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Barack Obama's Promised Land: Deplorables Need Not Apply

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Although one gets no sense of this in A Promised Land, Barack Obama would prove to be the most divisive president in recent American history. The words of Rev. Jeremiah Wright and other paranoid influencers infect his thinking more than he knows or at least more than he cares to admit. The “E pluribus unum, out of many, one” that Obama endorsed in his 2004 speech warred throughout his presidency with Wright’s “U.S. of KKK A” before finally surrendering. A Promised Land subverts many of the 2004 speech’s loftier aspirations, none more nakedly than the bromide, “There is not a liberal America and a conservative America.” Although Obama does not use Hillary Clinton’s pet phrase “deplorables” to describe conservatives, he might as well have. With one notable exception, all references to conservatives, at home and abroad, are pejorative.

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For Obama, again with one exception, the only good Republican is a dead Republican. McCain fares better than any Republican other than Abraham Lincoln. Obama claims to have admired his courage as a navy pilot, but what he really appreciated was McCain’s “contrarian sensibility and willingness to buck Republican Party orthodoxy on climate change and immigration.”³⁹ In fact, McCain’s primary role in Obama’s memoir is to shed light on “the race-tinged nativism that regularly infected other Republican politicians.”⁴⁰ McCain was above all this. “He wasn’t an ideologue,” says Obama, which is his way of complimenting McCain for not believing in much of anything.

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In purging his past, Obama went harder on “Frank” than he did on Malik or even on Obama Senior. In Dreams, he talks about Frank, as in Frank Marshall Davis, more than he does any nonfamily member. In A Promised Land, Obama mentions him not at all. A card-carrying member of the Communist Party USA, a bisexual libertine, and the author of a pornographic memoir only slightly more fictionalized than Dreams, Davis was a genuine character. As the man who introduced Obama to the perils of being

black, he deserved attention. Obama gives him none. For all the energy Obama spends rebuking those who question his past, he refuses to attack even filmmaker Joel Gilbert whose widely seen documentary *Dreams from My Real Father* argued that Davis was Obama's biological dad.

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Of course, Obama could have exonerated Clinton before the primary, but that would not have helped him secure the black vote. On Election Day, he received 80 percent of "a massive black turnout" and 24 percent of the white vote to win the primary easily. So convinced were black voters of the Clintons' racism that eight years later Bill Clinton, as the *Politico* headline affirms, felt the need to "seek redemption in South Carolina."¹⁰⁶ Bill Clinton was, of course, righter than he knew. The story Obama told repeatedly on the campaign trail was a fairy tale. Pollster Mark Penn understood this. He privately labeled Obama a "phony." Penn wrote to Hillary in 2007, "He told the people of NH yesterday he has a Kansas accent because his mother was from there. His mother lived in many states as far as we can tell—but this is an example of the nonsense he uses to cover this up."¹⁰⁷ Obama is still covering up for his mother. Throughout *A Promised Land*, the omissions often loom larger than the story told. One such omission is Seattle. Seattle, not Kansas, is where his mother spent her formative years. Seattle, not Hawaii, is where Obama spent the first year of his life. In fact, mother and son lived on Capitol Hill, just a few blocks outside the famed Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone, or CHAZ. Despite the city's importance to Obama's life story, there is no mention of "Seattle" in the memoir. Obama's

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Not until Obama's 2004 campaign for the US Senate did "Barack and Michelle's attendance at the almost nightly dinners at the Khalidis' or Bill Ayers and Bernardine Dohrn's home" begin to fall off.¹²² As Garrow proves beyond doubt, Obama lied throughout the 2008 campaign about his relationship with Ayers and Dohrn. Ayers was much more than a "guy who lives in my neighborhood." He was an intimate friend. That revelation alone could have finished him in the primary.

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Recall that Michelle and Bernardine Dohrn worked together in the late 1980s. Ayers and Obama, I am convinced, were communicating no later than 1994 and, quite possibly, much earlier. The evidence for this earlier meeting can be found in *Dreams*. Unlike Obama, Bill Ayers has had a genuine, career-long interest in education. Critics of

my thesis overlook the extraordinary mind meld between these secret sharers on that subject. In his 1993 book, *To Teach*, Ayers

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Andersen makes a strong case for Ayers's active involvement in the crafting of *Dreams*. "To flesh out his family history, Barack had also taped interviews with Toot, Gramps, Ann, Maya, and his Kenyan relatives," Andersen writes. "These oral histories, along with his partial manuscript and a trunkload of notes, were given to Ayers."¹²⁵ Having been involved in many such projects myself, I find Andersen's description of the handoff of material entirely credible. Although Andersen did not consult with me on the book, he told me afterwards that he relied on two sources in Obama's Hyde Park neighborhood. Understandably, he would not reveal who those sources were. Although Andersen's book was widely reviewed—he even appeared on *Hardball* with Chris Matthews—no one wanted to touch the six pages he spent on the writing of *Dreams*. This includes Garrow, who cites Andersen on several occasions in his Obama biography but ignores him on the question of authorship.

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don't doubt that Rob Fisher was involved, but he did not lend the book its fire. Ayers did. Ayers did not "write" *Dreams*. He doctored it, indifferent to the fact that he was helping reshape Obama's persona. Obama could have used his touch on *A Promised Land*. The Obama of *Dreams* was considerably less real but much more interesting.

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In 1990, Obama contributed an essay titled, "Why Organize?" to a collection called *After Alinsky: Community Organizing in Illinois*. Although Obama shied from the gonzo tactics Alinsky used to get press attention, he embraced the use of Alinsky-driven power strategies to mobilize the collective will of the community. In his article, he also favorably cited McKnight's influence. "The problems facing inner-city communities do not result from a lack of effective solutions," wrote Obama, "but from a lack of power to implement these solutions."¹⁵⁸ Despite the abundant evidence, Obama bristles at those on the right who criticized "my alleged fealty to radical community organizer Saul Alinsky." In *A Promised Land*, he equates that charge to accusations about "my friendship with my neighbor Bill Ayers."¹⁵⁹ In reality, his connection to Alinsky no more deserves the word "alleged" than does his friendship with "neighbor" Bill Ayers.

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To make the racism story line work, Obama and his colleagues had to overlook default rates. In 2004, HUD did a study of FHA loans that originated in 1992. The sample size was large, nearly two hundred fifty thousand loans, and the cross-racial data were for comparable properties. The study revealed that after seven largely prosperous years from 1992 to 1999, blacks were defaulting on their home loans more than twice as frequently as whites. Were blacks held to tougher standards, as Obama's Citibank suit insisted, black default rates should have been lower than whites, not higher.¹⁶⁷ Obama had to know about the effect of family dynamics on home ownership. Indifferent to the data, he and his partners charged Citibank with denying their plaintiffs first mortgage loans "on the basis of their race or the racial composition of their neighborhoods." For its part, Citibank rejected "each and every claim of wrongdoing."¹⁶⁸ Still, the company agreed to settle as Obama's partners knew it would. When media observers are all pulling for David, no one wants to play the role Goliath, especially a Goliath wearing a white hood. Not surprisingly, Obama's law firm pocketed in fees nearly three times what the aggrieved parties received in payment. As part of the settlement, Citibank agreed to organize a lending consortium in Chicago to "assist low to moderate income loan applicants in obtaining mortgages."

Note:

For investors, high interest translated into high yield. In October 1997, the investment banks Bear Stearns and First Union Capital Markets underwrote the first securitization of subprime loans for a total of \$385 million. The triple-A rating of Freddie Mac-approved loans seemed, at least, to guarantee the payments on these securities. The virtue-signaling press release announcing the launch hit all the PC hot buttons: these "affordable" and "flexible" mortgages offered the possibility of credit for "low and moderate income families" in "traditionally underserved markets."¹⁷² These securities offered a 7.5 percent yield in a low-interest environment and, even better, a chance to purge one's predatory soul through an act of seeming charity. Imagining himself as a hedge fund manager who had been drinking too much progressive Kool-Aid, satirist Michael Lewis wrote, "At the time I bought the subprime portfolio, I thought: This is sort of like my way of giving something back."¹⁷³ In his farewell address at the Democratic National Convention in August 2000, the recently impeached president—back when you had to be president to be impeached—boasted of "the highest home ownership rate in our history." At the time, the figure had moved beyond 67 percent and was still rising. Never shy about his accomplishments, real or imagined, President Clinton thanked the gathered Democrats for supporting his agenda, one that "has taken our country to new heights of prosperity, progress, and peace."

Note:

It is no wonder Obama took offense at Rick Santelli's famed 2009 "rant" on CNBC about personal responsibility. He quotes Santelli as saying, "The government is promoting bad behavior! How many of you people want to pay for your neighbor's mortgage that has an extra bathroom and can't pay their bills?" In one of his very few uses of foul language, Obama drops a "bullshit" on Santelli's "half-baked populism." The fact that Santelli's "shtick" launched the Tea Party movement irks Obama all the more.¹⁸³ The problem for America, as Santelli implied, was that political people no more fiscally responsible than Obama were tasked with managing the fiscal policies of the world. Among the more irresponsible was Fannie Mae's CEO Franklin Raines. Although the New York Times was sounding warning bells about Fannie Mae as early as August 2003, Raines deflected criticism by focusing on Fannie Mae's success at social engineering. "We have met or exceeded our affordable housing goals, even as they have increased," he told the House Committee on Financial Services in late 2003. He also shared the company's "voluntary goal," namely, to "lead the market in serving minority families."¹⁸⁴ Raines had equally irresponsible friends in Congress. At that same hearing, Congresswoman Maxine Waters commended "the outstanding leadership of Frank Raines" and insisted that regulatory reform not impede Fannie Mae's "affordable housing mission, a mission that has seen innovation flourish from desktop underwriting to 100 percent loans."¹⁸⁵ Another friend was bubble-boy-in-chief Barney Frank, the ranking Democrat on House Committee on Financial Services. In 2005, on the House floor, he scolded his more prudent colleagues, "You are not going to see the collapse that you see when people talk about a bubble. So those on our committee in particular are going to continue to push for homeownership."¹⁸⁶ In *A Promised Land*, Obama has only good things to say about Frank, "the tough and quick-witted Democrat from Massachusetts who knew his stuff."¹⁸⁷ About Franklin Raines, he has nothing to say. In July 2008, the Washington Post's Anita Huslin caused Obama a minor headache by linking Raines, an African American and a Harvard Law grad, to the Obama campaign. Four years after leaving Fannie Mae under the cloud of a \$6.3 billion accounting scandal, Raines had "shaved eight points off his golf handicap, taken a corner office in Steve Case's D.C. conglomeration of finance, entertainment and health-care companies and more recently, taken calls from Barack Obama's presidential campaign seeking his advice on mortgage and housing policy matters." The McCain campaign noticed the Post article and began running ads based on Huslin's reporting. The Obama campaign, of course, denied any connection to Raines. Although conceding the subprime woes of the "quasi-governmental" Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, he exonerates the federal government from any responsibility for the performance of these "two giant...

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In June 2008, the media reported on the details of a racket known informally as Friends of Angelo, or FOA. FOA waived points, lender fees, and borrowing rules for politically

useful allies, among them Franklin Raines and chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, Christopher Dodd.¹⁹⁰ Angelo's friends could help only so much. On July 1, 2008, the Bank of America put the faltering giant out of its misery and bought it for \$4.25 a share, one-tenth of its share price just eighteen months earlier. Connecticut Senator Dodd had another friend in Joe Cassano of AIG, the Connecticut-based insurance company that underwrote many of the investment banks' subprime securities. Cassano had donated heavily to Dodd's senate campaigns as well as to his ill-conceived run for president in 2008 and had personally solicited contributions for Dodd from his employees.¹⁹¹ Hedging his bets, Cassano contributed to Obama's primary run and maxed out in the general election for Obama. By this time, though, Cassano was investing only to save his skin. AIG was on the brink. Fortunately for Cassano, his campaign investment paid off. The same failed politician who had his credit card bounce at the 2000 Democratic convention was accepting his party's nomination at the 2008 one. After the obligatory patter about "the young man from Kenya and a young woman from Kansas," Obama got to the meat of the matter. "More of you have cars you can't afford to drive, credit card bills you can't afford to pay, and tuition that's beyond your reach," preached Obama. "These challenges are not all of government's making. But the failure to respond is a direct result of a broken politics in Washington and the failed policies of George W. Bush."¹⁹² For Obama, it was that simple. As

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Libertarians to the core, the Kochs really just wanted to be left alone. In the lead-up to the 2010 midterms, it was Obama and his people who waged war on the Kochs, demonizing them to the point that the brothers had to hire security details for themselves and their families. It got so bad, in fact, that David felt obliged to send his children to school in a bulletproof car. "I'm not sure it would ever cross Charles's mind," a Koch friend observed, "that a sitting president would single him out."²⁰⁰ As

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Knowing his own allies, Breitbart refused to buy Carson's reckless slander for a second. In a risky bit of brinksmanship, Breitbart offered a one-hundred-thousand-dollar reward for any video showing a single person shouting a racial slur at any member of the Black Caucus, several of whom were recording the march as they walked. He got no takers. "What [the Democrats] did not expect was that new media would successfully challenge the propaganda of the old media and the Congressmen's racial smear," wrote Breitbart.²⁹⁵ Three months later, however, the NAACP resurfaced Carson's charges as if they had not been debunked. To counter the charges, Breitbart posted a video of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) official Shirley Sherrod telling an approving NAACP audience how she had once discriminated against a white farmer.

Later in the same recorded talk, including the edited version posted by Breitbart, Sherrod told the audience how she had to assess her own bias and ended up helping the farmer. Within hours of its posting, however, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, with Obama's blessing, forced Sherrod's resignation. When the full story of Sherrod's remarks was revealed, a humbled White House offered Sherrod her job back and then some. None of this makes it into the pages of *A Promised Land*. In investigating Sherrod, however, Breitbart stumbled on to a bigger story, *Pigford v. Glickman*, one whose absence from *A Promised Land* testifies to the memoir's inherent dishonesty. Starting in mid-2010, Breitbart pounded this story until his death in March 2012. The *New York Times* chose not to cover the case until after Obama was reelected, but the *Times* piece by reporter Sharon LaFraniere proved shocking in its candor.

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For the next twenty years, Big Media continued to move in the direction it had been moving in during the previous twenty years—leftward. CNN, NBC, CBS, ABC, PBS, NPR, Big Tech, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and the entire entertainment industry had become very nearly unified in their messaging. Obama was the beneficiary. Donald Trump was not. By the end of the Trump presidency journalists no longer felt the need to hide their biases. In January 2021, Katie Couric made this leftward progression perversely clear. An heir to the Cronkite anchor chair and a past winner of the Walter Cronkite Award for her hit piece on Sarah Palin, Couric captured the newsroom zeitgeist with a remark so casually Maoist it would have made the Chairman himself blush. "They bought into this big lie," she said of Republicans. "And the question is how are we going to really almost deprogram these people who have signed up for the cult of Trump?"³⁰¹ For four years Obama watched this ruthless collective attack the sitting president, and yet he still grieves about his treatment by the one major news outlet that challenged him. Obama writes, "I didn't believe a president should ever publicly whine about criticism from voters."³⁰² But ex-presidents? That's apparently a different story.

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Excluding Father's Day 2008, Obama has refused to air the facts that would lead to an honest discussion of race. No one is quite sure who has been enforcing Obama's silence, but the most cited suspect goes unmentioned in *A Promised Land*. That would be international man of mystery, George Soros. Soros is, in fact, what progressives accuse the Koch brothers of being: a hugely powerful and omnipresent mover and shaker. Reportedly, Obama met with the billionaire financier in his New York offices in December 2006. Until that meeting, Soros favored Hillary Clinton's candidacy. It would appear that Obama got Soros's blessing. A few weeks later, when Obama announced

that he was forming an exploratory committee, Soros sent him a check for the maximum personal donation within hours.⁴⁰¹ No doubt, Soros's massive contributions through a wide range of leftist organizations helped shape Obama's presidency, but there is little evidence of direct, hands-on guidance.

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