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**The First Presidential Debate:
Tie Goes to the Runner
Between The Lines
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Watching the first presidential debate involving the first African American major party nominee was historic. But the aftermath was less than euphoric. By all accounts, Barack Obama won the debate. He was more "presidential," whatever that means. To me, it means he was more confident, more detailed in his answers, more exacting in his critique and more optimistic in his resolve to change our current dilemma. Obama spoke to the issues and he spoke to the people. McCain tried to dodge the debate by hiding behind the Wall Street collapse, then he dodged the issues by being non-response to questions while trying to baste Barack.

When the smoke cleared, many of the immediate post debate analysts tried to say that neither candidate clearly distinguished himself and that the debate was a tie. Well, given that the debate was on McCain's home court (Oxford, Mississippi – a red state that historically voted Republican or Dixiecrat [any party that was against civil or equal rights]) and the topic was supposed to McCain's strong suit, foreign policy, it would appear to me that a tie would mean Barack held his own and thus was the winner. In baseball, America's past-time, when the runner and the ball get to the base at the same time, because the fielders have more time to react to the play, the tie goes to the runner. Why should politics be any different? McCain was the pitcher in this debate, it was his field (foreign policy), Barack was the batter, trying to prove he could hit the foreign pitch. He did, and beat McCain to the base. The pundits want to call it a tie. Barack is still safe. Tie goes to the runner.

We have since seen in the daily Gallup polling how far off the pundits were. Obama has gotten a big bounce in polls - anywhere from five to ten points, depending on the poll you watch. Some want to tie it to the lack of confidence in the President's bailout

proposal. It also could be a lack of confidence that McCain had any sort of impact on the bailout (passing or failing). From my perspective, it's the American public being dismissed as so unintelligent and naïve that they can't tell the difference between who won and who lost. Despite a race that's closer than it should (be because a Stanford study finally confirmed what black people knew six months ago, that race is a larger-than-previously-acknowledged factor in this Presidential race), there is still something to be said about continuing to tell people - regardless of whom they support - not to believe what they see.

This era of political relativism that suggests the truth is relative, and reality is a figment of one's imagination, is why we're at war and the economy is on the floor. Even still, Bush, and now McCain have the unmitigated gall to ask you, "Who do you believe, me or your lying eyes?" Well, put it this way, after last Friday, a whole bunch of people are starting to believe their lying eyes.

People are tired of trying to make sense out of nonsense, sense out of pretense and sense out of misfeasance. That's why the Wall Street bailout made no sense to most Americans. We're giving \$700 billion to the same guys that stole us blind, took our homes and mismanaged the economy? The American people said it in virtual unison, "Reward malfeasance. That doesn't make any sense." The blind now see, and the deaf now hear and that bodes well for Obama.

As much as the right wants to manipulate the change message, the same message can't come close. Though they'd like to make you think it's close, it's not. They can't say reality isn't real, no matter how it makes you feel. The American people have been shocked into reality and the first Presidential debate of the fall couldn't have come at a better time, in the midst of Palin-mania and McCain hysteria, where the substance message was being lost to the same substance-less conversation that elected George W. eight years ago. As much as the pundits want to make you think this debate was a tie, we know better. Tie goes to the runner.

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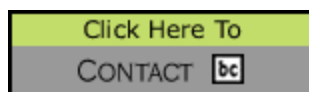
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