



THE AUDACITY OF HOPE

BARACK H. OBAMA
JULY 27, 2004



Before he became a politician, Barack Obama worked as a community organizer on Chicago's south side and practiced civil rights law. He taught Constitutional law at the University of Chicago. And in July 2004, he was an Illinois State Senator running for U.S. Senate, who had been asked to deliver the keynote at the Democratic National Convention. Obama included both his own biographical sketch, but most importantly, a powerful vision of America.

“Now, even as we speak, there are those who are preparing to divide us. The spin masters, the negative ad peddlers who embrace the politics of “anything goes.” Well, I say to them tonight, there is not a liberal America and a conservative America – there is the United States of America. There is not a Black America and a White America and Latino America and Asian America – there’s the United States of America.

The pundits like to slice-and-dice our country into Red states and Blue states; Red states for Republicans, Blue states for Democrats. But I’ve got news for them, too. We worship an awesome god in the Blue states, and we don’t like federal agents poking around in our libraries in the Red states. We coach Little League in the Blue states and yes, we’ve got some gay friends in the Red states. There are patriots who opposed the war in Iraq and there are patriots who supported the war in Iraq.

“We are one people, all of us pledging allegiance to the stars and stripes, all of us defending the United States of America.

“In the end, do we participate in a politics of cynicism or do we participate in a politics of hope? I’m not talking about blind optimism here – the almost willful ignorance that thinks unemployment will go away if we just don’t think about it, or the health care crisis will solve itself if we just ignore it. That’s not what I’m talking about. I’m talking about something more substantial.

“It’s the hope of slaves sitting around a fire singing freedom songs; the hope of immigrants setting out for distant shores; the hope of a young naval lieutenant bravely patrolling the Mekong Delta; the hope of a millworker’s son who dares to defy the odds; the hope of a skinny kid with a funny name who believes that America has a place for him, too.

“Hope. Hope in the face of difficulty. Hope in the face of uncertainty. The *audacity* of hope!”