

# *The Harbour League*



## OBAMA'S ENEMIES LIST

*By Mark Hyman*

After the Democratic convention, Obama campaign lawyer Robert Bauer warned TV stations against airing a TV ad that was embarrassing to Barack Obama. The commercial focused on the longtime relationship between Obama and Weather Underground terrorist Bill Ayers. Bauer sent letters to the Justice Department imploring the agency to pursue criminal action against those behind the ads. It was not lost on anyone at that time that Bauer was considered a candidate to be the next U.S. Attorney-General.

A team of Obama campaign operatives, joined by major news outlets, descended on Wasilla, Alaska immediately after Governor Sarah Palin was introduced as Senator John McCain's running mate. This was immediately followed by patently false reports claiming Palin imposed book bans, joined a fringe political party, charged rape victims for emergency room treatment and cut funding for special needs children.

In late August, the Obama campaign emailed an "Obama Action Wire" to thousands of supporters and liberal activists exhorting them to harass the offices of Chicago's WGN radio by flooding the station with angry phone calls and emails. Activists screamed insults to call-in screeners. The radio station's offense was that a long-time, respected radio host had the temerity to interview Ethics and Public Policy Center watchdog Stanley Kurtz. Kurtz had uncovered university records that documented a much closer relationship between Obama and Ayers than the presidential candidate had previously disclosed.

A few weeks later, state prosecutors and top sheriffs in Missouri who were prominent Obama supporters responded to a chilling Obama campaign request. They styled themselves as a "truth squad" and threatened to prosecute anyone including media outlets that printed or broadcasted material they deemed to be inaccurate about the Illinois Senator.

Obama contributors in the Justice Department's Civil Rights section (headed by \$2,000 Obama donor and former ACLU attorney Mark Kappelhof) urged preemptive prosecution of individuals the Obama campaign believed might disrupt the November election. A cited example of anticipated disruption was to send mailings of a non-violent nature addressing voting issues unfavorable to Obama.

In October, a question from a middle-class voter resulted in an answer from Obama indicating the Democratic nominee was in favor of "spread[ing] the wealth around." This voter became the symbol of middle-class America and Obama's response the touchstone of his neo-Marxist policies. Immediately thereafter, Democratic Ohio state officials scoured government data bases and confidential records in an effort to find embarrassing information on "Joe the Plumber" (e.g., he is divorced) that quickly found its way into the press.

In the final days of the campaign, three newspapers that had endorsed McCain were booted from the Obama campaign bus. The *New York Post*, *Dallas Morning News*, and *Washington Times* were unceremoniously shown the door only days after their papers' endorsements appeared. Obama campaign officials claimed the move was to make room for more important media outlets: *Jet* and *Ebony* entertainment magazines. Both publications were publishing fawning coverage of Obama.

Those heartened by the hope that a President Obama would be more tolerant of critics and criticism than a candidate Obama had their expectations dashed. In only his third full day as the 44th president Obama personally went on the offensive against a media personality. On January 23rd, Obama warned Congressional Republicans against listening to Rush Limbaugh. The man who offered to sit down with Holocaust denier and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad without any preconditions whatsoever views an American radio talk show host as a dangerous threat.

In precedent-setting action, Obama moved his director of political affairs, a highly partisan post, from the Old Executive Office Building into the West Wing. Political operative Patrick Gaspard was given White House access not experienced by his predecessors. Obama official Shauna Daly, a non-lawyer and career opposition researcher described as a "partisan dirt-digger," was assigned to the White House counsel office. The move signals not only a new low in partisan activities, but suggests the office assignment may be intended to hide Daly's political activities under the guise of the counsel's attorney-client privileges.

What America witnessed before the election and mere hours after Obama was sworn into office is just a sampling of what Americans can likely expect throughout an Obama presidency. One cannot help but reach the conclusion an Obama Enemies List is already being compiled and free speech restrictions are being considered. Fortunately for Obama he has no shortage of Congressional foot soldiers to help in his cause to muzzle critics and silence news outlets that refuse to adhere to Democratic talking points that are faxed directly into the network newscast teleprompters.

On Election Day, Senator Chuck Schumer likened conservative talk radio to pornography and argued it should be regulated. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi endorsed speech restrictions more than once during the election season. Senators Harry Reid, Dick Durbin and John Kerry have also advocated various limits

to political speech. Senator Debbie Stabenow assured a liberal radio talk show host that regulating conservative speech is imminent. House Commerce Committee Chairman Henry Waxman is reportedly working on speech restrictions with acting FCC Chairman Michael Copps.

Imagine the gross violations against political speech that may very well occur when there are no checks and balances from a sycophantic Congress and there is complicity from the national news gatekeepers. The public may be very surprised at the lengths the Obama Administration may pursue to silence critics. Moreover, the self-anointed Praetorian Guard of the First Amendment will conveniently develop a case of amnesia regarding on which side of the debate they fall when it comes to press freedoms. Do not expect to see the *New York Times* editorialize against Obama and the Congress when it comes to protecting free speech rights aside from its own and that of like-minded, liberally-biased press outlets.

The Clinton White House had its own enemies list and engaged in dirty practices that clearly broke the law. Clinton enemies audited by the IRS included Paula Jones, Juanita Broaddrick, Gennifer Flowers, White House Travel Officer Director Billy Dale and the independent watchdog group, Judicial Watch, just to name a few.

Early in Clinton's first term, staffers improperly squirreled away more than 400 FBI files on prominent Republicans. This gave the Clintons access to confidential information on key Republicans they viewed as political threats.

Just weeks after the Monica Lewinsky broke in early 1998, then-Deputy Attorney General (and current Attorney General) Eric Holder engineered a federal grand jury investigation of *The American Spectator*. The magazine had long been a very successful critic of both Clintons, having broken several stories embarrassing for the President and First Lady. Fourteen months later, the federal prosecutor dropped the probe without filing any criminal charges. The probe may have achieved its purpose as it nearly bankrupted the magazine.

Much has been made by the political left of Richard Nixon's infamous enemies list. The reality is while there was a Nixon's enemies list most of the names were those who did not receive presidential Christmas cards or White House reception invitations. This was a hardship that even the most vulnerable in American society could easily withstand.

The heavy-handed actions against Obama critics and opponents that occurred before he had government institutions firmly under his control should have had public interest watchdog groups up in arms. Because so many of such groups are ideologically aligned with Obama may explain why there was not even a peep. Conservative and balanced news outlets have the disturbing habit of holding accountable liberal public interest organizations that engage in dishonest or deceptive practices that the major news organizations just so happen to overlook.

How soon and how far the Obama Administration will extend its attacks against its critics and the political opposition may become evident in the days ahead. Spared any serious scrutiny by most news outlets during his very brief career in public office, Barack Obama has displayed an exceptionally thin

skin when he has come under a microscope or when he has suffered political and public relations setbacks.

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