



Misstep in a Liberal Minefield

(Published in *The Washington Post*, January 17, 2008)

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Colaboraciones n° 2149

January 28, 2008

[Hillary Clinton](#)'s campaign, useful at last, has in recent days added to the nation's stock of harmless merriment. It has done so by floundering around, like a dinosaur drowning in a tar pit, with the sticky problem of being as "sensitive" as good liberals, our multicultural role models, are supposed to be.

For decades, liberals, believing that "self-esteem" is a universal entitlement that is endangered by nearly universal insensitivity, have striven to make everybody exquisitely sensitive to slights. Liberals have become industrialists as an indignation industry has burgeoned. It writes campus speech codes, infests corporations with "sensitivity training" workshops and "consciousness-raising" retreats, and generally enforces the new right to pass through

this vale of tears without tears or even being peeved.

It is unfair, and wonderful, that Clinton has been castigated for her insensitivity in uttering the incontestable truth that President [Lyndon Johnson](#), as well as [Martin Luther King Jr.](#), was indispensable to enactment of the civil rights acts of 1964 and 1965. To his credit, [Barack Obama](#) seemed not quite able to conceal his boredom with his assigned role of slighted victim in the charade of being offended. His campaign, however, methodically played a muted part in the required dance of agreement.

Clinton's clanking, wheezing political jalopy, blowing its gaskets and stripping its lug nuts, has moved on from faulting Obama for a kindergarten essay (in which he suppos-

edly revealed a presidential ambition that was unseemly around the teeter-totter) to accusing him of wanting to be reasonable, even likable. Is there nothing the man will not stoop to?

America has passed another milestone on its march to equal opportunity thanks to [Robert Johnson](#), founder of [Black Entertainment Television](#), who this week proved that a black billionaire can be just as witless as are certain white billionaires who think their wisdom is commensurate with their net worth. Introducing Clinton at a rally, Johnson called Obama a "guy who says, 'I want to be a reasonable, likable [Sidney Poitier](#) in 'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner.'" For the uninitiated, that is how you call someone an Uncle Tom in an age that has not read "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Johnson also said the Clintons were "involved in black issues" when Obama "was doing something in the neighborhood -- I won't say what he was doing, but he said it in his book." Johnson was, of course, referring to Obama's admission of teenage drug use. With [Bill Clinton](#) supporting him, he later insisted that he was referring to Obama's community organizing. The Clinton campaign should not be blamed for this comic dishonesty. In the Clintons' orbit, meretriciousness is as reflexive as a sneeze, and reflexes are not moral failures.

All this nonsense is, however, perhaps germane to something sensible occurring in the Democratic contest.

Endorsements of politicians by politicians may matter little to voters, but they are indicators of the endorsers' estimates of strengths and dangers. So what do Sens. [Kent Conrad](#) of [North Dakota](#), [Tim Johnson](#) of [South Dakota](#), [Claire McCaskill](#) of [Missouri](#) and [Ben Nelson](#) of [Nebraska](#); former senator [Gary Hart](#) of [Colorado](#); and Govs. [Jim Doyle](#) of [Wisconsin](#), [Tim Kaine](#) of [Virginia](#) and [Janet Napolitano](#) of [Arizona](#) have in common?

Three things, actually. They are Democrats, they have been elected in red or swing states, and they have endorsed Obama.

In 2000 and 2004, [George W. Bush](#) carried North Dakota with 60.7 percent and 62.9 percent of the vote. A Democratic presidential candidate has not carried the state since 1964. Bush carried South Dakota with 60.3 percent and 59.9 percent. It has not voted Democratic in a presidential election since 1964. Bush carried Missouri with 50.4 and 53.3. This bellwether state has voted with the winner in every election but one (1956) in the past 100 years. Bush carried Nebraska with 62.2 and 65.9. It last voted Democratic in 1964. Bush carried Colorado with 50.8 and 51.7. It last voted Democratic in 1992. Bush carried Arizona with 51 and 54.9. It last voted Democratic in 1996. Bush carried Virginia with 52.5 and 53.7. It last voted Democratic in 1964. Bush narrowly lost Wisconsin with 47.6 and 49.3.

The preference of those eight people for Obama surely has something to

do with what Clinton's campaign reveals about her. It has had serial misadventures in the racial minefield of liberalism's own making. Its clumsy competition in the sensitivity sweepstakes makes it seem like a

quaint anachronism. It reeks of the synthetic racial and other sensitivity-mongering of the last third of the previous century. Temperate Americans are surely thinking: Get. Over. It.

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