in the past — are real and must be addressed.”

The eloquent statements will not undo the damage 20 years of dedication to a bigoted man, who Obama referred to as a spiritual leader who is “like family” and a “part of me.”

Obama said “race is an issue that I believe this nation cannot afford to ignore right now,” but he managed to “ignore” it in his church for two decades. Now he’s trying to avoid a fatal head on collision.

He compared Wright’s charge that “rich white people” control the country with his own white Grandmother expressing fear of black men on the street. Syndicated columnist Kathleen Parker said his grandmother’s fear may have been the most telling line of the entire speech.

“He said he cringed, but I’m betting he did more than that. Those remarks had to cut deep...His grandmother — his surrogate mother at that point — rejected the black man he was becoming. The anger Obama heard in Rev. Wright’s church may not have felt so alien after all.”

But he did not own up to the same anger and instead persuaded voters to move on. “We can play Reverend Wright’s sermons on every channel, every day and talk about them from now until the election, and make the only question in this campaign whether or not the American people think that I somehow believe or sympathize with his most offensive words,” he said.

The questions must be answered “this time” and shouldn’t be off the table until Obama answers the real questions of character and judgment that plague him now.

And there is one last question that overrides all of Sen. Obama’s speech: is he — was he — sincere in his criticisms of Wright’s sermons? In March 2007, the *New York Times* reported Obama had “disinvited” Wright to the announcement of his presidential campaign. According to that story, Obama told Wright, “You can get kind of rough in the sermons,

so what we've decided is that it's best for you not to be out there in public."

Mr. Obama would have us believe that Mr. Wright is still someone he loves and trusts, someone whose church he would belong to even if Wright had not retired from the pulpit. Which raises the ultimate question: how sincere is Mr. Obama's condemnation of Mr. Wright when, like so many other things about Mr. Obama, it is only words and not action?

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The Barack Obama Double Standard

Imagine in 1999, that a videotape had come to light showing the pastor of Texas Gov. George W. Bush's church making vicious, hateful comments about America and cruel, racist statements about Americans of color.

Suppose this preacher had given a lifetime achievement award to former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke, and had traveled to Europe with Duke to meet with neo-Nazi terrorists.

Now try to envision that the candidate's family had attended this church for more than twenty years, that George and Laura Bush had been married there, by this pastor, and that the Bush daughters had been baptized by him.

Picture George Bush titling his autobiography after a phrase in one of this minister's sermons, writing that the man was his mentor, and then putting him on the presidential campaign staff as a trusted advisor and confidant.

Say it came to light that for several years George W. Bush had been friends with Eric Rudolph, the notorious Olympic Park bomber and anti-abortion terrorist. Furthermore, let's suppose that Bush had remained friends with Rudolph over the years and still considered him a colleague today.

Now imagine Laura Bush, on the campaign trail for her husband, telling supporters and the national media that America is "mean" and that for the first time in her adult life she was proud of her country.

Is there a doubt that Republican officeholders would have run from the Bush campaign like rats from a burning barn, that he would have become the political leper of the 2000 campaign? And what about the media? They virtually crucified candidate Bush that year for daring to give a speech at Bob Jones University, which had once banned interracial dating. I cannot imagine the field day they would have had with something like this.

And yet excuses are made for Barack Obama, who now finds himself in exactly this situation. Obama's pastor of more than two decades — the man who

married Barack and Michelle Obama, who christened their daughters, who inspired the title of the candidate's book, "The Audacity of Hope," — is now at the center of a storm that would have destroyed the candidacy of any Republican the day the story broke.

Rev. Jeremiah Wright, pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago for the last 36 years, has been caught on tape denouncing the United States and the white race in terms that should shock and disgust every thinking American. Wright and the church swear allegiance to the "mother country" — Africa. (Presumably this includes the Obama family.)

Rather than trying to infuse his congregation with hope and encouragement, Wright poisons them with vitriol about how the U.S. government has tried to commit genocide against the black community using drugs and the AIDS virus as weapons of choice.

"Don't say God bless America," Wright screams in one sermon. "God damn America!"

Wright, representing the church, bestowed a lifetime achievement award on Louis Farrakhan, the racist leader of the Nation of Islam. In the 1980s, Wright traveled to Libya with Farrakhan to meet with Muammar Gaddafi.

If Barack Obama has not been paying attention in church, it is apparent that his wife, Michelle, has. Campaigning for her husband recently, she said that for the first time in her adult life, she is finally proud of her country. In a separate speech, she said America is "a mean country."

Obama is friends with William Ayers, an admitted domestic terrorist with the Weather Underground, which declared war on the United States and claimed responsibility for bombing several government buildings, including the Pentagon and the State Department building, in the 1970s. In an interview with The New York Times, ironically published on the morning of September 11, 2001, Ayers was quoted as saying, "I don't regret setting bombs; I feel we didn't do enough."

Now a tenured professor at the University of Chicago (only in America!), Ayers met Barack Obama in the 1990s. They have remained friends ever since.

We are judged not just by our words, but by the company we keep. The litmus test should not be whether or not everyone a candidate knows is ideal. That is an impossible standard. The true measure of a man is in his ability to choose friends with which he can be proud to stand shoulder to shoulder, not those about whom he must equivocate and for whom he must apologize.

Mr. Patton is a freelance columnist who has served as a political speechwriter and public policy adviser. His weekly columns are published in newspapers across the country and on selected Internet web sites, including The Conservative Voice and GOPUSA.com, where he is a senior writer and state editor. Readers may e-mail him at dougpatton@cox.net.

KENNETH BLACKWELL

Eloquent Speech, Troubling Worldview

Barack Obama just gave an eloquent speech, but one that does not address the underlying nature of Senator Obama's beliefs. Rev. Jeremiah Wright, like Mr. Obama, believes in a state-centered 21st century form of big-government socialism. This 21st century form of socialism is at the heart of the Liberation Theology Rev. Wright preaches from the pulpit. Today, Mr. Obama again made it clear, with all his eloquence, that he still embraces these beliefs that would require dismantling the free-market system that has made our country's economy the most prosperous in all of human history.

In contrast to Liberation Theology, the Christian orthodoxy teaches about the nature of God, the nature of man, the relationship between the two in this life, and about the hereafter. Liberation Theology, on the other hand, is a belief system about political agendas, socialistic economic policy, and redistribution of wealth. Proponents of Liberation Theology, like Rev. Wright, teach that God commands us to form a government that will supervise our economy to create government-subsidized jobs under central-government planning; guarantee healthcare and education by having government control both; and achieve 'economic equality' by redistributing wealth through massive taxes on the affluent and massive government entitlements for the poor. And it advocates replacing governments that do not embrace this socialistic agenda.

Those are the beliefs of Liberation Theology. Those are the offensive root beliefs underlying many of Rev. Wright's sermons. And though Barack Obama does not embrace Mr. Wright's offensive language, he does embrace this government-solves-everything-through-socialism worldview.

His speech was magnificent in its elegance and rhetoric, but today Mr. Obama reminded me yet again of his worldview that embraces, among other things, partial-birth abortion, military weakness, and economic socialism. Thank God for religious liberty, free market, and free elections!

Mr. Blackwell is the former Ohio Secretary of State.

Obama Whines Again

Barack Obama wants the media, the Tennessee GOP and everyone else to “lay off his wife.”

Obama told ABC’s Good Morning America on May 19, 2008 that “If they [the GOP] think that they’re going to try to make Michelle an issue in this campaign, they should be careful because that I find unacceptable, the notion that you start attacking my wife or my family.”

But the problem Obama has is that his wife is out there, a surrogate speaker in his campaign, saying a lot of things Americans find almost as offensive as what his former pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright, said in church for decades. Obama admitted that Wright was a legitimate issue. So why isn’t what his wife says on the campaign trail? In truth, she is.

Unless Obama can stop his wife from saying things on the campaign trail that deserve criticism, he cannot reasonably ask Americans to disregard what she says.

In Bill and Hillary, we had a “co-presidency.” Obama, like the dutiful husband, always brags of his wife’s influence on him. So if the Obama family is offering another “twofer” deal like the Clintons did, why shouldn’t Michelle O. — her beliefs, her statements and her political commitments — be looked at as closely as we have looked at Hillary’s since 1992?

Michelle Obama has made herself an issue by constantly attacking America. Perhaps she should be more careful with her choice of words. Telling American’s you’ve never felt pride until your forty fifth year on earth says the civil rights movement, and all its achievements, meant nothing to you. It says the Berlin Wall coming down was insignificant to you, that the downfall of communism was not worth mentioning, Saddam Hussein’s removal was inconsequential, taking down the Taliban was trivial, and Iraqi’s voting in free elections is irrelevant.

The Tennessee GOP simply exercised its right to free speech with an ad showing Michelle Obama’s very own anti-American remarks last February to Wisconsin voters in which she proclaimed she had

not felt proud to be an American until that February Fonda moment.

The Tennessee GOP ad features proud Tennesseans speaking out on their life-long pride for America in a four minute YouTube video that is not going over well with Obama who labeled it “Low class.”

That’s not far off the mark of what Obama basically called the proud people of Pennsylvania when he essentially described them as bitter God-gunning Bible boobs.

It’s acceptable for Barry Obama to insult America, and it’s fine with the Senator if his wife trashes America as a callous country despite America giving Michelle Obama the best Ivy League educations and high paying jobs. But Heaven forbid the GOP giving the Obamas what democracy — the small “d” democracy — serves up for every pol.

If Barry Obama does not want anyone talking about his wife’s nasty anti-American comments, Obama should bar his wife from the campaign stage. If Obama does not want the GOP discussing everything Michelle Obama froths out, then Obama should stop her from saying things that are more than a little controversial.

Since that’s as unlikely as Bill Clinton being faithful to his wife, Obama had better get used to the fact many Americans see through him and his unpatriotic wife and their unholy alliances with anti-American race-baiters and radical former terrorist bombers.

What Americans owe each other is a patriotic president with a wife who has no intention of following in Hillary Clinton’s over-bearing, politically grasping, West Wing-climbing steps.

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Barack Obama: Karma Karma Karma Karma Karma Chameleon

“Give the People What They Want.” That soulful O’Jay’s hit from the 1970s is the celestial theme song for Archangel Barack Obama’s presidential campaign.

However, some key Democrat constituencies are learning that The Culture Club’s “Karma Chameleon” would be a more appropriate anthem.

It is not Obama’s fault that he has heretofore served as a Rorschach ink blot test for Democratic primary voters — they see in him whatever they want to see. But it is his choice to embrace that as his political persona and ignore the contradictions intrinsic to the pursuit of being all things to all people.

Obama’s penchant for blending in with the scenery is visible to the naked eye — and naked ear. I particularly enjoyed his newfound southern twang earlier this month when he gave a karaoke version of a civil rights sermon in Selma, Alabama.

It’s not easy for a kid from Hyde Park by way of Hawaii by way of Jakarta to sound like Jeff Foxworthy.

And such examples of His Eminence’s personal and political malleability abound with each passing day. Consider his last week on the campaign trail:

Obama angered the homosexual lobby by dodging opportunities to denounce Gen. Peter Pace’s comments the week previous that Pace considered homosexuality to be immoral.

Instead of challenging the statement made by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Obama made oblique references to the military’s “Don’t ask, don’t tell” policy and attempted to assuage his offended gay backers by setting up a gay advisory panel to his campaign. Obama hedging right.

On Friday, Obama endorsed Chicago Alderman Dorothy “The Hat” Tillman in her bitter and, I predict, losing re-election bid in a rapidly gentrifying ward on the city’s south side. Rather than supporting an independent Democrat concerned about something other than slave reparations, Obama sided with the hack machine candidate — as has been his history in Chicago politics. Obama hedging left.

Then on Saturday at a Democratic presidential forum in Las Vegas (where I go to visit my money), Comrade Obama was skewered by the national socialists in attendance for the lack of details he has provided about his alleged universal health care plan while his chief rivals, Clinton and Edwards, were triumphantly blaring their commitment to provide mediocre health care for all Americans at Pentagon prices. Obama languishing in the middle.

Now, I know what some of you cynics out there are thinking: all politicians tell people what they want to hear and pander to the audience they address on a given day, why should Obama be held to a different standard?

On second thought, Obama shouldn’t be held to a different standard. I concede the point. Barack Obama is just another politician.

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Obama the Inexperienced

While the Rev. Jeremiah Wright continues to play out in sound bites on cable TV and talk radio, it isn't Wright who might be president. It is Barack Obama who wants that job. Rev. Wright is consistent in his preaching that America bore some responsibility for the 9/11 attacks and in his conspiratorial lunacy about "how the government lied about inventing the HIV virus as a means of genocide against people of color," but Obama has been inconsistent in what he has said about issues that will have a far greater impact than the outrage produced by his former pastor.

I am all for a post-racial, nonpolarized society, but Obama has yet to detail how that would work and on which issues he is willing to move toward the center from positions any reasonable observer would have to describe as far-left, even radical.

On Fox News Sunday, Chris Wallace tried to get Obama to say where he might find common ground with Republicans when he asked him: "Can you name a hot-button issue where you would be willing to buck the Democratic Party line and say, 'You know what? Republicans have a better idea here.'" Obama offered regulation and charter schools, not exactly hot-button issues. Moving away from his vote against banning partial-birth abortion, as other Democrats have done, would have been a good hot-button issue on which he might have compromised, but abortion is the unholy grail of the left and no Democrat can get the presidential nomination unless he (or she) buys the entire abortion package.

Obama has the right attitude, as in, "My goal is to get us out of this polarizing debate where we're always trying to score cheap political points and actually get things done." That's admirable, so let's examine a few of the things Obama says he would like to do.

On the war, Obama said on Fox, "I will listen to Gen. (David) Petraeus, given the experience that he's accumulated over the last several years. It would be stupid of me to ignore what he has to say." Admirable. But in testimony last September before

the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of which Obama is a member, Gen. Petraeus said, "I believe Iraq's problems will require a long-term effort." The day after Petraeus' testimony, Obama called for the U.S. to "Immediately begin to remove our combat troops from Iraq." Which is it, immediate, or heeding Gen. Petraeus and his long-term approach for bringing stability to Iraq?

On Fox, Obama said he would raise capital gains taxes to no more than 20 percent. But on March 27, Obama told CNBC's Maria Bartiromo he would raise capital gains taxes to 28 percent. Obama said his goal is to "create additional revenue." But as The Wall Street Journal noted in an editorial recently, lower capital gains taxes have, in fact, historically produced more tax revenue while higher capital gains taxes bring in less, as people are less willing to sell stocks because it will cost them more in taxes.

What about payroll taxes? On Fox, Obama said he's for raising them on Americans earning more than \$102,000 annually. But just two weeks ago, Obama said he wouldn't raise taxes on anyone making less than \$200,000. When asked by ABC's George Stephanopoulos during the Philadelphia debate with Hillary Clinton if he would pledge not to raise taxes on the middle class, Obama responded, "I not only have pledged not to raise their taxes, I've been the first candidate in this race to specifically say I would cut their taxes." Again, which is it?

Obama's view of government is classic liberal paternalism: "... what (the American people) are looking for is somebody who can solve their problems ... who will tell them the truth about how we're going to bring down gas prices, how we're going to bring back jobs," he told Wallace.

No president can solve my problems, or bring down gas prices (those are set by market forces) or create jobs, other than more government jobs. In all of Obama's impressive rhetorical skills, there is nothing about the role of the individual, only the role of big government. His uncertainty and inconsistency

on issues ranging from war to taxes reveal his inexperience and youthful stumbling, two qualities that make him unprepared to be president.

And now we return to our regularly scheduled program of the rantings of Rev. Wright.

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Obama and Wright: Breaking Up Is Hard to Do

His campaign mired in the controversy, Sen. Barack Obama called a news conference recently in North Carolina to address Monday's outlandish National Press Club speech by his former pastor and longtime friend, Rev. Jeremiah Wright.

Wright — having seen some of the political dust settling after Obama's massively-hyped "race" speech several weeks ago — seemed eager to reignite the debate about Obama's connections to him and the many anti-American and racist comments in his sermons that had been published. Wright's media tour — including an NAACP speech, a high profile interview with Bill Moyers and headlining the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc. yesterday in Washington — focused the national media's attention on Wright and Obama, taking Hillary Clinton and John McCain almost off the air.

Instead of soothing the ears of the public — who Obama said previously had seen Wright unfairly characterized in only sound bytes — Wright confirmed his former statement that America brought on the 9/11 attacks (by "do[ing] terrorism on other countries") and that the American government created the AIDS virus in attempt to exterminate blacks ("I believe the American government is capable of anything.")

The unfettered anti-white rhetoric that Wright continues to spew in the name of the "black church" and what he called "black liberation theology" has pushed Obama to distance himself further from the man he only recently called an "uncle."

Clearly distressed at the press briefing yesterday, Obama repeated his denunciation of Wright's "offensive" comments from church sermons and recent speeches. In his press conference yesterday — with an inartfulness which has become a recent characteristic — Obama specifically denounced Wright's recognition of Louis Farrakhan as "one of the most important voices of the 20th century" and said Wright's comments were "antithetical to our campaign."

When the Wright controversy erupted earlier this year, Obama went great lengths to establish his rela-

tionship with Wright as close and important, even though he did not agree with everything Wright said. Obama claimed never to have heard the particular comments in question — "God-Damn America" and the "US of KK A" specifically — when he was attending church.

However, in his speech at the Press Club, Wright announced that the only reason Obama had distanced himself was because he was "saying what a politician had to say" in order to get elected.

Obama indicated that he had taken offense at Wright's implicit accusation of dishonesty and said that his relationship with Wright has obviously "changed" — though he still will not separate himself completely. Obama's challenge to expertly explain away his connection to Wright was a failure as he stuttered and grasped for words, proving again how uneasy he is when it comes to answering tough questions. This was first demonstrated during the recent Democrat debate on ABC and again in his post-Pennsylvania primary speech.

Though he said Wright had "disrespect[ed]" him, Obama spoke of many helpful sermons he had heard at Trinity United Church over the years.

"I continue to believe that Reverend Wright has been a leader in the South Side," Obama said. "I think that the church he built is outstanding. I think that he has preached in the past some wonderful sermons. He provided, you know, valuable contributions to my family."

But Obama adamantly dismissed the majority of Wright's remarks. Obama called Wright's recent rants "appalling" and "outrageous", stating that they "contradict everything that I am about and who I am."

He said, "the person that I saw yesterday was not the person I met 20 years ago," though he did not clarify how he accepted Wright until now, when his prospects for the presidency are in jeopardy.

"I don't think that he showed much concern for me," said Obama. "I don't — more importantly — I don't think he showed much concern for what we're

trying to do in this campaign.”

Wright has seized the media spotlight to the detriment of Obama’s campaign. In a recent press conference, Obama was hoping to put the issue behind him, and be able to press on with his North Carolina and Indiana campaigns before next Tuesday’s primaries. Was the presser enough to accomplish that?

Probably not. As long as Wright is grabbing air time, the media will let him. And he will remain a millstone tied around Obama’s neck.

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Obama: Too Little, Too Late

You could see the pain, anger and frustration in Sen. Barack Obama's face as, once again, he had to answer questions about his former pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright. What you didn't see or hear from Obama was recognition that he could have prevented Wright from becoming an issue in the first place. But by the time Wright took to the podium at the National Press Club recently to re-issue his hateful comments about the United States, Obama had already missed his chance. In fact, there were at least three specific occasions on which Obama made the wrong choice.

His first opportunity to avoid being tarnished occurred long ago when the young Barack Obama picked Wright's Trinity United Church of Christ. We know what a younger Obama was thinking when he chose Wright's church because he wrote about it almost 15 years ago in his first memoir, "Dreams from My Father." He describes in vivid detail his first meeting with Wright, whom he quotes as warning him: "Life's not safe for a black man in this country, Barack. Never has been. Probably never will be."

Apparently these words didn't set off warning lights. To the contrary, the young, Ivy-League educated Obama, who had been raised in Hawaii by his white grandparents and attended prep school there, seemed to be seeking a vicarious sense of victimhood in Wright's church. Obama describes, approvingly, a congregation in which "the flow of culture now ran in reverse as well; the former gang-banger, the teenage mother, had their own forms of validation — claims of greater deprivation, and hence authenticity, their presence in the church providing the lawyer or doctor with an education from the streets."

Obama's choice of churches was as much political as it was spiritual, a form of religious "radical chic."

Obama missed his second chance to keep Wright at bay when he decided to run for president. Campaign aides warned Obama that his association with Wright was going to cause him trouble; so, on the eve of his presidential announcement, Obama withdrew his invi-

tation to Wright to give the benediction at the ceremony. If he'd left it at that, Obama might at least have been able later to say that he had grown apart from Wright, or had outgrown him, or had come to see that Wright's message was incompatible with his own.

But instead, he invited Wright to come to the announcement but to stay in the basement, out of sight of cameras, where he could pray privately with the senator and his wife. His own actions now make Obama look not only ambivalent about Wright, but duplicitous.

But Obama's greatest missed opportunity to break with Wright came after Wright's crazy rants first hit the airwaves in March. Instead of denouncing Wright in his famous Philadelphia speech, again Obama tried to have it both ways: he renounced Wright's words, but not the man. "I can no more disown him," Obama said, "than I can my white grandmother — a woman who helped raise me, a woman who sacrificed again and again for me, a woman who loves me as much as she loves anything in this world, but a woman who once confessed her fear of black men who passed by her on the street, and who on more than one occasion has uttered racial or ethnic stereotypes that made me cringe."

But Obama's comparison of a race-baiter who spewed hatred from the pulpit with his elderly grandmother who had voiced her fears in private was not only morally asymmetrical, it was dishonest. Once more, the candidate's first memoir is revealing. In that version, a younger Obama explained his grandmother's fears by describing an actual incident that provoked them: While she was waiting for the bus to go to work early one morning, a black man tried to shake her down for money. She gave him some, but he kept demanding more. "If the bus hadn't come, I think he might have hit me over the head," Obama says she told him.

Obama should have used this story in his speech on race to talk about the legitimate fear that crime evokes. Instead, he gave short shrift to his grandmother, while engaging in an extended apologia on

the historical roots of Wright's rage in slavery and Jim Crow.

By the time Obama finally got around to denouncing Wright, not just his words, it was too little, too late. The Wright controversy had revealed a major character flaw in a candidate whose entire appeal has been based on character.

Mrs. Chavez is president of Stop Union Political Abuse.

Obama's Speech

Did Senator Barack Obama's speech in Philadelphia convince people that he is still a viable candidate to be President of the United States, despite the adverse reactions to statements by his pastor, Jeremiah Wright?

The polls and the primaries will answer that question.

The great unasked question for Senator Obama is the question that was asked about President Nixon during the Watergate scandal; What did he know and when did he know it?

Although Senator Obama would now have us believe that he is shocked, shocked, at what Jeremiah Wright said, that he was not in the church when pastor Wright said those things from the pulpit, this still leaves the question of why he disinvited Wright from the event at which he announced his candidacy for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination a year ago.

Either Barack Obama or his staff must have known then that Jeremiah Wright was not someone whom they wanted to expose to the media and to the media scrutiny to which that could lead.

Why not, if it is only now that Senator Obama is learning for the first time, to his surprise, what kinds of things Jeremiah Wright has been saying and doing?

No one had to be in church the day Wright made his inflammatory and obscene remarks to know about them.

The cable news journalists who are playing the tapes of those sermons were not there. The tapes were on sale in the church itself. Obama knew that because he had bought one or more of those tapes.

But even if there were no tapes, and even if Obama never heard from other members of the church what their pastor was saying, he spent 20 years in that church, not just as an ordinary member but also as someone who once donated \$20,000 to the church.

There was no way that he didn't know about Jeremiah Wright's anti-American and racist diatribes from the pulpit.

Someone once said that a con man's job is not to convince skeptics but to enable people to continue to believe what they already want to believe.

Accordingly, Obama's Philadelphia speech — a theatrical masterpiece — will probably reassure most Democrats and some other Obama supporters. They will undoubtedly say that we should now "move on," even though many Democrats have still not yet moved on from George W. Bush's 2000 election victory.

Like the Soviet show trials during their 1930s purges, Obama's speech was not supposed to convince critics but to reassure supporters and fellow-travelers, in order to keep the "useful idiots" useful.

Best-selling author Shelby Steele's recent book on Barack Obama ("A Bound Man") has valuable insights into both the man and the circumstances facing many other blacks — especially those who were never part of the black ghetto culture but who feel a need to identify with it for either personal, political or financial reasons.

Like religious converts who become more Catholic than the Pope, such people often become blacker-than-thou. For whatever reason, Barack Obama chose a black extremist church decades ago — even though there was no shortage of very different churches, both black and white — in Chicago.

Some say that he was trying to earn credibility on the ghetto streets, to facilitate his work as a community activist or for his political career. We may never know why.

But now that Barack Obama is running for a presidential nomination, he is doing so on a radically different basis, as a post-racial candidate uniquely prepared to bring us all together.

Yet the past continues to follow him, despite his attempts to bury it and the mainstream media's attempts to ignore it or apologize for it.

Shelby Steele depicts Barack Obama as a man without real convictions, "an iconic figure who neglected to become himself."

Senator Obama has been at his best as an icon,

able with his command of words to meet other people's psychic needs, including a need to dispel white guilt by supporting his candidacy.

But President of the United States, in a time of national danger, under a looming threat of nuclear terrorism? No.

Dr. Sowell is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and author of Applied Economics and Black Rednecks and White Liberals.

Is Obama Really the Man Blacks Need?

It appears that Barack Obama has survived. In the words of some, he's shown that "he can take a punch."

But, frankly, I think Senator Obama is still getting kid gloves treatment from a press corps that tilts left.

Despite the hounding about his "bitterness" remarks, and the ongoing story of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, there's been hardly 10 seconds of attention about his incredible statement that he wouldn't want his daughters "punished with a baby" if they "make a mistake."

This in a discussion about HIV/AIDS in which he said that contraception should be included alongside of abstinence in sex education.

Regarding his two young daughters, Obama said, "I am going to teach them first about values and morals."

First? What are values and morals if there is a second? Faith, of course, includes forgiveness. But values and morals are absolutes. There is a world of difference between forgiveness and teaching alternative paths.

There have been questions, appropriate questions, about how Barack Obama could have been sitting in the Rev. Jeremiah Wright's church for 20 years and suddenly, today, realize he does not agree with him. How so?

We have a good possible answer here. Religion for Senator Obama is not something too serious. It may satisfy some social needs and provide intellectual and emotional salve. But it doesn't translate into behavioral absolutes.

The arena for addressing life's dilemmas for Obama is politics not religion. So, in this sense, Pastor Wright had it right. His former congregant is first and foremost a politician.

In answering a question about abortion while campaigning in Iowa last year, the always deliberative Obama said: "I think the American people struggle with two principles: There's the principle that the fetus is not just an appendage, it's potential life ...

They also believe that women should have some control over their bodies ..."

The fetus is "potential life?"

Shortly after the Supreme Court's decision last year upholding the constitutionality of the ban on partial birth abortions, Obama spoke at a Planned Parenthood conference in Washington, D.C. Condemning the court's decision, he said that it was part of "a concerted effort to steadily roll back" legal abortions.

Criticizing Justice Anthony Kennedy, who wrote the majority opinion in the case, Obama said, "Justice Kennedy knows many things, but my understanding is that he does not know how to be a doctor."

Of course, Kennedy's job is not to be a doctor, but to be a judge. And in doing so, he included in his opinion testimony of a nurse who participated in a partial birth abortion procedure:

"The baby's little fingers were clasping and unclasping, and his little feet were kicking. Then the doctor stuck the scissors in the back of his head, and the baby's arms jerked out ...The doctor opened up the scissors, stuck a high powered suction tube into the opening, and sucked the baby's brains out ... Now the baby went completely limp. He threw the baby in a pan, along with the placenta, and the instruments he had just used."

Thus the end of what, for Obama, was "potential life."

Nat Hentoff, no conservative, but a libertarian who writes for the "Village Voice," calls Obama the "infanticide candidate."

In a recent column, Hentoff noted that, while in the Illinois State Senate, Obama voted against the Born Alive Infant Protection Act. This Act addressed cases where, during an abortion procedure, the live infant was actually born. The Act would have banned killing the living child.

Responding to John McCain's remarks delivered the other day at Wake Forest University about law

and judges, Obama contrasted McCain's pledge of "judicial constraint" with his own concept of legal activism.

Obama said he'd seek out judges "who are sympathetic to those who are on the outside, those who are vulnerable, those who are powerless."

Aside from this bizarre idea about the role of law, what irony there is in hearing this from a man with zero empathy for our most vulnerable — the helpless infant in the womb.

For the 90 percent of blacks who are casting votes for Obama, know that almost 50 million children have been aborted since Roe V. Wade in 1973, a third of which were black babies. Is this really the man whom our community needs?

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Obama's Other Jeremiah Wrights

Jeremiah Wright is not the only supporter Barack Obama needs to explain.

Although the media has finally exposed Barack Obama's ties to the unhinged pastor his support from rappers who propagate equally pernicious nonsense has gone almost entirely unnoticed.

Rappers are gaga over Obama. The superstar Jay-Z, who raps about "b——," "hoes" and "n——," even urged voters to support Obama in a robo-call for the March 4 Ohio primary and caucus. The equally foul-mouthed rapper Will.I.am, whose hit songs include "I love my B——," has hyped Obama in two widely-viewed videos posted on YouTube.

The rappers have good reason to praise Obama. He has at times been an apologist for their "music." His complicity with rappers dates back to at least 2006.

Late that year he met with the rap giant Ludacris in his Chicago office. Ludacris, who Pepsi dropped as a spokesman in 2004 after Fox News Channel host Bill O'Reilly exposed his putrid lyrics, said afterwards that Obama felt like family to him. In March 2007 Ludacris, whose hit songs include "Move B——," headlined an Obama fundraiser in Atlanta.

Obama even recorded a voice over for a new album out this June from rapper Q-tip. Will it contain lyrics like these sonnets from another Q-tip song? "Close the door, 'ight let a n—— rock. Cause we 'bout to eat real s——, not s—— slop."

Who are these members of Obama's amen corner? Many are the industry's leading lights, who have become rich and famous thanks to the willingness of liberals like Obama to ignore or excuse their glorification of sexism, drugs and violence. Without this kind of collaboration they would just be unemployed thugs instead of millionaires.

Obama thus far has equivocated on rappers. He has criticized their language, but adamantly refused to denounce the whole sordid genre as the unique cultural problem that it is.

"I haven't just singled out rappers," Obama told

Al Sharpton's National Action Network conference last year, according to the New York Observer. "I've said I've heard those words [used by rappers] around the kitchen table in some homes. I hear them in the barber shop. I hear them on the basketball court. All of us have been complicit in diminishing ourselves."

Obama here relies on the pro-forma defense of rap music. Yes, apologists say, it's racist and sexist but it only reflects the racism and sexism of society.

Oh, really? Where else but rap do folks talk so openly and regularly about b——, n—— and hoes? What other industry makes millions of dollars from those words? Obama says he's heard this kind of language on the basketball court. Which one? Not any NBA game. Players who curse during games are suspended and fined.

Where else but rap do you hear words like these from Obama supporter Jay-Z in his song "99 Problems?"

Now once upon a time not long ago

A n—— like myself had to strong arm a hoe

This is not a hoe in the sense of having a p——

But a p—— having no God Damn sense

Besides Jay-Z, Obama has also won support from rap mogul Russell Simmons, rapper Nas, whose new album is titled "N——" and 9/11 conspiracy theorist Mos Def.

It's high time the media ask some tough questions. Why has Obama collaborated with rappers? Is he familiar with their words? How could he not be? The senator's spokesperson said that when he and Ludacris met the two men found common ground on AIDS prevention. How do you find common ground on sexual behavior with someone who calls women "b——?"

Have any rappers donated to his campaign? Will he return the money? Why has he not renounced support from rappers? Is this going to take 20 years like it did with Reverend Wright?

At stake here is something more fundamental than Obama's rank hypocrisy. The willingness to break ranks with allies or anyone in your general orbit is

the fundamental moral test for anyone engaged in public life.

In the 1980s, David Dinkins, New York City's first black mayor, without any public pressure unequivocally denounced Louis Farrakhan. (In contrast to Jesse Jackson who has not to this day.) Dinkins did not try to offer any context for Farrakhan's hate mongering or liken him to a misguided uncle as Obama did with Wright.

Obama should follow Dinkins' lead. The senator should say that instead of performing songs for him rappers would be better off playing in the Rev. Wright's choir.

Mr. Gahr has written extensively about race for the New York Post, the American Spectator and the Washington Times.

Barack Obama Is a Loser

What do you call a candidate who wins 90 percent of the African-American vote, between 30 percent and 50 percent of the Hispanic vote and 40 percent of the white vote in a tight Democratic primary race?

A general election loser.

Apply those percentages to the general election, and the candidate will bomb. In 2004, President Bush won 43 percent of the Hispanic vote, 58 percent of the white vote and 11 percent of the African-American vote. That means that John Kerry did better among Hispanics than Barack Obama has done in the Democratic primaries; better among whites than Obama has done in the Democratic primaries; and almost as well among African-Americans. Obama's coalition is Kerry's, but weaker.

In a general election, candidates must appeal to the broadest base of support in order to win. Relying on small coteries of like-raced voters simply will not do it. And the simple fact is that Barack Obama will gain the Democratic nomination by winning intellectual centers, black voters and just enough whites to beat a deeply flawed Hillary Clinton.

This is not a winning coalition. It is, in fact, a recipe for disaster against John McCain. The black vote counts for a far greater percentage in the Democratic primaries than it does in the general election; McCain can lose virtually the entire black vote and still win handily (Bush did it in 2000 and 2004, Bush's father did it in 1988 and Reagan did it in 1984 and 1980).

McCain will do far better among whites than Hillary did. Obama cut especially into Clinton's main base of support — whites — by exploiting her gender, winning 40 percent of white males in Indiana and 45 percent of white males in North Carolina. McCain is far more appealing to white men than Clinton. Hillary is perceived as a shrew — most men find her unpalatable. If Obama could not win more than 45 percent of white men in North Carolina running against Clinton, how can he hope to beat that

percentage against McCain?

And then there's the Hispanic vote. For a Democrat, Obama is shockingly unpopular among Hispanics — he won just 32 percent of California's Hispanic vote in the Democratic primary. McCain, by contrast, is incredibly popular among Hispanics — he routinely wins 70 percent of the Hispanic vote in his Arizona Senate contests. Such percentages will not translate directly to the general election, of course — there are more registered Hispanic Democrats than Hispanic Republicans. But those percentages bode ill for Obama, who will struggle to overcome racial barriers, as well as an immigration-friendly Republican like McCain, who also shares many family values with Hispanic Catholics.

These numbers are not likely to change significantly before November. This is because Obama has established himself as a candidate — he is a mixed-race Adlai Stevenson carbon copy with better rhetorical skill. His association with Jeremiah Wright will not win him additional white votes; his elitism will not win him additional lower-class votes; his racial appeal does not have the same appeal to Hispanic voters.

This leaves McCain in the unexpected position of November front-runner. He will almost certainly win Florida and Ohio, and he will challenge in Pennsylvania. He will retain the states President Bush won, as well.

Democrats expected a political realignment in 2008, with a strong new coalition led by young voters. Instead, they may end up with 1972 all over again.

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Is Obama Ready for America?

Some pundits ask whether America is ready for Obama. The much more important question is whether Obama is ready for America and even more important is whether black people can afford Obama. Let's look at it in the context of a historical tidbit.

In 1947, Jackie Robinson, signing a contract with the Brooklyn Dodgers, broke the color barrier in major league baseball. He encountered open racist taunts and slurs from fans, opposing team players and even some players on his own team. Despite that, his first year batting average was .297. He led the National League in stolen bases and won the first-ever Rookie of the Year Award. Without question, Jackie Robinson was an exceptional player. There's no sense of justice that should require that a player be as good as Jackie Robinson in order to be a rookie in the major leagues but the hard fact of the matter, as a first black player, he had to be.

In 1947, black people could not afford a stubble bum baseball player. By contrast, today black people can afford stubble bum black baseball players. The simple reason is that as a result of the excellence of Jackie Robinson, as well those who immediately followed him such as Satchel Paige, Don Newcombe, Larry Doby and Roy Campanella, there's no one in his right mind, who might watch the incompetence of a particular black player, who can say, "Those blacks can't play baseball." Whether we like it or not, whether for good reason or bad reason, people make stereotypes and stereotypes can have effects.

For the nation and for black people, the first black president should be the caliber of a Jackie Robinson and Barack Obama is not. Barack Obama has charisma and charm but in terms of character, values and understanding, he is no Jackie Robinson. By now, many Americans have heard the racist and anti-American tirades of Obama's minister and spiritual counselor. There's no way that Obama could have been a 20-year member of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright's church and not been aware of his statements.

Wright's racist and anti-American ideas are by no means unique. They are the ideas of many leftist professors and taught to our young people. The basic difference between Sen. Obama, Wright and leftist professors is simply a matter of style and language. His Philadelphia speech demonstrated his clever style where he merely changed the subject. The controversy was not about race. It was about his longtime association with such a hater and whether he shared the Reverend's vision.

Obama's success is truly a remarkable commentary on the goodness of Americans and how far we've come in resolving matters of race. I'm 72 years old. For almost all of my life, a black having a real chance at becoming the president of the United States was at best a pipe dream. Obama has convincingly won primaries in states with insignificant black populations. As such, it further confirms what I've often said: The civil rights struggle in America is over and it's won. At one time black Americans did not have the constitutional guarantees enjoyed by white Americans; now we do. The fact that the civil rights struggle is over and won does not mean that there are not major problems confronting many members of the black community but they are not civil rights problems and have little or nothing to do with racial discrimination.

While not every single vestige of racial discrimination has disappeared, Obama and the Rev. Wright are absolutely wrong in suggesting that racial discrimination is anywhere near the major problem confronting a large segment of the black community. The major problems are: family breakdown, illegitimacy, fraudulent education and a high rate of criminality. To confront these problems, that are not the fault of the larger society, requires political courage and that's an attribute that Obama and most other politicians lack.

Dr. Williams is a nationally syndicated columnist, former chairman of the economics department at George Mason University, and author of More Liberty Means Less Government.

Barack Obama Pays Radicals To Staff His Campaign

Barack Obama is all about unification. There's only one problem: the people who comprise his staff are some of the most extreme leftists in the country.

There's his legislative counsel, Ian H. Solomon, who wrote in 2004 that John Kerry lost Florida due to voter fraud, repeating the kook theory that computer voting machines were rigged for Bush. Obama paid him \$49,499.94 during the six-month period from April 1, 2007 to September 30, 2007.

There's Jennifer Mason, Obama's Correspondence Coordinator, who, according to columnist Debbie Schlusel, is a member of Louis Farrakhan's dangerous and sickening Nation of Islam. During the same period, she was paid \$30,749.95 by the Obama campaign.

Then there's Demond Mullins, Obama's "special assistant." Between July 9, 2007 and August 24, 2007, Obama paid Mullins \$3,066.66. Mullins is a former clothing model who joined the National Guard for its educational benefits and was surprised to learn that National Guard members could be placed in war zones. He served in Baghdad from September 2004 to September 2005.

Mullins is now a radical anti-war pacifist associated with Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW). "I thought [the military] showed a blatant disregard for human life. I was just tired of being part of a machine destroying the Earth — and I'm speaking of the military-industrial complex," he told *Commondreams.org*. When asked by *The New Times* Holler! what positives he thought sprang from American presence in Iraq, Mullins answered, "I don't see anything positive about an unjustified and criminal occupation of foreign territory."

In an interview with NPR, Mullins strayed into John Kerry circa post-Vietnam territory. "I dehumanized people ... I don't even know how many raids I did while I was there. But during raids you're throwing them up against the wall, you're tying their hands behind their back, you're dragging them out of the bed. You're dehumanizing them in front of their wives and their kids and, you know, the women are crying

and the children are crying and you're just like, whatever. Put a bag over their head or blindfold, drag them into the Humvee. Certain exhibitions of violence on my part that were probably unnecessary — were definitely unnecessary. But I was really stressed out and on edge at the time and I conducted myself ... like that."

Mullins is a one-man anti-military band. Aside from dehumanizing innocent Iraqis, Mullins claims that military men spend their time raping military women. "One time a woman was taking a shower late, and guys went and held the door closed so she couldn't get out, while one guy went in to rape her," Mullins told *Salon.com*. The original *Salon.com* story included a quote from Mullins reading, "Rapes were happening every night ... Married men were doing it, everyone." *Salon.com* deleted the quote after Mullins stated that he had been misquoted — really, Mullins clarified, married men were only committing adultery and sexual harassment, not rape, on a constant basis.

Why did the Obama campaign pay Mullins — a professional anti-war protestor with a history of anti-military statements — over \$3,000 for unspecified services during July-August 2007? What was Mullins' role with the campaign? Calls to the Obama campaign were not returned; neither were calls to IVAW.

All along, Barack Obama has pled ignorance with regard to the people with whom he associates. Former Weathermen Underground terrorist Bill Ayers is just a college professor, according to Obama; Reverend Jeremiah Wright is just a spiritual advisor without political input. These are absurd claims in their own right. But whether or not Obama should be held responsible for the statements of his friends, he should certainly be held responsible for the people he puts on his payroll.

Mr. Shapiro is a student at Harvard Law School. He is the author of Project President: Bad Hair and Botox on the Road to the White House, Porn Generation: How Social Liberalism Is Corrupting Our Future (Regnery, a HUMAN EVENTS sister company) and Brainwashed: How Universities Indoctrinate America's Youth (Thomas Nelson).

A Living Lie

An e-mail from a reader said that, while Hillary Clinton tells lies, Barack Obama is himself a lie. That is becoming painfully apparent with each new revelation of how drastically his carefully crafted image this election year contrasts with what he has actually been saying and doing for many years.

Senator Obama's election year image is that of a man who can bring the country together, overcoming differences of party or race, as well as solving our international problems by talking with Iran and other countries with which we are at odds, and performing other miscellaneous miracles as needed.

There is, of course, not a speck of evidence that Obama has ever transcended party differences in the United States Senate. Voting records analyzed by the National Journal show him to be the farthest left of anyone in the Senate. Nor has he sponsored any significant bipartisan legislation — nor any other significant legislation, for that matter.

Senator Obama is all talk — glib talk, exciting talk, confident talk, but still just talk.

Some of his recent talk in San Francisco has stirred up controversy because it revealed yet another blatant contradiction between Barack Obama's public image and his reality.

Speaking privately to supporters in heavily left-liberal San Francisco, Obama let down his hair and described working class people in Pennsylvania as so “bitter” that they “cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them.”

Like so much that Obama has said and done over the years, this is standard stuff on the far left, where guns and religion are regarded as signs of psychological dysfunction — and where opinions different from those of the left are ascribed to emotions (“bitter” in this case), rather than to arguments that need to be answered.

Like so many others on the left, Obama rejects “stereotypes” when they are stereotypes he doesn't like but blithely throws around his own stereotypes about “a typical white person” or “bitter” gun-tot-

ing, religious and racist working class people.

In politics, the clearer a statement is, the more certain it is to be followed by a “clarification,” when people react adversely to what was plainly said.

Obama and his supporters were still busy “clarifying” Jeremiah Wright's very plain statements when it suddenly became necessary to “clarify” Senator Obama's own statements in San Francisco.

People who have been cheering whistle-blowers for years have suddenly denounced the person who blew the whistle on what Obama said in private that is so contradictory to what he has been saying in public.

However inconsistent Obama's words, his behavior has been remarkably consistent over the years. He has sought out and joined with the radical, anti-Western left, whether Jeremiah Wright, William Ayers of the terrorist Weatherman underground or pro-Palestinian and anti-Israeli Rashid Khalidi.

Obama is also part of a long tradition on the left of being for the working class in the abstract, or as people potentially useful for the purposes of the left, but having disdain or contempt for them as human beings.

Karl Marx said, “The working class is revolutionary or it is nothing.” In other words, they mattered only in so far as they were willing to carry out the Marxist agenda.

Fabian socialist George Bernard Shaw included the working class among the “detestable” people who “have no right to live.” He added: “I should despair if I did not know that they will all die presently, and that there is no need on earth why they should be replaced by people like themselves.”

Similar statements on the left go back as far as Rousseau in the 18th century and come forward into our own times.

It is understandable that young people are so strongly attracted to Obama. Youth is another name for inexperience — and experience is what is most needed when dealing with skillful and charismatic

demagogues.

Those of us old enough to have seen the type again and again over the years can no longer find them exciting. Instead, they are as tedious as they are dangerous.

Dr. Sowell is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and author of Applied Economics and Black Rednecks and White Liberals.

Obama's Audacity

We've heard about Barack Obama's hope from his bestselling book "The Audacity of Hope." Now we are getting a glimpse of his audacity.

As the Christian Broadcasting Network's David Brody first reported, Obama has decided to go after two constituencies that have mostly voted Republican in recent years — Roman Catholics and Protestant Evangelicals — and take up an issue that the GOP and conservative Christians have owned in recent election cycles — pro-life.

The Obama campaign has formed the "National Catholic Advisory Council," co-chaired by Democratic Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania and former Democratic Congressman Tim Roemer of Indiana, both Roman Catholics. Casey's late father, Gov. Bob Casey, always claimed he was barred from speaking to the 1992 Democratic National Convention because of his strong pro-life views. Obama has said he wants to change his party's antipathy toward pro-lifers, though not its pro-choice position.

This is a crafty political move on Obama's part. It could not only strike at the heart of the Republican base, but it will reveal how seriously politicians are when they claim to favor legal protection for the unborn, but act as if they are pro-choicers. Obama has said that while he strongly favors "a woman's right to choose," he is open to hearing other opinions. That's nice, but hearing and acting are two different things. And why are two pro-life Catholics giving moral cover to Obama who, when he had the chance, did not even join with several of his Democratic Senate colleagues in voting to ban the horrid practice of partial-birth abortion, in which the brains of a fully developed baby are extracted as the child emerges from the womb?

How can a Catholic in good standing and good conscience endorse someone who violates a basic tenet of the Catholic Church? The lust for power and position, apparently, has become so strong that some people are willing to sell not only their own souls, but also the beating hearts and souls of unborn chil-

dren to the highest political bidder.

Obama compounded his insult to Catholics, ahead of next week's primary in heavily Catholic Pennsylvania, when he said small-town Americans are "bitter and cling to guns and religion as symptoms of frustration." That remark brought a quick rebuke from Hillary Clinton and John McCain. "Pennsylvania doesn't need a president who looks down on them," said Sen. Clinton. "They need a president who stands up for them, who fights for them, who works hard for your futures, your jobs, your families." McCain spokesman Steve Schmidt said Obama's initial remarks, made at a fund-raiser in San Francisco, "shows an elitism and condescension towards hardworking Americans that is nothing short of breathtaking."

Obama also wants to repeal the military's carefully crafted compromise "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which allows homosexuals to serve in the military, as long as they don't reveal their sexual orientation. And Obama favors same-sex "unions." Though he might call them something other than marriage, he would allow all of the benefits government conveys on heterosexual married couples to be given to same-sex partners. This, too, runs afoul of Catholic Church doctrine.

How much more cynical can politics get? Obama knows he would never have a prayer of getting the nomination were he anything but pro-choice, but he makes nice with a couple of pro-lifers who ought to know they have zero chance in moving Obama from his radical position. They apparently are so enamored by political power they are willing to use their pro-life "credentials" to help Obama get elected, though he has no plan — other than more "sex education" — for reducing the abortion carnage that has already taken the lives of nearly 50 million unborn children since 1973.

Leaders of the Catholic Church, perhaps beginning with Pope Benedict XVI during his visit to America this week, ought to condemn this kind of

cynical politics and content-less religion and remind Catholics that just because a Catholic politician endorses another politician, it does not mean the Catholic Church is giving its blessing to the endorsers or the endorsee.

*Mr. Thomas is America's most widely syndicated op-ed columnist. He is a commentator/analyst for the Fox News Channel and appears weekly as a panelist on "Fox News Watch," and an author of 10 books, including *Blinded by Might: Why the Religious Right Can't Save America* (HarperCollins/Zonder-van). His latest is, *The Wit and Wisdom of Cal Thomas*. Contact him at CalThomas@tribune.com.*

BY MICHAEL REAGAN

The Other Obama

Here we go again. After being subjected to eight years of the collegial presidency of Bill and Hillary, when we were told that when we got Bill we got Hillary as a bonus, it looks as if we are facing another twofer: Barack and Michelle.

Effete liberal Democrats are all but canonizing Barack Obama, who they see as one of their own — cool, detached, impressively intellectual — all in all what Pat Buchanan described as something fresh out of the faculty lounge, where lofty thoughts abound and contempt for the great unwashed is hardly concealed.

That may be an apt description, implying that the Barack Obama who scorned ordinary folks in small towns who, he sneered, cling to such lower-class crutches as religion and guns, is above the distractions of the madding crowd.

It does not, however, fit the other half of the new twofer, Michelle Obama, who far from being above it all is down there in the trenches acting like the flame-throwing liberal activist she is. To know her is to know what her husband really believes.

As I have told my listeners of my radio show, if you want to understand how Barack Obama uncomplainingly sat through all those fire-breathing sermons without so much as stirring uncomfortably you need to understand the way husbands and wives practice their religion these days.

The men in the pews for the most part are passive, while the wives tend to be passionate. In most cases husbands are there because their wives have dragged them there. Chances are that while the women sit in rapt attention to the words of their pastor, the husbands are snoozing, blissfully unaware of what the reverend is preaching.

From what we've heard from Mrs. Obama she was paying close attention to the Reverend Mr. Wright, eating up his fiery words and probably enthusiastically nodding agreement as he blamed whitey for inventing AIDS to kill blacks as Barack dozed beside her, wondering when the Reverend Wright was going to shut up.

Barack is now wide awake, and for the next seven months he's going to continue to be faced with explaining why he remained silent while his pastor ranted in

the pulpit. And insisting that during his presence in the pews the Reverend Wright never once acted like Reverend Wright just won't wash. Poor Barack, how can he admit that he didn't hear any of that rabble-rousing rhetoric because he slept through all 20 years of it?

If you want to find the culprit here, turn to Michelle. I'm willing to bet she heard every word of the Reverend Wright's inflammatory sermons, swallowed them whole, and seethed in anger over White America's wretched mistreatment of her fellow black Americans as described by her pastor.

Nowadays she's playing the role of dutiful wife and doting mother, but every once in a while her anger surfaces as it did most famously when she told a group in Milwaukee, "For the first time in my adult life, I am proud of my country because it feels like hope is making a comeback."

Just what is hope in Michelle Obama's lexicon?

Why it's nobody other than the man she shared a pew with for 20 years, her husband, who she brags "is one of the smartest people you will ever encounter who will deign [i.e. "lower himself"] to enter this messy thing called politics."

"We have lost the understanding that in a democracy, we have a mutual obligation to one another — that we cannot measure the greatness of our society by the strongest and richest of us, but we have to measure our greatness by the least of these," she says.

"That we have to compromise and sacrifice for one another in order to get things done. That is why I am here, because Barack Obama is the only person in this who understands that. That before we can work on the problems, we have to fix our souls. Our souls are broken in this nation."

Barack Obama, our sole hope — the cobbler who'll mend our poor broken souls. With, of course, the help of his wife Michelle.

Mr. Reagan is a syndicated radio talk-show host, author of Twice Adopted (Broadman & Holman Publishers) and The City on a Hill, and the son of former President Ronald Reagan.

BY ROBERT NOVAK

Obama: Flawed or Fantastic?

Buyer's remorse was beginning to afflict supporters of Barack Obama before a recent primary election returns showed he had delivered a knockout punch against Hillary Clinton. The young orator who had seemed so fantastic beginning with his 2007 Jefferson-Jackson dinner speech in Iowa disappointed even his own advisers over the past two weeks, and old party hands mourned that they were stuck with a flawed candidate.

The whipping Obama gave Clinton in North Carolina and his near miss in Indiana transformed that impression. The candidate who delivered the victory speech in Raleigh, N.C., was the Obama of Des Moines, bearing no resemblance to the gloomy, uneasy candidate who had seemed unable to effectively deal with bumps in the campaign road. Returning to his eloquent call for unity, the victorious Obama in advance dismissed Republican criticism of his ideology or his past as the same old partisan bickering that the people hate.

John McCain as the Republican candidate does not like that kind of campaigning, either. But a gentlemanly contest between the old war hero from out of the past and the new advocate of reform from the future probably would guarantee Democratic takeover of the White House. The Republican Party, suffering from public disrepute, faces major Democratic gains in each house of Congress — leaving the defeat of Obama as the sole GOP hope for 2008.

Republicans were cheered and Democrats distressed by an inexperienced Obama's ineptitude in handled adversity the past month. The new Republican consensus considered Obama the weaker of the two Democratic candidates. Indeed, Hillary Clinton had finally shaken off pretensions of entitlement and consigned Bill Clinton to rural America, raising speculation that she would decisively carry Indiana and threaten Obama in North Carolina. Clinton's failure Tuesday was a product of demographics rather than Obama's campaign skill. Consistently winning over 90 percent of the

African-American vote, Obama is unbeatable in a primary where the black electorate is as large as North Carolina's (half the registered Democratic vote there). Indiana differed from seemingly similar Ohio and Pennsylvania, where Clinton scored big wins, because it borders Obama's state of Illinois, with many voters in the Chicago media market.

As the clear winner and the presumptive nominee, Obama in Raleigh Tuesday unveiled his general election strategy. Dismissing McCain's "ideas" as "nothing more than the failed policies of the past," Obama denounced what he called the Republican campaign plan: "Yes, we know what's coming. ... We've already seen it, the same names and labels they always pin on everyone who doesn't agree with all their ideas."

Thus, Obama seems to be ruling out not only discussion of his 20-year association with the Rev. Jeremiah Wright but also any identification of the Democratic presidential candidate as "liberal" or as an advocate of higher taxes, higher domestic spending, abortion rights and gun control. These issues appear to be included in what Obama at Raleigh called "attempts to play on our fears and exploit our differences."

The test of Obama's strategy may be his friendship with and support from William Ayers, an unrepentant member of the Weatherman terrorist underground of the 1960s. Instead of totally disavowing Ayers as he belatedly did his former pastor Wright, Obama potentially deepened his problem by referring to Ayers as just a college professor — "a guy who lives in my neighborhood." He then compared their relationship with his friendship with conservative Republican Sen. Tom Coburn, as he had compared Wright's racism with his white grandmother's.

Democrats abhor bringing up what Obama calls Ayers' "detestable acts 40 years ago," but it will be brought into the public arena even if it is not McCain's style of politics. A photo of Ayers stomping on the American flag in 2001 has been all over the Internet this week. That was the year Obama

accepted a \$200 political contribution from Ayers and the year in which the former Weatherman said: “I don’t regret setting bombs. I feel we didn’t do enough.”

While McCain will demand no response from Obama, others will. How the prospective nominee handles this in the future will help define whether he is seen as flawed or fantastic in the long campaign ahead.

Mr. Novak is a syndicated columnist and editor of the Evans-Novak Political Report, a political newsletter he founded in 1967 with Rowland Evans.

Dreams From My Father, Lame Excuses From My Grandfather

Since a Chinese graduate student at Columbia University, Minghui Yu, was killed recently when black youths violently set upon him, sending him running into traffic to escape, I think B. Hussein Obama ought to start referring to the mind-set of the “typical Asian person.”

As of Wednesday, police had no motive for the attack, and witnesses said they heard no demand for money or anything else. The Associated Press reports that the assailant simply said to his friend, “Watch what I do to this guy” before punching Yu.

Meanwhile, let’s revisit the story about Obama’s grandmother being guilty of thinking like a “typical white person.” As recounted in Obama’s autobiography, the only evidence that his grandmother feared black men comes from Obama’s good-for-nothing, chronically unemployed white grandfather, who accuses Grandma of racism as his third excuse not to get dressed and drive her to work.

His grandmother wanted a ride to work at 6:30 in the morning because, the day before, she had been aggressively solicited by a homeless man at the bus stop. On her account, the panhandler “was very aggressive, Barry. Very aggressive. I gave him a dollar and he kept asking. If the bus hadn’t come, I think he might have hit me over the head.”

Even Obama’s shiftless grandfather didn’t play the race card until pretty far into the argument over whether he would drive Grandma to work. First, the good-for-nothing grandfather told Obama that Grandma was just trying to guilt him into driving her, saying, “(S)he just wants me to feel bad.”

Next, he complained about his non-work routine being disrupted, saying: “She’s been catching the bus ever since she started at the bank. ... And now, just because she gets pestered a little, she wants to change everything!”

Only after Obama had offered to drive his grandmother to work himself and it was becoming increasingly clear what a selfish lout the grandfather was, did Grandpa produce his trump card. The reason he

wouldn’t get his lazy butt dressed and drive Grandma to work was... she was a racist!

As Obama recounts it, on Grandpa’s third try at an excuse, he told Obama: “You know why she’s so scared this time? I’ll tell you why. Before you came in, she told me the fella was black. That’s the real reason she’s bothered. And I just don’t think that’s right.” So I guess I’ll be heading back to the sack now!

That makes sense. It certainly never bothers me when crazy white people harass and threaten me.

This is Obama’s own account of what happened, which — as anyone can see — consisted of his slacker grandfather making a series of excuses to avoid having to drive the sole bread-earner in the family to work.

But Obama says, “The words were like a fist in my stomach, and I wobbled to regain my composure.” (It was as if he had been punched by an aggressive panhandler at a bus stop!) And not because his grandfather’s sorry excuse reminded him that he came from a long line of callow, worthless men, both black and white.

No, Obama swallowed his grandfather’s pathetic excuse hook, line and sinker, leading Obama to a reverie about his grandparents: “I knew that men who might easily have been my brothers could still inspire their rawest fears.” That’s true — assuming his brothers and sisters were menacing people at bus stops.

How deranged would you have to be to cite this incident as evidence that your grandmother thought like a “typical white person” — as opposed to your grandfather being worthless and lazy? For those keeping score, Obama is aghast at his grandmother’s alleged racism, but had no problem with Jeremiah Wright’s manifest racism.

If Obama is sent reeling by the mere words of an elderly white woman, how is he going to negotiate with a guy like Mahmoud Ahmadinejad? What if Ahmadinejad calls him “booger-face”? Will he run

crying from the table?

Your grandmother wasn't a racist, Barack. Your grandpa was just a loser. Can we wrap up our national conversation about race now? I think we'd like to move onto questions about your stupid plan to hold talks with Iran.

Ann Coulter is Legal Affairs Correspondent for HUMAN EVENTS and author of High Crimes and Misdemeanors, Slander, How to Talk to a Liberal (If You Must), Godless, and most recently, If Democrats Had Any Brains, They'd Be Republicans.

BY ERICK ERICKSON

OB(H)AMA(S)

We are shocked, shocked, to find the media (again) derelict in its duties. Barack Obama has run his campaign with numerous advisors who the campaign would have everyone believe are just not that plugged in to the campaign. Additionally, Obama refuses to divulge who these people are. Inevitably, however, word gets out that Obama has, yet again, surrounded himself with an undesirable.

This time the undesirable is Robert Malley. Coming on the heels of the Obama campaign saying it was “flattered” by terrorist group Hamas’s endorsement, the foreign press — in this case the London Times — pointed out Mr. Malley has close ties to Hamas. All the left has been willing to do is point out that the Times is owned by Rupert Murdoch.

Back in February, in fact, the New York Sun pointed out Bob Malley’s close ties to the Obama campaign and Malley’s close ties to Hamas. At the time, however, the mainstream media ignored the story because, well, the Sun is a right-wing paper. Thank God for all the right wing news organizations or we might never have known Obama is getting advice from a man who views Hamas as a legitimate organization.

Obama’s response, like with his grandmother, his preacher, and other advisors who distract from his public image, was simple. He tossed Malley under the bus. What is more troubling, though, is Obama’s willingness to surround himself with people who view Israel as the bad guy. Obama has gone through great lengths to show a pro-Israel campaign face. Behind the scenes Iran and the terrorist gangs of the Middle East see a man who will side with them, or at least turn a blind eye to them, as they wage war on Israel.

At some point the press needs to do its job and start finding out the other Obama “informal advisors” who are telegraphing to terrorists a different message than Obama’s public facade.

Mr. Erickson is the managing editor at RedState.

Obama's 'Wright Problem' Escalates

If his former pastor doesn't believe Barack Obama, why should voters? In a speech recently at the National Press Club, Rev. Jeremiah Wright indicated — for the second time — that he doesn't take Obama's criticisms of his anti-American rhetoric seriously.

When Obama denounced Wright's inflammatory comments ("God damn America" and "US of KK A" most notably), Wright said Obama was only "saying what a politician had to say."

"If Obama didn't say what he said, he would never get elected," Wright added.

During a Friday interview with Bill Moyers, Wright said he and Obama both say what they must to do their jobs.

"He says what he has to say as a politician. I say what I have to say as a pastor. Those are two different worlds. I do what I do. He does what politicians do," said Wright.

Wright maintained that the public outcry against the controversial remarks recorded in his sermons were not an attack on him, but on all American black churches. He also said he was not a "spiritual mentor" to Obama — simply a pastor. Wright obviously believes that he still is Obama's pastor although Obama characterizes the relationship in the past tense. Who is right?

Wright said now an "honest dialogue about race in this country" will begin because of Obama's willingness to take it on.

Obama did not address the issue squarely until forced to justify his relationship with Wright, his pastor at Trinity United Church in Chicago, for over 20 years. In a speech several weeks ago, Obama denounced Wright's comments but justified them by saying that America didn't really know Wright. Obama's connection to the pastor runs deep, as he titled his second book, "The Audacity of Hope," after a sermon Wright gave. Wright also baptized Obama and his children as well as performing the marriage ceremony of Michelle and Barack Obama.

To several standing ovations and a mostly black crowd that delivered several "Amens" during the Press Club event, Wright's remarks were based on his view of America's (and Europe's) history of slavery. He said that because America has never "confessed the sin of racism", the black church continues the fight for equality and justice.

He suggested that much of America holds "faulty assumptions" about social order. He noted a theory of Dr. William Augustus Jones, which says a person's theology ("how I see God") determines one's anthropology ("how I see humans") and one's anthropology determines one's sociology ("how I order my society.")

Therefore, "If I see God as male... if I see God as a white male... if I see God as superior... white males are superior," he said to exemplify what he believes a typical white American viewpoint.

He said black America cannot forgive racism when leaders refuse to apologize and the country wants forgiveness for an act they are still committing ("still stepping on my foot," he put it.)

Several times during the speech Wright contended that his words were only the "context of a sound bite." He said the prophetic theology of the Black Church is rooted in Isaiah 61, where one can see "God's desire for a radical change in a social order that has gone sour."

Wright said the black religious experience was still "invisible" and kept his words planted in context of slavery and segregation.

"Black people... gathered to worship in brush arbors or hush arbors where slaveholders, slave patrols and Uncle Toms' 'couldn't hear nobody pray,'" Wright said, in a not-entirely understandable comparison to his own preaching.

Wright implied he was apolitical, saying he speaks only the words of a pastor but nevertheless lambasted American political leaders who "call me unpatriotic" and "use their positions of privilege to avoid military service while sending over 4,000 American

boys and girls to die over a lie.”

Regarding his prior statement — delivered a week after 9-11-01 — that “America’s chickens [were] coming home to roost,” Wright said America is “do[ing] terrorism on other people” and we cannot “expect that its not going to come back to [us].”

He also responded to a question over his statement that “the government lied about inventing the HIV virus as a means of genocide against people of color.”

He said he believes the government “is capable of doing anything” though he would not confirm that specific statement. He also affirmed his belief that the U.S. Marine Corps — in which he served — can be likened to the Roman soldiers who killed Jesus and said Louis Farrakhan is “one of the most important voices...”

“When he speaks, all black American listens,” Wright said, adding that those who listen may not agree and that Farrakhan is certainly not an enemy. “He didn’t put me in chains, slavery... or make me this color.”

Wright let Obama’s decision to distance himself slide and said he (Wright) will answer to God on November 5 and January 21 — not the American people.

“I said to Barack Obama last year, ‘If you get elected, November the fifth I’m coming after you, because you’ll be representing a government whose policies grind under people,’” said Wright, noting that if it is God’s will for Obama to become President, “God will do what God wants to do.”

Wright remains a big problem for Barack Obama’s campaign. The more he speaks out, the less credible are his statements and those Obama has made to distance himself from Wright.

HUMAN EVENTS emails to the Obama campaign to answer questions for this article were not returned by press time.

Ms. Andersen is a news producer and reporter for HUMAN EVENTS. She previously interned for The Washington Examiner newspaper. She has appeared on MSNBC live and been a guest on the Lars Larson radio show and the Jim Bohannon radio show. She wrote for the Indiana Daily Student, Indiana University’s daily newspaper. E-mail her at eandersen@eaglepub.com.

Obama's Controversial Views on Israel

For those of us with access to the Internet, it's been difficult to miss the circulating e-mails claiming that Barack Obama attended a Madrassa (an Islamic school) as a child in Indonesia. Or perhaps the one informing us that Obama's middle name is Hussein. Then there's the Internet allegation that Obama is really a "secret Muslim."

Innuendo about Barack Obama's faith and upbringing often dominate discussions regarding how the likely Democratic presidential nominee might conduct his foreign policy. That's a shame, because it distracts us from more legitimate and far deeper concerns over Obama's relationship not with Islam but with Israel, the principal rhetorical and military target of that religion's most extreme adherents.

Of course, as with Obama's remarks on many issues, it's easy to cherry-pick a few of his statements about Israel that make it seem as if a President Obama would be a loyal friend of the beleaguered state. Such as when he says, "peace through security is the only way for Israel" and "when I am president, the United States will stand shoulder to shoulder with Israel."

What's not to like, right? Well, a more thorough examination of Obama's statements, his background and previous associations and, most importantly, his would-be foreign policy team reveals a far different reality — one that has caused many supporters of Israel, including me, to worry about what an Obama presidency might do to the long-term support for the Jewish State.

First off, Obama demonstrates a deep misunderstanding of the Middle East when he calls for the immediate removal of American forces from Iraq, which would expose Iraq to worse ethnic bloodshed and embolden the enemies of Israel and the United States. Senator Obama also voted against legislation to place the Iranian Revolutionary Guard on the list of terrorist organizations and criticizes Hillary Clinton for voting in favor of the legislation, which passed with the support of over three-quarters of the

Senate. He has also pledged to meet without preconditions with Iran's Holocaust-denying leader, Ahmadinejad.

Just as disturbing are Obama's statements about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which include: "Nobody has suffered more than the Palestinian people" and the clueless remark that "the Israeli government must make difficult concessions for the peace process to restart."

These troubling statements caused my friend and former Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Danny Ayalon to ask in a recent op-ed, "Who are you, Barack Obama?" Ayalon wrote that after meeting with Obama on two occasions, he was "left with the impression that [Obama] was not entirely forthright with his thinking [about Israel]."

Ayalon's skepticism no doubt stems from the fact that Obama's more recent pro-Israel statements do not square with his past sympathy for Palestinian radicals. Anti-Israel activist Ali Abunimah claims to know Obama well and to have met him at several pro-Palestinian events in Chicago when Obama was an Illinois state senator. In an article, Abunimah lamented that "Obama used to be very comfortable speaking up for and being associated with Palestinian rights and opposing the Israeli occupation." "Obama's about-face is not surprising," Abunimah insisted, "He is merely doing what he think is necessary to get elected and he will continue doing it as long as it keeps him in power."

Then there's Obama's church, Trinity United Church of Christ, whose anti-Semitism is now well known. Among many anti-Semitic documents that the church has published on its website is a letter that alleges Israeli "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing" of Palestinians and claims that Israelis "worked on an ethnic bomb that kills blacks and Arabs." Trinity's former pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright, who Obama has described as a "spiritual mentor," gave anti-Semite Louis Farrakhan an award for being a leader who "truly epitomized greatness."

Wright even traveled to meet with Libyan terrorist leader Muammar al-Gaddafi and has compared conditions in Israel to the apartheid of South Africa. Of course, you won't hear much from Wright these days. As Wright told PBS last year, he understands that Obama must keep his distance because "he can't afford the Jewish support to wane or start questioning his allegiance to Israel."

But nothing should concern Israel supporters as much as Obama's foreign policy team, which consists of the likes of Zbigniew Brzezinski, a remnant of the administration of President Jimmy Carter, who, like Rev. Wright, calls Israel an apartheid state. Brzezinski, Carter's national security advisor, has long held anti-Israel views and supports open dialogue with the terrorist group Hamas. Other top foreign policy advisors with avowed hostility toward Israel include Susan Rice and Robert Malley.

Most recently, it was revealed that Obama military advisor and national campaign co-chairman Merrill "Tony" McPeak has a long history of criticizing Israel and in 2003 alleged that American Middle East policy is being controlled by Jews at the expense of American interests in the Middle East. During the interview with the Oregonian, McPeak was asked why there was a lack of action in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. He responded, "New York City. Miami. We have a large vote — vote, here in favor of Israel. And no politician wants to run against it."

What's most worrying about Obama's foreign policy team is that given the candidate's extreme lack of foreign policy experience (he once declared that the four years he spent living in Indonesia as a child give him credibility on the world stage), one would expect Obama to lean heavily on it for advice. That's something that should concern anyone who understands the value of supporting America's only reliable ally from a region in which we are engaged in two wars.

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Hamas Loves Obama For a Reason

Recently, the chief political strategist for Hamas, Ahmed Yousef, expressed delight bordering on glee at the idea that Barack Obama might be America's next president.

"Actually, we like Mr. Obama," he said. "We hope he will [win] the election."

Sensing the disaster in this, the forces of liberalism that Must Protect Barry at All Costs, rallied to his defense, intimidating anyone who might raise the fact that one of the world's most lethal terrorist groups has just endorsed him. Nobody, they intoned, should point this out. Pointing it out is below the belt. John McCain, war hero, patriot, lover of America, candidate for president, had the audacity to point it out, and Democrats jumped all over him. Not appropriate, they said. Unseemly, they wagged. Obama himself used his best stealth tactic of shaking his head in disapproval "more in sorrow than in anger: "I thought Senator McCain pledged to run a positive campaign," he said wistfully. His wingmen, like Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid, attacked McCain for behaving in an unbecoming manner for bringing it up. And Jon Stewart took care of the pop culture side, by berating McCain for raising the Hamas endorsement as McCain sat on his couch, trying to be a polite guest.

There can be only one of two reasons Barry got Hamas's endorsement: is it because Hamas believes he is sympathetic to them, or that they think he's so naive and inexperienced that they can run circles around him? Obama has said he "understands" the Palestinians' position. He schmoozes with Rashid Khalidi, a "professor" (formerly of the University of Chicago, where Barry and Michelle socialized with him, including over dinner at Chez Khalidi), now at Columbia University. Khalidi is on record calling Israel a "racist" state with an "apartheid" system and has had ties to the PLO. (Khalidi should not be confused with Jimmy Carter, though they do sound much alike). Obama has sat by Khalidi's side as Khalidi has made some outrageously anti-Israel com-

ments, with nary a peep of opposition.

Obama didn't back away from the efforts of his big cheerleader, Jimmy "My Name is Earl" Carter, when Carter blundered stupidly into talks with Hamas. Until it dawned on Obama that he might need a big chunk of the Jewish vote to get elected, and then he "distanced" himself from Carter's Hamas lap dance.

Obama has said he wouldn't negotiate directly with Hamas, but two weeks ago, he had to cut loose a major foreign policy adviser, Robert Malley, for doing just that.

But don't question his patriotism!

He comes from Muslim parentage, at least on his father's side, and we're not supposed to wonder why Hamas would prefer Barack Hussein Obama to John Sidney McCain?

Meanwhile, not wanting to let Hamas hog the spotlight, Fidel Castro (still kickin'!) gave Obama a big, wet kiss this week. In a column for Cuban newspapers, he wrote that Obama was "the most progressive candidate to the U.S. presidency." ("Progressive" is Communist code for, well, Communist.) Castro also criticized Obama for saying he'd continue the trade embargo against Cuba, but ole Fidel went on to say, "I am not questioning Obama's great intelligence, his debating skills, or his work ethic."

Sounds like Fidel — like the thugs in Hamas — is packing his bags for a Love Boat cruise with Barry.

But don't question his patriotism!

You just know that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is pulling his hair out that these killers are stealing his thunder. Memo to junior clerics: find out what the New York Times is charging these days for a full page ad. Hugo Chavez must be investigating the costs of skywriting so he can declare his adoration for Barry from 20,000 feet. And Kim Jong Il must be illin' at the thought of the Islamists and the ancient Commie murderer edging him out of the endorsement game.

But perhaps they're smarter. If they keep their lips zipped and don't tip their hand, the Americans just might fall victim to a collective wave of idiocy and elect the 98 pound weakling who can't wait to make 'Smores around the campfire with them. Because, you know, who can resist a 'Smore?

When your enemies tell you who they are, believe them. When they tell you what they intend to do, believe them. And when they tell you which of your presidential candidates they'd prefer, believe them. They're not pulling your leg. (They only do that when it comes to reporting their nuclear activities.)

When America's enemies prefer the Clueless Hope Guy to the Bona fide War Hero, it shouldn't take a neurosurgeon to figure out for whom responsible Americans should vote.

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Obama's Dimestore 'Mein Kampf'

If characters from "The Hills" were to emote about Lrace, I imagine it would sound like B. Hussein Obama's autobiography, "Dreams From My Father."

Has anybody read this book? Inasmuch as the book reveals Obama to be a flabbergasting lunatic, I gather the answer is no. Obama is about to be our next president: You might want to take a peek. If only people had read "Mein Kampf" ...

Nearly every page — save the ones dedicated to cataloguing the mundane details of his life — is bristling with anger at some imputed racist incident. The last time I heard this much race-baiting invective I was ... in my usual front-row pew, as I am every Sunday morning, at Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago.

Obama tells a story about taking two white friends from the high school basketball team to a "black party." Despite their deep-seated, unconscious hatred of blacks, the friends readily accepted. At the party, they managed not to scream the N-word, but instead "made some small talk, took a couple of the girls out on the dance floor."

But with his racial hair-trigger, Obama sensed the whites were not comfortable because "they kept smiling a lot." And then, in an incident reminiscent of the darkest days of the Jim Crow South ... they asked to leave after spending only about an hour at the party! It was practically an etiquette lynching!

In the car on the way home, one of the friends empathizes with Obama, saying: "You know, man, that really taught me something. I mean, I can see how it must be tough for you and Ray sometimes, at school parties ... being the only black guys and all."

And thus Obama felt the cruel lash of racism! He actually writes that his response to his friend's perfectly lovely remark was: "A part of me wanted to punch him right there."

Listen, I don't want anybody telling Obama about Bill Clinton's "I feel your pain" line.

Wanting to punch his white friend in the stomach was the introductory anecdote to a full-page psy-

chotic rant about living by "the white man's rules." (One rule he missed was: "Never punch out your empathetic white friend after dragging him to a crappy all-black party.")

Obama's gaseous disquisition on the "white man's rules" leads to this charming crescendo: "Should you refuse this defeat and lash out at your captors, they would have a name for that, too, a name that could cage you just as good. Paranoid. Militant. Violent. Nigger."

For those of you in the "When is Obama gonna play the 'N-word' card?" pool, the winner is ... Page 85! Congratulations!

When his mother expresses concern about Obama's high school friend being busted for drugs, Obama says he patted his mother's hand and told her not to worry.

This, too, prompted Obama to share with his readers a life lesson on how to handle white people: "It was usually an effective tactic, another one of those tricks I had learned: People were satisfied so long as you were courteous and smiled and made no sudden moves. They were more than satisfied, they were relieved — such a pleasant surprise to find a well-mannered young black man who didn't seem angry all the time."

First of all, I note that this technique seems to be the basis of Obama's entire presidential campaign. But moreover — he was talking about his own mother! As Obama says: "Any distinction between good and bad whites held negligible meaning." Say, do you think a white person who said that about blacks would be a leading presidential candidate?

The man is stark bonkersville.

He says the reason black people keep to themselves is that it's "easier than spending all your time mad or trying to guess whatever it was that white folks were thinking about you."

Here's a little inside scoop about white people: We're not thinking about you. Especially WASPs. We think everybody is inferior, and we are perfectly

charming about it.

In college, Obama explains to a girl why he was reading Joseph Conrad's 1902 classic, "Heart of Darkness": "I read the book to help me understand just what it is that makes white people so afraid. Their demons. The way ideas get twisted around. I helps me understand how people learn to hate."

By contrast, Malcolm X's autobiography "spoke" to Obama. One line in particular "stayed with me," he says. "He spoke of a wish he'd once had, the wish that the white blood that ran through him, there by an act of violence, might somehow be expunged."

Forget Rev. Jeremiah Wright — Wright is Booker T. Washington compared to this guy.

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Over the Top Barack

Based on Barack Obama's hysterical, paranoid reaction to President Bush's remarks to the Israeli Knesset condemning the practice of appeasing terrorists, one might infer Obama was lying in wait for just such an opportunity to capture some national security street cred.

After all, Democrats begin any presidential race with a national security credibility deficit, and this one should be no different, notwithstanding the unpopularity of the Iraq war. Democrats like to think they gained congressional seats in 2006 because of the war, but a better read is that Republicans did themselves in through reckless spending, scandals and other abandonment of conservative principles.

Despite his puffed-up posturing, Obama probably recognizes this, as well. Otherwise, why would he have lashed out so nastily at both Mr. Bush (and Sen. McCain) for assuring our closest Middle Eastern ally that we would stand by it?

Obama was so sure Bush's remarks were aimed at him that he shed his nice-guy facade and gave the nation a little glimpse of his inner anger. For those who insist Obama is all sweet and light, I challenge you to listen to his tantrums in response to the president's non-attack.

Obama shouted: "I'm a strong believer in bipartisan foreign policy, but that cause is not served with dishonest, divisive attacks of the sort that we've seen out of George Bush and John McCain over the last couple days. They aren't telling you the truth."

Let me ask you: Where does Barack Obama get off proclaiming himself the high arbiter of civility and bipartisanship while he is engaged in a sputtering tirade of abject incivility and partisanship? Obama apparently expects us to assess his civility not on the basis of his conduct, but solely on the strength of his distorted self-description.

Like so many other liberals, Obama exempts himself from behavioral accountability through identification with liberal policies, which confer upon him the irrefutable presumption that he is kind and com-

passionate. But those not subject to the self-deluding spell of liberalism or Obamaphilia will not be fooled by such hypocrisy. They will judge Obama's claim to civility not on his self-elevating but empty words, but on his self-damning, nasty ones.

Obama's joining with other Democrats to bear false witness against President Bush is a perfect example of the type of incivility for which he disingenuously excoriates President Bush.

Obama also decried the president's remarks as "exactly the kind of appalling attack that's divided our country and alienated us from the rest of the world."

No, Sen. Obama, what have divided this country and alienated us from the rest of the world are the nonstop Democratic assaults against President Bush — assaults that you not only did not condemn as uncivil, dishonest and divisive but also have embraced and echoed.

What has placed America in a falsely negative light to the world is the Democratic chorus of lies that President Bush misled us into war in Iraq; that he is responsible for the killing of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians; that the United States is torturing and otherwise violating the "rights" of our enemy prisoners at Guantanamo Bay; that this very detention center is comparable to a Soviet Gulag or Nazi prison camp; that the Bush government is spying on its own citizens; that America, because of its corporate greed, refuses to lead the world against apocalyptic global warming; and that the heartland of America is inhabited by jingoistic, imperialistic, intolerant, homophobic, xenophobic, racist and reality-challenged Bible-thumpers.

President Bush is not guilty of leveling a partisan attack against Barack Obama in Israel. But if he were to change course after seven long years on the receiving end and start returning cheap shots at Democrats, say, at the rate of 10 per day for the remainder of his term, he still would be behind Democrats in this department by a sizeable multiple. Truly, it amazes

me how civil, composed and un-reciprocal President Bush has been in the face of this incessant barrage of partisan vitriol.

Shame on Barack Obama for falsely accusing the president of behavior he and his party have perfected through meticulous practice. Shame on him for pretending that he offers bipartisanship when his actual record is one of extreme liberalism and is strikingly bereft of aisle crossing or compromise. Shame on him for defining bipartisanship and civility, in effect, as acquiescing to his dictates.

Obama likens his own foreign policy approach to that of Presidents Kennedy and Reagan, but reality places him closer to George McGovern or Michael Dukakis. But there is a method to his madness. He has assumed the offense against his Republican rivals to divert our attention from his demonstrable lack of toughness in the war on terror.

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Barack Potatoe Obama?

Imagine that John McCain named a young running mate to campaign with him, and this national rookie suggested America had 58 states, repeatedly used the wrong names for the cities he was visiting, and honored a Memorial Day crowd by acknowledging the “fallen heroes” who were present, somehow alive and standing in the audience. How long would it take for the national media to see another Dan Quayle caricature? Let’s raise the stakes. What if it was the GOP presidential candidate making these thoroughly ridiculous comments? This scenario is very real, except it isn’t McCain. It’s the other fellow.

ABC reporter Jake Tapper follows politicians around for a living. On his blog, he suggested Barack Obama has a problem: “The man has been a one-man gaffe machine.”

In Sunrise, Fla., Obama said, “How’s it going, Sunshine?” He did the same thing in Sioux Falls, S.D., calling it “Sioux City.” Some of his geographic struggles seem calculated. When asked why Hillary Clinton trounced him in Kentucky, Obama claimed “I’m not very well known in that part of the country ... Sen. Clinton, I think, is much better known, coming from a nearby state of Arkansas. So it’s not surprising that she would have an advantage in some of those states in the middle.” But Obama’s home state of Illinois is more than “near” Kentucky — it borders Kentucky.

In Oregon, there was a doozy. Obama said of his long campaign, “I’ve been in 57 states, I think, one left to go.” No one in the press made much of this. As former ABC political reporter Marc Ambinder, now with the Atlantic Monthly magazine, admitted: “But if John McCain did this — if he mistakenly said he’d visited 57 states — the media would be all up in his grill, accusing him of a senior moment.” If you doubt him, remember how most media outlets noted, then underlined McCain’s error about al-Qaeda being trained and funded by Iran.

In New Mexico, Obama suggested he was like a young Haley Joel Osment in “The Sixth Sense,” with

the ability to see dead people: “On this Memorial Day, as our nation honors its unbroken line of fallen heroes — and I see many of them in the audience here today — our sense of patriotism is particularly strong.” Fallen heroes in the audience? Is this Barack Potatoe Obama? This is precisely the kind of misstatement that Dan Quayle-bashers would run ad infinitum.

But there have also been gaffes on more serious matters. ABC found that campaigning in Rush Limbaugh’s hometown of Cape Girardeau, Mo., Obama argued that our military’s Arabic translators in Iraq are needed in Afghanistan: “We only have a certain number of them and if they are all in Iraq, then it’s harder for us to use them in Afghanistan,” he claimed. But Afghans don’t speak Arabic; they speak several other languages. That’s a lot like McCain’s gaffe — except for the degree of media attention, which in the Democrat’s case was virtually nonexistent.

McCain also would have enjoyed more media focus on Obama’s completely muddled analysis of South America last week. He told the Orlando Sentinel on Thursday that he would meet with Chavez to discuss “the fermentation of anti-American sentiment in Latin America, his support of FARC in Colombia and other issues he would want to talk about.” But on Friday in Miami, he insisted any country supporting the Marxist guerrillas of FARC should suffer “regional isolation.” This left Obama advisers scrambling to suggest that these two opposing statements can somehow be put together, that he can meet Chavez and isolate him at the same time.

Sometimes, Obama invents Bosnia-sniper-style whoppers about his personal history. In Selma, Ala., Obama claimed that the spirit of hope derived from the civil rights protests in Selma in 1965 inspired his birth — when he was born in 1961. He also has inaccurately claimed that the Kennedys funded his Kenyan father’s trip to America in 1959.

While he was making boo-boos in New Mexico

on Memorial Day, Obama also (according to CBS reporter/blogger Maria Gavrilovic) talked about post-traumatic stress disorder by claiming he had an uncle “who was part of the American brigade that helped to liberate Auschwitz,” and then came home and spent six months in an attic. Gavrilovic didn’t note that the prisoners at Auschwitz were liberated by the Red Army. Obama earlier made the claim on his campaign site that his grandfather knew American troops who liberated Auschwitz and Treblinka (also liberated by the Red Army).

Everyone should grant these candidates a little room for error in the long slog of presidential campaigning. But what about some balance? The same national media that turned Dan Quayle’s name into an instant joke are now working over time to present Obama as Captain Competent.

How Would Iran Read Obama?

Reeling from President Bush's criticism of the proposition that we should negotiate with terrorists, "as if some ingenious argument will persuade them they have been wrong all along," Barack Obama was at first indignant, declaring: "George Bush knows that I have never supported engagement with terrorists." But apparently he doesn't consider Iran, for all the genocidal bellicosity of its President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a terrorist state: on Monday he reaffirmed that he would indeed sit down with the leaders of Iran (as well as with those of Cuba and Venezuela), and that no one should be disturbed by this, since these countries "don't pose a serious threat to us the way the Soviet Union posed a threat to us."

And speaking specifically about Iran, the presumptive Democratic nominee continued: "If Iran ever tried to pose a serious threat to us, they wouldn't stand a chance. And we should use that position of strength that we have to be bold enough to go ahead and listen. That doesn't mean we agree with them on everything. We might not compromise on any issues, but at least, we should find out other areas of potential common interest, and we can reduce some of the tensions that has caused us so many problems around the world."

Yes, he really said that "we should find out other areas of potential common interest." He didn't explain what these might be, but here John McCain's comment was particularly apposite. "It shows naivete and inexperience and lack of judgment," observed the GOP standard-bearer, "to say that he wants to sit down across the table from an individual who leads a country that says that Israel is a 'stinking corpse,' that is dedicated to the extinction of the state of Israel. My question is, what does he want to talk about?"

That's not all. Obama is apparently not aware that Ahmadinejad has made it clear that he is in no mood to sit down with Americans unless the Americans know their place. "The American administration," he said in 2006, "is still dreaming of returning the Iranian people 30 years backwards. As long as America has this dream, these [relations] will not happen."

What should America do instead? "They should wake up from this dream and see the facts. They should change their behavior and mend their ways. They should take a fair position. We have told them what they have to do, and if they do it, there will be no problem as far as we are concerned."

"We have told them what they have to do, and if they do it, there will be no problem as far as we are concerned"! As if that weren't clear enough, he warned America and its allies that "if you want to have good relations with the Iranian people in the future, you should acknowledge the right and the might of the Iranian people, and you should bow and surrender to the might of the Iranian people. If you do not accept this, the Iranian people will force you to bow and surrender."

Would Iran's Thug-In-Chief regard Obama's invitation to sit down and chat as a sign that he was willing to "bow and surrender"? There is no reason to think he would regard it in any other way. Islamic law stipulates that Islamic forces may only ask for a truce with the enemy under two conditions: if they have a reasonable expectation that the enemy may convert to Islam, or — more commonly — if the Muslims are weak and need to buy some time to recover their strength to fight again more effectively. With this understanding, the Iranian mullahs might be forgiven for assuming that if Obama is coming to them hat-in-hand, he must be weak. Given Ahmadinejad's oft-repeated declarations that Israel will soon cease to exist (it was only last week that he said that it was "on its way to annihilation"), weakness might not be the wisest thing to project to them at this point.

Unless, of course, the bright new President Obama is prepared to deal with a nuclear mushroom cloud over Tel Aviv. That will certainly give him and Ahmadinejad plenty to talk about.

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