

# The BLACK C o M M e n t a t o r

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## **The President's Re-election Reality: He's Got 99 Problems And Mitt Ain't One Between The Lines**

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"Down goes Romney." "Down goes Romney." If Howard Cosell were still alive, that would have been the call around 11:15 (8:15 Pacific Standard Time). It was over just that quickly. The re-election of President Barack Obama was not unexpected, nor was it the nailbiter it was forecasted to be. The swing states (Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Virginia, North Carolina) all swung one way. The identity groups (Blacks, Latinos, Women, Gays, Students) all swung one way. All the hype that Mitt Romney would get the popular vote was nonsense.

The President won the popular vote by more than two million votes. They said the possibility existed that neither candidate would get to the 270 Electoral College votes needed to confirm a winner. Well, 303 is well past 270 and Florida's 29 votes are leaning toward the President. The fact of the matter is that Mitt Romney was selling "wolf tickets" and the media bought 'em and then sold 'em to the public. They had a reason. A close race means more campaign ad buys. A landslide means everybody keeps their money in their pockets. So, there you have it. The President punched through that paper tiger with a base that was *larger* than 2008. Mitt couldn't match the boots on the ground and he couldn't be every place at once (though he tried). You knew he was in trouble when he hit five states *on Election Day*.

Done. Done. And DONE.

In the closing days of the election, the President brought out his "All-

Stars" on the road, which included Bruce Springsteen and Shawn Carter (Jay Z). I caught a clip of Jay Z singing a line from his famous (infamous) "99 Problems." It sums up what the reality of this re-election campaign was for the President, which is, "I got 99 problems and a Mitt ain't one..."

There was an anti-realism to this election that even Romney began to believe (that it was really close). So much so that he only wrote one speech...a victory speech. Mitt musta' really fallen and bumped his head. No, the Republicans bumped his head when they saddled him with a right wing ideologue Paul Ryan - making him nearly unelectable. Or was it the RNC that bumped his head when they saddled his campaign with Karl Rove - talk about the ghosts of George W. Bush - who cast a shadow over his campaign. Romney couldn't get across the finish line carrying all the Republicans' ideological and unethical baggage. They piled it on him, the price to be paid to wear the Republican tin can crown. Errbody got paid on that side of the table, except Mitt. Well, there's not doubt Mitt got his head bumped on Election night, and now it's time for the President to get to the *real* problems of the nation. And, hopefully, that's *not* a problem.

There won't be much time for celebrating as the obstructionist politics of the last three years comes to a head at year's end. The "fiscal cliff" (automatic "across the board" budget cuts and expiration of the Bush tax cuts) is the most pressing problem for the President, and he essentially has ended up with the same Congress he's had the past two years. Washington gridlock is a problem and it is the foundation upon which the *HOPE* agenda was built. The day after the election, the Republicans were *still* talking crazy. They ain't learned nothing.

Despite their nonsense, President Obama will have to accomplish some things, in spite of them. Now that history has been made, and the President will have the opportunity to fulfill his destiny, God willing, he will have to fulfill the expectations of those who invested in him, and entrusted him to make the difference he said he can. He's gonna' have to bump Congress' head too. The Republicans are on the verge of becoming obsolete. What they stand for is not in the best interest of the country - if it's only about tax cuts. It's time to stop the militarism, the anti-taxation rhetoric and the obstructionism. It's time for both parties to govern. But the President now has to perform. He *does* have 99 problems (at least) and without the prospect of facing re-election, there is no reason why he shouldn't, at least, attempt to address them. I'm not going try to name all 99 problems, but I can name at least *five*. The top five...that's what everybody's watching.

The nation's top problem is *jobs*. Now, I believe that the economy is turning around and the country is on the right track...but unemployment threatens to slow the economy. People have to be put back to work. The next problem is America's growing poverty problem. Now, I'm not ready to jump on the Smiley/West bandwagon just yet, but this is one issue - for sure - that must be part of the Obama legacy. With re-election behind him, there is no reason for Obama not to make poverty eradication a personal challenge as LBJ did. This one is for the completion of King's legacy.

The third biggest problem is arresting the nation's foreclosure crisis. And when I say, *arrest*, I mean *arrest*, as in making sure whoever caused this - abuse and those that are stalling its resolution are dealt by the law. Make the banks - bite the apple and put the HAMP money on the streets. People are falling out of their homes - not because of government in action, but because of corporate recalcitrance. Put a spotlight on it.

It is now "payday" on immigration reform. With 70% Latino support this election, it's time to pay the piper and resolve the problem of immigration reform. Make the Republicans address it or expose them for the hypocrites they are - but push it through. Lastly, Obamacare kicks in fully in 2014 and it needs to be paid for. Take away the excuses the Republicans have for trying to dismantle it. Budget reform is intricately tied to health care reform. It will be a problem if Obamacare unravels because it can't be paid for (which is their party line). Say it ain't so, Brother President. Make it make sense, and making sense means being paid for. That's just a sample of Obama's second term charge. Yes, congratulations on Obama's re-election, but now...

The President's got, at least, 99 problems facing him to fix this divided nation.

And a Mitt ain't one.

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