



## SWIFTBOATING 2.0

### THE THEMATIC STRUCTURE OF THE RIGHT-WING SMEAR CAMPAIGN AGAINST BARACK OBAMA

As the means of communication have evolved, presidential campaigns have grown increasingly multifaceted, with each election featuring layers of complexity that were not present four years before. The most striking feature of the 2008 election may be the sheer volume and variation of the attacks being directed at Sen. Barack Obama. Though they come from many sources, arrive through a variety of media, and cover a wide range of subjects, a close examination reveals a unified thematic structure to these attacks.

As has been extensively documented, many of the criticisms Obama has faced are based on outright falsehoods. The truth is that he is a Christian, not a Muslim; he was born in the United States; he doesn't refuse to recite the Pledge of Allegiance; he wasn't endorsed by Fidel Castro; and so on. Other attacks are outrageous distortions with a kernel of truth at their core.

The diagram below shows how the seemingly disconnected attacks on Obama all drive in a similar direction. Each begins with some aspect of Obama's history, family, personal characteristics, or beliefs. The attack then moves to one of three broad themes: that Obama is a Muslim or somehow foreign; that he represents a black radicalism more at home in the 1960s than today; or that he is a liberal elitist with a radical, even socialist agenda.

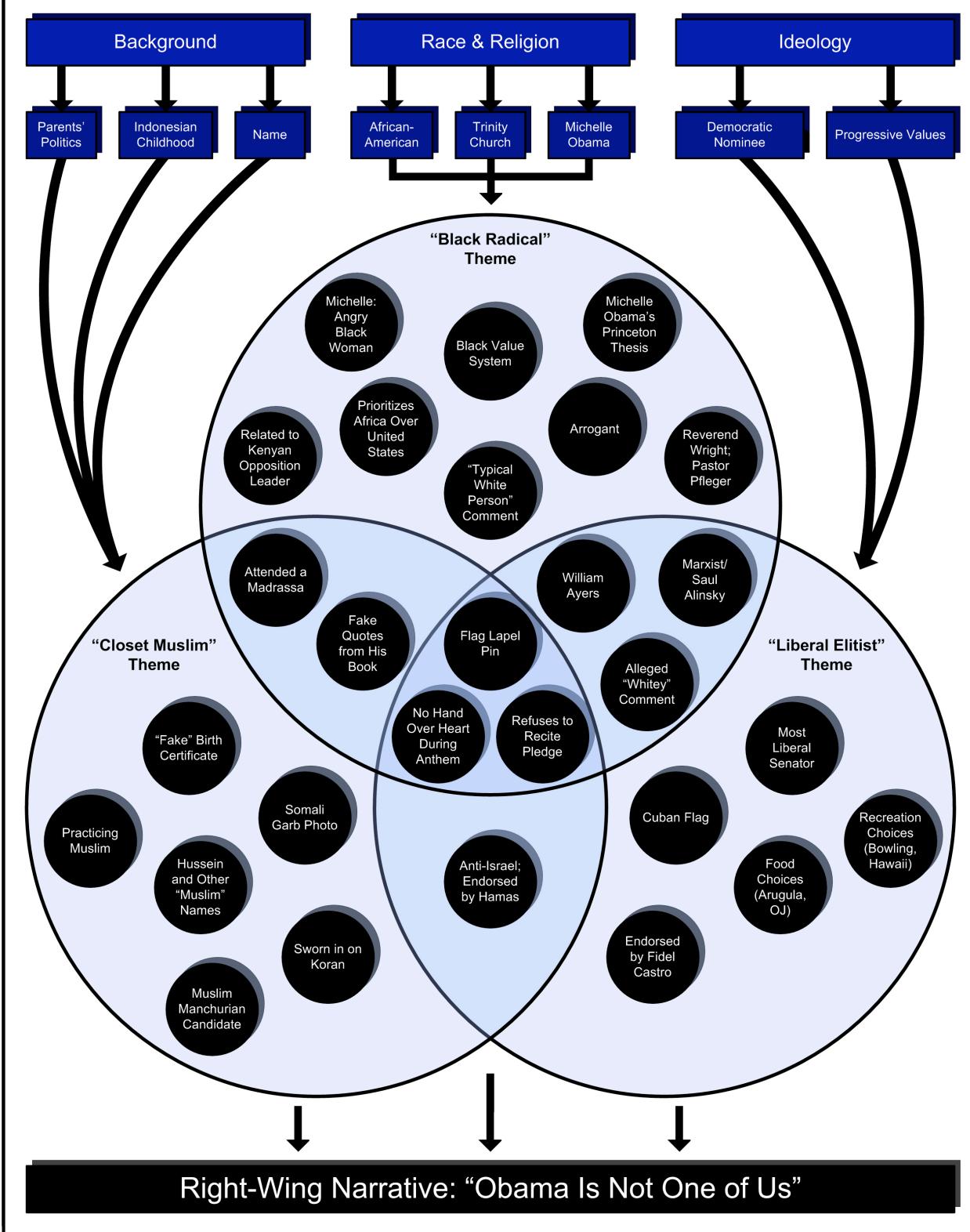
Some of the attacks touch on two or even all three of these themes, which is why they are represented in a Venn diagram. But all the attacks ultimately point to the conclusion that Obama is "not one of us," as the expression goes -- not Christian, not white, not mainstream, not even American.

Just as the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth unleashed on the public a dossier of lies about John Kerry in 2004, this new campaign is on a mission to spread misinformation about a presidential candidate. We call it "Swiftboating 2.0" not only because it is the latest model of a political smear campaign, but also because it shares features of "Web 2.0" sites like Facebook and MySpace: significant portions of the content are generated by ordinary people and are spread from peer to peer. Swiftboating 2.0 combines these new information pathways with traditional media -- books from conservative publishers, right-wing radio, and conservative pundits and strategists on television -- to spread the smears as widely as possible and force them into the mainstream media.

To understand the attacks on Obama, one must acknowledge that they operate together, as one coherent, thematically unified campaign: Swiftboating 2.0.

# Swiftboating 2.0

The Right-Wing Smear Campaign Against Barack Obama



# SWIFTBOATING 2.0

## "Black Radical" Theme

Arrogant	5
Black Value System	7
Michelle: Angry Black Woman	8
Michelle Obama's Princeton Thesis	9
Prioritizes Africa over United States	10
Related to Kenyan Opposition Leader	11
Reverend Wright; Pastor Pfleger	12
"Typical White Person" Comments	15

## "Liberal Elitist" Theme

Cuban Flag	17
Endorsed by Fidel Castro	18
Food Choices (Arugula, OJ)	19
"Most Liberal" Senator	21
Recreation Choices (Bowling, Hawaii)	22

## "Closet Muslim" Theme

"Fake" Birth Certificate	23
Hussein and Other "Muslim" Names	24
Muslim Manchurian Candidate	25
Practicing Muslim	26
Somali Garb Photo	29
Sworn in on Quran	30

## **"Black Radical" / "Liberal Elitist"**

Alleged "Whitey" Comment	31
Marxist / Saul Alinsky	32
William Ayers	34

## **"Liberal Elitist" / "Closet Muslim"**

Anti Israel; Endorsed by Hamas	36
--------------------------------	----

## **"Closet Muslim" / "Black Radical"**

Attended a Madrassa	38
Fake Quotes from His Book	39

## **"Black Radical" / "Liberal Elitist" / "Closet Muslim"**

No Flag Lapel Pin	40
No Hand over Heart during Anthem	42
Refuses to Recite Pledge	43

## “BLACK RADICAL” THEME

### Arrogant

**Attack:** Barack Obama is arrogant and presumptuous, already acting like a president even though he hasn't been elected. He considers himself a “symbol,” which underscores his hubris.

**The Facts:** While Obama has been accused of acting presumptuously, the truth is that Obama has acted no differently than other presidential candidates. He has been criticized for planning a White House transition months before the election, when Presidents George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter all did the same.<sup>1</sup> He has been assailed for going on an overseas diplomatic tour and meeting foreign leaders, when John McCain himself has met with leaders overseas<sup>2</sup> during the campaign and touted those trips. He has been accused of hubris for calling himself a “symbol”<sup>3</sup> of America following his trip to Europe, when in fact Obama noted that his enthusiastic reception by crowds “is not about me at all.”<sup>4</sup> Some<sup>5</sup> critics<sup>6</sup> have<sup>7</sup> read<sup>8</sup> the attacks as a coded racial smear of Obama being “uppity.”

**The Echo Chamber:** AP<sup>9</sup>, Washington Post<sup>10</sup>, Los Angeles Times<sup>11</sup>, MSNBC<sup>12</sup>, CNN<sup>13</sup>, Fox News Channel<sup>14</sup>, Republican National Committee<sup>15</sup>, Karl Rove<sup>16</sup>, John McCain<sup>17</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** One of the first major journalists to write about Obama's alleged arrogance was Associated Press' Ron Fournier. In a March 17, 2008, analysis piece headlined “Obama walks arrogance line,” Fournier wrote of Obama, “[T]here's a line smart politicians don't cross – somewhere between 'I'm qualified to be president' and 'I'm born to be president.' Wherever it lies, Barack Obama better watch his step. He's bordering on arrogance.” In an interview for the GQ blog posted April 2, Karl Rove picked up on the theme, calling Obama “coolly detached and very arrogant.”

It was a line of attack that would only gain momentum after Obama clinched the nomination in June. At a June 23 breakfast with Republican insiders, Rove called Obama “coolly arrogant.”<sup>18</sup> On June 24, on Fox News' *The O'Reilly Factor*, Rove repeated the charge: “I do think Barack Obama is arrogant.”<sup>19</sup> On June 25, CNN reported Rove's comments, calling it “a new line of attack.”<sup>20</sup> On July 30, the Republican National Committee launched a website called “Obama Audacity Watch,”<sup>21</sup> which chronicled instances of alleged arrogance by Obama.

Conservatives and the media continued that line of attack by criticizing Obama for allegedly acting as if he were already president when he went abroad in July. In a July 11 report on Obama's then-upcoming trip to Europe and planned speech in Germany, CNN's Campbell Brown asked, “Just who does Barack Obama think he is? Are all these grandiose speeches good politics, or an example of some very presumptuous overreaching?”<sup>22</sup> On the July 22 edition of MSNBC's *Race for the White House*, Weekly Standard senior writer Stephen Hayes said, “I think for Barack Obama, this really risks becoming the arrogance tour.”<sup>23</sup>

On July 24, the Republican National Committee posted on its website an attack on Obama following reports that he was planning for a White House transition.<sup>24</sup> On that day's *MSNBC Live*, host David Shuster called the plan “a little premature,” while his guest U.S. News & World Report's Kenneth Walsh replied that “it plays into this notion that the Republicans are talking about, about Obama being too arrogant, that he has sort of a sense of inevitability that has set in there.”<sup>25</sup> Other media outlets also forwarded the Republican criticism without noting that Presidents George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter all planned their

transition to the White House months before the election.<sup>26</sup>

In a July 30 *Washington Post* article, Dana Milbank called Obama the “presumptuous nominee” and accused him of “hubris.”<sup>27</sup> Quoting an unnamed source that he gave no indication he had attempted to verify, Milbank reported that Obama told congressional leaders in a closed-door meeting, “I have become a symbol of the possibility of America returning to our best traditions.” But according to the Post’s Jonathan Weisman, the line attributed to Obama was actually part of a longer statement in which he sought to deflect attention from himself. The full quote, according to Weisman’s sources, stated, “It has become increasingly clear in my travel, the campaign -- that the crowds, the enthusiasm, 200,000 people in Berlin, is not about me at all. It’s about America. I have just become a symbol.”<sup>28</sup>

John McCain’s campaign has also been pushing the arrogance storyline.<sup>29</sup> On July 30, the McCain campaign released an ad that called Obama “the biggest celebrity in the world.”<sup>30</sup> In an accompanying press release, the McCain campaign blasted Obama for his “presumptuous arrogance” and cited Milbank’s column, stating: “As *The Washington Post* reported this morning, Barack Obama has gone from his party’s presumptive nominee to ‘its presumptuous nominee.’”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200807250012?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200807250012?f=s_search)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2008/07/03/peripatetic\\_mccain\\_takes\\_campaign\\_abroad/](http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2008/07/03/peripatetic_mccain_takes_campaign_abroad/)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/07/29/AR2008072902068.html>

<sup>4</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200807300009?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200807300009?f=s_search)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/08/03/gergen-mccain-is-using-co\\_n\\_116605.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/08/03/gergen-mccain-is-using-co_n_116605.html)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2008/7/28/83757/6092/453/557882>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.theroot.com/id/47536>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.nysun.com/national/claim-that-obama-is-arrogant-stirs-a-debate/73174/>

<sup>9</sup> [http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap\\_campaignplus/20080317/ap\\_ca/on\\_deadline\\_arrogance](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap_campaignplus/20080317/ap_ca/on_deadline_arrogance)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/07/29/AR2008072902068\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/07/29/AR2008072902068_pf.html)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-challenges25-2008jul25,0,7143612.story?page=2>

<sup>12</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200807240009?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200807240009?f=s_search)

<sup>13</sup> <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0807/30/ldt.01.html>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACFV51xzb7g>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.gop.com/News/NewsRead.aspx?Guid=25374d23-41be-45c2-a5d9-8aefeba8ffb4>

<sup>16</sup> <http://men.style.com/gq/blogs/gqeditors/2008/04/karl-rove-likes.html>

<sup>17</sup> <http://thepage.time.com/mccain-campaign-statement-2/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalpunch/2008/06/rove-obamas-the.html>

<sup>19</sup> <http://bravenewfilms.org/blog/43068-karl-rove-yes-i-do-think-barack-obama-is-arrogant>

<sup>20</sup> <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0806/25/ec.01.html>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.gop.com/news/NewsRead.aspx?Guid=294eff88-9f29-4459-94d4-41674db9d3c6>

<sup>22</sup> <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0807/11/ec.01.html>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/25834202/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.gop.com/News/NewsRead.aspx?Guid=25374d23-41be-45c2-a5d9-8aefeba8ffb4>

<sup>25</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200807250012?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200807250012?f=s_search)

<sup>26</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200807250012?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200807250012?f=s_search)

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/07/29/AR2008072902068.html>

<sup>28</sup> [http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/2008/07/30/house\\_aides\\_push\\_back\\_on\\_obama.html](http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/2008/07/30/house_aides_push_back_on_obama.html)

<sup>29</sup> <http://thepage.time.com/mccain-campaign-statement-2/>

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHXYsw\\_ZDXg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHXYsw_ZDXg)

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.johnmccain.com/McCainReport/Read.aspx?guid=943e785c-c61e-4a38-8637-c1df86ae7cd>

## Black Value System

**Attack:** The “Black Value System” promulgated by Trinity United Church of Christ proves that the church is “separatist” and shows that Obama is a divisive candidate out of the mainstream of American life.

**The Facts:** Trinity United Church of Christ promotes a “Black Value System,” whose tenets include “Commitment to God,” “Commitment to the Black Community,” “Commitment to the Black Family,” and “Commitment to Self-Discipline and Self-Respect.”<sup>1</sup> But contrary to the assertion that Trinity is “separatist,” Rev. Jeremiah Wright of Trinity said on the March 1 edition of *Hannity & Colmes*, “The African-centered point of view does not assume superiority, nor does it assume separatism. It assumes Africans speaking for themselves as subjects in history, not objects in history.”<sup>2</sup> Far from shunning non-blacks, Trinity welcomes worshippers of all races, as Martin E. Marty of the University of Chicago Divinity School wrote: “My wife and I on occasion attend, and, like all other non-blacks, are enthusiastically welcomed.”<sup>3</sup> Addressing criticism from conservatives, Obama said, “Commitment to God, black community, commitment to the black family, the black work ethic, self-discipline and self-respect. ... Those are values that the conservative movement in particular has suggested are necessary for black advancement.”<sup>4</sup>

**The Echo Chamber:** chain emails<sup>5</sup>, Fox News<sup>6</sup> Channel<sup>7</sup>, MSNBC<sup>8</sup>, right-wing<sup>9</sup> news sites<sup>10</sup>, right-wing<sup>11</sup> blogs<sup>12</sup>, *Investor’s Business Daily*<sup>13</sup>, *The Obama Nation* by Jerome Corsi<sup>14</sup>, *The Case Against Barack Obama* by David Freddoso<sup>15</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** A February 6, 2007, article in the *Chicago Tribune* discussing the Black Value System and the mission of Trinity United Church of Christ sparked a firestorm of criticism from conservatives.<sup>16</sup> On the February 7 edition of MSNBC’s *Tucker*, host Tucker Carlson claimed that Trinity “sounds separatist to me” and “contradicts the basic tenets of Christianity.”<sup>17</sup> On the February 28 edition of Fox News Channel’s *Hannity & Colmes*, guest Erik Rush of the right-wing news site WorldNetDaily called the Black Value System a “scary doctrine” and compared Trinity to a “cult.”<sup>18</sup> For the next several months, co-host Sean Hannity asserted<sup>19</sup> numerous<sup>20</sup> times that Trinity advocated a separatist ideology.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.tucc.org/black\\_value\\_system.html](http://www.tucc.org/black_value_system.html)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,256078,00.html>

<sup>3</sup> [http://marty-center.uchicago.edu/sightings/archive\\_2007/0402.shtml](http://marty-center.uchicago.edu/sightings/archive_2007/0402.shtml)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/politics/chi-0702060164feb06,1,5408274.story?page=1&coll=chi-news-hed>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2008/jan/11/attack-e-mail-slams-obama-religion-race/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,317584,00.html>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.newsounds.us/2007/06/27/conspiracy\\_theorist\\_hannity\\_smears\\_obamas\\_minister\\_again.blames\\_hillary.php](http://www.newsounds.us/2007/06/27/conspiracy_theorist_hannity_smears_obamas_minister_again.blames_hillary.php)

<sup>8</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200702090009>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.newsmax.com/kessler/Obama\\_Church\\_Racism/2008/01/07/62285.html](http://www.newsmax.com/kessler/Obama_Church_Racism/2008/01/07/62285.html)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.worldnetdaily.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=59169>

<sup>11</sup> <http://newsbusters.org/blogs/john-stephenson/2008/03/16/obama-s-church-sanitizes-website>

<sup>12</sup> [http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=29309\\_Obamas\\_Church\\_Web\\_Site\\_Disappears\\_the\\_Black\\_Value\\_System\\_\(Update-They\\_Missed\\_a\\_PDF\)&only](http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=29309_Obamas_Church_Web_Site_Disappears_the_Black_Value_System_(Update-They_Missed_a_PDF)&only)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.ibdeditorials.com/ibdArticles.aspx?id=289784519414202>

<sup>14</sup> pp. 177-178

<sup>15</sup> p. 158

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/custom/religion/chi-0702060164feb06,0,5356687.story>

<sup>17</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200702090009>

<sup>18</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200703010012>

<sup>19</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200703220005?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200703220005?f=s_search)

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,317584,00.html>

## **Michelle: Angry Black Woman**

*Attack: Michelle Obama is an “angry black woman.”*

**The Facts:** Michelle Obama is a strong advocate for her husband, but there is no evidence that she is “angry.”

**The Echo Chamber:** Fox News<sup>1</sup> Channel<sup>2</sup>, National<sup>3</sup> Review<sup>4</sup>, Michelle Malkin<sup>5</sup>, *The Obama Nation* by Jerome Corsi<sup>6</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** In a February 18 speech, Michelle Obama told a crowd in Wisconsin, “What we’ve learned over this year is that hope is making a comeback. ... And let me tell you something -- for the first time in my adult lifetime, I’m really proud of my country. And not just because Barack has done well, but because I think people are hungry for change. And I have been desperate to see our country moving in that direction and just not feeling so alone in my frustration and disappointment. I’ve seen people who are hungry to be unified around some basic, common issues, and it’s made me proud.”<sup>7</sup> Conservatives seized upon her comments. On May 5, the *National Review* published an online article about Michelle Obama headlined “America’s Unhappiest Millionaire”; two weeks earlier, it put Michelle Obama on the cover of the magazine with the headline “Mrs. Grievance.”<sup>8</sup> On May 7, blogger and syndicated columnist Michelle Malkin wrote a column calling her Barack Obama’s “bitter half.”<sup>9</sup> During a panel discussion on the June 14 edition of *Fox News Watch*, syndicated columnist Cal Thomas said, “In this campaign, we are being asked to accept three things simultaneously, the first woman with a credible chance of being president, the first African-American with the chance of being president and, whoever Michelle Obama is going to be styled, the angry black woman, first lady?”<sup>10</sup>

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1 <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,367601,00.html>

2 [http://www.newshounds.us/2008/05/07/michelle\\_malkin\\_calls\\_michelle\\_obama\\_the\\_bitter\\_half\\_queen\\_of\\_the\\_grievance\\_mongers.php](http://www.newshounds.us/2008/05/07/michelle_malkin_calls_michelle_obama_the_bitter_half_queen_of_the_grievance_mongers.php)

3 <http://nrd.nationalreview.com/article/?q=MWU0YzQwZTZjODZhZTNkODc5ODlhMGU1MDkzZjRjODc=>

4 <http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=OWI1ZGE5NDY4ZjY0YzZhZjE0NGY0Zjg4Yjc3NmVjZTI=>

5 [http://www.townhall.com/columnists/MichelleMalkin/2008/05/07/barack\\_obamas\\_bitter\\_half](http://www.townhall.com/columnists/MichelleMalkin/2008/05/07/barack_obamas_bitter_half)

6 p. 233

7 <http://www.breitbart.tv/html/49244.html>

8 <http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=OWI1ZGE5NDY4ZjY0YzZhZjE0NGY0Zjg4Yjc3NmVjZTI=>

9 [http://www.townhall.com/columnists/MichelleMalkin/2008/05/07/barack\\_obamas\\_bitter\\_half](http://www.townhall.com/columnists/MichelleMalkin/2008/05/07/barack_obamas_bitter_half)

10 <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,367601,00.html>

## Michelle Obama's Princeton Thesis

**Attack:** *The undergraduate thesis written by Michelle Obama at Princeton University reveals a divisive, even separatist, outlook on race.*

**The Facts:** Michelle Obama's thesis was based on a survey of African-American alumni of Princeton who attended the university during the 1970s. Obama was purporting to document attitudes among black Princeton alumni who attended the school in the '70s and not asserting her own views. Lines from the thesis that allegedly express her divisive views on race are either completely fabricated or taken out of context.

**The Echo Chamber:** chain emails<sup>1</sup>, Fox News Channel<sup>2</sup>, National Review<sup>3</sup>, right-wing<sup>4</sup> blogs<sup>5</sup>, Slate.com<sup>6</sup>, The Star-Ledger of Newark, New Jersey<sup>8</sup>, The Boston Globe<sup>9</sup>, The Obama Nation by Jerome Corsi<sup>10</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** Although several news outlets had written about or mentioned Michelle Obama's thesis in 2007, right-wing<sup>11</sup> speculation<sup>12</sup> over the thesis began after it was revealed that the thesis would be "temporarily unavailable" until November 5 at the Princeton University library. However, the Obama campaign gave the Politico a copy of the thesis upon request.<sup>13</sup> After its release, critics seized upon the contents of the thesis as evidence that Michelle Obama harbored separatist views on race. Conservative Fox News Channel host Sean Hannity returned to the subject<sup>14</sup> repeatedly<sup>15</sup>, alleging that the thesis revealed a divisive outlook on race. In fact, the line Hannity quoted was Obama's description of the attitudes of black Princeton alumni who attended the school in the '70s, not her own views. A chain email purporting to contain excerpts of her thesis also began circulating in the spring of 2008. The email falsely claimed that Obama had written that

America was founded on "crime and hatred" and that whites were "ineradicably racist."<sup>16</sup> None of those phrases appear in her thesis.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/504/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200802290007>

<sup>3</sup> <http://nrd.nationalreview.com/article/?q=MWU0YzQwZTZjODZhZTNkODc5ODlhMGU1MDkzZjRjODc=>

<sup>4</sup> <http://thinkingoutsidetheblog.blogspot.com/2008/02/michelle-obaramama-has-begun.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://corner.nationalreview.com/post/?q=NTI1NjE4OGY2MTUxMGY3MzdiNzY3NzI3MzZlZGlyMTk>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.theodoresworld.net/archives/2008/04/post\\_31.html](http://www.theodoresworld.net/archives/2008/04/post_31.html)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.slate.com/id/2190589/>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf?2008/02/princeton\\_u\\_releases\\_michelle.html](http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf?2008/02/princeton_u_releases_michelle.html)

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial\\_opinion/oped/articles/2008/03/02/a\\_delicate\\_line\\_for\\_michelle\\_obama/](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2008/03/02/a_delicate_line_for_michelle_obama/)

<sup>10</sup> pp. 232-233

<sup>11</sup> <http://corner.nationalreview.com/post/?q=NTI1NjE4OGY2MTUxMGY3MzdiNzY3NzI3MzZlZGlyMTk>

<sup>12</sup> <http://thinkingoutsidetheblog.blogspot.com/2008/02/michelle-obaramama-has-begun.html>

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0208/8642\\_Page2.html](http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0208/8642_Page2.html)

<sup>14</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200802290007>

<sup>15</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200803050004?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200803050004?f=s_search)

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/504/>

## Prioritizes Africa over United States

**Attack:** As a member of Trinity United Church of Christ, which espouses a “non-negotiable commitment to Africa,” Barack Obama maintains an allegiance to Africa over the U.S.

**The Facts:** Trinity’s website lists a “10-point Vision” calling for its congregation to make “a non-negotiable commitment to Africa.”<sup>1</sup> However, there is no statement on the website that calls for such a commitment to Africa to supersede commitment to the U.S.

**The Echo Chamber:** Melanie Morgan<sup>2</sup>, chain<sup>3</sup> emails<sup>4</sup>, right<sup>5</sup>-wing<sup>6</sup> blogs<sup>7</sup>, WorldNetDaily<sup>8</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** On the March 5, 2007, broadcast of San Francisco radio station KSFO’s *Sussman, Morgan, and Vic*, co-host Melanie Morgan suggested that as a result of his membership at Trinity, Obama has a stronger allegiance to Africa than to the United States.<sup>9</sup> Morgan stated that “this is a major American presidential candidate whose church that he belongs to – says he’s proud to belong to -- says that their allegiance goes to Africa before it goes to America.” Late in 2007, chain emails attacking Obama began circulating that included the allegations that Obama’s church has “a non-negotiable commitment to Africa”<sup>10</sup> that excludes the United States and that one had to be black to join the church, a false allegation.<sup>11</sup> A January 9 article on right-wing news site WorldNetDaily questioned whether the church was more about Africa than about God and asked, “Is this what Barack Obama truly believes?”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.tucc.org/about.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200703060013>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2008/jan/11/attack-e-mail-slams-obama-religion-race/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/church.asp>

<sup>5</sup> <http://ricgator.blogspot.com/2008/01/barack-obama-racist-it-would-seem-so.html>

<sup>6</sup> <http://faultlineusa.blogspot.com/2008/02/obamas-afrro-centric-church-non.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.israpundit.com/2008/?p=304>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=59600](http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=59600)

<sup>9</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200703060013>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/church.asp>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2008/jan/11/attack-e-mail-slams-obama-religion-race/>

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=59600](http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=59600)

## Related to Kenyan Opposition Leader

**Attack:** Barack Obama is closely involved in Kenyan politics in support of his cousin, opposition leader Raila Odinga, with whom he speaks daily. He has given almost \$1 million to Odinga's campaign. Obama's support for Odinga against Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki has helped fuel postelection violence in Kenya.

**The Facts:** Obama is not related to Odinga, nor has he given money to Odinga's campaign. According to Kenya experts, Odinga's claim that he is related to Obama<sup>1</sup> is false and was made "to give himself more legitimacy."<sup>2</sup> Obama spoke "for about five minutes" with Odinga in January 2008 in an effort to end postelection violence in Kenya, but there is no evidence that they speak regularly.<sup>3</sup> The nonpartisan fact-check website PolitiFact.com spoke with the original authors of the chain email that made the allegation, Celeste and Loren Davis, who produced documents supposedly supporting their claims of Obama's contributions to Odinga.<sup>4</sup> However, PolitiFact consulted with experts and found that the documents were fraudulent.

**The Echo Chamber:** chain<sup>5</sup> emails<sup>6</sup>, The New York Sun<sup>7</sup>, Investor's Business Daily<sup>8</sup>, No Quarter blog<sup>9</sup>, right-wing<sup>10</sup> blogs<sup>11</sup>, Newsmax<sup>12</sup>, The Obama Nation by Jerome Corsi<sup>13</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** In early 2008, a chain email began to circulate alleging Obama's ties to Odinga. In addition to the claims about Obama's relationship to Odinga and contributions to his campaign, it also made other false claims about Obama's identity ("Obama IS a muslim and he IS a racist") that had appeared in other similar chain emails. Blogger Larry Johnson also highlighted the alleged familial<sup>14</sup> ties<sup>15</sup> between Obama and Odinga. Some of the allegations against Obama were repeated in more mainstream outlets. A January 10 column in the conservative New York Sun newspaper passed on the smears and called for closer scrutiny of Obama's "Kenya connection."<sup>16</sup>

The falsehoods about Obama's connections to Kenya have also spread on right-wing blogs and news sites.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1574963/I'm-Barack-Obama's-cousin-says-Raila-Odinga.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/465/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/kenya.asp>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/465/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/465/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/kenya.asp>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.nysun.com/opinion/kenya-connection/69273/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.investors.com/editorial/editorialcontent.asp?secid=1501&status=article&id=285292746454291>

<sup>9</sup> <http://noquarterusa.net/blog/2008/01/31/obamas-african-hubris-2/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://libertarianrepublican.blogspot.com/2008/02/obamas-relative-linked-to-ethnic.html>

<sup>11</sup> [http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com/atlas\\_shrugs/2008/01/atlas-sighting.html](http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com/atlas_shrugs/2008/01/atlas-sighting.html)

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/obama\\_odinga\\_kenya/2008/06/24/107152.html](http://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/obama_odinga_kenya/2008/06/24/107152.html)

<sup>13</sup> p. 93

<sup>14</sup> <http://noquarterusa.net/blog/2008/01/31/obamas-african-hubris-2/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://noquarterusa.net/blog/2008/05/24/obamas-cousin-wont-let-us-go-after-terrorists/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.nysun.com/opinion/kenya-connection/69273/>

## **Reverend Wright; Pastor Pfleger**

**Attack:** Barack Obama's pastor and spiritual mentor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright of Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ, holds racist and radical political views to which Obama himself subscribes. Obama also shares Rev. Michael Pfleger's sentiments regarding Hillary Clinton -- that she felt "entitled" to the Democratic presidential nomination and that "there's a black man stealing my show."

**The Facts:** Obama has repeatedly denounced Wright's more controversial comments.<sup>1</sup> He has said that "we don't agree on everything."<sup>2</sup> In some cases, Obama criticized Wright for remarks he made before controversy over them erupted.<sup>3</sup> In April 2008, Obama renounced his ties to Wright.

Barack Obama denounced the controversial comments Pfleger made about Hillary Clinton. Obama released a statement on May 29 saying, "As I have traveled this country, I've been impressed not by what divides us, but by all that unites us. That is why I am deeply disappointed in Father Pfleger's divisive, backward-looking rhetoric, which doesn't reflect the country I see or the desire of people across America to come together in common cause."<sup>4</sup> Shortly thereafter, Pfleger issued a statement: "I regret the words I chose on Sunday. These words are inconsistent with Senator Obama's life and message, and I am deeply sorry if they offended Senator Clinton or anyone else who saw them."

On May 30, Obama sent a letter to Trinity to inform them that he was leaving the church.<sup>5</sup>

**The Echo Chamber:** Stories about Wright and Obama's alleged "pastor problems" appeared on all the broadcast and cable news networks, in virtually every major newspaper, in newsmagazines, on numerous radio programs, and in countless web sites.

**Origin & Evolution:** One of the recurring attacks on Obama has focused on his membership of more than 20 years at Trinity United Church of Christ. Scrutiny of the church and Obama's association with it intensified when video clips of Rev. Jeremiah Wright making controversial statements at Trinity began appearing on YouTube and in the media.

On March 12, 2008, Fox News Channel's *Special Report With Brit Hume* ran a story on Wright that included video footage of Wright's sermons that it said was purchased from the church.<sup>6</sup> Among the snippets featured in the story was a declaration from Wright: "Barack knows what it means living in a country and a culture that is controlled by rich white people. Hillary would never know that. Hillary ain't never been called a nigger. Hillary has never had a people defined as a non-person."

The following morning, ABC's *Good Morning America* aired a story by Brian Ross in which Wright was shown saying about the 9/11 attacks, "We bombed Hiroshima, we bombed Nagasaki, and we nuked far more than the thousands in New York and the Pentagon, and we never batted an eye. We have supported state terrorism against the Palestinians and the black South Africans, and now we are indignant because the stuff we have done overseas has now been brought back into our own front yard. America's chickens are coming home to roost."<sup>7</sup> Wright was also shown proclaiming, "The government gives them the drugs, builds bigger prisons, passes a three-strike law and then wants us to sing 'God Bless America.' No, no, no, God damn America, that's in the Bible for killing innocent people. God damn America for treating our citizens as less than human." Although Ross noted that Obama had said that Wright is "like an old uncle, who says things I don't always

agree with," at no point did Ross report that when asked about Wright's 9/11 comments in particular, Obama said, "The violence of 9/11 was inexcusable and without justification."<sup>8</sup>

The videos began circulating on YouTube<sup>9</sup> and became a topic of extended discussion for blogs and media outlets.<sup>10</sup> The blanket coverage -- which included stories in the New York Times<sup>11</sup>, CNN<sup>12</sup>, MSNBC<sup>13</sup>, Rush Limbaugh<sup>14</sup>, and the Fox News Channel<sup>15</sup>, among other outlets -- all but dominated political news for days. On March 14, Obama addressed the controversy in a column posted on *The Huffington Post*. "I vehemently disagree and strongly condemn the statements that have been the subject of this controversy," Obama wrote.<sup>16</sup> The campaign also announced that Wright had been dropped as a member of its spiritual advisory committee.<sup>17</sup> Several days later, Obama gave a speech in Philadelphia on race and politics where he once again addressed the statements made by Wright and clarified his relationship with the pastor. Obama repeated his denunciation of Wright's statements, and stated that Wright's "comments were not only wrong but divisive, divisive at a time when we need unity."<sup>18</sup>

On April 28, Wright appeared at the National Press Club and did not back away from his widely criticized comments.<sup>19</sup> In the wake of that appearance, Obama broke ties with his former pastor on April 29, saying, "Whatever relationship I had with Reverend Wright has changed as a consequence of this."<sup>20</sup>

On May 29 ABC News' Political Punch blog reported<sup>21</sup> that a video clip had surfaced of a guest sermon given by Rev. Michael Pfleger on May 25, 2008 at Trinity United Church in which the pastor mocked Hillary Clinton.<sup>22</sup> (Pfleger is not a pastor at Trinity.) In the video, Pfleger is shown saying that Clinton had felt "entitled" to the Democratic presidential nomination and mocking Clinton for having cried in New Hampshire, mimicking her saying, "There's a black man stealing my show." Right<sup>23</sup>-wing<sup>24</sup> blogs<sup>25</sup> and mainstream<sup>26</sup> media<sup>27</sup> outlets<sup>28</sup> hyped the story as part of Obama's "pastor problems," comparing Pfleger to Rev. Jeremiah Wright.

On May 30, Obama sent a letter informing Trinity that he was leaving the church.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/15/us/politics/15wright.html?\\_r=3&ref=politics&oref=slogin&oref=slogin&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/15/us/politics/15wright.html?_r=3&ref=politics&oref=slogin&oref=slogin&oref=slogin)

<sup>2</sup><http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/30/us/politics/30obama.html?ei=5088&en=e9014787da35c685&ex=1335585600&adxnnl=1&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&pagewanted=1&adxnnlx=1216757669-vozcGlhG0zzejh52ILq6nQ>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/30/us/politics/30obama.html?pagewanted=3&ei=5088&en=e9014787da35c685&ex=1335585600&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&adxnnlx=1216757669-vozcGlhG0zzejh52ILq6nQ>

<sup>4</sup> [http://blogs.suntimes.com/sweet/2008/05/obama\\_deepl...y\\_disappointed\\_in\\_f\\_1.html](http://blogs.suntimes.com/sweet/2008/05/obama_deepl...y_disappointed_in_f_1.html)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.politico.com/blogs/bensmith/0508/Reports\\_Obama\\_resigns\\_Trinity.html](http://www.politico.com/blogs/bensmith/0508/Reports_Obama_resigns_Trinity.html)

<sup>6</sup> <http://elections.foxnews.com/2008/03/12/obamas-controversial-pastor-puts-church-in-hot-water/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/story?id=4443788&page=1>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/30/us/politics/30obama.html?scp=1&sq=a+candidate,+his+minister&st=nyt>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=jeremiah+wright&search\\_type=](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=jeremiah+wright&search_type=)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.slate.com/id/2186599/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/03/13/the-wright-controversy/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0803/13/acd.01.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/23633756/>

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site\\_031308/content/01125106.guest.html](http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site_031308/content/01125106.guest.html)

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,337891,00.html>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/barack-obama/on-my-faith-and-my-church\\_b\\_91623.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/barack-obama/on-my-faith-and-my-church_b_91623.html)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/23634881/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/23690567/>

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/04/28/jeremiah-wright-at-nation\\_n\\_98949.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/04/28/jeremiah-wright-at-nation_n_98949.html)

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/30/us/politics/30obama.html?\\_r=2&th=&adxnnl=1&emc=th&pagewanted=2&adxnnlx=1214953890-b4swTFYkk/zq6QIa8JDpGA&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/30/us/politics/30obama.html?_r=2&th=&adxnnl=1&emc=th&pagewanted=2&adxnnlx=1214953890-b4swTFYkk/zq6QIa8JDpGA&oref=slogin)

<sup>21</sup> <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalpunch/2008/05/priest-and-obam.html>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWigzBCIEk8&feature=related>

<sup>23</sup> <http://michellemalkin.com/2008/05/29/hes-baaaack-obama-supporter-rev-michael-pfleger-flogs-hillarys-white-entitlement-on-the-pulpit/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://hotair.com/archives/2008/05/29/obama-deepl...y-disappointed-pfleger-deepl...y-sorry-for-comments-about-hillary/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://sultanknish.blogspot.com/2008/03/father-michael-pfleger-obama-mentor.html>



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<sup>26</sup> [http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/2008/05/29/obama\\_again\\_apologizes\\_for\\_a\\_p.html](http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/2008/05/29/obama_again_apologizes_for_a_p.html)

<sup>27</sup> <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0805/30/ldt.01.html>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/24882600/>

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.politico.com/blogs/bensmith/0508/Reports\\_Obama\\_resigns\\_Trinity.html](http://www.politico.com/blogs/bensmith/0508/Reports_Obama_resigns_Trinity.html)



## “Typical White Person” Comment

*Attack: Barack Obama’s comments regarding his grandmother as a “typical white person” proves that he harbors racist views and disdains “white” America.*

**The Facts:** Following a March 18 speech on race in which Obama said his white grandmother “on more than one occasion has uttered racial or ethnic stereotypes that made me cringe,” Obama explained the comment in a March 20 interview: “The point I was making was not that my grandmother harbors any racial animosity -- she doesn’t. But she is a typical white person who, you know, if she sees somebody on the street that she doesn’t know, there is a reaction. That has been bred into our experiences that don’t go away and that sometimes come out in the wrong way.”<sup>1</sup> Contrary to the suggestion that Obama’s reference to his grandmother as a “typical white person” proves that he harbors racist views and disdains “white” America, Obama was making the point that everyone harbors stereotypes but that it does not make them bad people. At a March 21 press conference, Obama said, “What I was trying to express is something I expressed in the speech, which is that we all harbor stereotypes. That doesn’t make us bad people. ... Part of what the speech was about was the stereotypes that still linger in the body politic. The anger, the resentments, and the stereotypes that sometimes serve us publicly and sometimes serve us privately. They’re sometimes directed at African-Americans, but African-Americans harbor their own stereotypes, and that’s part of what was the failure of Rev. Wright’s sermons, was assuming a set of attitudes that weren’t necessarily accurate.”<sup>2</sup>

**The Echo Chamber:** right<sup>3</sup>-wing<sup>4</sup> blogs<sup>5</sup>, ABCNews.com<sup>6</sup>, FoxNews.com<sup>7</sup>, Rush Limbaugh<sup>8</sup>, *The Case Against Barack Obama* by David Freddoso<sup>9</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** In a March 18 speech, Obama addressed the controversy surrounding Rev. Jeremiah Wright and spoke about his grandmother as well. He said, “I can no more disown him than I can disown the black community. I can no more disown him than I can my white grandmother -- a woman who helped raise me, a woman who sacrificed again and again for me, a woman who loves me as much as she loves anything in this world, but a woman who once confessed her fear of black men who passed by her on the street, and who on more than one occasion has uttered racial or ethnic stereotypes that made me cringe. These people are a part of me. And they are a part of America, this country that I love.”<sup>10</sup> In a March 20 radio interview, he clarified, “The point I was making was not that my grandmother harbors any racial animosity -- she doesn’t. But she is a typical white person who, you know, if she sees somebody on the street that she doesn’t know, there is a reaction. That has been bred into our experiences that don’t go away and that sometimes come out in the wrong way.”<sup>11</sup> Right<sup>12</sup>-wing<sup>13</sup> blogs<sup>14</sup>, commentators<sup>15</sup>, and mainstream<sup>16</sup> media<sup>17</sup> outlets seized upon the “typical white person” line as proof of Obama’s problematic views toward whites, or even that Obama believes all whites have racist views.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.barackobama.com/2008/03/18/remarks\\_of\\_senator\\_barack\\_obam\\_53.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2008/03/18/remarks_of_senator_barack_obam_53.php)

<sup>2</sup> <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalpunch/2008/03/obama-attempts.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.powerlineblog.com/archives2/2008/03/020088.php>

<sup>4</sup> <http://michellemalkin.com/2008/03/21/now-on-sale-the-typical-white-person-t-shirt/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://campaignspot.nationalreview.com/post/?q=MDg1MTk0YjQ2Yj1ZDBhNDYzMTA4Y2NhMDA4ZWRIOWU=>

<sup>6</sup> <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalpunch/2008/03/obama-talks-mor.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://elections.foxnews.com/2008/03/21/ferraro-offended-by-comparison-to-pastor-wright/>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site\\_032108/content/01125111.guest.html](http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site_032108/content/01125111.guest.html)

<sup>9</sup> pp. 166-168

<sup>10</sup> <http://my.barackobama.com/page/content/hisownwords>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8gnmUyminI>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.powerlineblog.com/archives2/2008/03/020088.php>

<sup>13</sup> <http://michellemalkin.com/2008/03/21/now-on-sale-the-typical-white-person-t-shirt/>

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<sup>14</sup><http://campaignspot.nationalreview.com/post/?q=MDg1MTk0YjQ2YjI1ZDBhNDYzMTA4Y2NhMDA4ZWRlOWU=>

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site\\_032108/content/01125111.guest.html](http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site_032108/content/01125111.guest.html)

<sup>16</sup> <http://blogs.abcnetwork.com/politicalpunch/2008/03/obama-talks-mor.html>

<sup>17</sup>[http://www.philly.com/philly/blogs/phillygossip/Obama\\_on\\_WIP\\_My\\_grandmothers\\_a\\_typical\\_white\\_person.htm](http://www.philly.com/philly/blogs/phillygossip/Obama_on_WIP_My_grandmothers_a_typical_white_person.htm)



## “LIBERAL ELITIST” THEME

### Cuban Flag

*Attack: A Cuban flag with an image of Che Guevara on it adorning an Obama volunteer’s office in Houston is indicative of Barack Obama’s politics.*

**The Facts:** The image was seen in a news report from a Fox affiliate in Houston, Texas. The office was run and funded by Obama volunteers and not sanctioned or in any way controlled by the Obama campaign. The Obama campaign stated: “We were disappointed to see this picture because it is both offensive to many Cuban-Americans – and Americans of all backgrounds – and because it does not reflect Senator Obama’s views.<sup>1</sup> Barack Obama has been very clear in putting forward a Cuba policy that is based on one principle: freedom for the Cuban people.” On the TV station’s Web page with the video, a disclaimer now appears: “The office featured in this video is funded by volunteers of the Barack Obama Campaign and is not an official headquarters for his campaign.”<sup>2</sup>

**The Echo Chamber:** right<sup>3</sup>-wing<sup>4</sup> blogs<sup>5</sup>, National Review Online<sup>6</sup>, Los Angeles Times<sup>7</sup>, Investor’s Business Daily<sup>8</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** A Feb. 6, 2008, report on KTRK Fox 26 in Houston included footage inside an Obama volunteer office. At one point in the report, a Cuban flag with the image of Che Guevara is visible on an office wall. On Feb. 11, several posts were made on conservative blogs about the Che/Cuban flag attempting to draw a connection between Che’s<sup>9</sup> politics<sup>10</sup> and Obama’s.<sup>11</sup> On Feb. 12, KTRK ran a report on the controversy over the flag featuring Obama campaign spokesman Josh Earnest saying, “It’s important for your viewers to understand that the office that was featured in the previous story was opened independently and separate from our official campaign.”<sup>12</sup> The smear has also been perpetuated in mainstream outlets like the *Los Angeles Times*<sup>13</sup> and *Investor’s Business Daily*.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [http://factcheck.barackobama.com/factcheck/2008/02/12/on\\_reports\\_of\\_an\\_inappropriate.php](http://factcheck.barackobama.com/factcheck/2008/02/12/on_reports_of_an_inappropriate.php)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.myfoxhouston.com/myfox/pages/Home/Detail?contentId=5700252&version=1&locale=EN-US&layoutCode=VSTY&pageId=1.1.1>

<sup>3</sup> <http://newsbusters.org/blogs/d-s-hube/2008/02/11/another-flag-issue-obama>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.captainsquartersblog.com/mt/archives/016946.php>

<sup>5</sup> <http://hotair.com/archives/2008/02/11/video-campaign-office-decor-of-the-day/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://campaignspot.nationalreview.com/post/?q=MmM1MzU2MTkzYzFlNmRmMjM4ZjNhYmE2YmI3ZTQwZGU=>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-goldberg26feb26,0,7243562.column>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.investors.com/editorial/editorialcontent.asp?secid=1501&status=article&id=287712495807374>

<sup>9</sup> <http://newsbusters.org/blogs/d-s-hube/2008/02/11/another-flag-issue-obama>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.captainsquartersblog.com/mt/archives/016946.php>

<sup>11</sup> <http://hotair.com/archives/2008/02/11/video-campaign-office-decor-of-the-day/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.myfoxhouston.com/myfox/pages/Home/Detail?contentId=5756697&version=2&locale=EN-US&layoutCode=VSTY&pageId=1.1.1>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-goldberg26feb26,0,7243562.column>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.investors.com/editorial/editorialcontent.asp?secid=1501&status=article&id=287712495807374>

## Endorsed by Fidel Castro

*Attack: Fidel Castro has endorsed Barack Obama.*

**The Facts:** Castro did not endorse Obama. In August 2007, conservative outlets made the claim that Fidel Castro endorsed a Hillary Clinton-Barack Obama ticket based on a column Castro had written in the Cuban newspaper *Granma*. In fact, Castro's column did not contain an endorsement for either Obama or Clinton.<sup>1</sup> While Castro commented that a Clinton-Obama ticket would be "seemingly invincible," Castro actually criticized their pro-democratic stance toward Cuba as an "error." More recently, in an article in *Granma* titled "The empire's hypocritical politics,"<sup>2</sup> Castro primarily criticized Obama, calling the embargo that Obama pledged to maintain "an act of genocide."<sup>3</sup>

**The Echo Chamber:** Fox News Channel<sup>4</sup>, CNN<sup>5</sup>, WorldNetDaily<sup>6</sup>, Florida GOP<sup>7</sup>, chain emails<sup>8</sup>, Chicago Tribune's The Swamp blog<sup>9</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** In an Aug. 28, 2007 column for *Granma*, Castro called a possible Clinton-Obama ticket "seemingly invincible," but criticized both for their Cuba policy. On that night's *The O'Reilly Factor*, right-wing blogger Michelle Malkin falsely stated, "And Fidel Castro, of all people, endorses a Hillary Clinton-Barack Obama presidential ticket." The following morning, Fox News Channel's *Fox & Friends* ran a story that featured the false onscreen graphic: "CASTRO'S DREAM TEAM: WANTS CLINTON AND OBAMA IN '08."<sup>10</sup>

On May 23, 2008, Obama gave a speech to the Cuban American National Foundation in Miami in which he sketched out his Cuba policy.<sup>11</sup> On May 26, Castro wrote an article that, while praising Obama for his "great intelligence, his debating skills ... [and] work ethic," condemned Obama's speech and called his support for embargo on Cuba "an act of genocide."<sup>12</sup> On May 28, the Republican Party of Florida sent out an email with the subject line, "Fidel Castro endorses Obama."<sup>13</sup> Inside the email, there was a doctored image of Castro holding up an Obama poster with the caption, "I love this guy!" The email also contained a link to Castro's article, which it called "a qualified endorsement" that called Obama "the most advanced candidate." As the nonpartisan fact-check site PolitiFact.com stated, "Castro actually spends most of his words criticizing" Obama's speech.<sup>14</sup> Contacted by PolitiFact, Katie Gordon, press secretary for the Republican Party of Florida, said the email was a joke and that the "cartoon" image was not meant to be taken literally.

In a related smear, chain emails have also claimed that Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez is financing Obama's campaign.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200708290012?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200708290012?f=s_search)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.granma.cu/ingles/2008/mayo/lun26/Reflections-26may.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/510/>

<sup>4</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200708290012?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200708290012?f=s_search)

<sup>5</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200708300009?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200708300009?f=s_search)

<sup>6</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200709040003?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200709040003?f=s_search)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/510/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/510/>

<sup>9</sup> [http://weblogs.chicagotribune.com/news/politics/blog/2008/05/obama\\_praised\\_critiqued\\_by\\_cas.html](http://weblogs.chicagotribune.com/news/politics/blog/2008/05/obama_praised_critiqued_by_cas.html)

<sup>10</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200708290012?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200708290012?f=s_search)

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.barackobama.com/2008/05/23/remarks\\_of\\_senator\\_barack\\_obam\\_68.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2008/05/23/remarks_of_senator_barack_obam_68.php)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.granma.cu/ingles/2008/mayo/lun26/Reflections-26may.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/510/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/510/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/chavez.asp>

## Food Choices (Arugula, OJ)

*Attack: Obama's mention of arugula at an Iowa event and preference for orange juice over coffee at a diner in Indiana show that he is an elitist who is out of touch with ordinary people.*

**The Facts:** Arugula is grown by local farms in Iowa and is widely available in stores throughout the state.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the media have provided no support or explanation for their assertion that arugula – which is served at Olive Garden<sup>2</sup> and Applebee's<sup>3</sup> – is a signifier for elitism. As Obama himself said, "All the national press, they said, 'Oh, look at Obama. He's talking about arugula in Iowa. People in Iowa don't know what arugula is.' People in Iowa know what arugula is."<sup>4</sup>

Nor is orange juice an elite drink – the average American drinks 20 liters per year.<sup>5</sup> Media figures who attacked Obama for choosing orange juice over coffee have provided no support for the idea that it somehow indicates being out of touch with ordinary Americans.<sup>6</sup>

**The Echo Chamber:** MSNBC<sup>7</sup>, Newsweek<sup>8</sup>, Glenn Beck<sup>9</sup>, The New York Times<sup>10</sup>, Tribune Co.'s The Swamp blog<sup>11</sup>, washingtonpost.com<sup>12</sup>, MSNBC.com<sup>13</sup>, The Weekly Standard<sup>14</sup>, right-wing<sup>15</sup> blogs<sup>16</sup>, Commentary<sup>17</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** Obama asked an audience of Iowa farmers in the summer of 2007, "Anybody gone into Whole Foods lately and see what they charge for arugula? I mean, they're charging a lot of money for this stuff."<sup>18</sup> Critics claimed that arugula was not grown in the state<sup>19</sup> and cited Obama's reference to the plant as proof that he was a "wine-track" candidate who did not have an affinity for ordinary people.<sup>20</sup> In the months since, the arugula remarks have morphed into an example of Obama's supposed elitism and inability to connect with working-class voters. The May 5 issue of Newsweek featured a cover story on "Obama's Bubba Gap."<sup>21</sup> The cover illustration was of a handful of arugula and a mug of beer.<sup>22</sup>

At a campaign event April 10, Obama declined coffee and asked for orange juice at a diner near South Bend, Indiana. On that evening's editions of MSNBC's *Hardball*, Chris Matthews and David Shuster critiqued Obama's behavior as something you just don't do.<sup>23</sup> Matthews revisited the theme on April 16, asserting that Obama "can't walk into a dinette [sic] with five or six guys there, white guys, in some cases. ... He can't just shake hands and hang out."<sup>24</sup> MSNBC contributor Pat Buchanan added: "And there are black leaders up there that can do that. But he is very much Columbia and Harvard Law and all the rest of it."

New York Times columnist David Brooks piled on, asserting that "Obama's problem is he doesn't seem like the kind of guy who could go into an Applebee's salad bar."<sup>25</sup> Brooks was apparently unaware that Applebee's restaurants do not have salad bars. Karl Rove evoked a similar theme in June, saying, "Even if you never met him, you know this guy. He's the guy at the country club with the beautiful date, holding a martini and a cigarette that stands against the wall and makes snide comments about everyone who passes by."<sup>26</sup>

1 <http://mediamatters.org/items/200708280009>

2 [http://www.olivegarden.com/press/news\\_releases/2006/20061009.asp](http://www.olivegarden.com/press/news_releases/2006/20061009.asp)

3 <http://www.applebees.com/MediaPressRelease.aspx?id=41>

4 [http://www.swamppolitics.com/news/politics/blog/2007/10/obama\\_talks\\_arugula\\_again\\_in\\_i.html](http://www.swamppolitics.com/news/politics/blog/2007/10/obama_talks_arugula_again_in_i.html)

5 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2006/jan/10/ethicalmoney.leohickmanonethicallyliving>

6 [http://mediamatters.org/items/200804110004?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200804110004?f=s_search)7 [http://mediamatters.org/items/200804110004?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200804110004?f=s_search)8 <http://www.newsweek.com/id/134398/output/print>9 <http://mediamatters.org/static/pdf/beck-20070828-arugula.pdf>10 <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/07/27/obamas-down-on-the-farm/>11 [http://weblogs.chicagotribune.com/news/politics/blog/2007/10/obama\\_talks\\_arugula\\_again\\_in\\_i.html](http://weblogs.chicagotribune.com/news/politics/blog/2007/10/obama_talks_arugula_again_in_i.html)

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- 12 [http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/2007/10/05/people\\_in\\_iowa\\_know\\_what\\_arugu.html](http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/2007/10/05/people_in_iowa_know_what_arugu.html)  
13 <http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com/archive/2007/10/05/399443.aspx>  
14 <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/015/215hpooz.asp?pg=1>  
15 [http://www.debbieschlussel.com/archives/2007/08/out\\_of\\_touch\\_ba.html](http://www.debbieschlussel.com/archives/2007/08/out_of_touch_ba.html)  
16 <http://michellemalkin.com/2008/06/14/its-not-race-its-arugula/>  
17 <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/blogs/index.php/greenwald/4262>  
18 <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/07/27/obamas-down-on-the-farm/>  
19 <http://mediamatters.org/static/pdf/beck-20070828-arugula.pdf>  
20 [http://mediamatters.org/items/200709240012?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200709240012?f=s_search)  
21 <http://www.newsweek.com/id/134398>  
22 <http://www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=109&STORY=/www/story/04-27-2008/0004800846&EDATE=>  
23 [http://mediamatters.org/items/200804110004?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200804110004?f=s_search)  
24 [http://mediamatters.org/items/200804180002?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200804180002?f=s_search)  
25 <http://www.crooksandliars.com/2008/06/03/memo-to-david-brooks-applebees-doesnt-have-a-salad-bar/>  
26 <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalpunch/2008/06/rove-obamas-the.html>

## “Most Liberal” Senator

**Attack:** Obama is the most liberal member of the U.S. Senate, as National Journal rankings demonstrate.

**The Facts:** The *National Journal* ranking is the only survey that rated Obama the most liberal member of the Senate in 2007, and its methodology is questionable. The *National Journal* based its rankings<sup>1</sup> not on all votes cast by senators in 2007, but on 99 “key” Senate votes<sup>2</sup> selected by *National Journal* reporters and editors. Among the votes Obama cast that earned him *National Journal*’s “most liberal senator” label were those to implement the 9-11 Commission’s homeland security recommendations, reauthorize and expand the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, support embryonic stem-cell research, and oppose the repeal of a federal minimum wage.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, a study by political science professors Keith Poole and Jeff Lewis that used every non-unanimous vote cast in the Senate in 2007 to determine relative ideology – in other words, not a subjective assessment of which votes are “key” – placed Obama in a tie for the ranking of 10th most liberal senator.<sup>4</sup>

**The Echo Chamber:** USA Today<sup>5</sup>, CNN<sup>6</sup>, MSNBC<sup>7</sup>, The New York Times<sup>8</sup>, Los Angeles Times<sup>9</sup>, National Public Radio<sup>10</sup>, Associated Press<sup>11</sup>, Politico<sup>12</sup>, Time’s The Page<sup>13</sup>, right-wing<sup>14</sup>-wing<sup>15</sup> blogs<sup>16</sup>, Fox<sup>17</sup> News<sup>18</sup> Channel<sup>19</sup>, John McCain<sup>20</sup>, The Obama Nation by Jerome Corsi<sup>21</sup>, The Case Against Barack Obama by David Freddoso<sup>22</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** The *National Journal* published its annual vote ratings on January 31. In a post that day on the *Time* website The Page, senior political analyst Mark Halperin reported that Obama was ranked the “Most Liberal Senator.”<sup>23</sup> Numerous media outlets have since repeated the *National Journal*’s assessment without noting the study’s problematic methodology.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://nj.nationaljournal.com/voteratings/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://nj.nationaljournal.com/voteratings/votes.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200802080004?f=h\\_latest](http://mediamatters.org/items/200802080004?f=h_latest)

<sup>4</sup> <http://voteview.com/sen110.htm>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/election2008/2008-06-05-mccain\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/election2008/2008-06-05-mccain_N.htm)

<sup>6</sup> <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0802/12/sitroom.02.html>

<sup>7</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200805010007?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200805010007?f=s_search)

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/04/us/politics/04mccain.html?\\_r=1&ref=politics&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/04/us/politics/04mccain.html?_r=1&ref=politics&oref=slogin)

<sup>9</sup> <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/apr/07/nation/na-delegates7>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.npr.org/blogs/news/2008/01/obama\\_ranked\\_most Liberal\\_sena\\_1.html](http://www.npr.org/blogs/news/2008/01/obama_ranked_most Liberal_sena_1.html)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.wtop.com/?nid=213&pid=0&sid=1414088&page=1>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0608/11263.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://thepage.time.com/2008/01/31/national-journal-rankings-obama-most-liberal-senator-in-2007/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.captainsquartersblog.com/mt/archives/016824.php>

<sup>15</sup> <http://gatewayspundit.blogspot.com/2008/01/shhh-obama-most-liberal-senator.html>

<sup>16</sup> <http://hotair.com/archives/2008/01/31/nonpartisan-avatar-of-hope-and-healing-somehow-has-most-liberal-voting-record-in-senate/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,328093,00.html>

<sup>18</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200806040007>

<sup>19</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200806130007?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200806130007?f=s_search)

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.wtop.com/?nid=213&pid=0&sid=1414088&page=1>

<sup>21</sup> pp. 236, 284

<sup>22</sup> pp. 106, 137

<sup>23</sup> <http://thepage.time.com/2008/01/31/national-journal-rankings-obama-most-liberal-senator-in-2007/>

<sup>24</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200806270010?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200806270010?f=s_search)

## Recreation Choices (Bowling, Hawaii)

**Attack:** Obama's poor bowling skills and choice of Hawaii as a vacation destination prove that he is out of touch with ordinary Americans.

**The Facts:** Bowling skill is not an indicator of empathy for ordinary Americans nor is it a qualification for the presidency. The fixation on Obama's poor bowling – even though he is by many<sup>1</sup> accounts<sup>2</sup> a good athlete – underscores the media's obsession with baselessly painting Democrats as out-of-touch elitists.

The same attack over Obama's recreation habits occurred in August, when Obama went to Hawaii for vacation. Obama was assailed for choosing a "foreign" and "exotic" destination. Far from being "foreign," Hawaii is a state, was Obama's birthplace, and is home to Obama's grandmother, whom he was visiting. Moreover, Hawaii is a popular destination for Americans, with 5.5 million Americans<sup>3</sup> visiting the state in 2007.

**The Echo Chamber:** Bloomberg<sup>4</sup>, ABC News<sup>5</sup>, NPR<sup>6</sup>, *The Obama Nation* by Jerome Corsi<sup>7</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** At a March 29, 2008 event at a bowling alley in Altoona, Pennsylvania, Obama bowled a 37 (he stopped after seven frames).<sup>8</sup> After the event, members of the media ridiculed him for his low score and asserted that his poor performance furthered his image of an elitist. MSNBC's *Morning Joe* host Joe Scarborough and Willie Geist repeatedly mocked Obama's bowling performance, which Scarborough called "dainty."<sup>9</sup> Scarborough said, "You know Willie, the thing is, Americans want their president, if it's a man, to be a real man.... You get 150, you're a man, or a good woman." *Hardball* host Chris Matthews announced later that day, "[T]his gets very ethnic, but the fact that he's good at basketball doesn't surprise anybody, but the fact that he's that terrible at bowling does make you wonder."<sup>10</sup>

On the August 10 edition of ABC's *This Week*, ABC News political analyst Cokie Roberts criticized Obama's decision to go to Hawaii for his vacation.<sup>11</sup> "I know his grandmother lives in Hawaii and I know Hawaii is a state, but it has the look of him going off to some sort of foreign, exotic place," Roberts said, adding, "He should be in Myrtle Beach, and, you know, if he's going to take a vacation at this time." Roberts repeated the claim the following day on NPR's *Morning Edition*, saying that going to Hawaii "makes him seem a little bit more exotic."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/Nightline/Story?id=3082803&page=1>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/01/us/politics/01hoops.html?\\_r=1&oref=login](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/01/us/politics/01hoops.html?_r=1&oref=login)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080812/NEWS05/808120359/1001/LOCALNEWSFRONT>

<sup>4</sup> [http://bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601039&refer=columnist\\_carlson&sid=aAa467CxhOvU](http://bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601039&refer=columnist_carlson&sid=aAa467CxhOvU)

<sup>5</sup> <http://talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/207883.php>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=93490150>

<sup>7</sup> pp. 212-213

<sup>8</sup> <http://firstrand.msnbc.msn.com/archive/2008/03/30/842513.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200803310007?f=h\\_latest](http://mediamatters.org/items/200803310007?f=h_latest)

<sup>10</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200803310018>

<sup>11</sup> <http://talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/207883.php>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=93490150>

## “CLOSET MUSLIM” THEME

### “Fake” Birth Certificate

**Attack:** Barack Obama is not a natural-born citizen, cannot produce his birth certificate to prove otherwise, and is not eligible to be president of the U.S.

**The Facts:** Obama's birth certificate confirms that he was born in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1961, two years after Hawaii became a state in 1959, making him a natural-born citizen.<sup>1</sup>

**The Echo Chamber:** right<sup>2</sup>-wing<sup>3</sup> blogs<sup>4</sup>, WorldNetDaily<sup>5</sup>, chain emails<sup>6</sup>, National Review Online<sup>7</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** Conservative blogger Velvet Hammer wrote a March 5, 2008, post asking to see Obama's birth certificate to find out where “Obama's loyalties lie.”<sup>8</sup> In June, Jim Geraghty wrote a post on the *National Review* website highlighting the rumor that Obama is not a natural-born citizen without directly refuting them.<sup>9</sup> In June, the conservative website WorldNetDaily alleged that there was “secrecy” over Obama's birth certificate and asked, “Is Obama's candidacy constitutional?”<sup>10</sup> That same month, chain emails began to circulate questioning Obama's status as a native-born citizen.<sup>11</sup> The Daily Kos<sup>12</sup> and nonpartisan fact-check website PolitiFact.com<sup>13</sup> posted a copy of Obama's birth certificate on June 12, 2008, debunking the smear. Obama has also made his birth certificate publicly available on his website.<sup>14</sup> The nonpartisan Factcheck.org<sup>15</sup> on August 21 reported, “FactCheck.org staffers have now seen, touched, examined and photographed the original birth certificate. We conclude that it meets all of the requirements from the State Department for proving U.S. citizenship.”

Yet right-wing media figures continue to advance false rumors about Obama's birth certificate. On the September 17 edition of *The G. Gordon Liddy Show*, Liddy and Obama Nation author Jerome Corsi each repeated the claim that Obama has not released an authentic U.S. birth certificate, and therefore could be ineligible to run for president.

Updated on September 29, 2008

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/media/img/graphics/birthCertObama.jpg>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.conservablogs.com/velvethammer/2008/03/05/wanted-barack-hussein-obamas-birth-certificate/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://michellemalkin.com/2008/06/10/the-buzz-about-baracks-birth-certificate/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://hotair.com/archives/2008/06/10/obamas-panama/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.worldnetdaily.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=66787>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/citizen.asp>

<sup>7</sup> <http://campaignspot.nationalreview.com/post/?q=ZTgxZmlwNTg0OWVhMWJkODNmZjI4ZjY4Mjg2OWRmNzI=>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.conservablogs.com/velvethammer/2008/03/05/wanted-barack-hussein-obamas-birth-certificate/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://campaignspot.nationalreview.com/post/?q=ZTgxZmlwNTg0OWVhMWJkODNmZjI4ZjY4Mjg2OWRmNzI=>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.worldnetdaily.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=66787>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/citizen.asp>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.dailykos.com/storyonly/2008/6/12/11012/6168/320/534616?loc=interstitialskip>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/464/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://my.barackobama.com/page/invite/birthcert>

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.factcheck.org/elections-2008/born\\_in\\_the\\_usa.html](http://www.factcheck.org/elections-2008/born_in_the_usa.html)

## Hussein and Other “Muslim” Names

*Attack: Obama’s name suggests that he is a Muslim.*

**The Facts:** Obama is a Christian and has never been a Muslim.<sup>1</sup> The right-wing attacks using his middle name, “Hussein,” and his last name are part of an effort to give the impression that he is a Muslim.

**The Echo Chamber:** Fox<sup>2</sup> News<sup>3</sup> Channel<sup>4</sup>, CNN<sup>5</sup>, MSNBC<sup>6</sup>, right-wing blogs<sup>7</sup>, right-wing<sup>8</sup> talk radio<sup>9</sup>, chain emails<sup>10</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** Right-wing figures have repeatedly used Obama’s name against him in an attempt to further the image that he is a Muslim. During the July 11, 2005 broadcast of *The Rush Limbaugh Show*, Limbaugh repeatedly called Obama “Obama Osama.”<sup>11</sup> Other media outlets and personalities also emphasized or highlighted Obama’s middle name for the purposes of raising questions about Obama’s identity.<sup>12</sup> Anonymous chain emails have also claimed that Obama’s middle name is really “Mohammed”<sup>13</sup> and others stress the fact that Obama’s middle name is “Hussein.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.suntimes.com/news/falsani/726619,obamafalsani040504.article>

<sup>2</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200806090013?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200806090013?f=s_search)

<sup>3</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200802270008?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200802270008?f=s_search)

<sup>4</sup> <http://thinkprogress.org/2008/02/27/cunningham-contradicts-himself-on-obama/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0612/11/sitroom.03.html>

<sup>6</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200803070001?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200803070001?f=s_search)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.debbieschlussel.com/archives/2006/12/barack\\_hussein.html](http://www.debbieschlussel.com/archives/2006/12/barack_hussein.html)

<sup>8</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200507120008>

<sup>9</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200802290017?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200802290017?f=s_search)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2008/jan/11/attack-e-mail-slams-obama-religion-race/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200507120008>

<sup>12</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200612200008?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200612200008?f=s_search)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2008/jan/11/attack-e-mail-slams-obama-religion-race/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/muslim.asp>

## Muslim Manchurian Candidate

**Attack:** Barack Obama is a “Manchurian candidate” or sleeper agent sent by terrorists to destroy America.

**The Facts:** Of the many variations on the smear that Obama is a Muslim, one of the most bizarre is the rumor that he is a “Manchurian candidate,” or a sleeper agent who will bring about the downfall of the U.S. and the triumph of Islamic terrorists if he becomes president. Obama is not and has never been a Muslim.

**The Echo Chamber:** chain emails<sup>1</sup>, right-wing<sup>2</sup> blogs<sup>3</sup>, Fox<sup>5</sup> News<sup>6</sup> Channel<sup>7</sup>, CNN<sup>8</sup>, NBC<sup>9</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** In December 2006, anonymous chain emails began circulating alleging that Obama is a Muslim and that “[t]he Muslims have said they plan on destroying the U.S. from the inside out, what better way to start than at the highest level – through the President of the United States, one of their own!”<sup>10</sup> Since then, the smear has been repeated on mainstream media outlets. On the April 30, 2008 edition of CNN Headline News’ *Glenn Beck*, right-wing pundit Ann Coulter asked of Obama, “Is Obama a Manchurian candidate to normal Americans who love their country? ... Or is he being the Manchurian candidate to the traitor wing of the Democratic Party?”<sup>11</sup> On the May 7 edition of Fox News’ *The O’Reilly Factor*, Dick Morris stated: “And the determinant in the election will be whether we believe that Barack Obama is what he appears to be, or is he somebody who’s sort of a sleeper agent who really doesn’t believe in our system and is more in line with [Reverend Jeremiah] Wright’s views?”<sup>12</sup> Weeks later, on NBC’s *Today*, Morris said, “[T]his whole debate about what kind of president Obama would make has swirled around almost an existential level. Is he sort of a Manchurian candidate? A sleeper agent? Or is he the great hope of the future?”<sup>13</sup> On the June 6 edition of Fox News’ *America’s Pulse*, E.D. Hill teased an upcoming discussion of a gesture shared between Obama and his wife Michelle following the final the Democratic primary by saying: “A fist bump? A pound? A terrorist fist jab? The gesture everyone seems to interpret differently.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/muslim.asp>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.debbieschlussel.com/archives/2006/12/barack\\_hussein.html](http://www.debbieschlussel.com/archives/2006/12/barack_hussein.html)

<sup>3</sup> <http://forthardknox.com/2008/02/08/obama-the-manchurian-candidate/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://morrisao.wordpress.com/2008/06/19/if-obama-becomes-president-in-in-the-us/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200805080003>

<sup>6</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200806110001?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200806110001?f=s_search)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G\\_vmrQfTi3aM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_vmrQfTi3aM)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCclZPMO9so>

<sup>9</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200806240001?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200806240001?f=s_search)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/muslim.asp>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCclZPMO9so>

<sup>12</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200805080003>

<sup>13</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200806240001?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200806240001?f=s_search)

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G\\_vmrQfTi3aM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_vmrQfTi3aM)

## Practicing Muslim

*Attack: Obama was raised a Muslim and/or is a practicing Muslim.*

**The Facts:** Obama is a Christian and has never been a Muslim.<sup>1</sup> Though Obama's birth father was born Muslim, Obama has described him as an atheist.<sup>2</sup> Until recently, he was a member of the Trinity United Church of Christ, where he had worshipped for 20 years.

**The Echo Chamber:** chain<sup>3</sup> emails<sup>4</sup>; right<sup>5</sup>-wing<sup>6</sup> blogs<sup>7</sup>, forums<sup>8</sup> and news<sup>9</sup> sites<sup>10</sup>, right<sup>11</sup>-wing<sup>12</sup> talk radio<sup>13</sup>, Fox News<sup>14</sup> Channel<sup>15</sup>, Washington Times<sup>16</sup>, Associated Press<sup>17</sup>, CNN<sup>18</sup>, BaltimoreSun.com<sup>19</sup>, Los Angeles Times<sup>20</sup>, WashingtonPost.com<sup>21</sup>, The Obama Nation by Jerome Corsi<sup>22</sup>, Edmond Sun<sup>23</sup>, Drudge Report<sup>24</sup>, Time<sup>25</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** On Aug. 10, 2004, shortly after Obama gave the keynote speech at the Democratic National Convention in Boston, "Internet journalist" and perennial Republican Senate candidate Andy Martin issued a press release alleging that Obama had "misrepresent[ed] his own heritage" and claiming, "His Muslim religion would obviously raise serious questions in many Jewish circles where Obama now enjoys support." Few people, except for some members of right-wing forums, picked up Martin's claims.<sup>26</sup> In October 2006, when speculation about an Obama presidential run began to pick up, the Infidel Bloggers Alliance blog posted Martin's press release.<sup>27</sup> Ted Sampley, leader of Vietnam Veterans Against John Kerry, published an article Dec. 29, 2006 using Martin's statement as his main source and accusing Obama of being a "closet Muslim."<sup>28</sup> That same month, right-wing blogger Debbie Schlussel wrote, "So, even if he identifies strongly as a Christian ... is a man who Muslims think is a Muslim, who feels some sort of psychological need to prove himself to his absent Muslim father, and who is now moving in the direction of his father's heritage, a man we want as President when we are fighting the war of our lives against Islam? Where will his loyalties be?"<sup>29</sup> According to an article by Chris Hayes in *The Nation*, Snopes.com, a website that debunks urban legends, received its first chain email smearing Obama as a radical Muslim in December as well.<sup>30</sup>

A Feb. 11, 2007 Associated Press article falsely reported that Obama spent "his childhood years in the Muslim faith,"<sup>31</sup> contradicting its previous reporting<sup>32</sup>. (Subsequent versions of the Feb. 11 AP story corrected the error.) The non-partisan fact-check website PolitiFact.com in October 2007 received chain emails claiming that Obama was "was enrolled in a Wahabi school in Jakarta."<sup>33</sup> On December 24, 2007, an article on the far-right web site FrontPageMag.com by Daniel Pipes, the director of the Middle East Forum, a group notorious for the tactics it uses to fight any criticism of Israel, claimed not only that Obama was a Muslim but that because he practices Christianity, Muslims would consider him an apostate and attempt to execute him.<sup>34</sup> In February 2008, right-wing talk radio host Michael Savage falsely asserted that Obama was a Muslim and said that "[w]e have a right to know if he's a so-called friendly Muslim or one who aspires to more radical teachings."<sup>35</sup> Right-wing website World Net Daily wrote on April 3, 2008 that Obama was "quite religious in Islam."<sup>36</sup> In May 2008, articles in *The Washington Times*<sup>37</sup>, BaltimoreSun.com<sup>38</sup>, the *Los Angeles Times*<sup>39</sup>, and *Washington Post.com*<sup>40</sup> uncritically quoted an Indiana man who said of Obama, "I can't stand him. He's a Muslim."<sup>41</sup> On May 12, 2008, the *New York Times* published an op-ed by Edward Luttwak, echoing Pipes' claim that Obama is a Muslim apostate and is therefore subject to execution according to Islamic law.<sup>42</sup> The fact that the *Times* chose to publish Luttwak's column prompted a rebuke from the paper's public editor.<sup>43</sup>

Underscoring the extent to which the smears had spread, a May 2008 *Newsweek* poll found that 11 percent of Americans believed Obama to be Muslim.<sup>44</sup>

In September, right-wing<sup>45</sup> blogs<sup>46</sup> sought to revive the theme by pouncing on a statement made by Obama on the Sept. 7 edition of ABC's This Week. Conservative media<sup>47</sup> outlets<sup>48</sup> also highlighted Obama's comment. Responding to host George Stephanopoulos' claim that the McCain campaign had not spread the false rumors that Obama was a Muslim, Obama said<sup>49</sup>, "[Y]ou're absolutely right that John McCain has not talked about my Muslim faith. And you're absolutely right that that has not come—" Stephanopoulos then interrupted, "Christian faith." Obama clarified, "My Christian faith. Well, what I'm saying is he hasn't suggested that I'm a Muslim. And I think that his campaign upper echelons have not either. What I think is fair to say is that coming out of the Republican camp there have been efforts to suggest that perhaps I'm not who I say I am when it comes to my faith, something which I find deeply offensive." A Sept. 24 column in the *Edmond Sun*, an Oklahoma daily, invoked<sup>50</sup> Obama's statement and asserted: "When Obama refers to 'my Muslim faith,' the verbal gaffe resonates as a Freudian slip because of Obama's thinly veiled hatred for this country's unique culture and institutions." The Drudge Report<sup>51</sup> linked to the column in the *Sun* (which it mistakenly identified it as a Canadian paper). The column also circulated on numerous right<sup>52</sup>-wing<sup>53</sup> blogs<sup>54</sup>.

Related to these smears is a right-wing talking point that Obama has been misrepresenting his ethnicity by calling himself African-American when he is in fact of Arab descent. The smear can be traced to a February 14 blog post<sup>55</sup> by Kenneth E. Lamb, a self-described "journalist, op-ed columnist, radio news-interview program host," who claimed that "Sen. Obama is actually Arab-American" and "Mr. Obama is not legally African-American." Lamb did not cite any evidence, but invited readers seeking "proof" of his claims to "[r]esearch the Kenyan records for yourself," adding: "You will find that his father was officially classified as 'Arab African' by the Kenyan government." A similar claim was forwarded by Fox News contributor Monica Crowley when she guest-hosted the June 23 broadcast<sup>56</sup> of *The Laura Ingraham Show* and cited Lamb's claims. When a caller to the show claimed that Obama is "not really African-American. He's Arab," Crowley said that "according to this genealogy -- and again, because I haven't done the research, I can't verify this -- but according to this guy Kenneth Lamb, Barack Obama is not black African, he is Arab African."

Most recently, on the September 22 broadcast of his nationally syndicated radio show, Rush Limbaugh asserted that Obama is "not black," and went on to ask: "Do you know he has not one shred of African-American blood?" Limbaugh continued: "He's Arab. You know, he's from Africa. He's from Arab parts of Africa. ... [H]e's not African-American. The last thing that he is is African-American."

The lie that Obama might be hiding his alleged Muslim faith resurfaced in a mainstream media outlet when a *Time/SRBI* poll conducted September 26-29 asked respondents with an "unfavorable opinion" of Obama the reasons for their view. One of the reasons *Time*<sup>57</sup> offered its respondents was the insinuation that Obama is hiding his true religion: "He's really a Muslim and not a Christian."

Updated on October 13, 2008.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.suntimes.com/news/falsani/726619,obamafalsani040504.article>

<sup>2</sup> [http://blogs.suntimes.com/sweet/2006/06/obama\\_on\\_faith\\_and\\_politics\\_an.html](http://blogs.suntimes.com/sweet/2006/06/obama_on_faith_and_politics_an.html)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/muslim.asp>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/237/>

<sup>5</sup> [http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=24399\\_AP\\_Admits\\_Obama\\_is\\_an\\_Islamic\\_Apostate&only](http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/?entry=24399_AP_Admits_Obama_is_an_Islamic_Apostate&only)

<sup>6</sup> <http://ibloga.blogspot.com/2006/10/is-barack-obama-lying-about-his-life.html>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.debbieschlussel.com/archives/2006/12/barack\\_hussein.html](http://www.debbieschlussel.com/archives/2006/12/barack_hussein.html)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1189687/posts>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/Read.aspx?GUID=656B62BA-7A61-4DF8-BDF7-B3937EFDECB4>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www wnd com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=60559>

<sup>11</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200507120008>

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-ames/the-right-unites-against-\\_b\\_89550.html?view=print](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-ames/the-right-unites-against-_b_89550.html?view=print)

<sup>13</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200804070001?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200804070001?f=s_search)

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- <sup>14</sup> [http://www.newshounds.us/2008/06/19/barachnophobia\\_strikes\\_again\\_as\\_brit\\_hume\\_twists\\_the\\_truth.php](http://www.newshounds.us/2008/06/19/barachnophobia_strikes_again_as_brit_hume_twists_the_truth.php)
- <sup>15</sup> [http://www.newshounds.us/2008/02/13/ann\\_coulter\\_claims\\_credit\\_for\\_hillarys\\_fall\\_says\\_barack\\_president\\_hussein\\_obama\\_willProbably\\_wi\\_n.php](http://www.newshounds.us/2008/02/13/ann_coulter_claims_credit_for_hillarys_fall_says_barack_president_hussein_obama_willProbably_wi_n.php)
- <sup>16</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200805070001?f=h\\_latest](http://mediamatters.org/items/200805070001?f=h_latest)
- <sup>17</sup> [http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D8N7NGE81&show\\_article=1](http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D8N7NGE81&show_article=1)
- <sup>18</sup> <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0803/17/sitroom.03.html>
- <sup>19</sup> [http://weblogs.baltimoresun.com/news/politics/blog/2008/05/a\\_busy\\_indiana\\_morning\\_for\\_oba.html](http://weblogs.baltimoresun.com/news/politics/blog/2008/05/a_busy_indiana_morning_for_oba.html)
- <sup>20</sup> <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/may/07/nation/na-obamacolor7>
- <sup>21</sup> [http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/2008/05/06/obamas\\_lean\\_and\\_hungry\\_voter\\_o.html](http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/2008/05/06/obamas_lean_and_hungry_voter_o.html)
- <sup>22</sup> Pg. 53
- <sup>23</sup> [http://www.edmondsun.com/opinion/local\\_story\\_268230433.html?keyword=topstory](http://www.edmondsun.com/opinion/local_story_268230433.html?keyword=topstory)
- <sup>24</sup> [http://www.drudgereportarchives.com/data/2008/09/25/20080925\\_120002.htm](http://www.drudgereportarchives.com/data/2008/09/25/20080925_120002.htm)
- <sup>25</sup> <http://www.srbi.com/ObamaSurges.pdf#page=9>
- <sup>26</sup> <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1189687/posts>
- <sup>27</sup> <http://ibloga.blogspot.com/2006/10/is-barack-obama-lying-about-his-life.html>
- <sup>28</sup> [http://www.usvetdsp.com/dec06/obama\\_muslim.htm](http://www.usvetdsp.com/dec06/obama_muslim.htm)
- <sup>29</sup> [http://www.debbieschlussel.com/archives/2006/12/barack\\_hussein.html](http://www.debbieschlussel.com/archives/2006/12/barack_hussein.html)
- <sup>30</sup> <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20071112/hayes/single>
- <sup>31</sup> [http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D8N7NGE81&show\\_article=1](http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D8N7NGE81&show_article=1)
- <sup>32</sup> <http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/politics/20070124-1317-obama-2008.html>
- <sup>33</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/237/>
- <sup>34</sup> <http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/Read.aspx?GUID=656B62BA-7A61-4DF8-BDF7-B3937EFDECB4>
- <sup>35</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200802220012?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200802220012?f=s_search)
- <sup>36</sup> <http://www wnd com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=60559>
- <sup>37</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200805070001?f=h\\_latest](http://mediamatters.org/items/200805070001?f=h_latest)
- <sup>38</sup> [http://weblogs.baltimoresun.com/news/politics/blog/2008/05/a\\_busy\\_indiana\\_morning\\_for\\_oba.html](http://weblogs.baltimoresun.com/news/politics/blog/2008/05/a_busy_indiana_morning_for_oba.html)
- <sup>39</sup> <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/may/07/nation/na-obamacolor7>
- <sup>40</sup> [http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/2008/05/06/obamas\\_lean\\_and\\_hungry\\_voter\\_o.html](http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/2008/05/06/obamas_lean_and_hungry_voter_o.html)
- <sup>41</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200805080002?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200805080002?f=s_search)
- <sup>42</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/12/opinion/12luttwak.html>
- <sup>43</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/01/opinion/01pubed.html?ref=opinion&pagewanted=all>
- <sup>44</sup> <http://www.newsweek.com/id/138456>
- <sup>45</sup> <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/2076683/posts>
- <sup>46</sup> <http://www.floppingaces.net/2008/09/08/obama-my-muslim-faith-on-abcs-this-week-program/>
- <sup>47</sup> <http://www.worldnetdaily.com/?pageId=74635>
- <sup>48</sup> <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2008/sep/07/obama-verbal-slip-fuels-his-critics/>
- <sup>49</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpoAVAA1F30>
- <sup>50</sup> [http://www.edmondsun.com/opinion/local\\_story\\_268230433.html?keyword=topstory](http://www.edmondsun.com/opinion/local_story_268230433.html?keyword=topstory)
- <sup>51</sup> [http://www.drudgereportarchives.com/data/2008/09/25/20080925\\_120002.htm](http://www.drudgereportarchives.com/data/2008/09/25/20080925_120002.htm)
- <sup>52</sup> <http://www.weblogginn.com/david-demming-why-obama-will-lose/>
- <sup>53</sup> [http://www.salon.com/opinion/greenwald/2008/09/26/national\\_review/index.html](http://www.salon.com/opinion/greenwald/2008/09/26/national_review/index.html)
- <sup>54</sup> <http://confederateyankee.mu.nu/archives/274201.php>
- <sup>55</sup> <http://kennethelamb.blogspot.com/2008/02/barak-obama-questions-about-ethnic.html>
- <sup>56</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200806260002>
- <sup>57</sup> <http://www.srbi.com/ObamaSurges.pdf#page=9>

## Somali Garb Photo

**Attack:** In February 2008, a photo of Barack Obama wearing a turban and a wraparound robe began circulating, making the implicit connection with false rumors that Obama is a Muslim.

**The Facts:** The photo shows Obama dressed in the traditional clothing of a Somali elder.<sup>1</sup> It was taken in 2006, during the senator's visit to Kenya. Politicians often dress in the traditional clothing of countries they visit as a sign of respect; President Bush has done so many times.

**The Echo Chamber:** *National Examiner*<sup>2</sup>, right<sup>3</sup>-wing<sup>4</sup> blogs<sup>5</sup> and forums<sup>6</sup>, Drudge Report<sup>7</sup>, Tennessee GOP<sup>8</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** The photo of Obama in Somali garb first appeared<sup>9</sup> in September 2006 in Geeska Afrika Online, an African news website. On Feb. 4, 2008, the picture with the headline "Obama's Shocking Al Qaeda Link" appeared in the U.S. supermarket tabloid *National Examiner*.<sup>10</sup> The photo was posted in the right-wing forum Free Republic Feb. 23.<sup>11</sup> That same day, the right-wing blog Sweetness & Light posted the photo and asked, "[W]hy haven't we seen that photograph until now?"<sup>12</sup> Other<sup>13</sup> blogs<sup>14</sup> wrote about the photo the following day. In the Feb. 25, 2008, edition<sup>15</sup> of the Drudge Report, Matt Drudge claimed<sup>16</sup> that campaign staff for Hillary Clinton had circulated the picture of Obama wearing the traditional Somali clothing, but did not provide evidence for the claim. The appearance of the photo on Drudge sparked a row<sup>17</sup> between the Obama and Clinton campaigns and prompted other<sup>18</sup> news<sup>19</sup> outlets<sup>20</sup> to report on it. On Feb. 26, the Tennessee Republican Party issued a press release which included the photograph and mentioned Obama's middle name, Hussein.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/23337141/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://patdollar.com/wp-content/uploads/2286994669\\_426a7d669e\\_b.jpg](http://patdollar.com/wp-content/uploads/2286994669_426a7d669e_b.jpg)

<sup>3</sup> <http://prairiepundit.blogspot.com/2008/02/obama-funny-hat-moment.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://sweetness-light.com/archive/obama-wore-muslim-gear-during-kenya-trip>

<sup>5</sup> <http://gatewayspundit.blogspot.com/2008/02/obama-needs-to-bury-this-muslim-photo.html>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1975275/posts?q=1&page=86#86>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.drudgereport.com/flashoa.htm>

<sup>8</sup> <http://embeds.blogs.foxnews.com/2008/02/27/mccain-uncomfortable-with-tn-anti-obama-release/>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.geeskaafrika.com/ethiopia\\_31aug06.htm](http://www.geeskaafrika.com/ethiopia_31aug06.htm)

<sup>10</sup> [http://patdollar.com/wp-content/uploads/2286994669\\_426a7d669e\\_b.jpg](http://patdollar.com/wp-content/uploads/2286994669_426a7d669e_b.jpg)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1975275/posts?q=1&page=86#86>

<sup>12</sup> <http://sweetness-light.com/archive/obama-wore-muslim-gear-during-kenya-trip>

<sup>13</sup> <http://prairiepundit.blogspot.com/2008/02/obama-funny-hat-moment.html>

<sup>14</sup> <http://gatewayspundit.blogspot.com/2008/02/obama-needs-to-bury-this-muslim-photo.html>

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.drudgereportarchives.com/data/2008/02/25/20080225\\_162610.htm](http://www.drudgereportarchives.com/data/2008/02/25/20080225_162610.htm)

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.drudgereport.com/flashoa.htm>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0208/8667.html>

<sup>18</sup> <http://elections.foxnews.com/2008/02/25/photo-showing-obama-in-somali-garb-circulated-by-clinton-campaign-source/>

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/2008/02/25/2008-02-25\\_dust\\_up\\_over\\_somali\\_photo\\_has\\_barack\\_oba.html](http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/2008/02/25/2008-02-25_dust_up_over_somali_photo_has_barack_oba.html)

<sup>20</sup> [http://blogs.suntimes.com/sweet/2008/02/sweet\\_the\\_story\\_behind\\_the\\_oba.html](http://blogs.suntimes.com/sweet/2008/02/sweet_the_story_behind_the_oba.html)

<sup>21</sup> <http://embeds.blogs.foxnews.com/2008/02/27/mccain-uncomfortable-with-tn-anti-obama-release/>

## Sworn In on Quran

*Attack: Obama took his oath of office for the U.S. Senate using the Quran instead of the Bible.*

**The Facts:** Obama was sworn in using his family Bible.

The Echo Chamber: chain<sup>1</sup> emails<sup>2</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** In 2007, anonymous chain<sup>3</sup> emails<sup>4</sup> began circulating spreading lies about Obama's religion. One of the falsehoods propagated was that Obama took the oath of office on the Quran. Nonpartisan fact-check website PolitiFact.com posited that the smear was inspired by the 2007 swearing-in of Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN), the first Muslim sworn into Congress.<sup>5</sup> Ellison used a Quran that once belonged to Thomas Jefferson.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/238/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/muslim.asp>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/238/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/muslim.asp>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/238/>

## “BLACK RADICAL” / “LIBERAL ELITIST”

### Alleged “Whitey” Comment

*Attack: Michelle Obama was caught saying the word “whitey” on a videotape.*

**The Facts:** There is no evidence that such a tape exists, nor is there any evidence that Michelle Obama ever referred to “whitey” in any speech.

**The Echo Chamber:** No Quarter blog,<sup>1</sup> Rush Limbaugh,<sup>2</sup> Fox News Channel<sup>3</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** On May 16, 2008, blogger Larry Johnson wrote a post alleging that sources had told him that “there is video dynamite – Michelle Obama railing against ‘whitey’ at Jeremiah Wright’s church.”<sup>4</sup> On May 30, Rush Limbaugh repeated the rumor on his nationally syndicated radio show.<sup>5</sup> On June 1, Republican consultant Roger Stone said on Fox News that “[t]here’s a buzz, which I believe now to be credible” that the tape exists.<sup>6</sup> On June 5, a reporter from McClatchy Newspapers asked Barack Obama about the rumor.<sup>7</sup> Obama told the reporter, “There is dirt and lies that are circulated in e-mails and they pump them out long enough until finally you, a mainstream reporter, asks me about it. That gives legs to the story.”

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<sup>1</sup> <http://noquarterusa.net/blog/2008/05/16/will-barack-throw-mama-from-the-train/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site\\_061208/content/01125109.guest.html](http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site_061208/content/01125109.guest.html)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZjoqq62oKU>

<sup>4</sup> <http://noquarterusa.net/blog/2008/05/16/will-barack-throw-mama-from-the-train/>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site\\_061208/content/01125109.guest.html](http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site_061208/content/01125109.guest.html)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZjoqq62oKU>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.politico.com/blogs/bensmith/0608/Obama\\_denies\\_a\\_rumor\\_and\\_questions\\_the\\_question.html](http://www.politico.com/blogs/bensmith/0608/Obama_denies_a_rumor_and_questions_the_question.html)

## Marxist / Saul Alinsky

*Attack: Barack Obama is a Marxist, and his ties to legendary Chicago community organizer Saul Alinsky show that he harbors a radical leftist agenda.*

**The Facts:** Obama is not a Marxist. Alinsky, who gained renown helping meatpackers organize for safe working conditions and developed an influential methodology of activism, was not a communist, and considered himself squarely within Judeo-Christian and democratic political traditions.<sup>1</sup> Obama was not a disciple of Alinsky, who died long before Obama began his community organizing work. Obama did admire “Alinsky’s appeal for small-d democracy but came to believe that social progress is best achieved by working within the political system, and on a national scale.”<sup>2</sup> During his years working for the Developing Communities Project in Chicago, Obama embraced Alinsky’s method of lengthy face-to-face conversations to elicit people’s stories, goals, and ambitions and then leading them to action.<sup>3</sup> He used it to negotiate among residents, church leaders, and politicians to build and lead various grassroots groups that worked for playgrounds, better trash pickup, and asbestos removal. But Obama rejected Alinsky’s confrontational tactics in favor of reconciliation and unity.<sup>4</sup>

**The Echo Chamber:** Tom<sup>5</sup> DeLay,<sup>6</sup> right<sup>7</sup>-wing<sup>8</sup> blogs,<sup>9</sup> Accuracy in Media,<sup>10</sup> *Investor’s Business Daily*,<sup>11</sup> Michael<sup>12</sup> Savage,<sup>13</sup> CNN.com,<sup>14</sup> *The New York Times*,<sup>15</sup> MSNBC,<sup>16</sup> Fox News,<sup>17</sup> Spero News,<sup>18</sup> Frontpagemag.com,<sup>19</sup> National Review,<sup>20</sup> *The Obama Nation* by Jerome Corsi,<sup>21</sup> *The Case Against Barack Obama* by David Freddoso<sup>22</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** The smear started as early as Obama’s 2004 run for the Senate, when his opponent, Alan Keyes, accused him of having the record of “a hard-line, academic, Marxist socialist.”<sup>23</sup> In December 2006, former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay said that Obama had a “Marxist leftist” record.<sup>24</sup> In another interview for *The Washington Times* in January 2008, he said of Obama, “He’s a Marxist but a very smart one.”<sup>25</sup> On the April 14 broadcast of his nationally syndicated radio show, Michael Savage asserted that Sen. Barack Obama is “a Marxist in his heart,” adding, “He’s an Afro-Leninist, and I know he’s dangerous.”<sup>26</sup> In a column published the same day in *The New York Times*, William Kristol ascribed Obama’s comments about working-class voters to a Marxist outlook.<sup>27</sup> That day, Sen. Joe Lieberman (I-CT) was asked on a radio show whether Obama is “a Marxist as Bill Kristol said might be the case.” Lieberman replied, “I must say that’s a good question,” and said, “I’ve learned some things about him, about the kind of environment from which he came ideologically. And I wouldn’t ... I’d hesitate to say he’s a Marxist, but he’s got some positions that are far to the left of me and I think mainstream America.”<sup>28</sup> An editorial posted on the *Investor’s Business Daily*’s website on May 5 accused Obama of having a “Marxist Axis Of Friends.”<sup>29</sup> Radio host and blogger Hugh Hewitt asked in May 2008, “[D]id the Obama rally begin with the Soviet National Anthem?”<sup>30</sup> The next month, DeLay said on a nationally syndicated radio program, “I have said publicly, and I will again, that unless he [Obama] proves me wrong, he is a Marxist.”<sup>31</sup> On March 19, 2007, *The New Republic* ran an article describing Obama’s community organizing roots in Chicago and suggesting that his campaign message of post-partisanship “raises questions about Obama’s authentic political identity.”<sup>32</sup> *The Washington Post* also ran an article that month describing Alinsky’s impact on Obama’s campaign methods.<sup>33</sup> The conservative media picked up this idea and used it to claim that what Obama took from Alinsky were not methods of political organizing but an ideology, and therefore Obama harbors secret radical impulses that are, among other things, “borderline communist,”<sup>34</sup> and revolutionary,<sup>35</sup> making him “the man of whom Alinsky and his Marxist acolytes dreamed.”<sup>36</sup> Jerome Corsi devotes extended discussion to Alinsky in his book attacking Obama.<sup>37</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> [http://www.salon.com/books/feature/2008/07/07/obama\\_books/print.html](http://www.salon.com/books/feature/2008/07/07/obama_books/print.html)
- <sup>2</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/24/AR2007032401152.html>
- <sup>3</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/24/AR2007032401152.html>
- <sup>4</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/07/us/politics/07community.html?partner=rssnyt&pagewanted=print>
- <sup>5</sup> <http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=18446>
- <sup>6</sup> <http://washingtontimes.com/news/2008/jan/09/republicans-prepare-to-take-aim-at-obama/?page=2>
- <sup>7</sup> <http://hughhewitt.townhall.com/blog/g/f67b448f-a956-4406-8aba-a870c567a019>
- <sup>8</sup> [http://www.redstate.com/stories/elections/2008/obamas\\_marxist\\_underpinnings\\_is\\_it\\_any\\_wonder\\_he\\_said\\_what\\_he\\_said](http://www.redstate.com/stories/elections/2008/obamas_marxist_underpinnings_is_it_any_wonder_he_said_what_he_said)
- <sup>9</sup> [http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com/atlas\\_shrugs/2008/05/obama-ran-on-ma.html](http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com/atlas_shrugs/2008/05/obama-ran-on-ma.html)
- <sup>10</sup> <http://www.aim.org/aim-report/is-barack-obama-a-marxist-mole/>
- <sup>11</sup> <http://www.ibdeditorials.com/IBDArticles.aspx?id=294880428846293>
- <sup>12</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200804150006?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200804150006?f=s_search)
- <sup>13</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200806100014?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200806100014?f=s_search)
- <sup>14</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/POLITICS/blogs/politicalticker/2006/12/is-obama-marxist-leftist.html>
- <sup>15</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/14/opinion/14kristol.html?\\_r=1&ref=opinion&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/14/opinion/14kristol.html?_r=1&ref=opinion&oref=slogin)
- <sup>16</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200808050004?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200808050004?f=s_search)
- <sup>17</sup> <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,395823,00.html>
- <sup>18</sup> <http://www.speroforum.com/site/article.asp?id=15264>
- <sup>19</sup> <http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/Read.aspx?GUID=D6E27ECE-9798-4F01-A378-3F1405F69704>
- <sup>20</sup> <http://article.nationalreview.com/print/?q=OTlkYzllMmM1Y2YxYjEwMzA3Njc1OWE1MDM4ZjU5NzE=>
- <sup>21</sup> pp. 84-87, 110-112, 121-124, 130-134
- <sup>22</sup> pp. 122, 126-144
- <sup>23</sup> AP, September 4, 2004
- <sup>24</sup> <http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=18446>
- <sup>25</sup> <http://washingtontimes.com/news/2008/jan/09/republicans-prepare-to-take-aim-at-obama/?page=2>
- <sup>26</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200804150006?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200804150006?f=s_search)
- <sup>27</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/14/opinion/14kristol.html?\\_r=1&ref=opinion&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/14/opinion/14kristol.html?_r=1&ref=opinion&oref=slogin)
- <sup>28</sup> <http://thinkprogress.org/2008/04/14/lieberman-its-a-good-question-to-ask-if-obama-is-a-marxist/>
- <sup>29</sup> <http://www.ibdeditorials.com/IBDArticles.aspx?id=294880428846293>
- <sup>30</sup> <http://hughhewitt.townhall.com/blog/g/f67b448f-a956-4406-8aba-a870c567a019>
- <sup>31</sup> <http://thinkprogress.org/2008/06/05/delay-obama-marxist/>
- <sup>32</sup> [http://www.tnr.com/story\\_print.html?id=a74fca23-f6ac-4736-9c78-f4163d4f25c7](http://www.tnr.com/story_print.html?id=a74fca23-f6ac-4736-9c78-f4163d4f25c7)
- <sup>33</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/24/AR2007032401152.html>
- <sup>34</sup> <http://bearingdrift.com/2008/07/28/guest-post-is-barack-obama-a-borderline-communist/>
- <sup>35</sup> <http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/Read.aspx?GUID=D6E27ECE-9798-4F01-A378-3F1405F69704>
- <sup>36</sup> <http://article.nationalreview.com/print/?q=OTlkYzllMmM1Y2YxYjEwMzA3Njc1OWE1MDM4ZjU5NzE=>
- <sup>37</sup> <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,395823,00.html>

## William Ayers

**Attack: Barack Obama's ties with former Weather Underground member William Ayers underscore his extremist beliefs.**

**The Facts:** Obama's connection to Ayers is minimal at best, and Ayers has no role in the Obama campaign. In the mid-'90s, Ayers and his wife, former Weather Underground member Bernardine Dohrn, hosted an event for Obama during his first run for the Illinois state Senate. (Ayers and Dohrn and the Obamas all live in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago.) Obama and Ayers were also members of the board of a grant-making foundation that seeks to increase opportunities for less advantaged people and communities to shape decisions affecting them, the Woods Fund of Chicago, between 1999 and 2002.<sup>1</sup> In 2001, Ayers contributed \$200 to Obama's campaign. Despite his membership in the Weather Underground during the 1960s, Ayers, a professor of education at the University of Illinois at Chicago, is today a respected member of the Chicago political community, having worked for Mayor Richard Daley in the past.<sup>2</sup> The Obama campaign has denounced Ayers' past radicalism, saying, "Senator Obama strongly condemns the violent actions of the Weathermen group, as he does all acts of violence. But he was an eight-year-old child when Ayers and the Weathermen were active, and any attempt to connect Obama with events of almost forty years ago is ridiculous."<sup>3</sup>

**The Echo Chamber:** right-wing<sup>4</sup> talk<sup>5</sup> radio,<sup>6</sup> right<sup>7</sup>-wing<sup>8</sup> blogs,<sup>9</sup> Politico,<sup>10</sup> Fox<sup>11</sup> News<sup>12</sup> Channel,<sup>13</sup> MSNBC,<sup>14</sup> ABC News,<sup>15</sup> The New York Times,<sup>16</sup> National Review,<sup>17</sup> The Weekly Standard,<sup>18</sup> The Obama Nation by Jerome Corsi<sup>19</sup>, The Case Against Barack Obama by David Freddoso<sup>20</sup>, Wall Street Journal<sup>21</sup>, NPR<sup>22</sup>, Los Angeles Times<sup>23</sup>, MSNBC<sup>24</sup>, Time's The Page<sup>25</sup>, McCain campaign<sup>26</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** According to a Nexis search, the very first mention of William Ayers in conjunction with Barack Obama was in a February 3 article by conservative Peter Hitchens in London's *The Mail on Sunday*.<sup>27</sup> A February 15 Bloomberg news article mentioning the relationship between the two men followed.<sup>28</sup> On Feb. 19, the conservative *New York Sun* newspaper published a front-page story about Obama's ties to Ayers.<sup>29</sup> The *Politico* published a similar story on February 22.<sup>30</sup> On April 15, conservative radio hosts Sean Hannity and Steve Malzberg urged guest ABC news host George Stephanopoulos to ask Obama about his connection to Ayers.<sup>31</sup> During the April 16 ABC Democratic presidential debate, Stephanopoulos asked Obama of Ayers, "Can you explain that relationship for the voters, and explain to Democrats why it won't be a problem?"<sup>32</sup>

In the weeks that followed, right<sup>33</sup>-wing<sup>34</sup> and mainstream<sup>35</sup> media<sup>36</sup> outlets<sup>37</sup> continued to run stories about Obama and Ayers, and the McCain campaign<sup>38</sup> has attacked Obama for the alleged association. At an October 4 campaign event in Englewood, Colorado, Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin, citing a *New York Times* article<sup>39</sup> on Obama's relationship with Ayers, accused<sup>40</sup> Obama of "palling around with terrorists." NPR's *Morning Edition*<sup>41</sup>, the *Los Angeles Times*<sup>42</sup>, and MSNBC<sup>43</sup> all reported Palin's attack without noting that the *Times* article she referred to concluded that "the two men do not appear to have been close. Nor has Mr. Obama ever expressed sympathy for the radical views and actions of Mr. Ayers, whom he has called 'somebody who engaged in detestable acts 40 years ago, when I was 8.'" In an October 7 post on *Time's The Page* blog, Mark Halperin asked<sup>44</sup> Obama strategist Robert Gibbs, "Does Obama think it is acceptable to serve on a board with – and have personal ties – to an unrepentant domestic terrorist?"

Updated on October 13, 2008.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.woodsfund.org/about/mission>

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- <sup>2</sup> <http://www.suntimes.com/news/sweet/901879,CST-NWS-sweet18.article>
- <sup>3</sup> [http://blog.washingtonpost.com/fact-checker/2008/02/obamas\\_weatherman\\_connection.html](http://blog.washingtonpost.com/fact-checker/2008/02/obamas_weatherman_connection.html)
- <sup>4</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200804170010>
- <sup>5</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/04/16/stephanopoulos-left-field\\_n\\_97136.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/04/16/stephanopoulos-left-field_n_97136.html)
- <sup>6</sup> [http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site\\_041708/content/01125106.guest.html](http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site_041708/content/01125106.guest.html)
- <sup>7</sup> <http://newsbusters.org/blogs/john-stephenson/2008/04/17/media-finally-covers-obama-s-connection-terrorist-ayers>
- <sup>8</sup> <http://rightwingnuthouse.com/archives/2008/04/17/finally-the-media-discovers-obama-ayers-relationship/>
- <sup>9</sup> <http://www.stoptheaclu.com/archives/2008/03/19/hey-media-lets-take-a-look-at-obamas-other-radical-friends/>
- <sup>10</sup> <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0208/8630.html>
- <sup>11</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fV\\_h-XwchkY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fV_h-XwchkY)
- <sup>12</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zp8WsRUF3Yg>
- <sup>13</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJCinSxipZk>
- <sup>14</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8t4glqu9OfM>
- <sup>15</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlnoXZWRjgE>
- <sup>16</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/17/us/politics/17truth.html?\\_r=2&ex=1366171200&en=2b5e7c726c82f40a&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&oref=slogin&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/17/us/politics/17truth.html?_r=2&ex=1366171200&en=2b5e7c726c82f40a&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&oref=slogin&oref=slogin)
- <sup>17</sup> <http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=OTFIYWNI211MTQ1OWM2ZTNmNWM4M2U5NmZkMTVmYTg=>
- <sup>18</sup> <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/015/197wxqsf.asp>
- <sup>19</sup> pp. 118-120
- <sup>20</sup> pp. 121-127
- <sup>21</sup> <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122212856075765367.html>
- <sup>22</sup> <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=95460510>
- <sup>23</sup> <http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/la-na-campaign7-2008oct07,0,5232782.full.story>
- <sup>24</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200810070016>
- <sup>25</sup> <http://thepage.time.com/2008/10/07/the-heart-of-the-ayers-matter/>
- <sup>26</sup> <http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5h2TC1ztfVzOjXeCNemY7IlelBNwD93JRMQ81>
- <sup>27</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-511901/The-Black-Kennedy-But-does-know-real-Barack-Obama.html>
- <sup>28</sup> <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=adgAs9YOxRSc>
- <sup>29</sup> <http://www.nysun.com/national/obamas-ties-to-left-come-under-scrutiny/71421/>
- <sup>30</sup> <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0208/8630.html>
- <sup>31</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200804170010>
- <sup>32</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlnoXZWRjgE>
- <sup>33</sup> <http://www.powerlineblog.com/archives2/2008/04/020358.php>
- <sup>34</sup> <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,355673,00.html>
- <sup>35</sup> <http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com/archive/2008/04/18/915557.aspx>
- <sup>36</sup> [http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2008/04/18/how\\_obama\\_and\\_the\\_radical\\_became\\_news/](http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2008/04/18/how_obama_and_the_radical_became_news/)
- <sup>37</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/17/us/politics/17truth.html?\\_r=2&ex=1366171200&en=2b5e7c726c82f40a&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&oref=slogin&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/17/us/politics/17truth.html?_r=2&ex=1366171200&en=2b5e7c726c82f40a&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&oref=slogin&oref=slogin)
- <sup>38</sup> <http://hotair.com/archives/2008/04/20/video-mccain-unloads-on-obama-over-ayers/>
- <sup>39</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/04/us/politics/04ayers.html>
- <sup>40</sup> <http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5h2TC1ztfVzOjXeCNemY7IlelBNwD93JRMQ81>
- <sup>41</sup> <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=95460510>
- <sup>42</sup> <http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/la-na-campaign7-2008oct07,0,5232782.full.story>
- <sup>43</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200810070016?f=h\\_latest](http://mediamatters.org/items/200810070016?f=h_latest)
- <sup>44</sup> <http://thepage.time.com/2008/10/07/the-heart-of-the-ayers-matter/>

## “LIBERAL ELITIST” / “CLOSET MUSLIM”

### Anti Israel; Endorsed by Hamas

*Attack: Barack Obama has been endorsed by Hamas for president. Obama in turn supports Hamas and is anti-Israel.*

**The Facts:** Hamas did not endorse Obama. Although one Hamas official was quoted in April 2008 saying the organization liked Obama and hoped he would win the election, in June a Hamas official said, “Hamas does not differentiate between the two presidential candidates, Obama and McCain, because their policies regarding the Arab-Israel conflict are the same and are hostile to us, therefore we do have no preference and are not wishing for either of them to win.”<sup>1</sup> Obama has also repeatedly denounced Hamas as a terrorist organization that should be isolated until they renounce<sup>2</sup> terrorism<sup>3</sup> and recognize Israel’s right to exist. Obama has said that “as President I will never compromise when it comes to Israel’s security.”<sup>4</sup>

**The Echo Chamber:** chain emails,<sup>5</sup> right<sup>6</sup>-wing<sup>7</sup> blogs,<sup>8</sup> right-wing<sup>9</sup> news sites,<sup>10</sup> Weekly Standard,<sup>11</sup> John<sup>12</sup> McCain,<sup>13</sup> Joe Lieberman,<sup>14</sup> Karl Rove,<sup>15</sup> Fox<sup>16</sup> News<sup>17</sup> Channel,<sup>18</sup> Rush Limbaugh,<sup>19</sup> *The Obama Nation* by Jerome Corsi<sup>20</sup>, *The Case Against Barack Obama* by David Freddoso<sup>21</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** In January 2008, the leaders of several Jewish organizations released an open letter<sup>22</sup> condemning<sup>23</sup> slanderous<sup>24</sup> chain emails<sup>25</sup> accusing Obama of being secretly a Muslim that were reportedly circulating among American Jews. But the idea that Obama was “bad for the Jews” has continued to spread in the months since, despite stories in pro-Israel<sup>26</sup> outlets<sup>27</sup> affirming that Obama is a staunch supporter of Israel.

In an April 13 interview<sup>28</sup> with conservative radio host John Batchelor and WorldNetDaily Jerusalem bureau chief Aaron Klein, Ahmed Yousef, chief political adviser to the prime minister of Hamas, reportedly said<sup>29</sup> that he liked Obama and hoped he would win the election. That statement came despite the fact that Obama in the past had denounced Hamas.<sup>30</sup> Obama had also repeatedly stated that his willingness to meet with international adversaries “does not include Hamas”<sup>31</sup> and that he “does not support negotiations with Hamas until they renounce terrorism, recognize Israel’s right to exist, and abide by past agreements.”<sup>32</sup> When Robert Malley, an unofficial foreign policy adviser to Obama, revealed on May 9 that he had met with Hamas as part of his work for a conflict-resolution think tank, the Obama campaign promptly severed ties with him.<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, the incident prompted right<sup>34</sup>-wing<sup>35</sup> blogs<sup>36</sup> to accuse Obama of being pro-Hamas. In a May 12 interview with *The Atlantic Monthly*’s Jeffrey Goldberg, Obama said, “My position on Hamas is indistinguishable from the position of Hillary Clinton or John McCain. I said they are a terrorist organization and I’ve repeatedly condemned them. I’ve repeatedly said, and I mean what I say: since they are a terrorist organization, we should not be dealing with them until they recognize Israel, renounce terrorism, and abide by previous agreements.”<sup>37</sup>

On June 4, Obama gave a speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) in which he said, “We must isolate Hamas unless and until they renounce terrorism, recognize Israel’s right to exist, and abide by past agreements” and that he would “never compromise when it comes to Israel’s security.”<sup>38</sup> Following his speech, a Hamas official stated, “Hamas does not differentiate between the two presidential candidates,

Obama and McCain, because their policies regarding the Arab-Israel conflict are the same and are hostile to us, therefore we do have no preference and are not wishing for either of them to win.”<sup>39</sup>

Yet members of the media continued to perpetuate the falsehood that Obama is supported by Hamas. On the June 6 edition of Fox News Channel’s *The O’Reilly Factor*, guest host Laura Ingraham complained that Obama “did not talk about the Hamas endorsement” at a fundraising event for Orthodox Jews in New York.<sup>40</sup> On June 24, right-wing talk radio host Rush Limbaugh said on his nationally syndicated radio show: “Hamas has endorsed Obama. Hamas has endorsed Obama!”<sup>41</sup>

John McCain’s campaign has also used the Hamas endorsement smear, writing in an email to donors: “Barack Obama’s foreign policy plans have even won him praise from Hamas leaders.”<sup>42</sup> McCain also reportedly said that “it’s very clear who Hamas wants to be the next president of the United States . . . If Senator Obama is favored by Hamas, I think people can make judgments accordingly.”<sup>43</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://blogs.reuters.com/trail08/2008/06/04/hamas-unendorses-obama-after-speech-to-pro-israel-lobby/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.barackobama.com/2008/06/04/remarks\\_of\\_senator\\_barack\\_obam\\_74.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2008/06/04/remarks_of_senator_barack_obam_74.php)

<sup>3</sup> <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalradar/2008/04/obama-contrary.html>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.barackobama.com/2008/06/04/remarks\\_of\\_senator\\_barack\\_obam\\_74.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2008/06/04/remarks_of_senator_barack_obam_74.php)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/muslim.asp>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.powerlineblog.com/archives2/2008/04/020315.php>

<sup>7</sup> <http://jihadwatch.org/archives/021050.php>

<sup>8</sup> <http://ace.mu.nu/archives/262088.php>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.newsmax.com/insidethecover/Hamas\\_Endoreses\\_Obama/2008/04/17/88754.html](http://www.newsmax.com/insidethecover/Hamas_Endorses_Obama/2008/04/17/88754.html)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.worldnetdaily.com/?pageId=61631>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.weeklystandard.com/weblogs/TWSFP/2008/04/obama\\_campaign\\_flattered\\_by\\_ha.asp](http://www.weeklystandard.com/weblogs/TWSFP/2008/04/obama_campaign_flattered_by_ha.asp)

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/04/18/mccain-hamas-endorsement\\_n\\_97469.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/04/18/mccain-hamas-endorsement_n_97469.html)

<sup>13</sup> <http://elections.foxnews.com/2008/04/25/mccain-takes-shot-at-obama-for-hamas-support/>

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/05/12/lieberman-parrots-obama-h\\_n\\_101313.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/05/12/lieberman-parrots-obama-h_n_101313.html)

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,334408,00.html>

<sup>16</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200806090008?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200806090008?f=s_search)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,334408,00.html>

<sup>18</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200804110008?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200804110008?f=s_search)

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site\\_062408/content/01125107.guest.html](http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site_062408/content/01125107.guest.html)

<sup>20</sup> pp. 257, 269

<sup>21</sup> p. 138

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.adl.org/internet/letter\\_obama.asp](http://www.adl.org/internet/letter_obama.asp)

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/16/us/politics/16letter.html>

<sup>24</sup> [http://tpmcafe.talkingpointsmemo.com/2008/01/10/the\\_hate\\_campaign\\_against\\_obam/](http://tpmcafe.talkingpointsmemo.com/2008/01/10/the_hate_campaign_against_obam/)

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/muslim.asp>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.tnr.com/politics/story.html?id=6bd11ed5-bf80-44a0-b683-a0563e11ab89>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.nysun.com/editorials/obama-and-israel>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.worldnetdaily.com/?pageId=61631>

<sup>29</sup> [http://cameroncorner.files.wordpress.com/2008/04/aaron\\_klein\\_4113081.mp3](http://cameroncorner.files.wordpress.com/2008/04/aaron_klein_4113081.mp3)

<sup>30</sup> <http://uk.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUKN0228863920080302>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSN03459104>

<sup>32</sup> <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalradar/2008/04/obama-contrary.html>

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us\\_and\\_americas/us\\_elections/article3897414.ece#cid=OTC-RSS&attr=2015164](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/us_elections/article3897414.ece#cid=OTC-RSS&attr=2015164)

<sup>34</sup> [http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com/atlas\\_shrugs/2008/05/obamas-hamas-ad.html](http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com/atlas_shrugs/2008/05/obamas-hamas-ad.html)

<sup>35</sup> <http://michellemalkin.com/2008/05/09/oopsie-obama-adviser-a-little-too-chummy-with-hamas/>

<sup>36</sup> <http://ace.mu.nu/archives/262088.php>

<sup>37</sup> [http://jeffreygoldberg.theatlantic.com/archives/2008/05/obama\\_on\\_zionism\\_and\\_hamas.php](http://jeffreygoldberg.theatlantic.com/archives/2008/05/obama_on_zionism_and_hamas.php)

<sup>38</sup> [http://www.barackobama.com/2008/06/04/remarks\\_of\\_senator\\_barack\\_obam\\_74.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2008/06/04/remarks_of_senator_barack_obam_74.php)

<sup>39</sup> <http://blogs.reuters.com/trail08/2008/06/04/hamas-unendorses-obama-after-speech-to-pro-israel-lobby/>

<sup>40</sup> [http://mediamatters.org/items/200806090008?f=s\\_search](http://mediamatters.org/items/200806090008?f=s_search)

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site\\_062408/content/01125107.guest.html](http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site_062408/content/01125107.guest.html)

<sup>42</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/04/18/mccain-hamas-endorsement\\_n\\_97469.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/04/18/mccain-hamas-endorsement_n_97469.html)

<sup>43</sup> [http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2008/05/09/mccain\\_obama\\_trade\\_jabs\\_over\\_hamas/](http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2008/05/09/mccain_obama_trade_jabs_over_hamas/)

## “CLOSET MUSLIM” / “BLACK RADICAL”

### Attended a Madrassa

*Attack: Barack Obama attended a madrassa as a child growing up in Indonesia.*

**The Facts:** During the time he spent in Indonesia, Obama attended a public school that did not focus on religion.<sup>1</sup>

**The Echo Chamber:** chain emails,<sup>2</sup> right-wing blogs,<sup>3</sup> InsightMag.com,<sup>4</sup> Fox & Friends,<sup>5</sup> right-wing talk radio<sup>6</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** InsightMag.com, a website owned by the right-wing *Washington Times* newspaper, posted an article January 17, 2007, containing the original smear, citing “researchers connected to” Hillary Clinton as the source of the allegation.<sup>7</sup> On the January 19 edition of their radio programs, right-wing radio hosts Melanie Morgan, Lee Rodgers<sup>8</sup> and Rush Limbaugh and Fox News Channel’s Fox & Friends<sup>9</sup> and *The Big Story With John Gibson*<sup>10</sup> all forwarded the accusation. The smear was also forwarded in chain emails accusing Obama of being secretly a Muslim.<sup>11</sup> On January 22, CNN aired a lengthy report debunking the InsightMag.com story.<sup>12</sup> The smear, however, continues to spread via emails attacking Obama.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/01/22/obama.madrassa/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/muslim.asp>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.debbieschlussel.com/archives/2007/01/hillary\\_camp\\_ag.html](http://www.debbieschlussel.com/archives/2007/01/hillary_camp_ag.html)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.insightmag.com/Media/MediaManager/Obama\\_2.htm](http://www.insightmag.com/Media/MediaManager/Obama_2.htm)

<sup>5</sup> <http://thinkprogress.org/2007/01/19/fox-obama-madrassa/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200701200003>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.insightmag.com/Media/MediaManager/Obama\\_2.htm](http://www.insightmag.com/Media/MediaManager/Obama_2.htm)

<sup>8</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200701200003>

<sup>9</sup> <http://thinkprogress.org/2007/01/19/fox-obama-madrassa/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200701200003>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/muslim.asp>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pMgsbMcPQE>

## Fake Quotes from His Book

**Attack:** Barack Obama's *Dreams From My Father* and *The Audacity of Hope* contain incendiary and offensive quotes about race and religion.

**The Facts:** The allegedly offensive passages have been taken out of context, altered, or fabricated, as nonpartisan<sup>1</sup> sources<sup>2</sup> have shown.<sup>3</sup> For example, one of the most widely spread quotes is the following: "I found a solace in nursing a pervasive sense of grievance and animosity against my mother's race." This "quote" is not something Obama ever wrote or said; it is a fabrication.

**The Echo Chamber:** chain emails<sup>4</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** In May 2008, an email began circulating that purported to cite problematic and disturbing quotations from Obama's *Dreams From My Father* and *The Audacity of Hope*.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2008/jun/10/dreams-my-father-quotes-require-context/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.factcheck.org/askfactcheck/did\\_obama\\_write\\_that\\_he\\_would\\_stand.html](http://www.factcheck.org/askfactcheck/did_obama_write_that_he_would_stand.html)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/ownwords.asp>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/dreamsfatheremail/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/dreamsfatheremail/>

## “BLACK RADICAL” / “LIBERAL ELITIST” / “CLOSET MUSLIM”

### No Flag Lapel Pin

*Attack: Barack Obama refuses to wear a flag pin on his lapel and has a “patriotism problem.”*

**The Facts:** Obama told a reporter in October 2007 that he had worn flag pins but stopped wearing them during the runup to the Iraq war because it had become a “substitute for...true patriotism.” Obama has stated he does not refuse to wear flag pins, and has in fact worn them on occasion in recent months.<sup>1</sup>

**The Echo Chamber:** right-wing<sup>2</sup> talk radio,<sup>3</sup> right-wing<sup>4</sup> blogs,<sup>5</sup> prominent<sup>6</sup> Republicans,<sup>7</sup> Fox News Channel,<sup>8</sup> Drudge Report,<sup>9</sup> ABC News,<sup>10</sup> CNN,<sup>11</sup> *The Obama Nation* by Jerome Corsi (pp. 254-255), *Tulsa World*<sup>12</sup>, *Edmond Sun*<sup>13</sup>, *Time*<sup>14</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** In an October 3, 2007, interview, Obama explained to a reporter in Iowa why he was not wearing a flag lapel pin.<sup>15</sup> The Associated Press reported on the story,<sup>16</sup> which was then linked to by the Drudge Report with a headline insinuating that Obama’s decision to stop wearing a flag pin was a recent one.<sup>17</sup> From there, numerous media outlets picked up the story, some of which echoed Drudge’s implication. On CNN, Wolf Blitzer teased a story by announcing, “It involves patriotism and the America flag. Why has Barack Obama stopped wearing a lapel pin of the U.S. flag?”<sup>18</sup> Obama’s comments led conservative media figures to question<sup>19</sup> whether he “believe[s] in America,”<sup>20</sup> to describe him as a “domestic insurgent,”<sup>21</sup> and to suggest that he has “patriotism problems.”<sup>22</sup> Prominent Republicans, like Karl Rove<sup>23</sup> and Rep. Jack Kingston (R-GA),<sup>24</sup> have also used the flag lapel pin as a line of attack against Obama. At the last Democratic presidential debate on April 16 on ABC, a Pennsylvania voter whose question was submitted via video clip and moderator Charles Gibson asked Obama about wearing a flag pin.<sup>25</sup> According to<sup>26</sup> McClatchy,<sup>27</sup> ABC “had tracked ... down” the Pennsylvania voter, Nash McCabe, “after she was quoted in a New York Times story<sup>28</sup> about white voters in small-town Latrobe, Pa., revealing her as 52, out of work and against Obama.” In a September 6 article, the *Tulsa World* uncritically quoted Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK) as saying: “I am not questioning Sen. Obama’s patriotism, but you have to question why at times he seems so obviously opposed to public displays of patriotism and national pride, like wearing an American flag lapel pin.”

The attacks on Obama’s patriotism have not relented. A Sept. 24 column<sup>29</sup> in the *Edmond Sun*, an Oklahoma daily, asserted that Obama was “a hollow man that despises American culture” and has a “thinly veiled hatred for this country’s unique culture and institutions.” The column also unfavorably contrasted Obama with Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin, and suggested Obama was “embarrassed by being an American.” The Drudge Report<sup>30</sup> linked to the column in the *Sun* (which it mistakenly identified it as a Canadian paper). The column also circulated on numerous right<sup>31</sup>-wing<sup>32</sup> blogs<sup>33</sup>, including a post by Confederate Yankee who wrote:

Barack Obama isn’t anti-American, but he is un-American. Our cultural memory and experiences are something he read about in books, but never lived, and something he cannot feel.

He is not one of us.

Mainstream media outlets have continued to advance the smear. A *Time*/SRBI poll conducted September 26-29 asked respondents with an “unfavorable opinion” of Obama the reasons for their view. One of the reasons *Time*<sup>34</sup> offered was, “He’s not as patriotic as he should be.”

Updated on October 13, 2008.

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- <sup>1</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/04/17/questioning-obama-neither\\_n\\_97235.html?page=1](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/04/17/questioning-obama-neither_n_97235.html?page=1)
- <sup>2</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200710050012>
- <sup>3</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200711280005>
- <sup>4</sup> <http://michellemalkin.com/2007/10/04/picture-this-barack-obamas-presidential-seal/>
- <sup>5</sup> <http://www.powerlineblog.com/archives/2007/10/018665.php>
- <sup>6</sup> <http://thinkprogress.org/2008/04/02/rove-ironically-attacks-obama-for-not-wearing-flag-pins/>
- <sup>7</sup> <http://thinkprogress.org/2008/02/28/kingston-caught-without-american-flag-lapel-pin/>
- <sup>8</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200710050012>
- <sup>9</sup> [http://www.drudgereportarchives.com/data/2007/10/04/20071004\\_193319.htm](http://www.drudgereportarchives.com/data/2007/10/04/20071004_193319.htm)
- <sup>10</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/print?id=4670271>
- <sup>11</sup> <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0710/04/sitroom.01.html>
- <sup>12</sup> [http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/article.aspx?articleID=20080906\\_11\\_A1\\_STPAUL227187](http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/article.aspx?articleID=20080906_11_A1_STPAUL227187)
- <sup>13</sup> [http://www.edmondsun.com/opinion/local\\_story\\_268230433.html?keyword=topstory](http://www.edmondsun.com/opinion/local_story_268230433.html?keyword=topstory)
- <sup>14</sup> <http://www.srbi.com/ObamaSurges.pdf#page=9>
- <sup>15</sup> <http://www.kcrg.com/news/local/10232921.html>
- <sup>16</sup> [http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D8S2LGH00&show\\_article=1&cat=0](http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D8S2LGH00&show_article=1&cat=0)
- <sup>17</sup> [http://www.drudgereportarchives.com/data/2007/10/04/20071004\\_193319.htm](http://www.drudgereportarchives.com/data/2007/10/04/20071004_193319.htm)
- <sup>18</sup> <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0710/04/sitroom.01.html>
- <sup>19</sup> <http://www.mediabusters.org/items/200710060001>
- <sup>20</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200710050012>
- <sup>21</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200710050005>
- <sup>22</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200710230004>
- <sup>23</sup> <http://thinkprogress.org/2008/04/02/rove-ironically-attacks-obama-for-not-wearing-flag-pins/>
- <sup>24</sup> <http://thinkprogress.org/2008/02/28/kingston-caught-without-american-flag-lapel-pin/>
- <sup>25</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/print?id=4670271>
- <sup>26</sup> [http://mediabusters.org/items/200804180005?f=s\\_search](http://mediabusters.org/items/200804180005?f=s_search)
- <sup>27</sup> <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/227/story/34071.html>
- <sup>28</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/04/us/politics/04penn.html?\\_r=3&&oref=slogin&fta=y&pagewanted=print&&oref=slogin&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/04/us/politics/04penn.html?_r=3&&oref=slogin&fta=y&pagewanted=print&&oref=slogin&oref=slogin)
- <sup>29</sup> [http://www.edmondsun.com/opinion/local\\_story\\_268230433.html?keyword=topstory](http://www.edmondsun.com/opinion/local_story_268230433.html?keyword=topstory)
- <sup>30</sup> [http://www.drudgereportarchives.com/data/2008/09/25/20080925\\_120002.htm](http://www.drudgereportarchives.com/data/2008/09/25/20080925_120002.htm)
- <sup>31</sup> <http://www.webloggin.com/david-demming-why-obama-will-lose/>
- <sup>32</sup> [http://www.salon.com/opinion/greenwald/2008/09/26/national\\_review/index.html](http://www.salon.com/opinion/greenwald/2008/09/26/national_review/index.html)
- <sup>33</sup> <http://confederateyankee.mu.nu/archives/274201.php>
- <sup>34</sup> <http://www.srbi.com/ObamaSurges.pdf#page=9>

## No Hand over Heart during Anthem

**Attack:** Barack Obama refuses to put his hand on his heart during the playing of the national anthem and may be breaking the law by not doing so.

**The Facts:** According to Bill Burton, an Obama spokesperson, Obama sometimes places his hand over his heart during the national anthem, and sometimes does not.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, there are photographs of him with his hand over his heart during the national anthem.<sup>2</sup> Even though the U.S. Code states that “all present except those in uniform should stand at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart,” experts on U.S. customs say that the rule is no longer strictly followed. Anne Garside, director of communication for the Maryland Historical Society, says that “there is no obligation to put your hand over your heart” during the singing of the national anthem<sup>3</sup> and that “the bottom line is that you show respect with your demeanor.”<sup>4</sup>

**The Echo Chamber:** chain<sup>5</sup> emails,<sup>6</sup> right-wing blogs,<sup>7</sup> Fox News Channel,<sup>8</sup> Associated Press,<sup>9</sup> *The Obama Nation* by Jerome Corsi<sup>10</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** An email began circulating in October 2007 asking, “Does this man not cross his heart when the National Anthem is playing, or when the flag is raised or lowered?”<sup>11</sup> The email usually came with a photograph of Obama standing in front of an American flag with his hands clasped in front of him.<sup>12</sup> Beside Obama are Hillary Clinton and Bill Richardson, with their hands over their hearts and all with their backs to the flag on stage, presumably facing another flag or the singer of the anthem offstage. The right-wing blog NewsBusters, in an October 20, 2007, post, noted Obama’s posture and suggested that it was a political statement: “Does he perhaps believe that, like wearing the flag pin, the hand on the heart isn’t ‘true patriotism’?”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://blog.washingtonpost.com/fact-checker/2007/11/obama\\_nabbed\\_by\\_the\\_patriotic.html](http://blog.washingtonpost.com/fact-checker/2007/11/obama_nabbed_by_the_patriotic.html)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/anthem.asp>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.factcheck.org/elections-2008/sliming\\_obama.html](http://www.factcheck.org/elections-2008/sliming_obama.html)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/169/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/anthem.asp>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.factcheck.org/elections-2008/sliming\\_obama.html](http://www.factcheck.org/elections-2008/sliming_obama.html)

<sup>7</sup> <http://newsbusters.org/blogs/mark-finkelstein/2007/10/20/obama-no-hand-heart-pledge-either-will-msm-notice>

<sup>8</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200710240006>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/politics/5564470.html>

<sup>10</sup> p. 255

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/anthem.asp>

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1662530\\_1446035,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1662530_1446035,00.html)

<sup>13</sup> <http://newsbusters.org/blogs/mark-finkelstein/2007/10/20/obama-no-hand-heart-pledge-either-will-msm-notice>

## Refuses to Recite Pledge

**Attack:** Barack Obama refuses to recite the Pledge of Allegiance or put his hand over his heart during the pledge.

**The Facts:** The photo<sup>1</sup> of Obama allegedly not placing his hand on his heart during the Pledge of Allegiance was actually taken during the singing of the national anthem.<sup>2</sup> Obama has no problem reciting the pledge with his hand over his heart, as can be seen in these<sup>3</sup> videos<sup>4</sup> of him leading the Senate and a town hall meeting in Ohio in reciting the pledge.<sup>5</sup>

**The Echo Chamber:** chain<sup>6</sup> emails,<sup>7</sup> NBC<sup>8</sup>

**Origin & Evolution:** An email that began circulating in October 2007<sup>9</sup> falsely claimed that Obama “REFUSED TO NOT ONLY PUT HIS HAND ON HIS HEART DURING THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, BUT REFUSED TO SAY THE PLEDGE” and showed a photograph<sup>10</sup> of Obama standing in front of an American flag with his hands clasped in front of him. Beside Obama are Hillary Clinton and Bill Richardson, with their hands on their hearts. Another email also began making the rounds claiming, “Barack Hussein Obama will NOT recite the Pledge of Allegiance nor will he show any reverence for our flag.”<sup>11</sup> The picture of Obama standing in front of the flag was snapped during the singing of the national anthem, not the Pledge of Allegiance, during a steak fry for Iowa Sen. Tom Harkin on September 16, 2007.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1662530\\_1446035,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1662530_1446035,00.html)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/169/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0FnOrGmRhg&feature=related>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Plt1i5K7HZU&feature=related>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4BglDfskLI>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/muslim.asp>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/169/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/24226233/page/4/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/anthem.asp>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1662530\\_1446035,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1662530_1446035,00.html)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/muslim.asp>

<sup>12</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/Video/playerIndex?id=3759803>