

The Reality of a Hip Hop President

Written by Akin B. Ware ID4548

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"Although it seems heaven-sent / We ain't ready to see a black President" - Tupac Amaru Shakur (2Pac)

On Tuesday, November 4, 2008, I stood in line for two minutes and cast my vote for Barack Obama in the 2008 Presidential race, voting for the first time in my life. I am a young, black man, and I had something in common with millions of other first time voters that day. We were all very young, those 18-35 products of what is unscientifically yet accurately known as the "Hip-Hop Generation". We came out in force that day and Generation X turned out to be the X-Factor that caused Obama to make history as he was elected the first black President in 200 years of elections in America.

This victory holds the potential for disaster. We are, as a generation new to politics, and in fact are known to hold the entire institution in sneering contempt. Make no mistake, however. What we have just elected is a politician. A brilliant, educated man, with great ideas representing high ideals, but a politician nevertheless. It is impossible for a person to run for and win the highest political office in the nation without becoming a politician, in the unlikely event that they were not already one.

The problem here is that this movement of young people of all races-this Hip Hop Generation-has inherited a trait from the Civil Rights generation (also of all races) that preceded it, as well as from the black community at large. This is the trait of seeking one leader to advocate and represent the people. From Booker T. Washington to Malcolm X, we have always sought that messiah figure that would lead us as a group to the Promised Land of Dr. Martin Luther King's Dream. This thirst for leadership has been passed on to the Hip Hop Generation. Today, they feel vindicated as their adopted champion has ascended to the throne.

Therein lays the flaw. The President of the United States governs a diverse, conflicted and contradictory land and is responsible for all the people within. The level of compromise required from a competent President is severe and dream shattering, and it has been often noted that many Presidents err on the side of compromise to the point that many of them are accused by their supporters of selling out their beliefs.

Compromise is defined by the great Irish playwright and wit George Bernard Shaw as "an agreement that satisfies no one" The President often places his seal on agreements that truly

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satisfy no one. The foundation of this is laid in our three-tiered governmental system, and the faithful practice of this is strongly recommended to any government official who would like to keep his job.

Therefore, the reality is that Obama has acceded to the Presidency due to his adoption by the youth of the nation, and this very success disqualifies him to lead this one group, as he is now equally the President of Young Jeezy and Young George Bush, leader of The Nation of Islam and B'nai B'rith.

What is important is that we recognize three things. First, Obama's achievement is the culmination of many sacrifices made by those who came before us, and his success is primarily significant as a vindication of the lives spent in fighting for the cause of freedom. Secondly, it is significant as a first, because while he is the first Black President, and the first President elected through a mass movement of the youth, he will not be the last. That bridge is forever crossed, and it is a beautiful thing that we can finally leave it far behind us.

Finally, what Obama's achievement must mean to us if it is to create any legacy that is lasting and meaningful, is that any of us can achieve anything through hard work, faith and determination. The true significance of Obama's election is not that he will solve our problems, but that he will inspire us to solve them ourselves. The true savior of America is not Barack Hussein Obama , but each of us. As the man himself famously stated, "Yes WE can!"

Akin B. Ware is a common man with uncommon views.

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