

FLIMFLAM MAN

BY MONTY PELERIN



**THE TRAGEDY OF
BARACK HUSSEIN OBAMA**

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The Tragedy of Barack Hussein Obama

Monty Pelerin

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This book owes its pedigree to many intellectual influences. There are too many to list, but a few are especially important. Free market economics provided the basis for economic and political views. Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman and James Buchanan were important influences. Political cynics like H. L. Mencken and Albert J. Nock were also important.

The book owes its existence to my wife, Joan, who has put up with my long hours on the computer and made me a better person.

The book owes its improvements to readers who offer suggestions and commentary. Keep the reviews coming, they are very helpful. The book is updated with many of your suggestions and corrections.

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1 Introduction

1.0.1 The Blog

[Monty Pelerin's World](<http://www.economicnoise.com> “”) is a blog begun in September of 2009. Economic, political and financial issues are covered. What began as a hobby turned into a greater commitment than expected. The folly that passed for news and analysis was too target rich to deal with part time. The blog now has 4,200 posts.

1.0.2 The Book

This book deals with President Barack Obama's phenomenal fall from grace. He entered office more popular than John F. Kennedy or anyone else in modern history. His performance suggests he will leave office rated below the hapless Jimmy Carter, generally acknowledged to be the worst president of the last several generations.

With about two and a half years left in his second term, the bottom still is not in sight for Obama. He and his policies have become an embarrassment for America. The economy still hasn't recovered despite policies that will impoverish future generations. Foreign policy is a disaster. Allies are nervous and enemies are emboldened.

More importantly for Obama, his supporters in the Democrat Party and the media are very nervous. Their man has not lived up to his billing and his failure now threatens to discredit them. [Peter Wehner of Commentary](<http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2014/05/21/the-new-obama-narrative-epic-incompetence/> “”) magazine describes the problem:

We've learned the hard way that Mr. Obama's skill sets are far more oriented toward community organizing than they are to governing. On every front, he is overmatched by events. It's painful to watch a man who is so obviously in over his head.

This problem didn't develop. It came with the man. It was who he was. Once the imagery and blind adulation wore off and the curtain pulled, there was nothing of substance there. This Wizard of Oz was not some bumbling, harmless old man. He was pompous, arrogant, mean, disingenuous and incompetent. He was doing serious harm to America and the world.

So long as the curtain hid the real man, Democrats had an asset. Now, they face a serious problem. How they handle this issue may determine the future of their party.

The 2014 elections likely will alter the balance of power in Washington. If so, Democrats and media may be forced to make a decision whether to stand by their man or to protect themselves. They will likely choose the latter, given the increasing dissatisfaction with Obama and the extraordinary number of alleged scandals, any one of which has the potential to sink him and the party. By some counts these number 25 and still being discovered – the VA hospital disgrace being recently exposed.

Impeachment is a harsh word and an extraordinary event. Its likelihood is not high – yet! However, Obama's situation becomes more precarious seemingly by the day. No one knows what may be uncovered in terms of real investigations. Benghazi shows evidence of a coverup. The IRS scandal is not going away and what seemed less abuse caused Nixon to resign. These are merely two vulnerabilities. At least a half dozen more could erupt.

If Obama becomes too big a liability for the Democrats or the media, look for them to abandon him. At such point they might assess

Obama, figuratively, worth more dead than alive. If so, these once-ardent supporters will turn on the fake messiah. Politics is not a noble business. It is one of survival and self-preservation.

Any new meaningful revelations pertaining to the alleged scandals would likely trigger a political earthquake. Signs are apparent as to what would happen. Democrats running for office avoid Obama like the plague. Media now openly question Obama's ability and failures. These are what we see. What is being said in private is alleged to be much harsher.

More importantly for Obama, supporters in the Democrat Party and the media are nervous. Their man has not lived up to his billing and now their sponsorship threatens to engulf them.

The 2014 elections likely will alter the balance of power in Washington. If so, Democrats and media may be forced to make a decision whether to stand by their man or to protect themselves. They will probably choose the latter, especially given the unknown threats associated with the extraordinary number of alleged scandals that will come under closer scrutiny. By some counts these number 25 and are still being discovered – the VA disgrace being the latest.

Impeachment is a harsh word and an extraordinary event. Its likelihood is not high – yet! However, Obama's situation is becoming more precarious. Future events are potentially very damaging. No one knows what may be uncovered in terms of investigations. Benghazi has shown that Congress did not receive the information it requested. Use of the IRS got Nixon in trouble and this Administration's involvement in this area could be worse. And these are merely two vulnerabilities. At least a half dozen more could explode.

Events could trigger momentum for dumping Obama. If he becomes too big a liability for the Democrats or the media, look for them to abandon him. At such a point it may be judged that Obama, figuratively, is worth more dead than alive. His once-ardent supporters will turn on this pretend-messiah if it is a way to protect themselves.

New information pertaining to any of the claimed improprieties would not be good news for Democrats. Any meaningful revelations could trigger a political revolt. Early signs are already apparent. Democrats running for office avoid Obama like the plague. Media now openly question Obama's ability and failures. These are public reactions. What is being said in private is alleged to be much harsher.

The chapters in this book originally appeared on Monty Pelerin's World. Many also appeared elsewhere, including sites like American Thinker, PJ Media, Zorohedge and other places. The substance of the original articles is unchanged, although editing has been applied to clean or clarify. No attempt to alter the prescience or lack thereof has been made.

1.0.3 Author's Political Disclaimer

This book deals with Barack Obama whose time in the presidency is almost coterminous with the blog. It is not incorrect to assume that the election of Barack Obama and his proposed, absurd policies motivated the initial entry to the world of blogging.

It would be incorrect to infer that the author is a Republican or has a dog in political races. Were the blog to have occurred earlier, during George Bush's tenure, it would have been different, but also critical. One of the earliest posts, for example, considered the question of whether Bush was our worst president.

H. L. Mencken captured my attitude toward politics and government in one statement:

Every decent man is ashamed of the government he lives under.

Those who know Mencken's work know that there are hundreds of statements that could have been chosen that express similar dislike for politics. This one was convenient and short.

There is a decided bias included in this book. It is not one that discriminates between Democrats or Republicans. It reflects Mencken's statement regarding government, but with some qualification. Government has a legitimate role in society, but that role is extremely limited.

Government should not be confused with Statism which is what we have today. Statists dominate both political parties. Both attempt to perpetuate the myth of government, which simply stated is the myth that government is a force for good and can improve society.

The reality is that government can do nothing good or well. That is why it is best kept limited. Statism is the source of current problems misery, not a cure. Bigger government only means bigger problems.

In that sense, I dislike Democrats and Republicans. I am an equal-opportunity hater with respect to politics and politicians.

1.0.4 Early Conditions

One of the first posts, (Sept. 13, 2009) discussed the conditions that confronted the country, its government and its people when President Barack Obama entered office in January of that year. Here are important issues that he had to quickly confront:

- The country was in a terrible economic and financial crisis.
- The government's response to the financial crisis angered many citizens.
- The health care row he created is a political disaster that further fuels anger.
- The recent rally in Washington (protest) "surprised" officials with the number of participants.
- Tea Parties around the country are seemingly growing in numbers (if not major media coverage).
- Political unrest is unlikely to subside because the economic situation may drag on for years.

- There is risk of civil unrest.
- Washington is arrogant and out of touch.
- Many believe Washington and the financial industry are an oligarchy that runs the country and looks out only for themselves.

The country suffered a financial crisis so severe that it might more properly have been called a Depression. Unprecedented, and some said unconstitutional, steps were taken to bail out major financial institutions and re-start the economy. The economic recession was declared over in June 2009, a claim that many found incredible. Federal Reserve quantitative easing continues to this day, as does the use of the word “recovering” when describing the economy.

Great uncertainty and anxiety characterized the country in 2009. Some concerns were expressed:

How this plays out depends upon many factors that are unknowable at this point. Will Washington continue to believe that the people work for them rather than the other way around? Will the economic pressures in the form of continued high(er) unemployment continue to build? If the “system” appears to be unfair and unresponsive, a feeling held by increasing numbers of citizens, civil unrest could get ugly.>

Most of the issues Obama was faced with are not better today, five and a half years later. Arguably he made some worse, especially the healthcare issue. Additionally, he revealed himself to be untrustworthy and incompetent. These personal weaknesses and his ineffectiveness destroyed his image and his presidency.

He went from “Messiah” to a Flimflam Man. He became the Elmer Gantry of politics.

1.0.5 The Organization of The Book

The book is developed in chronological order. It is almost a diary (with some large gaps in time between chapters). It came from a blog, essentially a diary when multiple posts are created daily. Posts have been edited (some heavily) in order to improve readability. The substance has not been altered in order to make them appear more or less prescient.

Each chapter contains the date that the original post appeared. The website is still active. Readers are encouraged to view the originals or posts not included in the book. In that sense, the book provides the highlights of a diary. Author opinions and analysis of developments are presented as they were happening.

The saga of Barack Obama is not over and the blog continues. So does the book. Periodically, the electronic forms will be updated for readers. Hard copy will also, although that probably necessitates another book purchase.

The period ahead is going to be exciting, perhaps even historic. I look forward to watching and commenting on it.

1.0.6 Sections of The Book

The book is divided, somewhat arbitrarily, into sections which the author sees as related:

PART ONE: Reality Displaces Myth

PART TWO: The Unlikely Re-Election of Obama

PART THREE: The Slide Continues

PART FOUR: Runup to 2014 Elections

PART FIVE: Beyond 2014

In this edition, the first three parts are complete. Part Four is under construction and Part Five is yet to come.

2 The Legend Of Bagger Obama

JANUARY 5, 2010

"... you don't ever know where he comes from or where he's going."

It is 2008. An unknown figure steps from the mist. No one knows his background. There is no birth certificate. No college transcripts or other records. No known friends. No apparent experience. A virtual blank slate stares at you. Are you watching a remake of the eponymous "Legend of Bagger Vance?" No, you are witnessing the emergence of Barack Obama on his march to power.

2.1 Bagger Vance

"The Legend of Bagger Vance" was a Robert Redford directed movie made in 2000. The principal actors were Will Smith, Matt Damon, Charlize Theron and Jack Lemmon (his last movie). The film was about a fictional golf event in 1931, held in Georgia. Smith played the central role of Bagger Vance, a mystical and mysterious caddy. Damon played Rannulph Junuh, whose life, golf game and love interest Bagger magically rejuvenated. The story was set against an epic golf match Junuh played against Walter Hagen and Bobby Jones.

[Awesomestories.com](http://www.awesomestories.com)¹ provided the following background for the film:

¹<http://www.awesomestories.com/religion/bagger-vance/who-is-bagger-vance>

As [Steven Pressfield](#)² (author of [The Legend of Bagger Vance](#)³) has acknowledged, Bagger Vance, and the story of his legend, are based on the Hindu epic and scriptural poem, the *Bhagavad-Gita*⁴. In the epic, Bhagavan is the “Supreme Personality” who helps his follower, Arjuna, understand much about war and about life.

In [a review of the film](#)⁵, the following observations were offered:

... co-producer Michael Nozik has described Bagger as a “Native American coyote trickster,” and costar [Charlize] Theron has expressed her fascination with how “you don’t ever know where he comes from or where he’s going.”

2.2 Bagger Obama

The Legend of Bagger Obama started with a masterfully crafted and executed presidential campaign. It was a campaign of personality, centered on a young, unknown, but messianic figure. The Clinton machine, the most feared force in politics, was taken out first. Then an inept Senator McCain was easily defeated.

Visions of Camelot redux filled the media. Millions supported the shadowy and charismatic man. A groundswell of popular support, hope and goodwill ushered him into office. Marvin Olasky captured the excitement in a [recent post](#)⁶:

²<http://www.stevenpressfield.com/>

³<http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/the-legend-of-bagger-vance>

⁴<http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/gita/bg-eg-hp.htm>

⁵<http://www.nicksflickpicks.com/bagvance.html>

⁶http://townhall.com/columnists/MarvinOlasky/2010/01/05/after_the_swoon

Tom Brokaw compared Obama's inauguration to the overthrow of Communism in 1989: "I was in Prague when that happened. . . . The streets were filled with joy." *CBS Early Show* co-anchor Maggie Rodriguez rhapsodized, "A new day is dawning here in the nation's capital. . . . Does it get any better, or more beautiful, or more spectacular, than this?"

The International community was similarly infatuated. Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize based on nothing more than imagery and expectations.

The trappings of office added additional majesty. Obama was a rock star. His presence dominated the airwaves and newspapers. Exaggerations (or lies) became truth if he uttered them.

This "Supreme Personality" believed his mere presence and pronouncements constituted governance. Management and decision-making seemed beneath him.

It was as if Bagger Vance, himself, had ascended to the White House. It was just how Bagger might govern. Mere pronouncements, filled with mystical wisdom, would solve the world's problems. Presence and image would replace decision-making. That was what Bagger knew and did.

2.3 Reality Versus Movies

Movies are easier to script than is real-life. Bagger Obama's "legend" soon began to falter. A teleprompter malfunction exposed oratory skills that appeared to be no better than his ridiculed, illiterate predecessor. Campaign promises were quickly abandoned. Embarrassments abroad developed, as did a pattern of waffling on issues.

Unlike a movie, real-life has angles never intended to be filmed. Campaigns can be orchestrated. After election, all camera angles

are in play. The young emperor soon began to be viewed as without clothes and without crown. Some of his biggest supporters in the media began criticizing, even satirizing Bagger. From Marvin Olasky:

Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show* on Comedy Central is often a leading indicator of sentiment among younger voters. Stewart last month waxed sarcastic regarding not only Democratic spending and deficit-creation, but also about Obama's personal style of implying frankness and then serving up bromides.

Maureen Dowd's *New York Times* column is often a leading indicator of sentiment among older liberal voters. She wrote recently, "The animating spirit that electrified his political movement has sputtered out. If we could see a Reduced Shakespeare summary of Obama's presidency so far, it would read: Dither, dither, speech. Foreign trip, bow, reassure. Seminar, summit. Shoot a jump shot with the guys, throw out the first pitch in mom jeans. Compromise, concede, close the deal. Dither, dither, water down, news conference."

Stripped of his aura, Bagger Obama was reduced to an ordinary man, subject to ordinary judgment and scrutiny. He was seen as just another politician. "The One" had morphed into "Just Another One" (ordinary politician, that is).

2.4 Reality Always Rules

Ayn Rand once stated that you can avoid reality but reality is not going to avoid you. That is an observation that seems beyond Obama's comprehension.

Without his halo, Bagger Obama's campaign phrases sounded sophomoric and hackneyed. "Yes we can!" had no meaning. "Hope and Change," conveniently imprecise and effective in a campaign, was useless for governing. The public passed judgment now in terms of effectiveness rather than awe. Warts and blemishes were apparent with the Messiah lens removed.

The prolonged Afghanistan troop decision, scripted as the measured consideration of a wise leader, did not play well. It was merely another politician stalling while he searched for a political strategy. The "correct" war of the campaign was now a political problem. Geopolitics or troop safety seemed irrelevant.

The Gitmo base closing represented another failed campaign-promise. The decision was postponed for more than a year, and the base may never be closed. Attempts to transfer prisoners to other places were clumsy and replete with political bribes.

Health-care reform morphed through endless iterations. At the end, there was no discernible logic behind the plan. Inconsistencies, deals, falsified data and outright lies were evident to anyone willing to look. Despite the problems and unpopularity, health care was pushed forward. Congressional Democrats sacrificed the best health care system in the world and the American taxpayer to their God, Bagger Obama.

Nowhere was the lack of leadership more apparent than in the economic sphere. Promises and forecasts were consistently wrong. The vaunted stimulus package was little more than large-scale looting, cronyism and vote-buying. Increasingly, non-government economists agreed that economic policies were harmful.

In response, the Administration maintained that a recovery was under way. But citizens knew that stocks were lower than they were in 1999, no net job creation occurred this century and foreclosures and bankruptcies were increasing. No alternative, credible plan was offered.

The real Bagger rehabilitated Junah's golf game to the point where Junah competed with Walter Hagen and Bobby Jones. Bagger Vance's magic was "real" in the sense that he mystically created outcomes.

Bagger Obama strode onto the stage selling the same magic. His "game" was our economy and geopolitical role in the world. Since his arrival, conditions in both areas worsened. This Bagger's magic did not work.

Obama sold a product he could not deliver. Image and reality collided, and reality won. The unfolding tragedy is that everyone but Bagger Obama seems to realize this. What was once viewed by people as confidence, control and wisdom is now seen as narcissism, naiveté and self-absorption. Competence is no longer presumed, it is doubted. Yet, Bagger continues playing his role, seemingly oblivious to the changing views of his followers.

2.5 Danger Point For Obama

We are at a dangerous point in both the Presidency of Barack Obama and the country. Does the Administration have any idea of what to do? Do they believe they can continue to use Hollywood imagery in lieu of real, hard decisions? Hype, rhetoric and Greek columns are irrelevant. Markets and enemies are immune to dramaturgy. The President, his minions and the country are apt to find that out shortly.

For Bagger Obama, it is difficult to visualize how this ends. **It is unlikely that he can rehabilitate his presidency, because there is no way to rehabilitate the phony image.** A different image might work, but it is doubtful that people would fall for another marketing ruse. Americans are forgiving people, but they have never been kind to con men. The most likely scenario is that Bagger Obama is a one-term embarrassment to the country, the world and the Democrat party.

Obama's fiction was great. He was a wonderful actor who was able to effectively play a President on TV, for awhile. The performance was all form and no substance, fine for a movie but not real life. The Fall sweeps have come and gone, and the Obama show did not pass muster. Unlike TV, mercilessly this show cannot be canceled for three more years.

Somewhere from beyond the mist the real Bagger must be chuckling as he watches his wannabe copycat. Perhaps he would provide the following advice to Obama:

“You know you can just go ahead and creep off somewhere I'll tell folk you took sick... Truth be told, ain't nobody gonna really object... In fact, they'd probably be happy as bugs in a bake shop to see you pack up and go home...”

For Bagger Vance this may be humorous. For most of us, however, the next three years will seem like a dangerous eternity.

3 Our President is Delusional

MARCH 15, 2010

President-of-the-World Obama is at it again. Apparently he feels the problems in this country are too small for him, or they have all been solved. His wisdom and greatness are too important to be squandered on only one nation. They must be shared with the entire world.

In his latest initiative, Obama takes “I’m from the Government, and I’m here to help you” across national borders. Breitbart reports on the call for a conference on entrepreneurship:

The White House on Friday announced a “summit on entrepreneurship” to build economic ties with the Islamic world, part of President Barack Obama’s outreach to Muslims.

The White House said it has invited participants from more than 40 countries over five continents for the April 26-27 conference in Washington.

On one level, this initiative is laughable, undoubtedly fodder for Saturday Night Live and Jon Stewart skits. On another, it reflects a serious situation pertaining to **the continuing delusional nature of Obama and his Administration.**

3.1 The Lighter Aspects

The “summit” provides more face-time for the President, a Pavlovian response by this White House to all problems. Unfortunately, the public has soured on what is seen as Obama’s endless campaigning. They want constructive action rather than continued platitudes and campaign slogans. “Talk is cheap” is an admonition this White House does not seem to understand.

Approval numbers are in free-fall. Obama, at this stage, is well ahead in **the race to displace President Jimmy Carter as the worst president of the past several generations**. He provides Carter’s ineptitude, without Carter’s sincerity. Desperation regarding the unpopular health care bill is making Obama look like the next Joe Isuzu, the fictitious liar in Isuzu commercials. Truth must not stand in the way of a sale.

Does the White House not understand how farcical their actions have become? Are they clueless or incompetent? Both hypotheses fit the facts. Making a definitive choice between them (both are likely valid) is irrelevant.

Now, Obama wants us to believe that he is another Peter Drucker, the world’s greatest management guru. The President has zero business experience and surrounded himself with advisers similarly deficient. Yet, Obama and his advisers believe that they are **qualified to lecture the world on entrepreneurship**.

Would it be impolite to ask what he has done to further entrepreneurship in this country? Have any of his prescriptions or proposals helped entrepreneurs? If so, which ones?

If foreign leaders care at all about their economies, they will **run away** from this conference. **Investment and hiring in this country stopped when Obama’s “solutions” rolled out.**

3.2 The Delusional Aspects

We have a President who believes he is always the smartest man in the room, no matter what room. Actually, he is always the least experienced and probably least qualified in most rooms. The fact is that **he has no experience in anything.**

What is known of his background includes stints as a “community organizer” and adjunct professor. What skills are required to be a community organizer? What experience is gained? None that is useful or transferable to an executive role! That is shown by Obama’s ineptness in office.

Obama’s short stint as a lecturer on Constitutional Law was unremarkable in every academic sense. There is no evidence of writing or publishing. The most notable aspect was his interpretation of the Constitution as a “living document,” open to changes that produce “social justice.” In effect, other than as a quaint artifact of history, for Obama **the Constitution does not exist.**

Despite this vacuous background, **Obama believes he knows more about medicine than doctors, more about business than businessmen and more about creating jobs than entrepreneurs.** This sad litany could be continued but the point should be obvious. Obama believes **he has more to contribute than anyone else, on any topic, in any field.** A rational man with such limited background would defer to those wiser and more experienced.

Instead, Obama presents himself to be an expert on all things. Does he not see how ridiculous this behavior makes him look? What must audiences of accomplished doctors, businessmen or entrepreneurs think when this man-child with zero experience lectures them? One can imagine the disgust and anger they feel, and must repress.

“Don’t worry, I stayed in a Holiday Inn Express last night” may work for TV but not as a governing strategy. Yet, Obama must believe that he received more than a good night’s sleep. In his mind,

he appears to believe he is special, something larger than his office. A messianic image was part of his campaign and still appears to be a part of his self-image.

“The One” is an image clearly in conflict with reality. Acting the part is **delusional**.

I am not a psychologist or psychiatrist and do not pretend to have these skills. But any observant person will see the President’s behavior as bizarre, if not outright dangerous. [James Lewis](#)¹ detailed the President’s extreme narcissism and commented on the risk:

The question is what real damage Obama may do to the country. This man has been entrusted with the greatest power in the world.

3.3 What If Obama Were Your Friend?

This situation may be better understood on a human, as opposed to a clinical, level. What would you do if your best friend believed that he was more knowledgeable than astrophysicists, oncologists, economists, businessmen, or other highly and specially-trained people?

What if he believed this so strongly that he felt he was entitled to “teach” or “lecture” practitioners in these highly specialized fields? As a friend, you would likely intervene and try to get him professional help. **Our President is this hypothetical friend.**

Other Presidents have rebuked industries or professions. Eisenhower came down hard on the military-industrial complex; Kennedy did so with the steel industry. Others have chosen whipping boys for both good reasons and political ones. None, however, presumed they were smarter than everyone else. **Other than Obama, no**

¹http://www.americanthinker.com/2010/03/obamas_malignant_narcissism.html

one believed they had unique knowledge that was applicable everywhere and could improve everything.

The President's behavior is delusional. While he sees himself as some modern-day, handsome version of Yoda, the rest of the nation is beginning to see him as "one sick puppy" who happens to hold the highest office in the land. He marches to a tune that others cannot hear.

Where are his friends, and why do they not intervene? Are they afraid to confront him with reality?

For the sake of the nation, if not for the sake of the man, someone should confront him about his problem. Delusional behavior is dangerous, especially when it affects the head of the world's most powerful country.

Does Obama not have a friend who will intervene? Is everyone around him a political toadie or ideologue willing to risk the safety of the country in order to advance their own personal or political goals?