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**Barack Obama: Black Rage on the Auction Block
The Substance Of Truth
By Tolu Olorunda
BlackCommentator.com Columnist**

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*[We are very pleased to announce that beginning with this issue, Tolo Olorunda will be a **BC** Columnist. No doubt you have read his many fine commentaries in The BlackCommentator.com Student Writers' Corner, and have noticed his exceptional ability to understand and elucidate complex matters. We welcome him as a **BC** Columnist and believe he is, should he so choose, at the beginning of a promising career in journalism.]*

In an [interview](#) with Sen. Obama last week, primetime news anchor, Keith Olbermann, asked the Democratic Presidential Nominee a question that seemed, at the very least, troubling in its framing. "... Maybe the most compelling moment of your acceptance speech in Denver was that one strongly voiced word, "enough," Olbermann said. Known for his neo-liberalist philosophies, the MSNBC ratings king proceeded to query the Illinois Senator if he had ever "*thought of using on the campaign trail and in your speaking engagements, more exclamation points.*" And then, in a striking tone, Olbermann inquired, "*Have you thought of getting angrier*?" At this point, to avoid paying critical deference to Olbermann's uninformed suggestion, Obama chuckled and skillfully diverted attention to Sen. McCain's woeful record on reform.

Media Mogul, Arianna Huffington, also displayed a similar longing for *Black Rage* in a [Huffington Post column](#) titled, "Enough!: Why Obama Should Release His Righteous Rage." Built upon the premise of Black prophetic anger, Huffington all but scolded Obama for acting civically and gregariously in his pursuit of the White House. To Arianna Huffington, and those who think like her, Sen. Obama cannot clinch the 270 electoral votes if he remains "analytical," "thoughtful" and "composed." She wrote,

"Obama has demonstrated a laudatory levelheadedness - the ability to keep his head while those around him were losing theirs - over the long haul of the '08 campaign, always presenting a cool and unruffled image. And it has served him well... Being likeable is obviously a good thing in politics... But the last seven-plus years demand more than a detached analysis - and certainly more than a beaming smile. They demand indignation. Outrage. Fury... As a leader fighting for fundamental change in this country, Obama has to be willing to show us that kind of righteous anger... Obama clearly has it in him. We saw a flash of it in Denver when he announced: "Enough!"

What most surprises the curious mind is how Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright was, earlier this year, demonized and castigated by the exact same White neo-liberals for his prophetic anger and candid criticism. *Black Rage* seems to only yield acceptance when commodifiable. In her 2002 critically acclaimed book, *Rock My Soul*, astute scholar and cultural critic, bell hooks, bore witness to this tragedy, saying, "Anger has rapidly become the only acceptable emotion for black people to express, so normative that it is often seen as synonymous with blackness by black and non-black people alike."

While media elites like Olbermann, Huffington and Rachel Maddow desired – so desperately – to be entertained by the manifestation of "Barack Obama in Black Rage," others craved to see the ever-collected Senator flip out and confirm their historically racist presuppositions of Black men. The "Black Rage Syndrome" had subjected many White Americans to gripping suspense as they anticipated the fulfillment of their 19-month long dream: Barack Obama losing his cool and acting a fool. No doubt, white pundits, like Chris Matthews, experienced the "[thrill up their leg](#)" shoot even further, as Obama [blurted out](#) "*I don't care what they say about me, but I love this country too much to let them take over another election with lies and phony outrage and swift boat politics. Enough is enough!*" To them, Barack Obama had dispelled the notion that Black Men could exceed traditional limitations within the parameters of White Supremacy with a poised, controlled and endearing demeanor. As Comedian, *Cedric the Entertainer*, [once comparably remarked](#), of Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, the White, passive "Barry Durham" had left the building, and the Black, angry "Barack Obama" had taken over.

To understand the context of Sen. Obama's outburst last Thursday, one must put into full context the issue at hand. Sen. John McCain, the war-mongering and Orwellian presidential candidate, performed in a way that made trick-master, [Karl Rove](#), admit was "one step too far and sort of attributing to Obama things that are, you know, beyond the 100-percent-truth test." By now, most are aware of the "lipstick on a pig" kerfuffle, which put to bed the claim that the 2008 U.S. Presidential race will center on issues affecting everyday citizens. In the midst of the mainstream media's self-congratulation for highlighting the McCain Campaign's [overt hypocrisy](#), little dedication was paid to the racial element that gives John McCain ample leverage to lampoon Sen. Obama for daring criticize a White man's policies. Many media watchdogs rapidly pointed out the absurdity of accusing an opponent for maligning a running mate whose name wasn't mentioned in the same breath, but none would go far enough to speak out courageously against the introduction of "Jim Crowism" into the presidential race.

What the mainstream press failed to explore, was the explicit incorporation of the southern strategy in John McCain's demand that Barack Obama apologize for insulting a White Woman. Luckily for Sen. Obama, this [isn't 1955](#). In the face of strident criticism from conservative proponents such as Bill O'Reilly and Mike Huckabee, the McCain campaign remained insistent on the call for Sen. Obama to make amends for his

statement. In a September 12th appearance on *The View*, following censure from the co-hosts for his manipulatory tactics, Sen. McCain [stubbornly refused](#) to concede, adding that Sen. Obama "chooses his words very carefully," and so therefore, "he shouldn't have said it." Unless one willingly declines to accept reality, Sen. John McCain - who is admittedly part of the "[White, Christian Male Power Structure](#)" - is openly reminding Sen. Obama of the cultural boundaries of American politics. How else to explain the McCain campaign characterizing Barack Obama as "[disrespectful](#)," for rightfully pointing out that Gov. Sarah Palin has [consistently](#) spewed [lies and half-truths](#) about [her record as Mayor and Governor](#). Sen. Obama was spot on in condemning the phony outrage of the newly-born feminists who were nowhere to be found when their good ole' pal Clarence Thomas was unbridled in his thrashing of Anita Hill in 1991.

In an effort to successfully portray Sen. Obama as the stereotypical "Black Beast," the McCain Campaign borrowed a page from the [Hillary Clinton playbook](#). In the McCain ad, titled "[Disrespectful](#)," the footage shamelessly alters Sen. Obama's imagery, and through cosmetic distortion, darkens his skin tone. This tactic, used prior to the political birth of John McCain, plays right into the occupied minds of White Females, who awaited the final nail in the coffin to justify the perverse decision of voting for a ticket which would exercise dominion over their personal lives, and deny them the God-given right to infallible control over their bodies. Another scheme, unmentioned by the adolescent media, is the McCain campaign's diabolic usage of coded words to define Sen. Obama. In the stump speeches following her acceptance of the GOP V.P. nomination, Sarah Palin has employed a curious phrase to characterize Sen. Obama. "Our Opponent," as she describes him, is neither in favor of the collective good or the prosperity of the U.S. With Obama's Muslim heritage and the [fabricated report](#) suggesting he was schooled in a Madrassa, the portrayal of Obama as an opponent of America's interest would only stoke the infantile [10% U.S. population](#) who believe Obama is a Muslim, and Islam represents the core of inhumanity.

Having walked through the valley of the shadow of White supremacy, Sen. Obama should be commended for his outright candor and composition. But I also believe that if the fulfillment of a Black president can only come at the reception of rabid and morally repugnant assaults upon Barack Obama - and inversely the Black Community - Sen. Obama must speak vociferously against the evil force of White supremacy which has - with the help of John McCain - shown itself to be at the root of the 2008 presidential race. If the Illinois Senator is too timid (or sophisticated) to answer the clarion call, his progressive supporters must pick up that baton and run with it. If not, the 2008-2012 Presidency will bear the [fruits of the poisoned tree](#).

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The BlackCommentator Readers' Corner Blog


BlackCommentator.com Columnist, Tolu Olorunda, is a 19-year-old local activist/writer and a Nigerian immigrant. Click [here](#) to reach Mr. Olorunda.

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