

Naturally Speaking



Obama's Bush

I contribute a monthly column to a website that deals with hair issues. One column that I offered two years ago had a particularly political twist.

In it I asked readers to fantasize about having a government that is run by a "nappy" administration.

I asked them to tell me who they would like to see occupying the nation's top political positions if nappiness was the only prerequisite.

The readers had fun with that one. In their eager responses, they primarily named people who were actors, artists and activists and cited their locks, braids and wild and wooly Afros as proof of eligibility.



The fantasy nominees included the likes of George Clinton, the P-Funk elder statesman who sports psychedelic locks;

CSI actor Gary Dourdan with his wonderfully irreverent and unruly 'do, and Angela Davis the 1970s activist whose billowing Afro thoroughly intimidated the status quo.

But one reader's fantasy nominee was a real life politician who wore his hair in a style that was close-cropped and conservative.

Her nominee was U.S. Senator Barack Obama.

"I'm not really sure how nappy his hair is," said Linda Ball of Murphy, Texas whose comments appeared in the column that I wrote in November 2006. "But I'm just finishing up his amazing autobiography (*The Audacity of Hope*) and he certainly has a great 'nappy mind.' If he runs for real, he'll get my vote!"

While Ms. Ball's nomination was fantasy, Obama's bid for the presidential top spot is very real. And in the real world politicians who seek presidential positions would be wise not to let their hair "make waves."

Let's be real. Obama would never have made it this far in his quest to be president if he were

flaunting the Bob Marley look.

There was a time in Obama's past when he had the "audacity" to wear his hair in a style that expressed his African roots.

Obama rocked an Afro during his youth and during the 1980s when he was a community organizer in Chicago. He continued sporting the style when he went to Harvard and apparently saw no need to change it when he decided to run for president of the prestigious Harvard Law Review.



His hair wasn't an issue with his classmates. They apparently were more impressed with what was inside Obama's head than what was on top of it. They elected him president, making him the first African American president of the publication in its 104-year history.

A photo of Obama wearing the Afro of his youth appeared recently on the March 31 cover of Newsweek. He looked quite becoming. Can we even say, "Cute?"

Elizabeth Edwards, wife of former presidential hopeful Sen. John Edwards, gave Obama's 'do a back-handed compliment during an interview with a political writer last year.

"There was a New York Times article fairly early in the race," Ms. Edwards told Roger Simon, writer for Politico.com. "It had a picture of Obama with an Afro - that a lot of people had then, it was nice looking, not odd looking - at Harvard Law School," she said.

What Edwards considers an "odd" Afro is fodder for another column.

For the record, let me say that that if Obama becomes president, he would have my full support if he decides to stop playing his hair so close to the scalp. Resurrection of his Afro would get my vote.



Having his "Bush" in the White House would be far better than the one we have there now.

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