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**September 4, 2008 - Issue 289**

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**The Clintons Played Their Role at the Convention, but Have They Earned Back  
Their "Ghetto Passes"?**

**Between the Lines**

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The Democratic National Convention put on a fantastic show last week. You did understand that it was a "show," don't you? Political parties put on conventions to show their spirit, to show their platforms and positions, to show their inclusion, to show off their future party leaders and to show that they can convince voters, and more importantly, independents, that they are the party of choice in the coming November election. The Democratic Convention went off without a hitch, almost. Everybody did what they were supposed to do to promote party unity. Said the right things. Did the right stuff. Even the Clintons acted right. There was no rain on Barack Obama's parade. His moment in history went unsullied and unsoiled, to the chagrin of the Republicans, who would have had a hard time matching the intensity of the Democrats, even if they hadn't scaled back their convention to show "sensitivity" to the Gulf Coast region residents in the midst of Hurricane Gustav.

While you can acknowledge that Bush and the Republicans may have learned some lessons after Katrina (despite having made little progress in the past three years in the post Katrina clean-up), you really wonder if such pre-hurricane preparations would be in effect if they weren't trying to win an election in November. The Democrats will experience a huge bounce in the polls this week, largely because of the impact of Obama's acceptance speech, combined with the fact that key factions of the Democratic Party stayed on message – which brings us back to the Clintons.

The pre-convention chatter was more WWCD (What Would Clinton Do - Hillary and Bill) than could Barack unify his party. You know, most black people were still upset with both those Clintons for the way they acted up in the primaries. We snatched Bill's "honorary First Black President" title and gave Hillary the bizniz like nobody's business for giving John McCain everything he needed to attack Barack this fall. By the way they tried to play Obama (and us), we were tired of some Clintons. So, by the time convention came around, Hillary had all but intimated a convention takeover if her peeps weren't heard. Hillary's demand to have her delegates heard turned out to be a largely symbolic roll call vote that gave Hillary the opportunity to call for a unanimous endorsement of Obama. Her speech offered the nation an opportunity to see how deep the Democrats bench was and rebuked any opportunity to play Hillary against Barack.

President Clinton's speech was even more empowering for the Democrats as Bill did (much of) what he was asked to do, which was speak on foreign policy (though he wanted to speak on the economy and wouldn't give up his speech in advance). Bill said whatever media pundits suggested that Hillary didn't say (namely that Barack wasn't fit to lead), and provided the most effective tag-team scenario since early in the primaries. Between the two Clintons, they got it done in aggressive (not passive) endorsements of Barack and set the table nicely for the perception of a unified Democratic party, leaving the question of a divided party on the kitchen cutting floor of the Republican strategists.

Former Vice President, Al Gore allowed us to see what apathy and indifference in a national election has cost us in the past eight years. Barack knocked it out of the park with his speech that couldn't help but leave a whole nation understanding exactly what we need to do to get the nation back on track. All that had to happen next, was the traditional "joint unity appearance" at the end of the speech with Hillary Clinton. That would have sealed the deal. The photo op of the year would have been Hillary handing up Barack's hand at convention's end. But, for whatever reason, it didn't happen. Hill and Bill were nowhere to be found. And just as black people were ready to give them back their "ghetto passes."

Hold those ghetto passes. We need to wait and see what the Clinton's do on the campaign trail for the next two months. Now that the lights are out, and the convention party is over, let's see what Hill and Bill do to get Barack over in Ohio, Arkansas, Pennsylvania, Florida and other "big" places Hillary claimed hard working white people needed a voice. They haven't earned their ghetto passes back yet, and we really need to see if they even want them back. Were they trying to save Barack? Or were they saving themselves for the next time around? One thing Democrats know, they won't win any election without us.

Time will tell, and the Clintons' ghetto passes will remain in our back pockets until we find out.

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