

TO KNOW A PRESIDENT

“Johnny, we hardly knew ye!” ...a quote to recall the short Presidential life of John Kennedy, cut down by an assassin’s bullet. Yet we remember him as a relatively young, vibrant, impressive man whose reputation seemed charged by words of Camelot, ‘his administration, idealized as having excitement, purpose, and a high level of culture, etc.’ We did know him well enough to cite his World War II naval experience, honorable and noteworthy, and his words which revealed his oft-repeated mantra... “ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” History has wrought the good, and bad of his life yet most found him as an exceptional President with potential not completed.

“Barry, we hardly know you,” but books have surfaced to give us a perspective. And some have said, “you see a figure traveling lightly and swiftly over the surface of things, darting away before he could leave an impression that might be lasting and fruitful”, college records, ‘suspect’ Hawaiian birth, his books, a career including an activity as ‘community organizer’, and a political experience as state legislator, and US Senator. It was Barry as a young man to white and black friends and acquaintances, and as President he became Barack Hussein Obama. Enigma to some, a hero to others, a destiny unfulfilled.

Andrew Ferguson, a Senior Editor at the Weekly Standard writes about Obama, the self-made man: As an Occidental graduate he returned to learn of Obama’s two years there, leaving with little known knowledge and resume. He also reviewed: ‘Dreams from my Father’ and ‘Audacity of Hope,’ and takes a look at Klein’s ‘The Amateur, -tough on Obama- and Mariniss’ biography on Obama, more flattering. Both suggest that in ‘Dreams’ there is an appearance of invention and epiphany by the young Obama trying to find himself in the black and white world. Earlier we saw in ‘Roots of Obama’s Rage’ (D’Souza) the hatred inspired by his father’s colonial experience in Kenya under the British. A father of questionable reputation who left the young Obama as a baby.

If all the aforementioned literature is basically true then one is left with a ‘fable of Obama far bigger and more consequential than the unremarkable man at its center.’ He joins us, haters and idolaters, a quandary over this man Obama.

To be fair, I wanted this man to be what he seemed to be a man of impressive looks and voice, of mixed genes displaying chromosome and DNA of the white and black parents, real history in the making of our Presidents. That alone is not the whole story for he must run on his record thus far somewhat inconsequential: a decision to go on evidence to kill or capture Osama bin-Laden which worked based on sound evidence and a military expertise on-going and reliable, plus an abomination (Obamacare) found to be a tax by the Supreme Court with cost overruns continuing. But will he? Or, as Truman blame all on Republicans and pander to the have-nots, the far left, and anoint his opponent as one who doesn't speak for the little man, youth, the workers, and just ordinary people; it worked as Dewey beaten.

So we are faced with the paradox of these two men, Obama and Romney. Both are people who possess contradictory features or qualities. Some will vote for either based on selfish motives- what's in for me- and others will try to perceive character and leadership qualities and vote that way. There is a sense, Obama had his day with mixed results, so I will opt for real hope and change and cry out for an America I knew.