



**FOSTERING FEAR AND SELLING INSANITY:  
BULLPITTIN AND SPITTIN WITH PALIN/MCCAIN**

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So, it has already started—that which we hoped wouldn't happen, but knew in our hearts it certainly would—the public hissing and howling of racial hatred at Sen. Barack Obama at rallies and radio and TV stations and in personal interviews, and the cave-image catcalls in the crowd of “treason”, “traitor”, “friend of terrorists” and any and everything else to reflect and foster racial hatred and fear, and provoke aggressive action that could easily get out of hand and lead to a history no one sane or minimally sensible would want to make, write or read.

And it is not just what Whites call their “trailer trash” or the backwoods bubbas and moonshine people from another era, or the little old White lady who believes with biblical certainty that Obama is an Arab and his grandmama is an imposter; nor even just Joe and Gina Six-Pack. It is also the still hidden hordes of haters and the way the more educated and cautious conservatives edge them on and explain away what they say and seek, and provide them with words and other ways to stroke their racial resentment and anger which they, themselves, obviously share but have found less crude ways to show.

That is why it was both right and timely for Rep. John Lewis to call out and criticize the McCain campaign, especially Six-Pack Sarah for bringing that moose-hunting and moon-howling style to this campaign. For she and others are indeed sending coded hate message of race and religion, linking terrorist with Muslim, Muslim with Arab, Arab with Obama, Obama with Osama, and using Hussein as a summary of all the remembered and imagined evil they can conjure up in their hate-diminished minds.

The McCain campaign is obviously desperate and refuses to repudiate clearly a base they feel they need even though these people screech and scream bloodthirsty threats against Obama. Instead, they try to divert attention from this personal and social sickness among their own supporters by blaming Obama thru character assassination, guilt by association, and whatever else they can contrive to stem the tide of Obama's impending victory. But they must know they are cultivating and reinforcing a rhetoric of violence and vigilantism and a hopeless longing for a time that has already passed, and for a leader who no longer exists and who would not and could not succeed under current circumstances.

Maybe these hatemongers don't go back as far as George Wallace and the public savagery of segregation and White supremacy. But they do seem to remember and recall the Reagan years with all their comforting myths and social meanness. And they seem to long for a reborn Reagan, an actor-president who with movie speech and special effects could weave a web of womb-warm for them, safe from the outside “evil empire”, with their false sense of superiority still in tact, competing in the Olympics with themselves, invading Grenada, a small unarmed island in order to mask a major loss in Lebanon, and in the middle of midnight, making them feel “it's morning again in America”.

But “my fellow Americans”, that history has passed; the fifth act is over, even if the music and memory of Dixie lingers on and reminds us when White was right in court, Congress and country, and the White House was an uncontested White space that Blacks could only speak of and never aspire

to, even though there were always that troublesome few who dared and did.

Now that Palin and McCain have launched this scorched-earth, scarred-soul and wrong-race campaign against Obama, they are finding it difficult to coax the monster back in its cage or control even how it relates to them. This was evident in the baffled and betrayed look McCain received when he tried to explain to that racially disoriented elderly woman that Obama was not an Arab and in the booping he encountered trying to halt the racist howling and hate speech at a rally and reassure the crowd Obama was “a decent person . . . you don’t have to be scared of as President of the United States”. But as we say: “if you spit in the wind, you shouldn’t be surprised when it blows back in your face”. It is a lesson Palin has also learned being booed, herself, having yahooped and yelled false fire reports thru a long list of lies and distortions about Obama.

Obama has tried to “transcend race” and avoid racial references, hoping his fellow Americans would do likewise. But racism is too rooted in this country to be sidestepped, solved by a single speech or special proclamation, or remedied without resolute resistance and radical uprooting on a serious and sustained basis. So, the problem persists and the promise of a just and good, self-conscious multicultural society remains unfulfilled. Indeed, the struggle continues and will intensify as the “bullpittin and spittin” deepens and expands in decided desperation, and as impotence-fearing Whites increase their rantin’ and ravin’ about Obama becoming and being President. It is clearly an irony of history that we Africans, Black people, find

ourselves publicly counseling Whites to be more rational and less racially sensitive, which is an uninvited and unwelcomed role they’ve played in the past toward us and others with a certain sense of manifest destiny and other imperial, racist and “elect” illusions.

The economy is collapsing around us, in spite of reports of the stock market rallying, and bankers and brokers are hold up in their financial fortresses counting other people’s money, wallowing in wealth they wrested from the country with threats of collapse and contrived conversations about a common destiny. And lying before us all are critical issues of economic recovery, housing, including foreclosures, health care, employment, education, energy sufficiency and cleanness, ending an unjust and unjustifiable war, rebuilding the country’s infrastructure and returning to the world stage as a force for good rather imperial ambition and aggression. Thus, we all must choose ways we can best address these problems and who is best suited to offer the leadership needed.

Moreover, we must choose wisely with an eye toward the future and profound concern, not just for ourselves but also for the health and wholeness of the world. And in this choosing, racists and racism can play no role; pitbulls with lipstick can have no place; and the central measure of men and women cannot be their color, bank account, sex or any other social or biological attribute, but rather their inherent worthiness and the way they relate to others and embrace the promise and project of a new humanity and world.

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