

Voters elected Will Smith president. What did they think they'd get?

If Barack Obama were coach of a high school basketball team, he would insist on also being the assistant coach and trainer, driving the bus to away games, arranging the year-end awards banquet and taking team pictures. Not because he is overly ambitious but because he sincerely believes no one else can do anything nearly as well as he can. Anything.

I don't often watch the POTUS State of the Union address (nor lesser, similar speeches) but the country is in such a hole and sinking deeper by the month, that I thought I should watch this one carefully and see if he had any solutions.

It was a me, me, me approach to the wide range of almost unsolvable problems. And, in spite of being rated an exceptional speaker, I thought the address was uninspiring. The two doofuses seated behind him were hard to stomach. Joe Biden, with his toothy grin and constant head nodding like a bobblehead doll affirmation of what Obama was "about" to say, not just what he had just said, was annoying and distracting. Poor Nancy Pelosi simply cannot blink or close her eyes because plastic surgery has pulled back her skin so tight on her face.

I appreciate a good speaker and a good speech, regardless of the political persuasion. More often than not, those built up most deliver least. I thought the president's SOTU speech was routine. And he never speaks extemporaneously. If the words aren't on the dual teleprompters, he ain't gonna say 'em. Even in front of a group of six graders recently, his teleprompters were set up so he could "read" - not speak.

It's hard for me to criticize the selection of Barack Obama as president because the Republican alternative was less than impressive. Because of the GOP's "it's his turn" practice of awarding the nomination, they often put up candidates who cannot be, and will not be, elected.

But, I have written on these pages that Obama is one of the least qualified candidates to have ever been elected president. Critics who tore into Sarah Palin - as much for being a woman as being unqualified, in my opinion - gave Obama a free pass. Primarily because they were impressed by his speechwriters and his ability to read the words. He had absolutely no qualifications nor credentials that should have led to his election. But probably would have against any Republican candidate such as the mood of the country and disdain for George W. Bush.

How quickly things have shifted. It is a normal cycle that the political party in power disappoints the demanding American people and at a near election, they are turned out and the other political party returned to power. Except for Congress being held by the Democrats for years, that is the normal ebb and flow. As president, since FDR won four consecutive elections, and Truman one as his

successor, the country has seen a Republican for two terms, a Democrat and his successor for two terms, a Republican for two terms, then a Democrat for a single term, a Republican for two terms, a Republican for a single term, a Democrat for two terms, a Republican for two terms, now a Democrat in his first term.

Each "successor" (Truman, Johnson and Ford) was elevated into the presidency by the death or resignation of an elected president. And it seemed that the more the American people see of a president, the less they thought of him. That partially explains why George H.W. Bush was the only vice president to be elected following the president he served. Nixon was elected later but first failed.

Exposure often brings distaste. And disappointment. Because Barack Obama was an unknown and everyone knew about all the warts of John McCain, Obama had an advantage. His most serious challenge came from within his own party in Hillary Clinton and she had the same problem - her known past and her husband's - and she was a woman.

Obama had never distinguished himself in politics leading to his election to serve as president. He was an unknown in Chicago politics until he was handed an unusual chance to run for the U.S. Senate. His Republican opponent in that race was forced to withdraw at the last minute and the replacement, Alan Keyes, was an unelectable alternative.

So, why would anyone be surprised now that Barack Obama cannot handle the job as POTUS? They shouldn't be. He was never in a decision-making position in his life. Senators don't get elected president for a good reason. They've never shown an ability to make an independent and defining decision. Since the John F. Kennedy (who had the advantage of running against an immensely dislikable Richard Nixon yet beat him only because Texas and Chicago "machines" delivered votes of dead and nonexistent voters for him) and Lyndon Johnson pairing have voters elected a Senator POTUS. Until Barack Obama. Several have run but none were elected. Governors' offices are where presidents have come from.

Obama was more telegenic, younger, had a better smile, a more self-accomplished and appealing wife (not an heiress), two young children and had no past of party infighting nor votes on controversial issues. I described him as a political Will Smith during the campaign.

So, he got elected. Then what? The country has gone further into the tank financially, the two wars rage on (we don't know much about Iraq because the media no longer covers that war), the federal government has taken over private industries, none of his promises have been kept and most unattempted. But, he had no past to suggest competence. Why would you be surprised he isn't?

Beginning Year No. 9

If I wrote that it seems like just yesterday when I started this grand adventure, that would be a misstatement. While time does pass fast, it often seems like every day of the eight years has crept by since I published the first issue of this publication I decided to call the Cheyenne Herald - on January 30, 2002.

I'll let others decide the purpose this alternative publication serves in Cheyenne. I will only say that the leads, tips and storyline requests come much faster than I can handle. And more frequently.

When I began, I knew that the Herald could serve a useful role in disclosing public issues. My background in local politics and political campaigns put me in a good place to know where to dig and where and how to gather information.

What I underestimated was that one day the Cheyenne Herald would become the "go to" place for stories involving crimes and injustices. I did not anticipate I would be asked to "investigate" so many stories where locals felt they had no place else to turn - where they felt that "the system" had betrayed them or abandoned them or a loved one.

The revelation that the system doesn't work for as many as I wanted to believe it did has not been a pleasant one.

As a law and order conservative, I wanted to believe that few fell between the cracks. Instead, over the eight years, I've learned that many fall between the cracks and that justice is often meted out depending on who you know and not what you did.

As I enter year nine of this journey, I am working several stories involving our judicial system and how justice is dispensed. If you went back and looked at the early years of this publication, you would find no stories about the criminal justice system, its unfairness or injustices.

Now, I can't keep up. I turn aside more than I can pursue. I'm not a good place to come if the wrongdoer did what he/she is accused of but doesn't think they should be punished for their lawlessness.

When I started the Cheyenne Herald in early 2002, I warned of the wanton spending by city government. Loudly and frequently. I said that the money would run out and the day of reckoning would arrive. Now it has. I get no great pleasure in saying "I told you so" because the victims of foolish fiscal decisions will not be those who made them but will be many innocents - like city employees and residents. Employees who had no obligation to decline serial pay increases they were given - but simply to do the best job they could at whatever pay rates or benefits provided. They are now going to be damaged for foolish decisions of recent years.

I hate to see employees lose any time or any pay for the mistakes by those voters thought could make better decisions. But that must happen now to right the sinking ship. And, weeks into the decision-making process of what must be done to just get through the current fiscal year, forget about next year and the year after, the only elected official or high paid department head to offer to share the pain has been Georgia Broyles. But, even Georgia went about it wrong - and she has been derided for her offer. Department heads, as a group, and the elected officials, as a group, should have come forward weeks ago and said they would take a substantial reduction in pay to share the pain - as a team. You should not ask, nor expect, those who work for you to take the hit for your mistakes. Alone. Council members should have stepped up and said "we will reduce our pay to \$550 a month for the next two years or until we leave office." And the mayor should have volunteered to reduce his annual salary to \$75,000. Department heads should take a 10% pay reduction.



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