

# *Life After Bush*

## Notes and Sources

This document provides the background and support for most of the political and historical references in *Life After Bush*, a live theatrical event from NERO FIDDLED, written and produced by Noah Diamond and Amanda Sisk. For much, much more, read the NERO FIDDLED blog.<sup>1</sup>

### *I Wasn't Impeached*

The song is a mini-compendium of Bush's common verbal tics, especially the little transitional phrases he uses when he's trying to make sense: **“as a result,” “in other words,” “therefore,” “I’m fully aware,” “that’s my point,” “I appreciate that,” “I say.”** **“Secondly”** is one of his favorites, often used several times in the course of one list. Here's a lovely example from June 17, 2008:<sup>2</sup>

“My only point to you is, is that we're in constant contact with people on the ground to help make sure that we save lives. Now that the water is beginning to recede, the question is, how do we help with the recovery? Secondly, what's going to happen in the long term to the homes? And so Michael is going to set up a housing task force similar to the kind we set up in California for the wildfires, to work with state and local authorities to have an orderly strategy to help people get back in their homes. Secondly, we're worried about farmers and ranchers.”

**“I’m the decider”** is one of his more celebrated declarations, originally uttered on April 18, 2006, in response to the suggestion that Donald Rumsfeld should resign.<sup>3</sup>

**“I’m fully aware that some opinions don’t agree with mine”**: In December of 2005, Bush told NBC's Brian Williams, “It’s a myth to think that I’m not aware that there is opinions that don’t agree with mine. Because I’m fully aware of that.”<sup>4</sup>

**“I always say the freedom that we love / Came straight from the Almighty up above”**: What he actually always says, usually mangling it in some way, is that “freedom is not America’s gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty’s gift to each and every individual who lives in the world.”<sup>5</sup> When Bush’s speechwriters give him things like this to say, he often gets confused. The

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nerofiddled.net>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dubyaspeak.com/search.phtml?q=secondly>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/04/18/rumsfeld>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/10439994/page/3>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/06/20040615-9.html>

“freedom is not America’s gift to the world” bit was *really* dragged through the dirt during an astounding 2004 interview Bush granted to the French magazine *Paris Match*.<sup>6</sup>

“Oh, I see what you’re saying. What I say is, I say that freedom is not America’s gift to the world. In other words, I’m making it clear to people that freedom is more universal than a country. Freedom is more universal than man. See, I believe freedom is the Almighty’s gift to everybody in the world. And the reason I say that is because I don’t want people to think that there is such thing as – that we want the world to look like America. I understand it’s not going to. But freedom is universal. Freedom is applied here. Freedom is applied in France. Freedom is a part of – will be a part of a new Iraq.”

**“God wants me to be president”:** Bush has asserted many times that he considers his presidency the result of divine intervention – which would seem, at any rate, like an admission that it’s not the result of a democratic process. “I feel like God wants me to run for President,” Bush told Texas evangelist James Robinson before his 2000 campaign. “I can’t explain it, but I sense my country is going to need me. Something is going to happen. . . I know it won’t be easy on me or my family, but God wants me to do it.”<sup>7</sup>

**“Well, I been to some disasters. / I know life is a dangerous place”:** Discussing flooding in the Midwest on June 17, 2008, Bush mused, “I, unfortunately, have been to too many disasters as President.”<sup>8</sup> On a May 7, 2003 press availability with President Aznar of Spain, Bush told us, “I think war is a dangerous place.”

Discussing Hurricane Katrina on *Good Morning America* on September 1, 2005, Bush said, **“I don’t think anyone anticipated the breach of the levees.”** In reality, *a lot of people* anticipated it.<sup>9</sup>

## *The Work is Surging / Al Qaeda in Iraq*

McCain’s answers in this section are his own. His vow to continue the troop surge (**“the first and most important and vital element...”**) comes from the 11/28/07 Republican primary debate.<sup>10</sup> **“I know how to win wars”** is a much-repeated McCain line; one example is his town hall meeting in Albuquerque on 7/15/08.<sup>11</sup>

**“My plane was shot down in 1967”:** Late in 1967, Navy pilot John McCain’s A-4 Skyhawk was shot down over Hanoi. For more than five years, he was imprisoned and tortured by North Vietnamese forces at the Hoa Lo Prison, known as the Hanoi Hilton. He was released in 1973.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/33149.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/nov/02/usa.religion>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/06/20080617-1.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200509020001>

<sup>10</sup> <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2007/11/28/mccain-were-winning-in-iraq>

<sup>11</sup> [http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/2008/07/15/mccain\\_i\\_know\\_how\\_to\\_win\\_wars.html](http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/2008/07/15/mccain_i_know_how_to_win_wars.html)

McCain's experience as a prisoner of war forms the basis of his autobiography *Faith of My Fathers*. It also forms the basis of his celebrity.<sup>12</sup>

**"...and we will win the war in Mesopotamia":** McCain hasn't actually referred to Iraq as Mesopotamia, but often his geography is out of date. One example: His repeated 2008 references to Czechoslovakia, which ceased to exist in 1993 (it split into two countries, the Czech Republic and Slovakia).<sup>13</sup>

**"Transcendental challenge":** McCain frequently describes the "war on terror" as *transcendental*, as in "a transcendental threat," "the transcendental challenge of the twenty-first century," etc. What he probably means is *transcendent*.

**"...al Qaeda would be telling the world they beat America":** Republican primary debate, St. Petersburg, Florida, 11/28/07.<sup>14</sup>

McCain's assurances that **al Qaeda in Iraq** is al Qaeda in Iraq come from a 2/27/08 McCain town hall meeting in Tyler, Texas. "I am not embarrassed to tell you that I did not watch the Democrat debate last night," McCain said. "But I am told that Senator Obama made the statement that if al Qaeda came back to Iraq after he withdraws, after American troops are withdrawn, then he would send military troops back if al Qaeda established a base in Iraq. I have some news. Al Qaeda is in Iraq! It's called al Qaeda in Iraq."<sup>15</sup>

As for the tendency of American politicians (and media) to exaggerate the significance of al Qaeda in Iraq, see Andrew Tilghman, "The Myth of AQI," *Washington Monthly*, October 2007.<sup>16</sup>

The speech about Iraq in which Bush mentioned al Qaeda **ninety-five times** was delivered to three hundred troops at Charleston Air Force Base, July 24, 2007.<sup>17</sup>

**"Since 2003":** Neither al Qaeda, nor al Qaeda in Iraq, nor al Qaeda in any other form, was in Iraq until after the U.S. invasion in March of 2003. Nor was Iraq a haven for anti-American terrorist activity. In March of 2008, five years after the invasion and the lies used to justify it, even the Pentagon finally admitted that there was never any connection between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein's Iraq.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <http://nerofiddled.blogspot.com/2008/09/mccains-one-accomplishment.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.thecarpetbaggerreport.com/archives/16196.html>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/28/us/politics/28debate-transcript.html>

<sup>15</sup> <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalradar/2008/02/mccain-to-obama.html>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2007/0710.tilghman.html>

<sup>17</sup> <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/jul/25/nation/na-bush25>

<sup>18</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/US/03/13/alqaeda.saddam/index.html>

# *Bus Stop*

This is an imaginary encounter between Reverend **Jeremiah Wright** (Barack Obama's former pastor at Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ) and Pastor **John Hagee** (the televangelist who founded San Antonio's Cornerstone Church, and whose endorsement was sought, won, and later rejected by John McCain). Most of what they have to say is derived from their actual pronouncements.

Hagee's description of the apocalypse, as supposedly predicted in the Bible, paraphrases the description set forth in his 2006 book *Jerusalem Countdown: A Warning to the World*.<sup>19</sup>

Hagee's theory that **Hurricane Katrina was God's punishment for a gay pride parade** comes from his 9/18/06 appearance on NPR's *Fresh Air*. Hagee told Terry Gross:

"All hurricanes are acts of God, because God controls the heavens. I believe that New Orleans had a level of sin that was offensive to God, and they are – were recipients of the judgment of God for that. The newspaper carried the story in our local area that was not carried nationally that there was to be a homosexual parade there on the Monday that the Katrina came. And the promise of that parade was that it was going to reach a level of sexuality never demonstrated before in any of the other gay pride parades. So I believe that the judgment of God is a very real thing. I know that there are people who demur from that, but I believe that the Bible teaches that when you violate the law of God, that God brings punishment sometimes before the day of judgment. And I believe that the Hurricane Katrina was, in fact, the judgment of God against the city of New Orleans."<sup>20</sup>

Jeremiah Wright's description of the Israel/Palestine dispute,<sup>21</sup> and his line about racism as the bedrock of American culture<sup>22</sup> ("**Racism is how this country was founded and how this country is still run**"), are direct quotes. The line about 9/11 demonstrating that "people of color had not gone away" was written by Wright in 2005.<sup>23</sup>

The rest of Wright's dialogue in this scene is derived from two now-famous sermons.<sup>24</sup> The first of these was delivered on 9/16/01:

"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 black South Africans, and now we are indignant because the stuff we have done overseas is now brought right back to our own front yards. America's chickens are coming home to roost."

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?articleId=11541>

<sup>20</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200802280018>

<sup>21</sup> <http://commonsensepoliticalthought.com/?p=2553>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/15/us/politics/15wright.html>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/30/us/politics/30obama.html>

<sup>24</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/Story?id=4443788>

The second was given in 2003:

“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. God damn America for as long as she acts like she is God and she is supreme.”

It’s worth mentioning that in the opinion of NERO FIDDLED, approximately half of what Jeremiah Wright has to say makes a lot of sense.<sup>25</sup>

## *Rudy, Rudy, Rudy*

**“I guess that’s really all I had to say”:** This take on Giuliani was nicely summed up by Joe Biden in the October 20, 2007 Democratic primary debate: “And the irony is, Rudy Giuliani, probably the most under-qualified man since George Bush to seek the presidency, is talking about any of the people here. Rudy Giuliani...I mean, think about it! Rudy Giuliani! There’s only three things he mentions in a sentence – a noun, a verb, and 9/11. There’s nothing else! There’s nothing else! And I mean this sincerely. He’s genuinely not qualified to be president.”<sup>26</sup>

## *Under the Bed*

Almost everything Obama says in this scene is taken from his standard stump speech delivered throughout the spring and summer of 2008.<sup>27</sup>

**“His wife said he wasn’t proud of America”:** Campaigning in Wisconsin on 2/18/08, Michelle Obama said, “For the first time in my adult life I am proud of my country, because it feels like hope is finally making a comeback.”<sup>28</sup> The remark was followed by a lunatic right-wing shit-storm which continues to this very day. Conservatives pounced on the implication that Ms. Obama had not been proud of her country until recently, and incorporated it into the existing (and utterly fictitious) view of her as some kind of dangerous militant. The day after the remark, just to make sure there was no confusion, Cindy McCain told a group of her husband’s supporters: “I’m proud of my country. I don’t know if you heard those words earlier. I’m very proud of my country.”<sup>29</sup> Fascinating debate.

**“...refused to put his hand on his heart”:** Among the many ridiculous right-wing myths about Barack Obama, there is the notion that he secretly hates America, and occasionally sends coded signals to his fellow America-haters. One widely-circulated photograph shows Obama, Hillary

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<sup>25</sup> <http://nerofiddled.blogspot.com/2008/04/jeremiah-was-bullshitter.html>

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2007/10/30/biden-rudys-sentences-c\\_n\\_70509.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2007/10/30/biden-rudys-sentences-c_n_70509.html)

<sup>27</sup> [http://www.barackobama.com/2008/05/06/remarks\\_of\\_senator\\_barack\\_obam\\_62.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2008/05/06/remarks_of_senator_barack_obam_62.php)

<sup>28</sup> <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalpunch/2008/02/michelle-obam-1.html>

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/02/19/cindy-mccain-is-proud-of-\\_n\\_87418.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/02/19/cindy-mccain-is-proud-of-_n_87418.html)

Clinton, and Bill Richardson at a campaign event, with an enormous American flag behind them. Clinton and Richardson have their hands on their hearts, and Obama does not. This, in the eyes of some, proves that Obama hates America.<sup>30</sup> (Not that this even deserves to be refuted, but for what it's worth, it was later revealed that the picture was taken not during the Pledge of Allegiance but during the national anthem.)

**“He said people in small towns are bitter”:** One of the more enduring non-stories of the primary season was Obama's “bitter” comment,<sup>31</sup> made at a private fundraiser in San Francisco, 4/6/08. Here it is in context:

“In a lot of these communities in big industrial states like Ohio and Pennsylvania, people have been beaten down so long, and they feel so betrayed by government, and when they hear a pitch that is premised on not being cynical about government, then a part of them just doesn't buy it. And...it's true that when it's delivered by a 46-year-old black man named Barack Obama, then that adds another layer of skepticism...

“But the truth is – is that our challenge is to get people persuaded that we can make progress when there's not evidence of that in their daily lives. You go into some of these small towns in Pennsylvania, and like a lot of small towns in the Midwest, the jobs have been gone now for twenty-five years, and nothing's replaced them. And they fell through the Clinton administration, and the Bush administration, and each successive administration has said that somehow these communities are gonna regenerate, and they have not. So it's not surprising then that they get bitter, they cling to guns, or religion, or antipathy to people who aren't like them, or anti-immigrant sentiment, or anti-trade sentiment, as a way to explain their frustrations.”

A classic example of a politician attacked for telling the truth.

## *Corporations Are People Too*

The concept of **corporate personhood** – beloved by conservatives – suggests that a corporation is a “legal person,” entitled to the rights granted to citizens by the United States Constitution. The concept comes from a highly inventive interpretation of an 1886 Supreme Court decision, *Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad*.<sup>32</sup>

Courts of law routinely agree to accept as true something which is actually false. They even have a special term for it: **Legal fiction**.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> <http://nerofiddled.blogspot.com/2008/02/last-refuge-of-scoundrels.html>

<sup>31</sup> <http://nerofiddled.blogspot.com/2008/04/bitter-pills.html>

<sup>32</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate\\_personhood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_personhood)

<sup>33</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal\\_fiction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_fiction)

## *Spurning Bush*

We made up “**Chowder brow.**” Bush’s penchant for assigning nicknames to the people around him is well-known,<sup>34</sup> but his real-life nickname for White House Chief of Staff Joshua Bolten – “Yosh” – just isn’t funny enough for the sketch.

“**Can I execute somebody? That’s how I used to unwind in Texas**”: Bush still holds the record for executing more prisoners than any other governor in American history.<sup>35</sup>

“**If you want him to win, do not campaign for him in public**”: Due to Bush’s approval ratings – the lowest in presidential history – McCain has avoided joint photo opportunities whenever possible. On May 27, 2008, Bush and McCain appeared at a private fundraiser in Arizona, closed to the press. Later, *Salon* reported, “Their time at the airport was the only moment when the press could capture images of the two together, and even then, according to Fox News, they were within camera shot for only 47 seconds, and were together on the tarmac for just 26 seconds. They gave each other a very quick hug, and an even quicker handshake, before Bush boarded Air Force One.”<sup>36</sup>

Later in the election season, Bush and Cheney became one of the only incumbent presidential tickets in history not to appear in person at their party’s nominating convention.<sup>37</sup>

## *Suckerpunch*

The brouhaha over **Michigan and Florida** was one of the primary season’s uglier twists.<sup>38</sup> Historically, the early caucus and primary states – Iowa and New Hampshire – have been the most important victories for presidential candidates. Other states have been crying foul for decades: Why should Iowa and New Hampshire have a disproportionate say in choosing our presidents?

Leading up to the 2008 election, the Florida and Michigan Democratic and Republican parties announced their intention to hold early primaries, in advance of Super Tuesday (February 5), when most states go to the polls. The Democratic National Committee warned both states that unless they rescheduled their primaries to take place on or after February 5, their votes would not be honored by the national party, and their delegates would not be seated at the convention. Undaunted, Michigan sent its primary voters to the polls on January 15, and Florida voted on January 29.

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.nndb.com/group/750/000091477>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.commondreams.org/views/061700-102.htm>

<sup>36</sup> [http://www.salon.com/politics/war\\_room/2008/05/28/mccain\\_bush](http://www.salon.com/politics/war_room/2008/05/28/mccain_bush)

<sup>37</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/08/31/bush-unlikely-to-attend-g\\_n\\_122761.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/08/31/bush-unlikely-to-attend-g_n_122761.html)

<sup>38</sup> <http://nerofiddled.blogspot.com/search?q=florida+michigan+ballot>

Honoring the DNC's ruling, all of the Democratic candidates agreed not to campaign in either of the two states. This gave a considerable advantage to Hillary Clinton, the most "known" Democratic candidate, with the highest name recognition and the highest profile. She had even more of an advantage in Michigan, where hers was the only name on the ballot; the other Democratic candidates withdrew their names following the DNC's decision.

Early in the primary season, when Clinton looked like the inevitable winner, she was prepared to accept the invalidity of the Florida and Michigan tallies; on October 11, 2007, she said on National Public Radio, "It's clear this election they're having [in Michigan] is not going to count for anything." By the spring of 2008, when it became clear that a full seating of the Florida and Michigan delegations *based on the existing vote totals* was the only way she could surpass Obama, she had changed her thinking; now, honoring the 1/15 and 1/29 results was nothing less than a civil rights imperative.<sup>39</sup>

At the DNC Rules and Bylaws Committee meeting on May 29, 2008, a compromise was reached: The full delegations of Michigan and Florida would be seated at the convention, and each delegate would get half a vote. By the time the Democratic Convention took place, in August, it was announced that the Florida and Michigan votes would be fully counted. Hillary Clinton, making a dramatic entrance on the convention floor, moved on behalf of the New York delegation to end the roll call and nominate Barack Obama by acclamation.

***Suckerpunch*** and ***Dick Memmons*** are obviously fictional, but the show has a lot in common with an array of cable news/opinion shows, particularly *Hardball with Chris Matthews*. Similarly, Peggy Patty Prentiss and David Mulberry-Schwartz are made up, but have plenty in common with the seemingly infinite army of advisers, surrogates, and strategists who spoke to the media on behalf of both campaigns.

**The photograph of Obama in traditional Kenyan attire** entered the primary fray by way of the right-leaning news website The Drudge Report, which claimed in February 2008 to have received the photograph from "Clinton staffers." David Plouffe, Obama's campaign manager, called it "the most shameful, offensive fear-mongering we've seen from either party in this election." Some of Peggy's lines in this sketch are taken from Clinton campaign manager Maggie Williams, who said, "If Barack Obama's campaign wants to suggest a photo of him wearing traditional clothing is divisive, they should be ashamed. Hillary Clinton has worn the traditional clothing of countries she has visited and had those photos published widely."<sup>40</sup>

**Khalid Sheikh Mohammed** was a member of Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda, starting around 1999. The 9/11 Commission Report<sup>41</sup> identifies him as "the principal architect of the 9/11 attacks." He is also suspected of (or has confessed to) involvement in the Richard Reid shoe bombing, the Bali nightclub bombing in Indonesia, the Millennium Plot, the murder of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl, and the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. He was

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<sup>39</sup> <http://nerofiddled.blogspot.com/2008/05/to-convention.html>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-518585>

<sup>41</sup> <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/index.htm>



captured in Rawalpindi, Pakistan on March 1, 2003 by Pakistani intelligence agents, and is now in U.S. custody at Guantanamo Bay.<sup>42</sup>

**“...listen to this sexist spew misogynist bile”:** The notion that Barack Obama and his staff were sexist – based on little more than the fact that Obama was defeating Hillary Clinton – was advanced most conspicuously during the primaries by Geraldine Ferraro, who had made history as the first female nominee for Vice President on Walter Mondale’s ticket in 1984. Oddly, it began with a Ferraro comment which was widely perceived as racist (“If Obama was a white man, he would not be in this position. And if he was a woman of any color he would not be in this position. He happens to be very lucky to be who he is. And the country is caught up in the concept”<sup>43</sup>). Ferraro resigned from her position with the Clinton campaign, writing in a letter to the Senator, “The Obama campaign is attacking me to hurt you. I won’t let that happen.”<sup>44</sup> Two months later, she told the *New York Times* that Obama was “terribly sexist,” and repeated the charge on numerous television shows. In the same *Times* article,<sup>45</sup> there is a quote from Cynthia Ruccia which informs Peggy’s argument in the *Suckerpunch* sketch: “We [women], the most loyal constituency, are being told to **sit down, shut up** and get to the back of the bus.” Ruccia is a co-founder of a group called Clinton Supporters Count Too,<sup>46</sup> made up of angry Clinton die-hards who believe Obama stole the nomination from Clinton. They are so angry that they say they will vote for McCain – who opposes not only a woman’s right to choose, but almost everything Hillary Clinton has spent her life fighting for.

**Bill Clinton’s lines** are things he said during the primaries. In South Dakota on May 25, he said, “I’ve never seen a candidate treated so disrespectfully just for running.”<sup>47</sup> In New Hampshire in January, he said, “This whole thing is the biggest fairy tale I’ve ever seen,” in reference to Obama’s antiwar credentials.<sup>48</sup> But as far as we know, he never punched an Obama staffer in the stomach.

## *Hillary*

**“Shot of Crown Royal”:** From Crown Point, Indiana, on April 13, CNN reported: “Clinton was at Bronko’s Restaurant having a beer when the bartender asked, ‘You want a shot with that, Hillary?’ After some deliberation, Clinton settled on a shot of Crown Royal, a Canadian whiskey.”<sup>49</sup>

**“I have won the big states,”** Clinton said in late March. **“I’ve won the states that a Democrat has to win.”**<sup>50</sup> Talking to *USA Today* on May 8, she declared, **“I have a much broader base to**

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<sup>42</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khalid\\_Sheikh\\_Mohammed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khalid_Sheikh_Mohammed)

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.cbsnews.com/blogs/2008/03/11/politics/horserace/entry3925257.shtml>

<sup>44</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/03/11/obama-ferraro-race-flap-r\\_n\\_91047.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/03/11/obama-ferraro-race-flap-r_n_91047.html)

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/19/us/politics/19women.html>

<sup>46</sup> <http://nerofiddled.blogspot.com/2008/05/obama-and-choice.html>

<sup>47</sup> <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalradar/2008/05/bill-clinton-ha.html>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.crooksandliars.com/2008/01/08/bill-clinton-on-obama-big-fairy-tale>

<sup>49</sup> <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2008/04/13/clinton-takes-a-shot-of-whiskey>

<sup>50</sup> <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0803/25/sitroom.03.html>

**build a winning coalition on.”** In the same interview, she raised some hackles by referencing an Associated Press article “that found how Senator Obama’s support among working, hard-working Americans, white Americans, is weakening again, and how whites in both states who had not completed college were supporting me.”<sup>51</sup>

**“I’ve been shot at by snipers”:** On the campaign trail, Senator Clinton often illustrated her foreign policy experience with a story about travelling to Bosnia as First Lady in March of 1996. In a speech in March of 2008, she recalled “landing under sniper fire.”<sup>52</sup> It later came to light that by design or by accident, Clinton’s story was greatly exaggerated. She told the editorial board of the *Philadelphia Daily News*, “I say a lot of things – millions of words a day – so if I misspoke, that was just a misstatement.”<sup>53</sup>

**“And now even Terry McAuliffe is getting depressed”:** McAuliffe, a top adviser to both Clintons since the 1990s, spent most of the 2008 primary season being relentlessly cheerful and upbeat, in joyous defiance of the lengthening shadows cast over Clinton’s chances.

**“Now she’s invoking R.F.K.”:** Clinton had an unfortunate moment when speaking to the South Dakota *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader* editorial board on May 23. Attempting to demonstrate that the 2008 primary season was not taking an unusually long time, she said, “My husband did not wrap up the nomination in 1992 until he won the California primary somewhere in the middle of June, right? We all remember Bobby Kennedy was assassinated in June in California. I don’t understand it.”<sup>54</sup> This touched off a whole week of furious second-guessing: Was Clinton simply explaining, as she claimed, that the 1968 primaries were still an open question in June? Or was she subtly reminding us that Robert Kennedy had been assassinated, and that the same fate could befall Barack Obama? To make matters worse, bloggers discovered that in Bill Clinton’s epic 2004 autobiography *My Life*, he wrote that “on April 9, [1992]...the fight for the nomination was effectively over.”<sup>55</sup>

Hillary Clinton’s concession speech of June 7, 2008 – which many felt was more of a non-concession speech – began: “Well, **this isn’t exactly the party I’d planned**, but I sure like the company.” She also said, in reference to one of her campaign’s most quoted refrains, “Although we weren’t able to shatter that **highest, hardest glass ceiling** this time, thanks to you, it’s got about eighteen million cracks in it.”<sup>56</sup>

**“And now she wants to be Vice President”:** Along with the news of Clinton’s concession came news that she was actively seeking to be Obama’s running mate, though this noise was quickly tamped down when it became clear that she would not necessarily be chosen. Nobody refuted that an Obama/Clinton ticket would be an electoral dynamo. But the problem of having a former president married to the vice president, along with the suggestion by some that Obama *had* to choose Clinton, made it nearly impossible.

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<sup>51</sup> [http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/election2008/2008-05-07-clintoninterview\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/election2008/2008-05-07-clintoninterview_N.htm)

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/21/AR2008032102989.html>

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/03/25/campaign.wrap/index.html>

<sup>54</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/05/23/clinton-kennedy-assassina\\_n\\_103319.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/05/23/clinton-kennedy-assassina_n_103319.html)

<sup>55</sup> [http://www.motherjones.com/mojoblog/archives/2008/05/8343\\_bill\\_clintons\\_a.html](http://www.motherjones.com/mojoblog/archives/2008/05/8343_bill_clintons_a.html)

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.hillaryclinton.com/news/speech/view/?id=7903>

# Triangulation

The term *triangulation* has its political origins in the Clinton administration. It's generally attributed to Bill Clinton's chief political adviser, Dick Morris, who used it to describe the 1996 Clinton reelection strategy: Identify the prevailing left-wing and right-wing opinions on a given issue, and then stake out the middle ground. It's often known as "Clintonian triangulation," and is especially used in reference to Bill Clinton's centrist positions on welfare reform, tax cuts, free trade, and "big government."<sup>57</sup>

**"Campaign in poetry, govern in prose":** This famous line, in one form or another, is generally attributed to Mario Cuomo, the former governor of New York. Bill Clinton has used it more than once, and Hillary Clinton used it on the campaign trail.<sup>58</sup>

**"It sounds more impressive to say we're progressive":** In large part, the far right has succeeded in turning *liberal* into a dirty word. At the Democratic CNN/YouTube debate, in July of 2007, Hillary Clinton all but disowned the word:

QUESTION: Mrs. Clinton, how would you define the word *liberal*? And would you use this word to describe yourself? Thank you.

CLINTON: You know, it is a word that originally meant that you were for freedom, that you were for the freedom to achieve, that you were willing to stand against big power and on behalf of the individual. Unfortunately, in the last thirty, forty years, it has been turned up on its head and it's been made to seem as though it is a word that describes big government, totally contrary to what its meaning was in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. I prefer the word *progressive*, which has a real American meaning, going back to the progressive era at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>59</sup>

Those of us who *do* identify ourselves as liberals, without apology, have been waiting all our lives to hear a real-life Democratic candidate say what a fictional one, Matthew Santos (Jimmy Smits), said to his Republican debate opponent Arnold Vinick (Alan Alda) on episode seven, season seven of *The West Wing* (teleplay by Lawrence O'Donnell):

SANTOS: I know you like to use that word, *liberal*, as if it were a crime.

VINICK: No, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have used that word. I know Democrats think *liberal* is a bad word. So bad you had to change it. What do you call yourselves now, *progressives*? Is that it?

SANTOS: It's true. Republicans have tried to turn *liberal* into a bad word. Well, liberals ended slavery in this country.

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<sup>57</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangulation\\_\(politics\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangulation_(politics))

<sup>58</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/01/06/hrc-on-the-offensive-yo\\_n\\_80059.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/01/06/hrc-on-the-offensive-yo_n_80059.html)

<sup>59</sup> <http://liberalvaluesblog.com/?p=1875>

VINICK: A Republican President ended slavery.

SANTOS: Yes – a *liberal* Republican, Senator. What happened to them? They got run out of your party. What did liberals do that was so offensive to the liberal party? I'll tell you what they did: Liberals got women the right to vote. Liberals got African-Americans the right to vote. Liberals created Social Security and lifted millions of elderly people out of poverty. Liberals ended segregation. Liberals passed the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act. Liberals created Medicare. Liberals passed the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act. What did conservatives do? They opposed them on every one of those things, every one. So when you try to hurl that label at my feet, *liberal*, as if it were something to be ashamed of, something dirty, something to run away from, it won't work, Senator, because I will pick up that label and I will wear it as a badge of honor.<sup>60</sup>

Some astute bloggers<sup>61</sup> have noted a number of fascinating parallels between the seventh season of *The West Wing* (which aired in 2006) and the 2008 election.

**“Move on, MoveOn, you don't speak for me”:** MoveOn.org, the powerful activist organization founded to encourage America to *move on* from the Monica Lewinsky scandal, is not as far left as the far right would have us believe. Nevertheless, moderate Democrats will do almost anything to avoid being seen as a darling of MoveOn. In February of 2008, Hillary Clinton told a group of donors at a private fundraiser:

“MoveOn.org endorsed [Obama] – which is like a gusher of money that never seems to slow down. We have been less successful in caucuses because it brings out the activist base of the Democratic Party. MoveOn didn't even want us to go into Afghanistan. I mean, that's what we're dealing with. And you know they turn out in great numbers. And they are very driven by their view of our positions, and it's primarily national security and foreign policy that drives them. I don't agree with them. They know I don't agree with them. So they flood into these caucuses and dominate them and really intimidate people who actually show up to support me.”<sup>62</sup>

## *Michelle Obama Makes Meringue Cookies*

For the background on Michelle Obama's “**for the first time in my adult life**” line, see notes for “Under the Bed.”

Obama's opponents continue to see radical code in everything Michelle Obama says or does, despite the fact that her every appearance is about as benign as a cookie recipe. We made up the cookie motif, and the Fox News reaction to it, but analogous things seem to happen every time Michelle Obama appears in public; recall, for instance, Fox's E.D. Hill's interpretation of the Obamas' affectionate fist-bump as “a terrorist fist jab.”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> <http://www.westwingtranscripts.com/search.php?flag=getTranscript&id=141>

<sup>61</sup> <http://nerofiddled.blogspot.com/2008/02/santos-and-vinick-obama-and-mccain.html>

<sup>62</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/celeste-fremon/clinton-slams-democratic\\_b\\_97484.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/celeste-fremon/clinton-slams-democratic_b_97484.html)

<sup>63</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/items/200806060007>

# *Everyone is Trying to Kill Us*

“**If you see something, say something**” is, of course, the anti-terror tip offered by the New York City transit system.

“**No one wants the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud**”: On 9/8/02, Condoleezza Rice told CNN’s Wolf Blitzer, “The problem here is that there will always be some uncertainty about how quickly [Saddam Hussein] can acquire nuclear weapons. But we don’t want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud.”<sup>64</sup> One month later, speaking in Cincinnati, Ohio, Bush used the same line: “Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof – the smoking gun that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.”<sup>65</sup>

The full John McCain quote, spoken on CBS’s *Face the Nation* in January 2008:<sup>66</sup>

“The point is it’s American casualties. We’ve got to get American’s off the frontlines, have the Iraqis as part of the strategy, take over more and more of the responsibilities, and then **I don’t think Americans are concerned if we’re there for one hundred years or a thousand years or ten thousand years.**”

## *Roe v. Wade / Abortionland*

All of the Supreme Court cases and legislative acts mentioned in the first section are real.

In 2002, when Sarah Palin was running for lieutenant governor of Alaska, she declared herself to be “**as pro-life as any candidate can be.**” In the same statement, she wrote that she had “**adamantly supported our [pro-life] cause since I first understood, as a child, the atrocity of abortion.**”<sup>67</sup> She opposes abortion **even in cases of rape and incest**,<sup>68</sup> though she herself has never applied that conviction to the example of her own husband and daughter.

Asked about global warming in a Newsmax interview conducted just prior to her emergence as McCain’s running mate, Palin said, “A changing environment will affect Alaska more than any other state, because of our location. **I’m not one though who would attribute it to being man-made.**”<sup>69</sup>

Sarah Palin’s long list of qualifications, of course, includes **moose-hunting**.

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<sup>64</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/01/10/wbr.smoking.gun>

<sup>65</sup> [http://www.narsil.org/war\\_on\\_iraq/bush\\_october\\_7\\_2002.html](http://www.narsil.org/war_on_iraq/bush_october_7_2002.html)

<sup>66</sup> <http://thinkprogress.org/2008/01/06/mccain-permanent-bases>

<sup>67</sup> <http://dwb.adn.com/news/politics/elections/governor06/story/8049298p-7942233c.html>

<sup>68</sup> <http://dwb.adn.com/news/politics/elections/2006/governor/story/8372383p-8266781c.html>

<sup>69</sup> [http://www.newsmax.com/headlines/sarah\\_palin\\_vp/2008/08/29/126139.html](http://www.newsmax.com/headlines/sarah_palin_vp/2008/08/29/126139.html)

**“I had actual responsibilities”**: In her nauseating acceptance speech at the 2008 Republican Convention, Palin shamefully belittled Barack Obama’s efforts as a community organizer, while exaggerating her own record as the mayor of a town roughly the size of Obama’s little finger. “I guess a small-town mayor is sort of like a community organizer,” she hissed, “except that you have actual responsibilities.”<sup>70</sup>

For more of the terrifying politics of Sarah Palin, see NERO FIDDLED blog entries from early September, 2008, starting with September 4, “I Don’t Know, But Alaska.”<sup>71</sup>

## *Don’t Ask*

The title is, of course, a reference to President Clinton’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy regarding gays in the military.

The Associated Press reported in November of 2002 that nine Army linguists, including six fluent in Arabic, had been **dismissed from the military because of their homosexual orientation.**<sup>72</sup> The Ackerman quote is from a February 7, 2008 State Department budget hearing.<sup>73</sup>

**The Peshawar Note** is a fictional contrivance. Peshawar is a city in Pakistan, near the Afghanistan border, close to where Osama bin Laden is thought to be hiding.

**Atiyah al-Rahman**, according to the State Department, is a senior member of al Qaeda, appointed by Osama bin Laden and based in Iran.<sup>74</sup>

“Lieutenant Bradley” is made up, but all of the characters who appear in this scene are real.

## *Barack Obama is an Elitist*

**“I am very proud of my cookies”**: The day after Michelle Obama’s misconstrued “proud of my country” remark, Cindy McCain declared, “I’m proud of my country. I don’t know if you heard those words earlier. I’m *very* proud of my country.” See notes for “Michelle Obama Makes Meringue Cookies.”

Obama’s reference to **the price of arugula at Whole Foods** is a favorite among right-wing attackers attempting to paint him as a big-city elitist. “Anybody gone into Whole Foods lately and see what they charge for arugula?” Obama asked at a campaign event in Iowa in July 2007.

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<sup>70</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/09/03/sarah-palin-rnc-convention\\_123703.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/09/03/sarah-palin-rnc-convention_123703.html)

<sup>71</sup> <http://nerofiddled.blogspot.com/2008/09/i-dont-know-but-alaska.html>

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/11/14/attack/main529418.shtml>

<sup>73</sup> <http://thinkprogress.org/2007/02/08/dontask-platoon>

<sup>74</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atiyah\\_Abd\\_al-Rahman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atiyah_Abd_al-Rahman)

“I mean, they’re charging a lot of money for this stuff.”<sup>75</sup>

**“Here’s six hundred dollars; get the Senator a pair of shoes”:** It is the not-at-all-elite John McCain who wears \$520 Italian loafers<sup>76</sup>, and owns **seven homes** valued at \$14 million<sup>77</sup>. On August 20, 2008, when reporters from Politico asked McCain how many houses he owns, he replied, “I think – I’ll have my staff get back to you.” On August 25, appearing on *The Tonight Show*, McCain actually found a way to use his P.O.W. experience as a justification for not knowing how many houses he owns. “I spent five and a half years in a prison cell,” he reminded Jay Leno. “I didn’t have a house.”<sup>78</sup>

The creepy story of how John McCain (42, married, celebrity senator) met Cindy Hensley (24, beer heiress) at a bar in Honolulu has been told many times.<sup>79</sup> McCain’s first wife, Carol, was seriously injured in a car accident while McCain was imprisoned in Vietnam; she endured six months in the hospital and twenty-three operations.<sup>80</sup>

Cindy McCain’s story about **secretly going to fight school** is essentially as she relayed it on *The Tonight Show* in August of 2008. (It’s also quoted in the September *New Yorker* profile of Cindy McCain; see earlier note.) In July, Ms. McCain had made an even more adamant case against elitism when she told CNN, “In Arizona, the only way to get around the state is by small private plane.”<sup>81</sup>

## *Perfect*

**John McCain’s threats** as he holds the future hostage (“Foreclosure on your family’s home! Your job goes to China and you go to Iraq! Even if you survive, Social Security won’t!”) are based on his promises to continue various economic, military, and trade policies of the Bush administration. McCain, like Bush, supports “supplementing” Social Security with personal accounts.<sup>82</sup>

Most of Obama’s lines in this section (**“For more than two centuries, we have strived, at great cost and great sacrifice, to form a more perfect union”**) are from his July 24, 2008 speech in Berlin.<sup>83</sup>

Tommy’s reasons for being “disappointed” in Obama are common complaints among some liberals, who perceive a rightward shift in Obama’s policy positions, as his likelihood of becoming president increases.

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<sup>75</sup> <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/07/27/obamas-down-on-the-farm>

<sup>76</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/isabel-wilkinson/a-week-in-john-mccains-sh\\_b\\_115692.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/isabel-wilkinson/a-week-in-john-mccains-sh_b_115692.html)

<sup>77</sup> [http://rawstory.com/news/2008/Homes\\_McCain\\_doesnt\\_remember\\_having\\_worth\\_0821.html](http://rawstory.com/news/2008/Homes_McCain_doesnt_remember_having_worth_0821.html)

<sup>78</sup> [http://www.boston.com/news/politics/politicalintelligence/2008/08/mccain\\_no\\_kitch.html](http://www.boston.com/news/politics/politicalintelligence/2008/08/mccain_no_kitch.html)

<sup>79</sup> [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/09/15/080915fa\\_fact\\_levy?currentPage=all](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/09/15/080915fa_fact_levy?currentPage=all)

<sup>80</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carol\\_McCain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carol_McCain)

<sup>81</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/07/14/cindy-mccain-in-arizona-t\\_n\\_112695.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/07/14/cindy-mccain-in-arizona-t_n_112695.html)

<sup>82</sup> [http://www.ontheissues.org/Economic/John\\_McCain\\_Social\\_Security.htm](http://www.ontheissues.org/Economic/John_McCain_Social_Security.htm)

<sup>83</sup> <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/07/24/obama-in-berlin/?ref=politics>

**Telecom immunity** refers to the Bush administration's proposed amendment to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), granting retroactive lawsuit immunity to telecommunications companies which cooperated in the administration's program of warrantless domestic wiretapping. In June of 2008, Obama voted in favor of the bill, "with a firm pledge that as president, I will carefully monitor the program."<sup>84</sup>

One week later, Obama further parted with the left when he spoke in support of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn the **Washington D.C. handgun ban**. "Today's decision reinforces that if we act responsibly," he said, "we can both protect the constitutional right to bear arms and keep our communities and our children safe."<sup>85</sup>

And then, at the beginning of July, Obama vowed to *expand* Bush's channeling of federal funding to **faith-based groups**. He said that the problems America faces require "an all-hands-on-deck approach," with the qualification that "federal dollars that go directly to churches, temples and mosques can only be used on secular programs."<sup>86</sup>

In a section cut from "Perfect," a group of disappointed Obama supporters sang:

He was supposed to be one of us,  
but now he's moving to the center; he's a moderate.  
A grassroots coalition doesn't grow unless you water it.

He was supposed to be one of us,  
but then he caved on FISA, and they made him wear the pin.  
Since he got the nomination, it's like he's trying to win!

The preamble to the Constitution: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form **a more perfect Union**, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."<sup>87</sup>

The Presidential Oath of Office: "I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, **preserve, protect** and defend the Constitution of the United States."<sup>88</sup>

## *Crisis of Faith*

**Bush's confusion over McCain's name** is fictional. But Bush gets people's names wrong all the time, and during the 2008 election cycle, many people have accidentally fused the names of

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<sup>84</sup> [http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/2008/06/20/obama\\_supports\\_fisa\\_legislatio.html](http://blog.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/2008/06/20/obama_supports_fisa_legislatio.html)

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jun/27/barackobama.usa>

<sup>86</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/02/us/politics/02obama.html>

<sup>87</sup> <http://www.usconstitution.net/const.html>

<sup>88</sup> <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/pihtml/pioaths.html>



George W. Bush and John McCain. In his acceptance speech at the Democratic Convention, Joe Biden referred to John McCain as “George,” and then explained, “Freudian slip! It was a Freudian slip!”<sup>89</sup> And after McCain’s acceptance speech at the Republican Convention, McCain ally (and supposed V.P. frontrunner) Tom Ridge referred to the candidate as “John Bush.”<sup>90</sup> These are two of many examples.

**“I kicked your ass in 2000”:** On September 13, 2008, Obama spokesman Bill Burton correctly observed that John McCain is “running the sleaziest and least honorable campaign in modern presidential campaign history.”<sup>91</sup> The great tragic irony here is that John McCain was one of history’s great victims of dishonorable campaigning. The same ruthless Bush/Rove operatives who destroyed McCain in the 2000 South Carolina primary are now running his presidential campaign. “The furor presents a breathtaking contrast to McCain’s image as a kind of anti-politician,” Politico noted on September 8, “who plays fair, disdains politics as usual and has never forgotten how his 2000 presidential campaign was incinerated by a series of loathsome dirty tricks in the South Carolina primary.”<sup>92</sup>

A particular hallmark of the Bush campaign against McCain in 2000 was the use of push polling, in which citizens are called on the phone and asked “polling questions” designed more to distribute misinformation than to elicit responses. (The classic example: “If you heard that John McCain had fathered an illegitimate black baby, would that make you more likely or less likely to vote for him?”) In 2008, there have been reports of anti-Obama push polling in Ohio.<sup>93</sup>

**“Republicans can’t win anymore unless they pander to the Ku Klux Klan”:** To his discredit, John McCain is nowhere on the record making this point. But there is some indication that he does feel this way. (There is good in him...I can feel it.) During the 2000 primaries, running against the divisive culture-war politics embodied by George W. Bush, McCain said, “Neither party should be defined by pandering to the outer reaches of American politics and the agents of intolerance, whether they be Louis Farrakhan or Al Sharpton on the left, or Pat Robertson or Jerry Falwell on the right.”<sup>94</sup> But when he decided to try again for the presidency, McCain began methodically embracing the “agents of intolerance” on the religious right, even delivering the commencement speech at Falwell’s Liberty University as early as 2006.<sup>95</sup>

During that 2000 Republican primary in South Carolina, McCain was asked if he felt the Confederate flag was a symbol of racism and should be removed from the South Carolina Statehouse. “Personally,” he said, “I see the flag as symbol of heritage.” In April, after dropping out of the race, McCain abandoned and denounced his position, calling it a “sacrifice of principle for personal ambition.” He told a gathering of conservatives at a South Carolina Policy Council forum:

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<sup>89</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/08/27/joe-biden-democratic-conv\\_n\\_121938.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/08/27/joe-biden-democratic-conv_n_121938.html)

<sup>90</sup> [http://beltwayblips.com/video/tom\\_ridge\\_calls\\_john\\_mccain\\_john\\_bush](http://beltwayblips.com/video/tom_ridge_calls_john_mccain_john_bush)

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/story/2008/09/13/ST2008091302649.html>

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0908/13412.html>

<sup>93</sup> [http://marcambinder.theatlantic.com/archives/2008/09/antiobama\\_push\\_polling\\_in\\_ohio.php](http://marcambinder.theatlantic.com/archives/2008/09/antiobama_push_polling_in_ohio.php)

<sup>94</sup> [http://www-tech.mit.edu/V120/N9/mccain\\_right\\_9.9w.html](http://www-tech.mit.edu/V120/N9/mccain_right_9.9w.html)

<sup>95</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/13/AR2006051300647.html>

“I feared that if I answered honestly, I could not win the South Carolina primary. So I chose to compromise my principles. I promised to tell the truth always about my intentions and beliefs. I fell short of that standard in South Carolina. While my response was factually accurate, it did not answer how I personally felt about the flag.

“My ancestors fought for the Confederacy. . .but I don’t believe their service, however distinguished, needs to be commemorated in a way that offends, deeply hurts, people whose ancestors were once denied their freedom by my ancestors.”<sup>96</sup>

This is just one example of the honorable politician McCain was once capable of being. It’s hard to believe that the man who made that humble confession in 2000 could also approve the McCain campaign’s tactics of 2008.

**“We want to steal the election”:** Ever wonder how the American people could be stupid enough to elect George W. Bush? They’re not, and they didn’t. Electoral fraud is difficult to prove, especially when it’s based largely on e-voting machines with no verifiable paper trail. It’s also difficult to prosecute, especially when it’s based largely on disenfranchising voters ahead of time, unbeknownst to anyone (as in the notorious purging of registered voters whose names had a few letters in common with the names of felons, in Florida in 2000). What is conclusively true is that there were *efforts* to steal the 2000 and 2004 elections for Bush, that the Florida and Ohio secretaries of state in 2000 and 2004 were also their states’ Bush campaign chairs, that hundreds of thousands of votes and voters were deliberately discarded or disenfranchised in both elections, and that anecdotal evidence indicates a larger number than Bush’s official margin of victory. If you want to learn more about the terrifying lack of integrity in recent American elections, it’s a hell of a trip. Start with Mark Crispin Miller’s book *Fooled Again*.<sup>97</sup>

**“You really think I give a fuck about this country?”:** George W. Bush said this in his Presidential Radio Address on May 3, 2008. No, not *really*. As far as we know, he’s never actually said anything like this. But do you really think he gives a fuck about this country?

**“Schmidt and Davis”:** Steve Schmidt, who joined the McCain team after the primaries, was Karl Rove’s right-hand man during Bush’s 2004 campaign. He brought with him two other Rove protégés, Nicole Wallace and Greg Jenkins. Rick Davis, who has worked on McCain’s staff for ten years, is also a top Washington lobbyist.<sup>98</sup>

**“Five and a half years with the gooks”:** McCain apparently feels that his experiences in a Vietnamese P.O.W. camp justify racist references to the Vietnamese people. “I hate the gooks,” McCain actually told reporters aboard his campaign bus in 2000. “I will hate them as long as I live.”<sup>99</sup> Even if you can somehow forgive a man with McCain’s background for saying something like that in private, the fact that a presidential candidate was comfortable saying it *to the press, while campaigning* is profoundly disturbing.

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<sup>96</sup> <http://archives.cnn.com/2000/ALLPOLITICS/stories/04/19/mccain.sc>

<sup>97</sup> <http://www.amazon.com/Fooled-Again-Mark-Crispin-Miller/dp/0465045790>

<sup>98</sup> <http://www.blog.newsweek.com/blogs/stumper/archive/2008/07/02/mccain-s-right-hand-men.aspx>

<sup>99</sup> <http://www.americablog.com/2008/02/i-hate-gooks-john-mccain.html>

**“GET AWAY FROM ME, YOU CUNT!”**: As far as we know, McCain has never called Sarah Palin a cunt. But in 1992, when he was running for the Senate, he did hurl that epithet at his wife. At a campaign event, Cindy McCain touched her husband’s hair and said, “You’re getting a little thin up there.” McCain replied, “At least I don’t plaster on the makeup like a trollop, you cunt.”<sup>100</sup> Hell of a guy!

**“You sound like my future son-in-law’s MySpace page”**: Levi Johnston is the young Alaskan gentleman who impregnated Sarah Palin’s underage daughter Bristol, giving the McCain campaign a good opportunity to talk about family values. Johnston’s public MySpace page, at the time the news broke, said: “I’m a fuckin’ redneck who likes to snowboard and ride dirt bikes. But I live to play hockey. I like to go camping and hang out with the boys, do some fishing, shoot some shit and just fuckin’ chillin’ I guess. Ya fuck with me I’ll kick ass.” It also said that he did not want children.<sup>101</sup>

Palin’s silliness (“**we don’t know quite what to make of a candidate...**” and the *hilarious* **hockey mom / pitbull** zinger) is from her acceptance speech at the Republican Convention, and also repeated endlessly on the campaign trail thereafter. She’s *awful*.

## *The American Dream*

**“The forty-fourth President of the United States is...”**: See the front page, November 5, 2008.

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<sup>100</sup> [http://rawstory.com/news/2008/McCain\\_temper\\_boiled\\_over\\_in\\_92\\_0407.html](http://rawstory.com/news/2008/McCain_temper_boiled_over_in_92_0407.html)

<sup>101</sup> <http://www.digitalalchemy.tv/2008/09/levi-johnston-myspace-photos.html>