

Obama's Mr. Wright

He ain't heavy, he's my brother.

By Steve Sailer

MILLIONS OF WORDS have been devoted to Barack Obama and his “post-racial” and “post-partisan” presidential campaign. As a candidate whose policy platform is almost identical to Hillary Clinton's, Senator Obama has been running largely on the charisma generated by widespread assumptions about the political implications of his personal background.

An avid golfer (16 handicap), Obama brilliantly positioned himself in his 2004 Democratic Convention keynote address as the Tiger Woods of politics, the product of a loving marriage bridging the racial gap, thus suggesting he's suited by nature and nurture to, in the words of countless journalists, “transcend race” and “heal our racial and political divides.”

Remarkably, not until most of the primaries were over did almost anybody in America notice that the candidate's most personal relationships suggest the opposite of his artfully concocted campaign image.

Obama's famous persona began to show cracks in late February when his often peeved wife Michelle, an intensely ungrateful beneficiary of affirmative action by Whitney Young H.S., Princeton, Harvard Law School, and the Sidley Austin corporate law firm, was recorded saying her husband's triumphs meant “... for the first time in my adult life, I am proud of my country.”

The serious blow, however, came with March 13 telecasts on ABC and Fox News of sermons by Obama's spiritual adviser, Rev. Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr., who fulminated in front of a raucously enthusiastic congregation, “No, no, no, not God bless America—God damn America.”

In response to the belated controversy, the candidate first claimed ignorance, even though Wright's history of Left radicalism goes back beyond his 1984 trip with Louis Farrakhan to Libya to meet Muammar Khaddafi.

The failure to publicize this side of Obama marks one of the most egregious failures by the press and public in recent political history. How could it have happened?

That Barack Obama is black offers the country a potential advantage: it makes his intellectual sophistication and verbal adeptness more acceptable to the bulk of voters, many of whom found Al Gore and his 1330 SAT score too inhumanly cerebral to trust. If Obama, a superb prose stylist, were white, he'd be written off as an effete intellectual. But white voters are hungry for a well-educated role model for blacks. And blacks see the preppie from paradise's membership in Wright's Trinity United Church of Christ as evidence that he's keepin' it real.

That Wright was a radical leftist and that Obama shared much of his outlook was apparent to anyone willing to read closely the potential president's graceful but slippery 1995 autobiography, *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*. As I explained in my March 26, 2007 article “Obama's Identity Crisis” in *The American Conservative*:

Even [Obama's] celebrated acceptance of Christianity in his mid-20s turns out to be an affirmation of African-American emotional separatism. As I was reading *Dreams*, I assumed that his ending would be

adapted from the favorite book of his youth, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, which climaxes with Malcolm's visit to Mecca and heart-warming conversion from the racism of the Black Muslims to the universalism of orthodox Islam. I expected that Obama would analogously forgive whites and ask forgiveness for his own racial antagonism as he accepts Jesus.

Instead, Obama falls under the spell of a leftist black nationalist preacher, Jeremiah A. Wright, who preaches African-American unity through antipathy toward whites.

My article was denounced as racist in the *Washington Monthly* and by David Brock's George Soros-funded Media Matters. Yet my conclusion identified the crucial question about this gifted politician that still remains unanswered:

He possesses one of the finest minds of any politician, but his personal passions routinely war against his acknowledging unwelcome truths, even to himself. Whether his head or heart would prove stronger in the White House remains unknown, perhaps even to Barack Obama.

As *Dreams* explains to anyone willing to endure Obama's mellifluous but evasive prose, his parents' disastrous bigamous marriage psychologically scarred him. He idealized his almost completely missing Kenyan father, while resenting his white American mother who twice dumped him on his grandparents in Hawaii.

To counter the impressions of Obama as either a secret Muslim (preposterous) or an opportunistic agnostic (plausible), the Obama campaign has long trumpeted his ties to Reverend Wright. Indeed, Obama's tearful hearing of Wright's sermon "The Audacity of Hope" (Obama borrowed the title for his second bestseller), in which Wright denounces how "white folks' greed runs a world in need," provides the climax for the central section of Obama's first memoir.

Obama, who met scores of black ministers during his years as a Saul Alinsky-style "community organizer," chose Wright as his mentor because he peddled the anti-American and anti-white paranoia that the white-raised Ivy Leaguer associated with being "black enough." For example, here is an excerpt from Trinity's current website explaining its "Black Value System":

Disavowal of the Pursuit of 'Middle-classness.' Classic methodology on control of captives teaches that captors must be able to identify the 'talented tenth' of those subjugated, especially those who show promise of providing the kind of leadership that might threaten the captor's control.

Those so identified are separated from the rest of the people by:

1. Killing them off directly, and/or fostering a social system that encourages them to kill off one another.

I hope Obama has matured out of the identity politics obsessions of his thirties. Yet hard evidence for this is sketchy. We have detailed breakdowns of the Obama family's charitable deductions from their tax returns of 1998, 2005, and 2006. In both 1998 and 2006, Trinity was their favorite charity, with the Obamas donating \$22,500 in 2006

alone. So, Obama pays to promulgate the idea that white America is killing off the "talented tenth" of young blacks.

On March 18, rather than holding a news conference in which he might finally be exposed to tough questions, he orated edifyingly about how America's racial problem is so complex, so deep-rooted, so multifaceted that the only possible solution is to elect him president. Few noticed that, yes, he implicitly admitted that he had lied about what he knew and when he knew it. And, no, he wasn't going to find himself and his children a less leftist and racist church.

Revealingly, Obama asserted, "I can no more disown him than I can my white grandmother ... who once confessed her fear of black men who passed by her on the street ..."

Yet pages 88-91 of *Dreams* reveal both a serious factual conflict and why Obama carefully picked out Trinity, whose "black liberation theology" Wright described in 2007 as similar to the "liberation theology" espoused by Nicaraguan Sandinista revolutionaries.

In reality, Obama's now 85-year-old grandmother, the most level-headed member of his otherwise irresponsible family, became afraid to take the bus to her bank management job after being abused by a pushy panhandler: "He was very aggressive, Barry. Very aggressive. I gave him a dollar and he kept asking. If the bus hadn't come, I think he might have hit me over the head."

The self-absorbed Obama's response was to be overwhelmed by angst and revulsion—not at the potential mugger but at his own grandmother after his leftist grandfather revealed that he didn't want to give his own wife a ride to work because, "You know why she's so scared this time. I'll tell you why. Before you came in, she told me the fella was *black*. ... And I just don't think that's right."

Obama reeled in self-pity:

The words were like a fist in my stomach. ... And yet I knew that men who might easily have been my brothers would still inspire [my grandparents'] rawest fear. ... The earth shook under my feet, ready to crack open at any moment. I stopped, trying to steady myself, and knew for the first time that I was utterly alone.

Sadly, with the primaries almost over, the press has done little to illuminate the central conundrum about Obama. Who most influences him? His moderate University of Chicago colleagues or his racially outraged minister and wife?

Why were these publicly available facts ignored until ridiculously late?

First, there's Obama's sheer political talent. If Hillary is the original Terminator 101 of candidates, a cyborg relentlessly plodding onward, Obama is the quicksilver Terminator 1000 from "Terminator 2," a shape-shifting quantum leap in political skill, able to persuade voters that he is whomever they want him to be.

Second, very few journalists have finished Obama's 1995 book. It's too long, too literary, too fixated upon race, the forbidden topic, and too hard to quote. Obama was at Harvard Law School when HLS graduate David Souter breezed on to the Supreme Court as a stealth nominee who, in sharp contrast to the rejected Robert Bork, lacked a controversial paper trail. The budding politician may have learned from this not to put anything in writing that can provide a controversial soundbite.

Third, despite all the calls to "begin a dialogue on race," nobody with a career to preserve has any such intention. Just last October, for example, America's most prominent living man of science, James Watson, co-discoverer of the structure of DNA, attempted to begin a dialogue on race concerning the far-reaching implications of rapidly improv-

ing genetic research techniques. He was immediately shown the door.

Similarly, in January, when Richard Cohen of the *Washington Post* became the first journalist to mention that back on Nov. 2, 2007, Wright had given his “Lifetime Achievement” award to Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, Cohen was widely denounced.

Thus the Clintons, who were attacked by Obama supporters as racists merely for using the term “fairy tale,” were terrified of being accused once again of “playing the race card” if they brought up Wright.

Fourth, many journalists assume that they can only report on issues brought up by the candidates. So if Hillary ignored Obama’s racist connections, then, in this Heisenbergian media climate, they effectively didn’t exist.

Fifth, Obama has largely avoided interviews by skeptical experts.

Considering the competition, Obama may be the best candidate of the three remaining. His puerile racial and political views may have matured after his soul-crushing rejection by the black electorate in his 2000 Democratic primary challenge to Congressman Bobby Rush, an ex-Black Panther. Perhaps Obama realized then that his future lay in appealing to white voters.

But we can’t know unless he honestly answers informed questions. What America needs now is for Obama to sit down to a long, live, no-holds-barred interview with someone who has the racial background to ignore political correctness. The obvious candidate is the conservative literary critic Shelby Steele, author of *A Bound Man* about Obama, who also has a black father and white mother.

Is that too much to ask of the man who would be president? ■

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Women at War

The strain of Iraq forced the shock integration of women into the military. The results aren’t all pretty.

By Kelley Beaucar Vlahos

A HIGH POINT of Kayla Williams’s service as a noncommissioned Army officer in Iraq was receiving a commendation for her support on missions in Baghdad. Low points included getting molested by one of her own men and being asked to mock a naked Iraqi prisoner in an interrogation cage in Mosul.

Riding a line between woman and warrior, “bitch” and “slut,” Williams, 31, was not alone. The Bush administration’s “long war” has forced the military to shock integrate more than 180,000 women into Iraq and Afghanistan over the last six years. The consequences have been both impressive and ugly and do little to put to rest decades of debate over women in combat.

Critics say the rush to put women into combat-related roles for which they weren’t trained has made them more vulnerable, exacerbated male-female tensions in theater, and advanced a controversial policy while most of the country wasn’t looking.

“We have large numbers of women who have been willing to come into the Armed Forces, who are willing to do jobs for which we have a shortage of young men,” says one retired Army colonel, now in the private sector, who declined to be identified because of his ties to the defense community. “I think the women under these circumstances do the best they can.”

Veterans who have spoken to *TAC* say most female soldiers have exceeded expectations. But the experience of the largest contingent of female soldiers in

modern history is not unclouded. The rate of single motherhood among women on active duty is 14 percent, and nursing mothers are being deployed four months after giving birth. Reports of sexual assault are climbing, as are suicides and the number of women—now over 36,000—who have visited VA hospitals since leaving the service. As of February, 102 female soldiers had died in Iraq.

Meanwhile, the Army, which represents most women in theater, won’t release figures on how many are evacuated from the field due to noncombat injuries, illness, or pregnancy.

“Whatever they are able to conceal or cover that’s not attractive—whether it’s unplanned pregnancy, rapes, whatever—everyone is prepared to pretend what is happening really isn’t,” says the retired colonel.

The drive to integrate women into every crevice of the military—the “ungendered vision” advocated by Duke law professor Madeleine Morris, a former assistant to Clinton administration Army Secretary Togo West—has created turmoil in Washington since the 1970s. And since then the number of women in the Armed Forces has increased dramatically, from 7,000 in Vietnam (mostly medical personnel) to over 40,000 in the Persian Gulf War to one in seven of our troops in Iraq today.

Thanks to Clinton-era liberals—like former Rep. Pat Schroeder and women-in-combat pioneers like Army Assistant Secretary Sara Lister, who was forced to resign in 1997 after she called the Marines