

**BARACK OBAMA
EXPOSED!**

Barack Obama: EXPOSED!

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Cover Photo: AP Photo/Seth Wenig

Published by:

Eagle Publishing, Inc.

One Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20001

1-888-467-4448

Website: www.humanevents.com

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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 inducement 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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Youth Double Standard: Obama vs. Dubya

Hillary has to be nervous. At this juncture in the campaign, she's being edged out in the Goo Primary. Her natural allies in the media suddenly are more adulatory toward Barack Obama—and more defensive of anyone who would dare question his exotic biography.

Insight magazine, a longstanding publication of The Washington Times Co., published a gossip item with anonymous “Democratic Party” sources (they claimed some of them came from Hillary's camp) that Obama had attended a madrassa—a radical Islamic school—in Indonesia as a child. The story was unproven and should not have been published in its sorry condition.

The most obvious media outlet coming to the rescue was CNN, which now might be the Obama News Network, and not just the Clinton News Network. “DEBUNKING A SMEAR,” screamed the headline on CNN. Reporter John Vause reported from the scene in Indonesia that Obama was actually educated in a state-run school that touched on religion only once a week, “in one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in Jakarta.”

Wolf Blitzer repeatedly described CNN as doing “serious journalism” and that “CNN did what any serious news organization is supposed to do in this kind of a situation. We actually conducted an exclusive firsthand investigation.”

Further to the point, CNN President Jon Klein milked the issue to savage the competition, telling The New York Times it was irresponsible for Fox News to mention the Insight tale “without bothering to—or being able to—ascertain the facts.”

Earth to CNN: Facts are important, but you might want to save the lecturing for someone who didn't hire Peter Arnett to shovel Saddam's horse manure on your airwaves. Or outrageously aired a “news documentary” that falsely accused America of gassing its own soldiers in Laos. Factually challenged smears? CNN has a record unchallenged on cable.

Let's be clear about this. The liberal media don't

care what Democratic love objects do when they're in grade school, even in Indonesia, just as they didn't care what Bill Clinton was doing touring Russia and the Soviet bloc in his 20s, just as they didn't care how he dodged the draft or whether he inhaled, just as they didn't even want to know if Clinton raped a woman when he was 32.

But Obama ought to thank his lucky liberal stars that he's not a Republican. This is not the standard the media had for George W. Bush in 1999, when the entire liberal media ran in a pack suggesting Bush was a cokehead.

How did CNN, that oasis of “serious journalism” which always attacks a story facts-first, approach the Bush-cocaine flap in August 1999? First, in early August, the network teased the reader with talk of “rumors” about Bush on “Larry King Live.” Then, it surfaced on several weekends as rumor-floating on “The Capital Gang” and as a media ethics discussion on “Reliable Sources.”

Then it arrived on the news shows, but always presented in play-dumb terms as an unmanned missile, a question anonymously “dogging” Bush. (What rich irony!) CNN only had a candidate who refused to answer a question, beyond saying he'd pass a government background check. Wolf Blitzer and the president of CNN didn't send reporters anywhere to investigate. There were no lectures about getting ahead of the facts. The dominant expectation of CNN for days and days was that Bush must answer the charge. He had to deny something no one had credibly accused him of doing.

How low could it go? On its old all-female chat show, “CNN & Company,” Chicago Tribune reporter Ellen Warren upped the ante, speculating that Bush was into heroin, not just cocaine: “No, the questions aren't going to go away. And if George Bush used cocaine or mainlined heroin, somebody did it with him, somebody saw it, and reporters will find out about it.”

CNN not only presented and fed the rumors, it then accused others of having done it. Blitzer

reported that while Democrats were “not going to out and start making those kinds of accusations” of cocaine use directly, they’re happy “that at least some of the Republicans on the far right, some of the more right-wing Republicans, are doing in effect their work for them.” He said this without giggling.

But the richest irony in the contrast is this: Obama has admitted in his biography to using cocaine in high school and college. CNN doesn’t care. While they scour the globe to rebut madrassa stories, they’re not asking him about this settled truth. Serious journalism, indeed.

As usual, CNN devotes its “serious” journalism to very partisan goals: defeating Republicans and making the path straight and flowery for Democrats. Now that’s just reporting the facts.

Mr. Bozell is president of the Media Research Center.

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 practi-

cally 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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Reality of Obama Taking Hold

Fred Thompson is not the only presidential candidate suffering under the weight of unrealistic expectations. It appears that exuberant Democrat primary voters are finding out that Barack Obama's appeal begins and ends with his personal story.

Hillary Clinton's cryogenic personality and tractor trailer full of personal and political baggage had opened a window of opportunity for a contrast candidate.

Yet, according to a recent national poll (Washington Post/ABC), Hillary's lead over Obama has ballooned to 33-points just as she has also emerged as the frontrunner in Iowa.

Hillary may be running her campaign with the ruthless efficiency of a Japanese automaker but Obama's pixie dust is losing its hold on Democrat primary voters because his second story, that of being a reformer challenging the system, does not comport with the reality of his past or the rhetoric of his present.

In the past, Obama spent his time in the Illinois State Senate as a toady for current Senate President Emil Jones, not exactly a name synonymous with government reform.

While in the General Assembly, Obama further attempted to curry favor with the Chicago Democrat Machine by attaching his name as a co-sponsor to virtually any legislation that came from Mayor Richard Daley's City Hall. Hizzoner Part II is many things but a radical iconoclast seeking public policy paradigm shifts is not one of them.

It was also during the time that he was being toted around our state's capitol by Emil Jones like some celebutant's cockapoo that Obama bonded with other purveyors of good government like Tony Rezko, currently awaiting the start of his federal corruption trial.

In the present, Obama talks about talking about big, bold ideas but he never quite gets around to offering any — unless you count his inspirational stand against American flag lapel pins.

Otherwise he's a biracial George McGovern, offering the same humdrum, big government liberalism pushed by the Left since the Great Society.

Even on the War in Iraq, his self-selected defining issue, Obama is awash in contradiction. He sponsored legislation calling for complete troop withdrawal by the end of March 2008 but then recently refused to commit to complete troop withdrawal by the end of his first term — that's 2013 — were he elected President.

After watching Obama grope in the dark for the past 9 months, it is not surprising he is down 33 points. It is surprising he is down only 33 points.

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Obama in Perspective

Give Barack Obama his due. He won a smashing victory in Iowa, then gave a stirring speech framed as a transformational moment in American history. Millions watching him speak Thursday night presumably saw a plausible president, quite possibly the next president.

But first, a few gritty details.

Obama is still the presidential contender with a one-page resume. The Illinois state legislature and half of one term in the U.S. Senate is scant preparation to be president of the United States. In his brief Senate tenure, Obama has no legislative accomplishments, mainly because for most of that short time he's been running for president.

For a candidate aspiring to the toughest, most important job in the world, shouldn't experience count for something?

Foreign policy and national security are a president's top responsibilities, especially in time of war. Obama is devoid of experience in either field. His gaffes — threatening to invade Pakistan, offering prompt negotiations with anti-American despots — bespeak his amateur standing on matters vital to the safety and security of the American people.

Obama's inconsistency on Iraq is amply documented. He's been alternately for and against withholding funding for the troops, for and against setting timelines for withdrawal, and for and against a quick retreat from Iraq.

Whatever one's views on Iraq strategy and home-front support, these vacillations on a war in progress don't inspire confidence; in Obama's judgment, his grasp of Iraq realities and his constancy of purpose. Whatever this is, it isn't leadership.

All of this betrays Obama's lack of experience; a glaring deficiency that should be raising profound questions about his qualifications and fitness, at least now, for the presidency.

Then there's the disturbing disconnect between Obama's carefully crafted persona as a unifier and a supposed "trans-ideological" agent of change, and

his actual record in office.

Obama is running, quite effectively, as both a change agent and an unconventional politician. That fits his campaign motif, a fresh-faced, idealistic outsider running against the Washington establishment voters so distrust. That, in turn, also suggests that Obama is a different kind of Democrat; one perhaps less reflexively partisan and divisive than, say, Hillary Clinton or John Edwards. Certainly that was an implicit message sent in his eloquent Iowa victory speech.

What's troubling, however, is that Obama's record doesn't match his reassuring persona.

The liberal Americans for Democratic Action rates Obama's voting record in the Senate at 97.5 percent, near perfection for liberal Democrats. The American Conservative Union, the ADA's ideological opposite, rates Obama's voting record at a rock-bottom 8 percent. Both ratings leave no doubt that Obama's actual votes mark him as a traditionally liberal Democrat, not a moderate.

Where in these votes is the evidence of trans-ideological change that Obama is selling so successfully on the campaign trail? Where in this record is the evidence that Obama is the unifier he claims to be?

On domestic, economic, foreign policy and national security issues, Obama's actual record is consistently liberal and consistently orthodox in Democratic Party terms. Obama typically talks like a centrist but votes like a liberal.

Obama's record also raises another disturbing matter — his penchant for ducking tough issues. In the Illinois Legislature, Obama compiled a record of voting "present" on controversial and politically explosive bills. However politically convenient, this isn't leadership. Obama's three years in the U.S. Senate are similarly devoid of any leadership examples on legislation of consequence.

This doesn't necessarily indict Obama's claimed leadership skills as fraudulent. It does demonstrate that those skills have not yet been in evidence in his

legislative work. That's a curious, and worrying, fact.

Cataloguing the doubts about Obama isn't nit-picking or partisanship. It's the sort of scrutiny every presidential candidate should get. This is information that every voter deserves, and should want before making fateful decisions about this country's future.

Barack Obama is showing that he's a skilled campaigner with a deeply inspirational message. His appeals to hope, to change and to less divisive politics are proving compelling and popular, as arguably they should be. Obama is poised, possibly, to surpass Hillary Clinton as the odds-on favorite to win the Democratic Party's presidential nomination.

Before that sale is made, however, voters should be looking closer and learning more about Barack Obama.

Mr. Caldwell is editor of the San Diego Union-Tribune's Sunday "Insight" section and can be reached at robert.caldwell@uniontrib.com.

HUMAN EVENTS

Top 10 Contributors to Both the Clinton and Obama Campaigns

The presidential campaigns of Democratic Senators Hillary Clinton (N.Y.) and Barack Obama (Ill.) have raised a combined total of \$272.8 million through the end of January 2008. Who's funding their campaigns?

Below are the top 10 combined contributors to the Clinton and Obama campaigns, according to most recent data on OpenSecrets.org, the website of the Center for Responsive Politics. (The organizations themselves did not donate, rather the money came from the organizations' PACs, individual members or employees or owners, and those individuals' immediate families.)

1. GOLDMAN SACHS — TOTAL CONTRIBUTED: \$834,124

Hillary Clinton: \$413,361
Barack Obama: \$421,763

2. CITIGROUP, INC. — TOTAL CONTRIBUTED: \$572,473

Hillary Clinton: \$350,895
Barack Obama: \$221,578

3. MORGAN STANLEY —

TOTAL CONTRIBUTED: \$517,896

Hillary Clinton: \$362,700
Barack Obama: \$155,196

4. LEHMAN BROTHERS —

TOTAL CONTRIBUTED: \$492,500

Hillary Clinton: \$241,870
Barack Obama: \$250,630

5. JP MORGAN CHASE & CO. —

TOTAL CONTRIBUTED: \$458,728

Hillary Clinton: \$214,880
Barack Obama: \$243,848

6. NATIONAL AMUSEMENTS, INC. —

TOTAL CONTRIBUTED: \$455,853

Hillary Clinton: \$210,010
Barack Obama: \$245,843

7. SKADDEN, ARPS ET AL —

TOTAL CONTRIBUTED: \$364,216

Hillary Clinton: \$167,796
Barack Obama: \$196,420

8. KIRKLAND & ELLIS — TOTAL CONTRIBUTED: \$314,414

Hillary Clinton: \$179,676
Barack Obama: \$134,738

9. TIME WARNER — TOTAL CONTRIBUTED: \$300,360

Hillary Clinton: \$144,977
Barack Obama: \$155,383

10. MERRILL LYNCH — TOTAL CONTRIBUTED: \$269,442

Hillary Clinton: \$165,042
Barack Obama: \$104,400

Quid Pro QuObama?

On the day Hillary Clinton’s campaign unloaded a press dossier on Barack Obama’s mentor, the rabidly anti-American “preacher” Jeremiah Wright, who years ago presided at the marriage of Barack and Michelle Obama, the Obama campaign sought to divert attention by releasing Obama’s list of earmarks requests. Perhaps he should have released something else.

Let’s follow the money to see if we can find the change Obama has been talking about.

In 2006, Barack Obama requested an earmark of \$1 million for the University of Chicago Hospital. It just so happens that Michelle Obama is the Vice President for Community Affairs at the hospital.

As Byron York notes, Michelle Obama made \$121,910.00 in 2004 before her husband was elected to the United States Senate. In 2005, after Obama won his election, she made \$316,962.00. According to the *New York Times*, the hospital denies that Michelle Obama ever lobbied her husband on behalf of her employer for the \$1 million.

Barack Obama hopes for change in Washington. It’s a sure bet that the University of Chicago will be keeping Mrs. Obama on the payroll hoping for some change too.

The question is, is this the type of change the voters really want?

The Emperor Has No Clothes

It's inevitable that a lot of people are taking credit for the outcome of the Texas and Ohio primaries. In reality, the outcome was more or less the result of "Saturday Night Live."

Think about it. They were the ones who sicced the media on Barack Obama by spoofing them for treating him with soft kid gloves.

The skit was so effective that Mrs. Clinton was able to use it during the debate the following week, where she suggested that perhaps Obama needed a pillow.

The effect of Hillary's sarcasm and the earlier SNL skit was to spur the media to take a closer look at Obama, whom they had all but elevated to sainthood over the past year.

So they began to look below the surface. Lo and behold, out popped Tony Rezco and what has become known as "Naftagate," the word coined by delighted Clinton campaign staffers to describe secret talks between an Obama campaign official and Canadian bureaucrats.

On the very eve of the crucial primaries, the media had created serious doubts about Obama's credibility by exposing the falsity of his denials that any such negotiations had taken place.

The effect of that revelation in Ohio, where NAFTA is a dirty word, was devastating. Here was Obama attacking the Clinton's backing of the North American Free Trade Agreement and promising to junk the treaty until it was renegotiated while at the same time a top official of his campaign was telling the Canadians sotto voce that he really didn't mean it — it was all just campaign rhetoric.

It got even worse when Obama held a press conference and answered a mere eight questions, and when the pressure got too strong he turned his back on the media and walked away. If you want to provoke the media to get hot on your heels and dig deeper into your clouded background, that's the way to do it.

As long as the media and the rest of us play in his

sandbox, and on his terms, Barack Obama loves the playing field. As soon as the game moves out of his sandbox, it seems to unnerve him.

When you are president of the United States of America you are constantly playing in other people's sandboxes, and if you don't know how to play the game outside of your own sandbox you don't belong in the White House sandbox.

In the space of a couple of days, Barack Obama showed that he is not equipped to be president of the United States. He showed that he folds under pressure. As long as he was treated by the media as being above criticism he seemed immune from the attacks ordinary mortals endure when running for office.

Once the media stopped worshipping at the Obama altar and was forced to take a close look at him, however, he lost his immunity and was shown to be a mere human like the rest of us.

Whatever new disclosures about Obama emerge in the coming months — and you can be sure there will be some because the Clinton attack machine never runs on idle — he can be expected to react as he did last week: angry and resentful that his treatment at the media's hands was a case of *lèse-majesté*.

As last week proved, he was not garbed in regal splendor but instead was stark naked.

The would-be emperor had no clothes.

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.

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 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.

Ms. Zoller is a political analyst and conservative talk show host for WDUN AM 550 in Gainesville, Georgia. She is one of the Talkers Magazine "Heavy Hundred" Talk Shows in America. She can be heard on Righttalk Radio and seen regularly on cable news. She is the author of "Indivisible: Uniting Values for a Divided America." You may contact her through www.marthazoller.com.

Clinton v. Obama: Who is Black Enough?

Apparently Hillary Clinton thinks she is a better African-American candidate than Barack Obama. After all, she is married to the first black President of the United States. But Hillary Clinton has become the unfair victim of a black man conspiring to become the first authentic black president: a man who has the utter gall to think he can compete against a white woman.

That's right, Barack Obama, a real black man, is running against the wife of the first black president. What utter nerve; what unmitigated gall from an upstart who thinks he can take on the first American Eurocrat and actually beat her in the primaries.

If Barack Obama thought he could take on the pantsuited Hillary he has another thing coming. Hillary Clinton tried to put Obama in his place and it backfired enormously. Obama, who spoke about Martin Luther King's march on Washington in the context of his own campaign for president, was scolded by Hillary who said that if it not for Democratic President Lyndon Johnson, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream and the Civil Rights Act would never have happened.

Mrs. Clinton, naturally, managed to not mention one big detail: if not for the Republican Party backing and pushing LBJ to sign the Civil Rights Act of 1964, that bill would have been poison penned by Democrats in the Congress and Senate. Republicans — the party of the Emancipation Proclamation-wanted Civil Rights more than Democrats — the party of slavery.

Civil Rights did not start with Lyndon Johnson, it started with Frederick Douglass, a black man, and his abolition movement against slavery that created the first Civil Rights Bill at the end of the Civil War to give all black Americans citizenship. Douglas, the black republican abolitionist, was an presidential advisor to Abraham Lincoln, the white republican president who signed the Emancipation Proclamation. That act set the groundwork for Dr. King 100 years earlier.

All the Clintons have done is scam America with socialized liberalism keeping low-income blacks where the Clintons want them: beholden to Democrats and certain to vote for Hillary.

Bill Clinton has made talk radio rounds accusing Barack Obama of racially attacking Hillary while claiming Obama's campaign is nothing but a fairy tale.

The truth is Hillary Clinton is desperate to win the presidency. She is desperate enough to play the race card as well as she played the tear card in New Hampshire. Underhandedness is not beneath Hillary Clinton who's angry she may lose the nomination to an upstart (who is, to paraphrase Bill, younger, taller and a man) who does a better imitation of President Kennedy than Bill Clinton ever did.

Just imagine the indignation Hillary Clinton must be experiencing when she watches Barack Obama speak and hears Americans compare him to Dr. King and JFK. Those comparisons belong solely to her "black" husband. After all, it was Bill Clinton who so admired President Kennedy, he wanted to become president; it was Bill and Hillary Clinton who resurrected Camelot; and it was the Clintons Americans used to refer to as the new Jack and Jackie. And what about all those expensive vacations the Clintons took in Martha's Vineyard? Didn't they rebrand the Clintons as Kennedys?

Unfortunately for Hillary, Michelle Obama does a far better impersonation of Jackie Kennedy than Hillary ever will. And worse for Hillary: Michelle Obama can actually pull it off in a skirt.

And let's not forget the Obama's have two cute little kids for fabulous photo-ops — think Jack and Jackie.

By now the infamous Clinton Oval Office Lamp Wars have probably resumed in the New York home. The pace and frequency of them will be determined by the consistency and timing of Bill's slips of the tongue making Hillary look foolish.

Bill Clinton was supposed to be Hillary's winning

ace in the hole. Now he's making Ron Paul look good.

Nothing is beneath the woman who turned a blind eye to every woman beneath her husband in order to get into the White House in 1992 and 1996. Our imagination doesn't reach what she is capable of in desperation to win the White House term she thinks she is owed.

The problem for Hillary Clinton is she is up against an attractive, smart black man who is out-classing both her and her juvenile delinquent hubby. Hillary Clinton is so obsessed with winning the presidency, her remarks about Martin Luther King, Jr's ineffectiveness may presage a Howard Dean moment. If Obama beats here in South Carolina, we may be treated to another Democrat performing a primal scream for the television cameras. I can't wait.

Lisa Richards is a lifelong Reagan Conservative Republican from Connecticut who believes in America's constitutional founding as a Constitutional Republic. You can read more of her work at www.lisa-richards.com.

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.

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.

The Godmother Kisses Obama

Republicans sat helpless as Bill demolished 41 and then Bob Dole. The Clinton war room, Bubba's charm and Hillary's supposed genius were unbeatable. "Were" is the operative word.

The Clintons' proven campaign tactics — triangulation, personal attacks and open-ended promises to liberal pressure groups — haven't worked against Obama. His shimmering vacuity makes a poor target for the first two, and his ability to out-promise Hillary negates the third. But the Clintons aren't quitting now, and they aren't rehearsing her for role of second-fiddler, despite what Hill and Bill were hinting at last week.

According to a USA Today report, "Speaking in Hattiesburg, Miss., [Sen.] Clinton remarked that 'I've had people say, 'Well I wish I could vote for both of you.' Well, that might be possible some day. But first I need your vote on Tuesday.'" Bill Clinton said a Democratic ticket including both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama would be "almost unstoppable." So why are the Clintons talking about a Hillary-Barack ticket?

It's a gesture the Godmother meant to be the campaign equivalent of the mafia kiss of death. A Clinton-Obama ticket may be what she will be forced to accept, but Obama wants the top prize and isn't in a position to have to settle.

And the other Clinton evolution — voiced yesterday on "Meet the Press" by Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell — is blunt: Hillary should be nominated because Obama can't carry the big swing states essential to winning the White House.

Rendell said that because Hillary's campaign has succeeded in larger states while Obama has managed to win smaller states that aren't crucial to the November result. Hillary has won in big states — Ohio, New York and California — but Obama has managed to win in others such as Virginia and Maryland and tied Clinton in Texas and Missouri.

The wonderfully-interminable cage match between Clinton and Obama may make this the most

Clintonian of elections: nasty, brutish and long. If Sen. McCain will remain locked on what he calls a "respectful" campaign, he'd better be cheering for Obama.

In the 2004 Wyoming caucuses, about 675 people turned out to vote. Last Saturday about 9000 did, and Barack Obama beat Hillary Clinton by 61-38 percent. Under the Democrats' proportionality rules even that large margin only resulted in a net gain of two delegates for Obama. Tomorrow's Mississippi primary is likely to result in another Obama win, and another small gain.

Clinton lags behind Obama by only 1588-1465 delegates. And those numbers include — according to RealClearPolitics — a Clinton advantage of 242-210 super delegates with 344 undeclared. Because the remaining primaries — including possible reruns of Florida and Michigan — will probably not clinch the nomination for either candidate, both are maneuvering to capture the remaining super delegates, and persuade others to change their allegiance.

To state the mathematically obvious, neither Obama nor Clinton will take enough elected delegates to win the required 2025 delegates before the convention. So the decision will be made on two fronts. First among the 796 "super delegates." And second, in the likely reruns of the Florida and Michigan primaries.

Those battles will be fought with increasing intensity by the candidates and their surrogates. Clinton's campaign benefited from two great gaffes last week. The first was by Obama himself.

After being ridiculed by a "Saturday Night Live" sketch for giving Obama too easy a time, the press reacted by making him face real questions in a press conference after Clinton's Ohio win. Obama fumbled and stumbled: at one point he appeared angry at being treated like a real pol. Hillary's remaining press pals — and the Obama media cheerleaders who defect — will smell blood in the water and won't let up. But then now-former Obama advisor Samantha

Power called Hillary a “monster” in an interview with *The Scotsman* newspaper.

As *The Scotsman* reported, Power said, “She is a monster, too — that is off the record — she is stooping to anything,” Ms. Power said, hastily trying to withdraw her remark.” This betrays a huge vulnerability in Obama’s team: no political pro would say something is off the record after it’s out in an on-record interview. Rookies make rookie mistakes. And that is precisely the kind of mistake that could defeat Obama.

The *Scotsman* also quoted Power saying, “You just look at her and think, ‘Ergh’. But if you are poor and she is telling you some story about how Obama is going to take your job away, maybe it will be more effective. The amount of deceit she has put forward is really unattractive.” Really? Hold on to your hat, Barack. You ain’t seen nothing yet.

The next big battleground — the likely do-overs of the Michigan and Florida primaries — could provide Clinton a decisive margin. With Michigan’s 156 prospective delegates and Florida’s 185 — Clinton or Obama could add up to 341 to their totals (but the required number of delegates will also rise to about 2208.) The two candidates can campaign hard in both states, but at what costs?

Just redoing the Florida primary could cost upward of \$4 million. Michigan could cost less, but not by much. Who will pay? State parties can accept “soft money” outside legal restraints. But which donors will foot the bill? And every dollar spent there will be one less to spend against McCain (through 527 groups and such) in the fall.

It will cost the campaigns more advertising money, more campaign time and much more. Much more maneuvering, promises and arm-twisting. Hillary may not be able to repeat her Florida win if Obama campaigns heavily there, as he will have to. Michigan will be the same.

In 1992 and 1996 Republicans watched helplessly. Now they can watch the cage match continue, probably right up to August. As I said, it’ll be nasty, brutish and long. Ain’t it grand?

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Playing by Obama's Rules

To observe Democrats this week, 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.

Mr. Buchanan is a nationally syndicated columnist and author of “The Death of the West,” “The Great Betrayal,” “A Republic, Not an Empire” and “Where the Right Went Wrong.”

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.

Ghettoizing Barack

“I guess this is how the West was won,” Hillary Clinton exulted at her victory rally in Las Vegas after the Democratic caucuses.

Well, not exactly, ma’am. Yet how the Clintons, by deftly playing the race and gender cards, turned back the greatest single challenge to a Clinton Restoration will be studied for a long time to come.

It began in Iowa, where Barack Obama, the first African-American crossover candidate with broad appeal to all racial and ethnic groups, was on fire in a state that was overwhelmingly white.

Came then Billy Shaheen, the Clinton New Hampshire co-chair, to suggest that, were Barack to be nominated, Republicans would ask when he had stopped using drugs and whether he ever bought or sold drugs. Mark Penn of the Clinton campaign denied on MSNBC’s “Hardball” that his team was raising the “cocaine issue.”

Mission accomplished, Shaheen dutifully resigned. Bill Clinton drove the point home, telling an interviewer that to nominate Obama would be a “roll of the dice.”

Nevertheless, Barack won Iowa going away and stormed into New Hampshire for what pundits predicted would be a defeat for Hillary so crushing it would be the final chapter of the Clinton era.

Then Bill Clinton told a Dartmouth audience that Obama’s claim to being consistently antiwar was a “fairy tale.”

That, plus the media pile-on, Barack’s snide dismissal of her in the debate — “You’re popular enough, Hillary” — and her choked-up moment hours before voting began caused the women of New Hampshire to rally in sympathy. Obama’s lead, estimated by some at 15 points, vanished, and Hillary won what became one of the great upsets in New Hampshire history.

Stunned and stung, Barack’s African-American backers then rushed into the baited trap. One after another, they headed for the TV cameras to charge that the Clintons had fought dirty, forcing voters to

focus on the race and gender of the candidates rather than on their records, ideas and issues.

When Hillary said sweetly that while Dr. Martin Luther King was the inspirational leader of the civil rights revolution, LBJ was the indispensable leader who had enacted the laws, King, martyr-hero of black America, became an issue.

As the raillery grew acrimonious and the rage among Barack’s backers rose, his black support solidified, but his white support, recoiling from race politics, peeled away. And the sisterhood rallied to Hillary.

Robert Johnson of Black Entertainment Television then stoked the fire once more, asserting that when Bill and Hillary were fighting for civil rights, Barack was in Chicago doing whatever he was doing in the neighborhoods. The implication: Barack was doing drugs, while Bill and Hillary marched. Denying malevolent intent, Johnson, too, apologized.

But the damage has been done. And reviewing the returns from Nevada and the polls in South Carolina, it may be irreversible. Barack is no longer a crossover candidate who transcends race. The color-blind coalition he seemed to be assembling appears to be coming apart.

His momentum is gone. The emotional movement that was Iowa has passed. The media are no longer smitten. And as African-Americans rally to him, Democratic women, a majority of the party, are rallying around Hillary.

Consider the stark Nevada returns. Though Barack used as the refrain of his concession speech in New Hampshire “Yes, we can!” — the battle cry of Hispanics, “Si, se puede” — though he was endorsed by the Culinary Workers Union, he lost Hispanics by nearly two to one.

Equally ominous, he lost both the white vote and the women’s vote by the same three-to-two margin, while sweeping the African-American vote five to one. Once a candidate who happened to be black, Obama is now the black candidate.

This may be a portent of what is to come. With Hispanics, whites and women a huge majority of Democrats, Hillary should sweep a majority of states in the Southwest and the West, including Texas and California, where African-Americans are relatively few in number and Hispanics are many.

If Barack loses South Carolina, he is cooked, as the Clintonites have made him the favorite. Even if he carries South Carolina, it will be written off as black folks coming out for a native son.

Folks will look instead at how well, or badly, he does among whites. If Hillary and Edwards crush him among white voters, the message will be that the Democratic Party will risk ruin if it nominates an African-American who has shown little appeal among whites and even less among Hispanics. For whites and Hispanics are the swing votes in presidential politics.

In three weeks, Barack has been ghettoized. The crossover candidate, the great liberal hope, has become a Jesse Jackson, who is ceded the black vote and a few states, then given a speaking role at the convention, as the party moves on to the serious business of electing a president.

One cannot deny that Bill Clinton was right. Nominating Barack would be a “roll of the dice.” But nor can one deny that Bill and Hillary helped make sure the risk would be one the party would not take.

Mr. Buchanan is a nationally syndicated columnist and author of “The Death of the West,” “The Great Betrayal,” “A Republic, Not an Empire” and “Where the Right Went Wrong.”

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.

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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!

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Human Events

The National Conservative Weekly

One Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20001

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