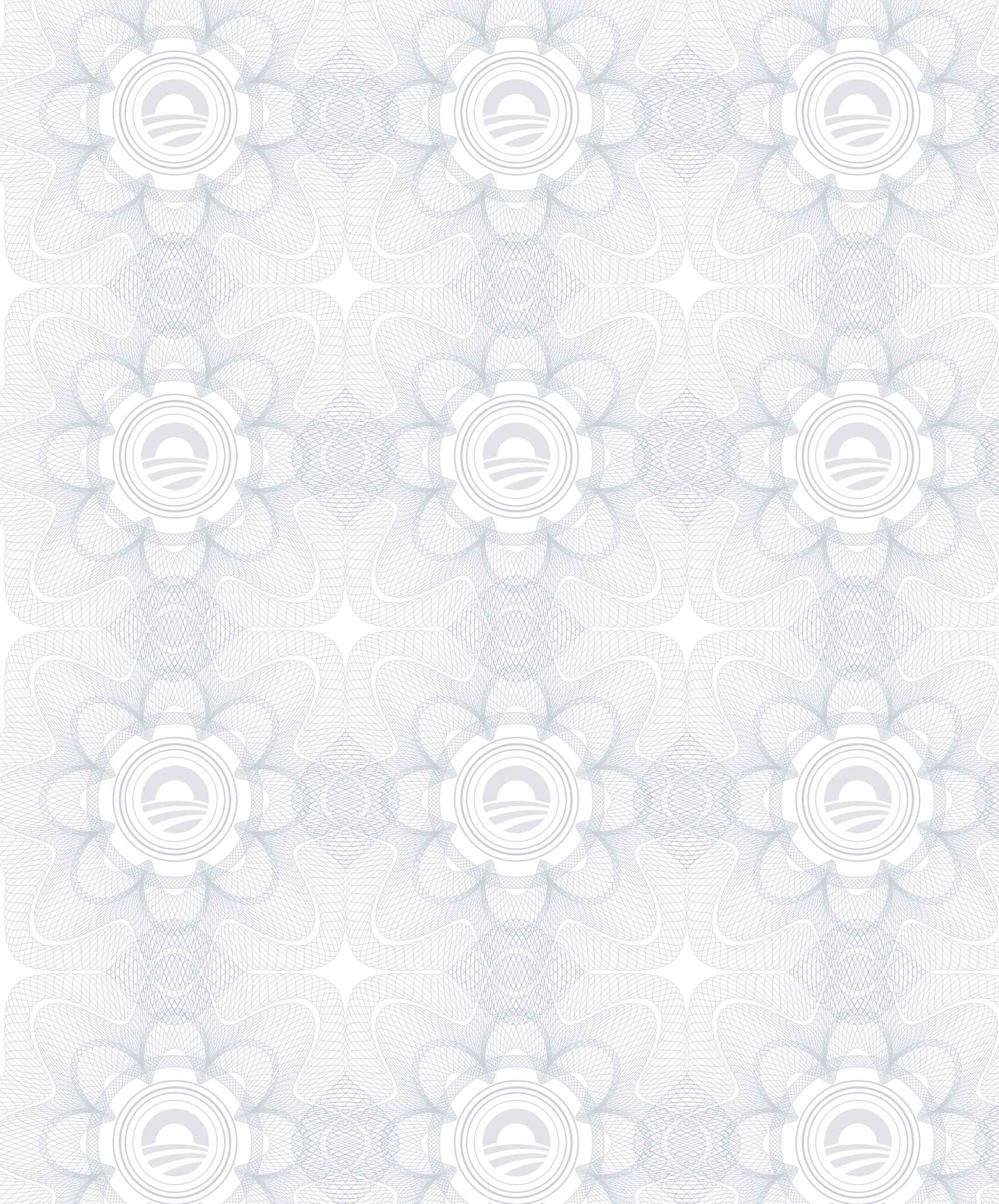






POST PRESS



DESIGNING OBAMA

A CHRONICLE of ART & DESIGN
from the 2008 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

Scott Thomas

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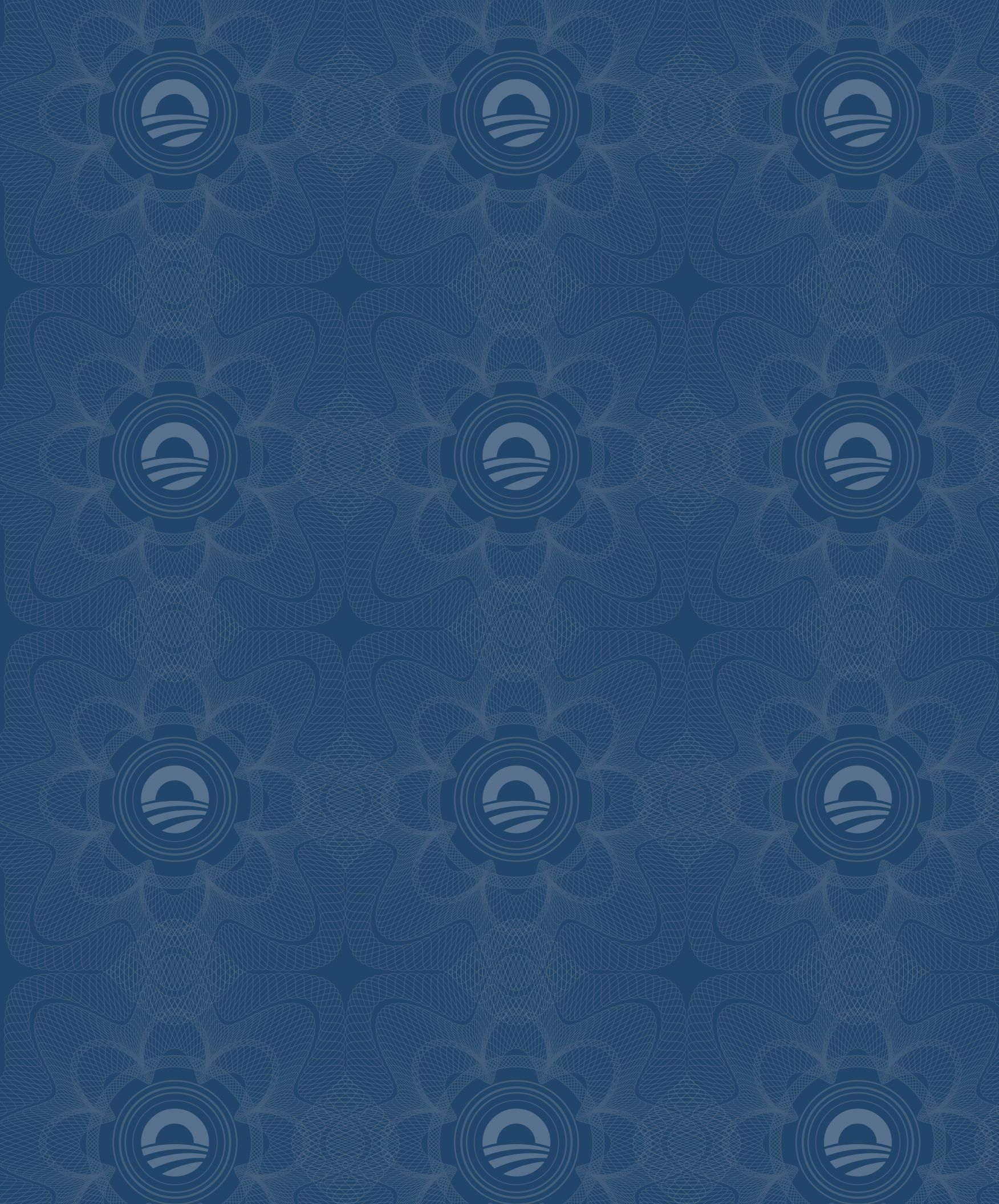
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The
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I decided to compile and create this book not just to document and acknowledge all the people who inspired and propelled the Obama for America campaign, but also to illustrate the great potential of this country. The entire experience is proof that if people from different backgrounds and competing interests can come together, put aside their differences, and sacrifice their politics, truly remarkable things can happen. Barack Obama's optimism and emphasis on creativity being the solution to many of our problems will forever guide my work. I must first thank him for taking the difficult step of leading and, more than anything, following his own true will.

There are so many people I wish to thank for inspiring and helping to create this book. First, Kori Schulman for compiling much of the artwork in this book. Joe Rospars, Michael Slaby, Stephen Geer, Scott Goodstein, Chris Hughes, Dan Siroker, Kate Albright-Hanna, Macon Phillips, the Obama for America new media team for the opportunity to work with you. The design team: John Slabyk, Matt Ipcar, Jessica Schlueter, Walker Hamilton, Carly Pearlman, Kyle Crouse, Will Wan, Jess Weida, Ryan Myers, Karen Backe, Kinjal Mehta, Wade Sherrard, Gray Brooks, Zealan Hoover, Paul Schreiber, and Nick Piazza for all of the inspiring work and dedication during the campaign. The Post Family, Sam Rosen, Allison Jones, Ina Weise, Charles Adler, Kickstarter, and the many backers of this project, for your support & encouragement. Ben Speckmann, Andrew Musch, Gus Gavino, Elaine Fong, Steven Heller, Michael Bierut, James H. Ewert Jr., Mia Sara Bruch, Julie Van Keuren, Fabra DiPaolo, Jay Stewart & Capital Offset, Acme Bindery and Universal Engravers, for helping in the production.

FOR ART ESTABLISHES THE BASIC HUMAN TRUTHS WHICH MUST SERVE AS THE TOUCHSTONES OF OUR JUDGMENT. THE ARTIST, HOWEVER FAITHFUL TO HIS PERSONAL VISION OF REALITY, BECOMES THE LAST CHAMPION OF THE INDIVIDUAL MIND AND SENSIBILITY AGAINST AN INTRUSIVE SOCIETY AND AN OFFICIOUS STATE.

John F. Kennedy

Amherst College in Massachusetts

October 26, 1963



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Thank you

DEDICATION

To our rights of life, liberty,
&
the pursuit of happiness.

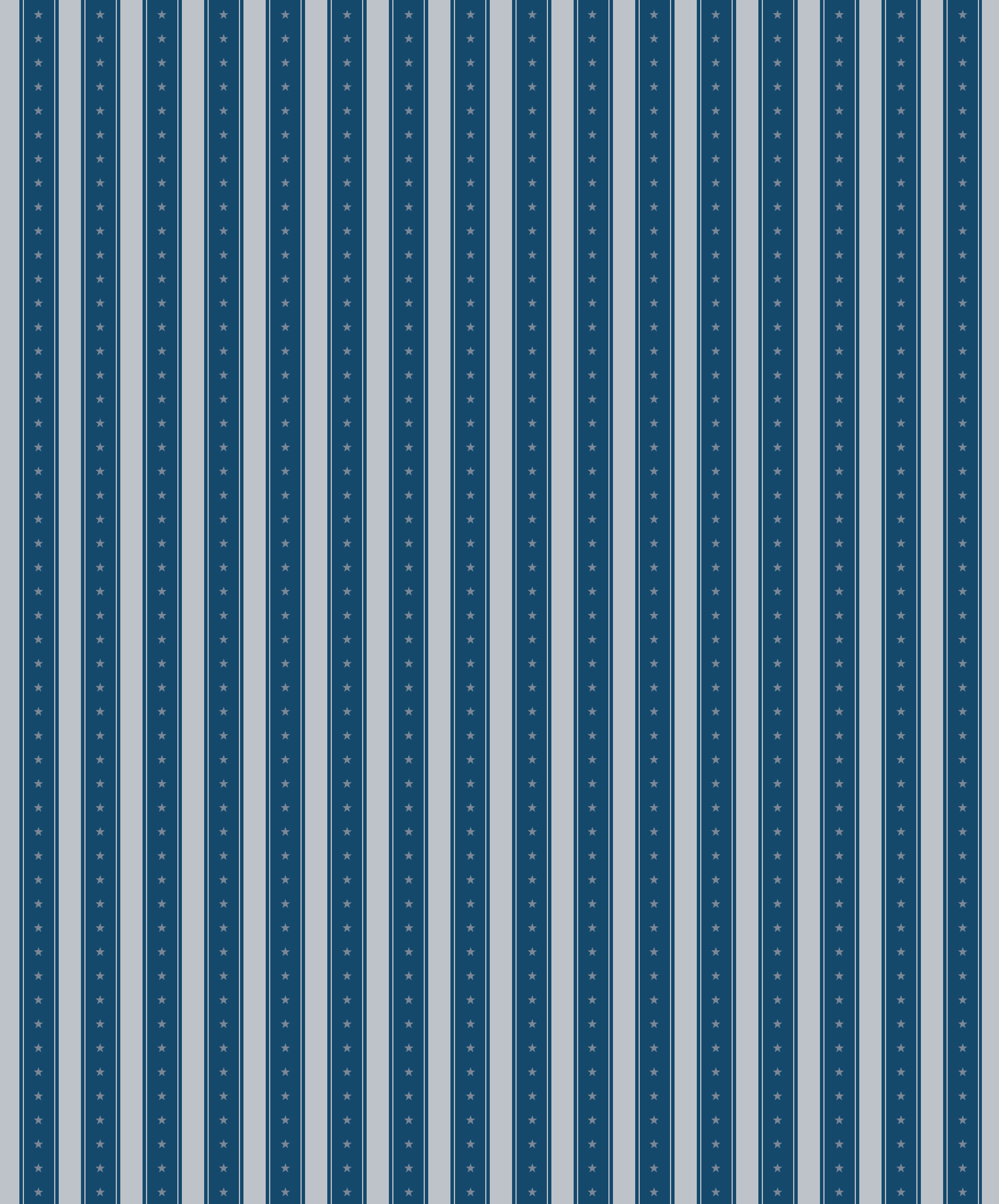


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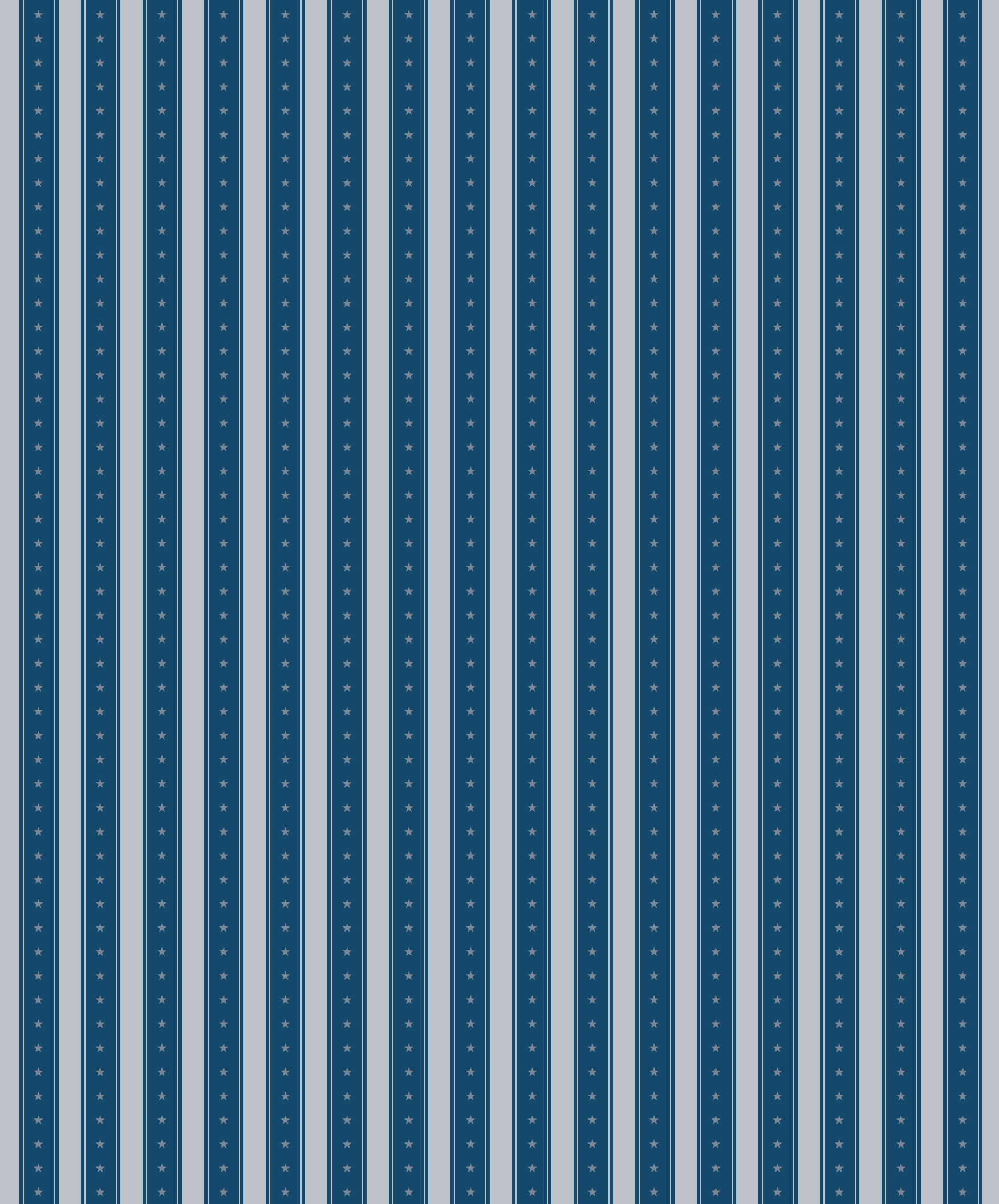
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THE REST IS EASY

THE INGREDIENTS OF A BRAND

By Michael Bierut

I was talking once with a group of graphic designers. The subject was good work: not doing it, but how to get it accepted. Designers like to complain. We cast ourselves as embattled defenders of good taste and inventive ideas; arrayed against us are armies of insensitive clients, determined to thwart us, whose pigheadedness can be defeated only by dedication, cunning, and guile.

We traded war stories for a while, but one seasoned designer in our midst was silent. We finally asked him what tricks he used to get good work published. “Well, I guess I’m lazy,” he said. “I just make sure all my clients are smart people with unique messages and good products. The rest is easy.”

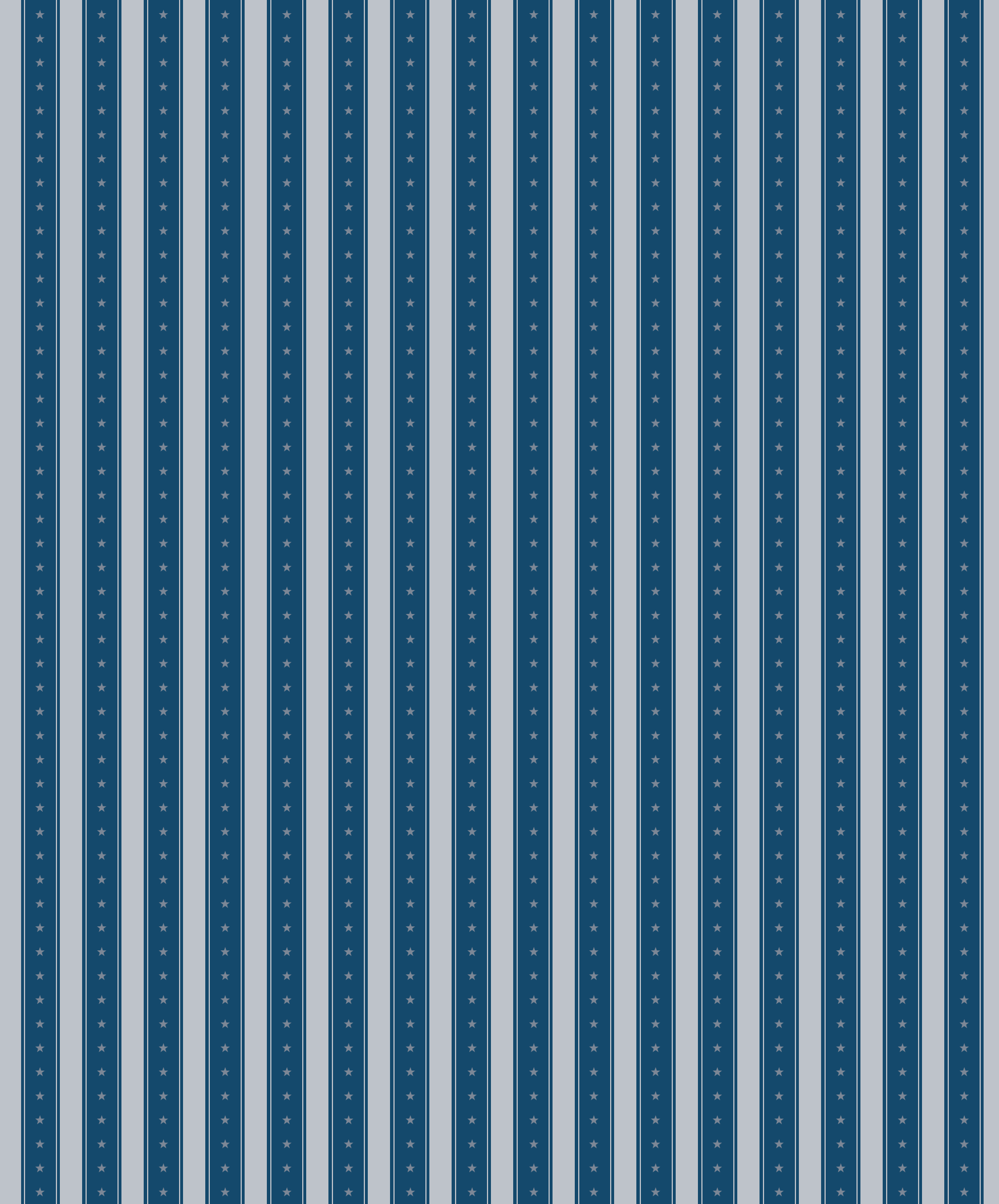
The rest is easy. Looking back at the design work that contributed to Barack Obama’s historic victory in November 2008, I wonder if that was the trick. Although much has been made – rightly so – of the ingenious and adaptable “O” logo developed by Sol Sender’s team, Obama himself was his own best logo. Young, African-American, charismatic – change wasn’t just a message, it was the candidate’s very embodiment. When it was all said and done, Barack Obama was a smart guy with a unique message and a good product. And what designer wouldn’t wish for that in a client?

Selling change isn’t easy in a world that tends to prefer the comfort of the familiar. We all know what a revolution looks like: handmade signs, scrawled graffiti, the voice of the people. But Obama’s campaign was the opposite. Reportedly, the candidate resisted at first. “He did not initially like the campaign’s blue and white logo – intended to appear like a horizon, symbolizing hope and opportunity – saying he found it too polished and corporate,” reported *The New York Times*. But David Axelrod and his team prevailed. They must have known that the revolution, when it finally came, would have to be wrapped up in the most comprehensive corporate identity program the twenty-first century has yet seen.

Like every other graphic designer I know, I watched the live images of campaign rallies from Toledo to Topeka to Tallahassee with a growing feeling of awe. Obama’s oratorical skills were one thing. But the awe-inspiring part was the way all the signs were faithfully, and beautifully, set in Hoefler & Frere-Jones’s typeface Gotham. “Trust me,” I told *Newsweek* back in February 2008, “I’ve done graphics for events – and I know what it takes to have rally after rally without someone saying, ‘Oh, we ran out of signs, let’s do a batch in Arial.’” But it isn’t just strict standards and constant police work that keeps an organization on brand. It’s the mutual desire for everyone to have every part of the effort look like The Real Thing. At the height of the campaign, my daughter asked me if I could design a flyer for a friend’s Obama benefit party at a little bar in Hoboken, New Jersey. We took the text and reset it in Gotham, downloaded the O logo, and put it together in minutes. “Wow,” my daughter said. “It looks like Obama’s actually going to be there!” Exactly.

The same thing was happening all over the country. In a world where access to digital media and social networks is becoming increasingly ubiquitous, Obama ’08 became the first open source political campaign. Shepard Fairey’s “Hope” poster – an icon that’s destined, if you ask me, to occupy the 2008 slot of any historical timeline drawn up a hundred years from now – sits at the top of an astonishingly vast collection of posters, websites, buttons, YouTube videos, and even pumpkins, some generated by professionals, some by ordinary citizens, all motivated by the urge to create a sense that their candidate was actually going to be there.

And it worked. Political operatives will study this campaign and its design program for years, trying to unlock its secrets. Many will copy it, but few will capture its magic. It seems so simple, doesn’t it? A good logo, consistent typography, get everyone to join in. They’ll have all the ingredients in place except the hardest one: a smart person with a unique message and a good product. Then, like the fellow said, the rest is easy.





O DESIGN:

WHAT HELPED OBAMA RUN

By Steven Heller

Everyone I know agrees that Barack Obama won the design race. Whatever the reason, his campaign knew early on that coordinated graphics were beneficial and that modern typography would signal change.

Whether or not “*O Design*” will totally alter the clichés and conventions that dominate election graphics, only time will tell. Nonetheless, the splendid art direction of this campaign has raised the bar.

During the campaign many designers waxed admiringly about Obama’s sophisticated typographical design scheme, particularly the consistent use in much of his graphic material of the typeface Gotham, designed by Tobias Frere-Jones. So when I was writing about graphics for the “Campaign Stops” blog on *The New York Times* website, I called Brian Collins, an expert on branding, to get his thoughts on what this “good design” means for the candidate.

HELLER: As a branding expert, can you tell me what it is about the typographical scheme of Senator Obama’s campaign that is unlike his challengers’?

COLLINS: John McCain’s, Hillary Clinton’s, and Barack Obama’s campaigns all make good efforts to brand their messages consistently. And that’s incredibly hard to do. Just imagine the thousands of volunteers and endless elements they must orchestrate from town to town, state to state. But as a result of their approach to design, the Obama campaign really stands out. From the bold “Change” signs to their engaging website to their recognizable lapel pins, they’ve used a single-minded visual strategy to deliver their campaign’s message with greater consistency and, as a result, greater collective impact. The use of typography is the linchpin to the program. Type is language

made visible. Senator Obama has been noted for his eloquence, so it’s not surprising that someone so rhetorically gifted would understand how strong typography is and how it helps bring his words – and his campaign’s message – to life.

HELLER: The other campaigns are less typographically successful. Is maintaining a strong design program really so difficult?

COLLINS: I think the real story here is less about typography than it is about discipline. Political campaigns are the Brigadoon of branding. There’s a compressed amount of time to tell a candidate’s story before the race is over and the campaign vanishes. During that window, the campaign must make sure that everything it produces – everything it touches – delivers the candidate’s message in a meaningful way. No opportunity to amplify that story should be missed. The Obama people have used design to take that discipline to a whole new level.

Barack Obama is running the first real transmedia campaign of the twenty-first century. His people not only understand how media has splintered, but how audiences have splintered, too. Cell phones, mobile devices, websites, e-mail, social networks, iPods, laptops, billboards, print ads, and campaign events are now just as important as television. The senator’s design strategy has given these diverse platforms (and their different audiences) a coherence that makes them all work together. I’ve worked with giant, global corporations who don’t do it this well.

HELLER: What is it about the typeface Gotham that adds personality to the Obama brand?

COLLINS: I don’t think that Gotham adds any personality to Senator Obama’s brand. I think it just amplifies the personality

that's already there. In fact, the typeface would work just as well for John McCain or Hillary Clinton, for that matter.

With that said, though, there's an oxymoronic quality to Gotham, which is why I think it's become so popular. It has a blunt, geometric simplicity, which usually makes words feel cold and analytical (like Univers), but it also feels warm. It's substantial yet friendly. Up-to-date yet familiar. That's a tough hat trick. And Gotham has another quality that makes it succeed: It just looks matter-of-fact. But perhaps any typeface inspired by signs at the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City – as Gotham is – will look like that.

HELLER: Do you think the typographical style actually makes a difference?

COLLINS: You bet I do. Style equals accuracy. Put the word “change” in Comic Sans and the idea feels lightweight and silly. Place it in Times Roman and it feels self-important. In Gotham, it feels just right. Inspiring, not threatening. In the end, typography makes a real difference when it delivers words and ideas that are relevant to people. And for many, that seems to be the case here.

Collins' insight was consistent with other design pundits. But typefaces alone do not make a successful graphics campaign. They serve only to frame the content. What's more, the public requires a mnemonic that will further perpetuate the good feelings towards the brand, product, or in this case, candidate. That very trait was manifest in the Obama “O,” the most ubiquitous logo of the year.

In another installment of “Campaign Stops,” I contacted the designer who helped establish its primacy. At the end of 2006, Mode, a motion design studio in Chicago, approached Sol Sender, a graphic designer, to create a logo for Barack Obama's presidential campaign. The resulting “O” became one of the most recognizable political logos in recent history. I spoke with Sender a few days after the election to discuss the evolution of his design. Here is an excerpt:

HELLER: How did you get the job of designing the Obama logo?

SENDER: We got the job through Mode. Steve Juras, a classmate of mine from graduate school, is the creative director there. They have a long-standing relationship with AKP&D Message and Media, a campaign consulting firm led by David Axelrod and David Plouffe, among others.

HELLER: I have to ask, since many agencies that do political campaigns are simply “doing a job,” did you have strong feelings one way or the other for the Obama candidacy?

SENDER: We were excited to work on the logo and energized by the prospect of Mr. Obama's campaign. However, we didn't pursue or develop the work because we were motivated exclusively by ideology. It was an opportunity to do breakthrough work at the right time in what's become a predictable graphic landscape.

HELLER: How many iterations did you go through before deciding on this “O”? Was it your first idea?

SENDER: We actually presented seven or eight options in the first round, and the one that was ultimately chosen was among

these. In terms of our internal process, though, I believe the logo – as we now know it – came out of a second round of design explorations. At any rate, it happened quite quickly, all things considered. The entire undertaking took less than two weeks.

HELLER: Did Barack Obama have any input into the symbol at all?

SENDER: None that was directly communicated to us. I believe he looked at the final two or three options, but I wouldn't be able to accurately portray his reaction.

HELLER: What were you thinking when you conceived this idea?

SENDER: When we received the assignment, we immediately read both of Senator Obama's books. We were struck by the ideas of hope, change, and a new perspective on red and blue (not red and blue states, but one country). There was also a strong sense, from the start, that his campaign represented something entirely new in American politics – “a new day,” so to speak.

HELLER: Did you have any qualms about this symbol? Did you ever think it was too “branded” and “slick”?

SENDER: We didn't, though there were certainly instances where we sensed a need to be careful about its application. We never saw the candidate as being “branded,” in the sense of having an identity superficially imposed on the campaign. The identity was for the campaign, not just for the candidate. And to the degree that the campaign spoke to millions of people, it may have become a symbol for something broader – some have termed it a movement, a symbol of hope.

HELLER: Do you think the “O” had any major contribution in this outcome?

SENDER: The design development was singularly inspired by the candidate's message. Like any mark, the meaning and impact really come from what people bring to it.

With the logo in place, this information-saturated digital age demands instant and constant communications through the Internet (or Interweb as someone once called it). Websites are the storefronts of the digital age. And like those classic neighborhood campaign offices, they are often cluttered with visual junk. The sites for John McCain's and Barack Obama's presidential campaigns may feature different content, but they share the same basic stuff – online attributes that are clear and confusing. Being more involved with print than web, I asked various interaction designers and information architects to tell me what they thought were the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates' sites. To summarize, based on their findings it is clear that there are two kinds of virtual campaign offices: Mr. McCain's is messier and at times folksy – a bit like a storefront on Main Street – while Mr. Obama's was cleaner and more cosmopolitan, like a top-end retail emporium.

In addition, the Obama campaign's signature transparency emerged from the site. It is a trait that his White House team appears to have extended into his presidency. It seems that whatever can or will be said about the Obama years, design does matter.

IN THE FACE OF WAR, YOU
BELIEVE THERE CAN BE PEACE.
IN THE FACE OF DESPAIR, YOU
BELIEVE THERE CAN BE HOPE. IN
THE FACE OF A POLITICS THAT'S
SHUT YOU OUT, THAT'S TOLD YOU
TO SETTLE, THAT'S DIVIDED US
FOR TOO LONG, YOU BELIEVE WE
CAN BE ONE PEOPLE, REACHING
FOR WHAT'S POSSIBLE, BUILDING
THAT MORE PERFECT UNION.

Senator Barack Obama

Presidential Announcement Speech

February 10, 2007



DESIGNING A PRESIDENT

INTRODUCTION

By Scott Thomas

ON A COLD DAY IN FEBRUARY OF 2007, a junior U.S. Senator from Illinois announced to tens of thousands of supporters that he was beginning a campaign to become the president of the United States of America. When Barack Obama took the podium on that day in front of the Old State Capitol in Springfield, Illinois – the same place where Abraham Lincoln had delivered his “*House Divided*” speech more than a century before – he was no political celebrity: He was a recently re-elected second-term senator and the only African-American in the U.S. Senate. Though his stock had been rising in the Democratic Party ever since his keynote speech at the national convention in 2004, no one in the crowd could imagine the impact his campaign would have on the course of American history.

Obama had not raised the millions of dollars or accumulated the name recognition of his opponents. But what he lacked in conventional political experience, he more than made up for in candor, intellect, charisma, and compassion. To most political insiders, he was merely a long shot, who might at most temporarily upset the projections of political pollsters in primary states. But to his earliest supporters – and to a rapidly growing number of Americans – he was the candidate the country had been waiting for.

Obama entered the national political stage at a time of deep cynicism and uncertainty among American voters. A volatile decade of terrorism, costly wars on two fronts, economic instability, and inaction in the face of environmental crisis tested Americans’ faith in their future, and heightened schisms among voters divided about how to face up to these formidable

problems. Obama needed to do more than note the challenges facing America. He needed to offer a divided and insecure electorate something more – something they could be inspired by and aspire to. At this trying moment in American history, Barack Obama offered the country a message that told us that we could do better: a message based on the principles of change, hope, and unity.

In the face of war, you believe there can be peace. In the face of despair, you believe there can be hope. In the face of a politics that’s shut you out, that’s told you to settle, that’s divided us for too long, you believe we can be one people, reaching for what’s possible, building that more perfect union.

– Senator Barack Obama’s presidential campaign announcement speech, February 10, 2007

As we now know, Obama’s campaign became a historic victory. An unlikely candidate who began the race with little name recognition outside of his home state and with meager campaign coffers went on to become the first African-American presidential nominee by a major American political party and, a few months later, America’s first African-American president. But on that winter day in Springfield, none of this was even remotely self-evident. Obama was saddled with major disadvantages. He had a limited public profile, a small campaign treasure chest, and an unconventional political persona. Neither a panderer nor a populist, he was unabashed about his intellect, his multiracial heritage, and the complexity of the problems facing the United States. He was a new kind of candidate, and if he was going to succeed, he needed a new kind of campaign.

—◆— *A New Kind of Campaign* —◆—

IN SEPTEMBER OF 2007, the Obama campaign hired John Slabyk and me as full-time new media designers. Our staff and our network of grassroots volunteers began to build a campaign strategy that went against the grain of the contemporary American political landscape and was very much at odds with conventional ground rules of how to win election to national office. We knew we faced several daunting challenges: We needed to appeal to voters in a way that would overcome their unfamiliarity with Obama, overcome their skepticism about the nation's prospects, and overcome their sense that politicians were disconnected from the needs and beliefs of everyday Americans.

Rather than trying to compensate for Obama's disadvantages, we decided to draw upon his strengths. What made this possible was the character of our candidate. Obama didn't need to be sold as something he wasn't, nor made palatable by a flurry of spin and crafty marketing. His life story, as recounted in his two memoirs, embodied the American dream: As he often remarked, his life could only have been possible in America. Obama was also resolute in his commitment to a well-defined set of values that resonated deeply with many American voters, particularly those who felt alienated or disgusted with politics as usual. He didn't see politics in tired partisan terms, and he didn't see Americans as divided in the zero-sum game of red states and blue states. He believed in the fundamental unity of the American people, in the accountability of elected officials to their constituents, and in the need for transparency and responsiveness by the people who had been entrusted with power. He believed in the potential of individuals to create a different future for America. And he believed that hope was the best way to bring Americans together and harness the unifying power of optimism, rather than the cynicism of division and hostility.

We recognized that to communicate what made Obama special, we needed to create a campaign that was just as singular as our candidate. Obama's compelling approach to politics made it both necessary and possible to translate and popularize his message in a way that would not only embody his vision, but also make it accessible and tangible to voters.

Our approach to these challenges made history. But what made our campaign unique wasn't just Obama's racial heritage or the distinct quality of his message. Our campaign made history by recognizing that a comprehensive design strategy would be just as important as rhetoric in conveying our message, and that a critical part of this strategy would be integrating the American people into the electoral process by forging a reciprocal and dynamic relationship with our grassroots supporters.

As veterans of the advertising world, neither John nor I had more than an inkling of what to expect, but it didn't take long for us grasp the magnitude of the task ahead of us. We quickly discovered the full scope of our mission: to create a comprehensive visual message that would be a clear and direct visual translation of the candidate's rhetorical message. We would do something no campaign had ever done: Create a visual structure and aesthetic that provided a unified template for the campaign's many departments. While we were hired as "new media" designers, our role was not limited to creating the campaign's website, its email graphics, and the banner ads that served as our online presence. We also needed to create a consistent, compelling, and unified visual message for fliers, merchandise, information graphics, policy documents for mass distribution — and the posters, tickets, banners, podium signs, and placards for high-profile events where our designs would work in concert with Obama's speeches, sending a visual message to reflect and magnify his words to the audiences and news cameras.

In developing our design strategy, we acknowledged several truths about contemporary America: Our society is an image-driven society, and new technologies of reproduction, communication, and distribution have placed design at the center of American culture. Design was no longer the domain of the elite. It had become a critical part of how people understood their identities and their choices. At any Target store, Americans could now buy toilet brushes designed by Michael Graves and clothing designed by Isaac Mizrahi. Design was not an afterthought or an affect; it was now part of everyday life, and it was the primary means of communication in a society driven by the power of images.

Previous presidential campaigns had used design to a limited extent in choosing typefaces for bumper stickers and lawn signs, but those images were marginal and easily forgotten after the election was over. The web had only become a significant force in presidential elections in 2004, but it had been limited to a relatively minor role in Bush's and Kerry's overall campaign strategies. Joe Rospars, who worked on Howard Dean's campaign for the 2004 Democratic presidential nomination, saw the web's potential as a campaign tool. Drawing on his experience in the new media division of the Dean campaign, he became a defining force in taking the Democratic Party online after the election. On the Obama campaign, he brought on Chris Hughes, the co-founder of Facebook, to explore how new media could be used to bring ordinary Americans into the political process and to mobilize supporters. As designers, John and I worked with them to create tools for organizing and engaging our supporters that were both beautiful and usable – and usable because they were beautiful. Together, we created something new: an innovative and comprehensive visual strategy for Obama that connected him with his supporters and made his message instantly recognizable, resonant, and versatile – both within the official campaign and beyond.

Public relations and marketing are, of course, old standbys in the American political repertoire. John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan all orchestrated successful marketing campaigns to win elections. Each featured carefully crafted commercials, strategic public appearances, and maneuvering of the press and media to make voters see them as the best man for the job. But this approach to strategy emphasizes spin rather than substance; it is not expected to stand for anything. The Obama design strategy did something much different: It created a message that was a direct expression of the candidate and was aligned with his message in all its scope and sophistication.

We accomplished this by placing design at the center of the campaign and by bringing our knowledge of how to make ideas visible into the realm of politics. As *Newsweek* noted in the heat of the primary season:

“It’s not just the message and the man and the speeches that are swaying Democratic voters – though they are. It’s the way the campaign has folded the man and the message and the speeches into a systemic branding effort. Reinforced with a coherent, comprehensive program of fonts, logos, slogans and web design, Obama is the first presidential candidate to be marketed like a high-end consumer brand. . . [It] transcends the mere appropriation of commercial tactics to achieve the sort of seamless brand identity that the most up-to-date companies strive for.”

As this observation reveals, the Obama design strategy drew on branding techniques, but it was no conventional branding campaign. Just as design wasn't used simply to make things pretty, branding techniques were not used simply to make Obama stylish. Rather, they were used to incarnate a message and to convey ideas. The campaign's aesthetic was created to operate in perfect symmetry with both the other elements of the campaign and the candidate himself. Its success lay in the fact that it was exactly what it set out to be, both embodying

and reflecting all the things the candidate wanted to communicate to the American public. Never before had design been such a critical part of a candidate's victory, and never before had design played such an integral role in representing and diffusing the candidate's message.

Every choice we made, including such details as color, proportions, font, configuration, and text size, was part of the strategy's success. The campaign's visual message became a unified, consistent design strategy that extended to every aspect of the campaign and every iteration of Obama's presence in the public sphere, ranging from the campaign's logo, to the posters that supporters waved at rallies, to the tools that organized supporters on the campaign's website, to the art created by professional and grassroots artists inspired by the candidate's message.

The Politics of Design

There are a few key elements that designers rely on in creating work which were fundamental building blocks in guiding the campaign's creative process. As with any design project, whether it's designing a soda brand or a presidential campaign, designers need to understand the role of color, form, and content in the hierarchy of human cognition. The human brain interprets color first, form second, and content last.

COLOR

Color is crucial in communicating on the most primitive and basic level of cognition. Imagine a streetlight. With a minimum of processing, we immediately know that red means "stop," green means "go," and yellow means "caution." This example is simple, but it exemplifies the importance color plays in human communication.

Political campaigns are first and most immediately perceived through color. Americans have come to know red as a Republican color and blue as a Democratic color. These colors, along with white, combine to represent our nation's most recognizable symbol – the red, white, and blue of the American flag. Although many campaigns have attempted to break the mold by using other colors, such as Edwin Muskie's purple and orange in 1972 and Jesse Jackson's red, yellow, and blue rainbow in 1984, they struggled to establish the connections and associations that the colors of the flag convey so effortlessly and directly. Beginning with the logo and extending throughout every element of the campaign's graphics, the Obama campaign used red, white, and blue to draw on our most elemental symbol of national unity. We rejected the divisive color scheme of red states and blue states, but still used blue as the dominant color theme to appeal to and draw on the Democratic base.

FORM

Form is essential to creating a profound and indelible relationship between an image and an idea. Visual symbolism was the only means of communication in pre-literate societies, and it retains a power that is more immediate than what can be communicated with words alone. Frequently, the language of symbols is more efficient and effective than the language of word. For example, the face of an iPod shows everything you need to do to select and play the music you want to listen to without using a single letter. You don't need to speak English or even know how to read to know what the icons say – even a child could operate it.

This technique of tying visual symbols with both ideographic meaning and with tangible goods has been a leading practice of corporate marketing during the twentieth century. The golden arches, the swoosh, and an apple with a bite out of it all

serve as visual cues that make us recognize McDonald's, Nike, and Apple. However, until the 2008 election, it was rarely employed by presidential candidates. Sticking to convention has its advantages, but nothing about the Obama campaign was conventional. The campaign went beyond the standard political use of visual elements such as flags, stars, and stripes, all of which instantly connote American patriotism, history, and unity. These symbols are indisputably American and are immediately recognizable as distinctive icons. Their shape and form communicate ideas instantly and effectively in a way that is more powerful than words, and they evoke thoughts and feelings that can be accessed only visually. The Obama visual message integrated these elements in a newly effective way, using the flag, stars, stripes, and other American icons to generate an emotional response that reached far beyond the limits of rhetorical messages.

CONTENT

A frequently used phrase in political campaigns is “control the message,” which means retaining control of how the candidate is presented and discussed in the public sphere. While the content of the ideas the candidate is communicating may be the most important aspect of a campaign as far as traditional messaging is concerned, it is the least important when it comes to making choices about design. Content is a difficult design element to utilize in a political campaign because of the lightning-quick responses and reactions demanded by the relentless pace of the campaign trail. The 24-hour news cycle requires sudden shifts in messaging to specifically communicate and address daily talking points. Those shifts in messaging often accompany abrupt changes in color and typography of placards, mailings, and campaign literature. This is especially true for television and print-based coverage of the campaign.

The imagery we see on television is often edited together with footage from days or even weeks before. So while the talking heads are analyzing current events, you may see four completely different rallies on four different subjects in four different contexts that send four completely different messages – all in one four-second clip.

Accordingly, the Obama team realized that our campaign's message would live or die on the design that supported it. While the talking points of the campaign may change daily or even hourly as events unfold, our message would retain stability and consistency if the design elements that delivered it remained constant and imperturbable. As designers, we knew how to hone every element that creates the images that we see, and how to finesse basic design principles to ensure that every detail – such as the discerning use of various fonts and fine-tuned choices about exactly what shade of red and blue to use and when – contributed as effectively as possible to the overall look of the campaign. A design that successfully served as a multifaceted visual representation of a campaign would draw from a precise and well-crafted conglomeration of images and visual cues, rather than being dependent upon a single image that may or may not be shown on television that night. If we wanted to “control the message,” we had to create and maintain an effective design.

To meet these demands, we created a visual strategy that utilized the fundamental principles of color, form, and content in a way that fused beauty and consistency with political savvy and grassroots responsiveness. We became the visual voice of the campaign, offering millions of supporters a way to listen with their eyes and see that Barack Obama was a candidate for every citizen of the *United States of America*.

This book is the story of how it happened.





HOPE

HOPE



obama

obama'08

OBAMA



Designed by Sol Sender, Amanda Gentry, & Andy Keene

SYMBOL OF THE MOVEMENT

CHAPTER ONE

The Obama “O” logo, with its blue “O” rising over a striped field of red and white, was the campaign’s first design element. It was also the aesthetic point of origin for nearly every component of design created by the campaign. Beyond the candidate himself, the logo was the most visible and recognizable element representing a political movement. As a watermark, it stood alongside Obama every step of the campaign trail and offered a powerful opportunity for visual messaging.

In the flurry of activity leading to Obama’s official announcement of his candidacy, David Axelrod, Obama’s chief strategist, and David Plouffe, Obama’s campaign manager, knew that the launch of the campaign would be incomplete without a logo. The logo would be a baseline image that served a wide variety of practical functions: It would help make Obama a compelling and credible candidate, and would demonstrate that his campaign was already organized around a consistent message and platform. It would be immediately accessible to supporters to demonstrate their excitement about the campaign. And it would serve as a visual signature in coverage of the campaign through the media – a key tool for a candidate who was working to increase his visibility and name recognition.

Longtime clients of the Chicago-based motion design studio Mode, Axelrod and Plouffe contacted Steve Juras, Mode’s creative director, to help them find the right person for the job. Juras contacted an old classmate, Sol Sender, and asked him to submit a few proposals for the upcoming campaign. In late December of 2006, Sender began to lay the groundwork for the Obama logo. After sending in a handful of samples for review by AKP&D Message and Media, Axelrod and Plouffe’s consulting firm, Sender was awarded the project and began the process of designing the symbol.

Sender began by thinking very broadly about how to create a logo that matched the man it stood for. He read Obama’s two books and quickly realized that in order to reflect Obama’s distinctive qualities as a candidate and make the most of what he had to offer, the campaign would bear little resemblance to traditional political races. In the past, presidential campaigns had applied design as an accessory piece to the substance of other conventional forms of political messaging. Past American campaign logos banked primarily on name recognition rather than the full spectrum of design tools, and their role was largely limited to lawn signs and bumper stickers.

As a designer, Sender saw that the Obama logo could be much more effective in ways other than the usual names in red or blue. To do this, Sender and his colleagues, Andy Keene and Amanda Gentry, established three basic criteria as points of departure for their design:

The logo would tell a simple, authentic story.

The logo would be stylistically resonant.

The logo would demonstrate impeccable execution.

After establishing these requirements, the team started sketching ideas. They picked up two specific themes from Obama’s message that they wanted to explore in detail: unity and hope. Sender’s team began exploring possible ways to communicate unity in a visual symbol that retained the essentials: Obama’s name and the election year. How, for example, could the red and blue of the political parties blend together, and how might they be used in relationship to the red, white, and blue of the flag? How could the “O” in “Obama” and the “8” in “2008” interact with each other? What if a group of diverse hands came together to form a patriotic star?



OBAMA08

BarackObama.com

Together

This was an early concept representing people of differing diversities coming together to form a star in the negative space.

Unification

These concepts explored the intersection of red and blue, activating the candidate's passion for finding common ground: red states and blue states coming together.



Another theme that Sender's team drew out for further exploration was diversity. They experimented with different ways to render the word "hope" emerging from the horizon. The team also considered using the "O" as a window that served as a porthole, using different photos within it to represent different concepts or demographics. They experimented with speech bubbles representing the many voices of America.

It was this idea that led the group to the concept of telling a more open-ended and broadly accessible story: a sun rising on the horizon, representing the hope of a new day. The team was immediately keen on the idea for its simplicity and its ability to convey a number of possible narratives in one image. Sender noted that "early on, we were very interested in how it might function as an independent symbol – that perhaps, at some point during the campaign, it would not require the use of the candidate's name, which would be very unique."



Voice

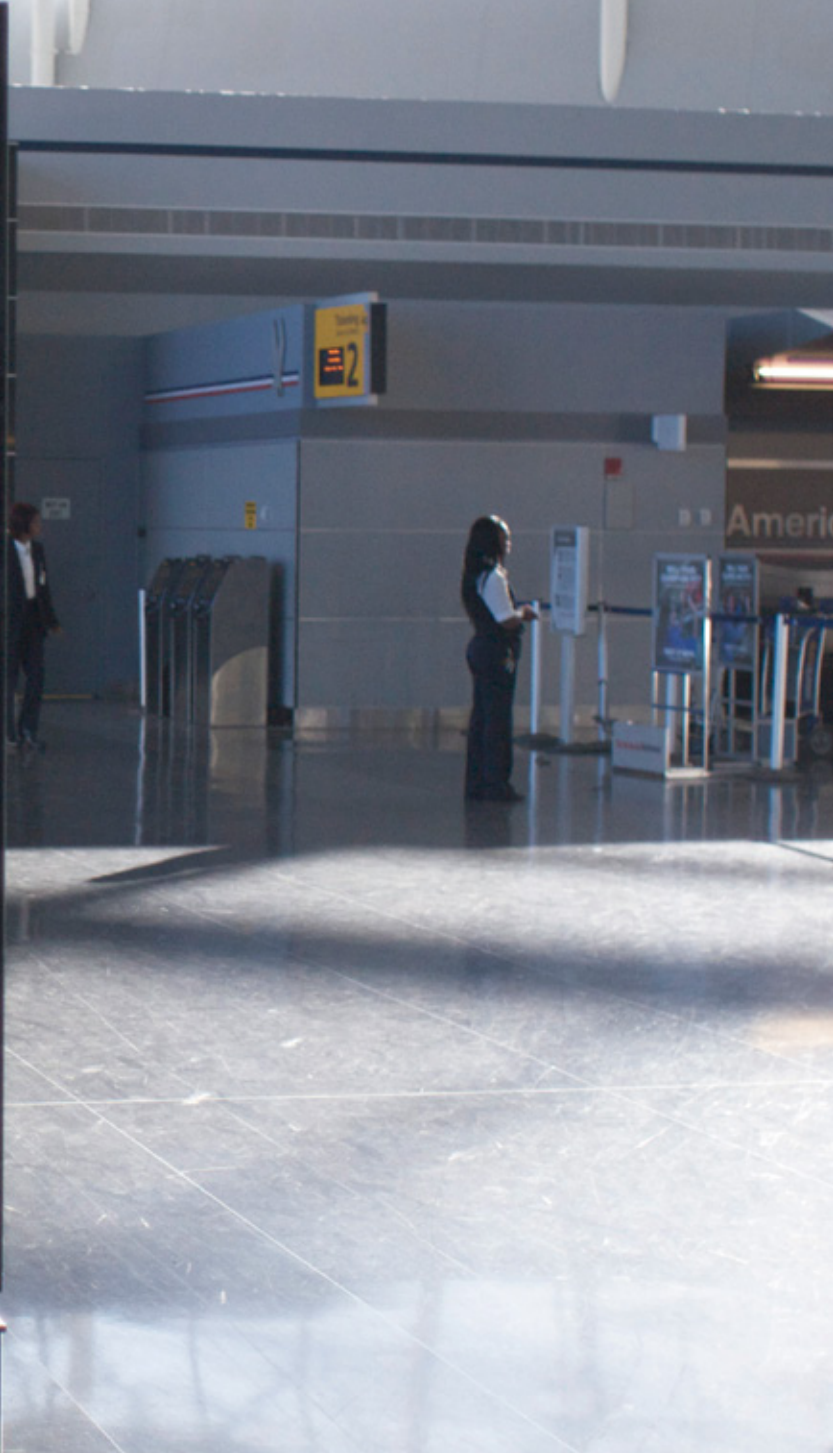
This was the runner-up. It was about change, the voice of the people. It captured the excitement surrounding the candidate and foreshadowed a groundswell of support. The campaign team liked it quite a bit. They felt it was something new and different.

VOTE!

08

BarackObama.com

JCDecaux



Symbol of the Movement

Logo Concepts

BarackObama.com

Obama
O8

Horizon

This was one of the final logo options. It was more sophisticated than the other options (maybe a bit too sophisticated). The “O8” reflected the “Ob” in a subtle allusion to infinite possibilities rising.



Window to Possibilities ~ HOPE

At the intersection of the "O" and the "08" – a view of a better tomorrow. Sender explored various types of images in the "O." In different combinations, with different words, it activated messages of change, unification, and diversity.





Obama'08

BarackObama.com



Sunrise Concept

In addition to the clear symbolism and a perfect intersection with the “O” of the candidate’s name, this option was recommended because of its patriotic palette. It was new, but it was also traditional. Concerned with the possibility of attacks on Senator Obama for being “different,” Sender’s group wanted to powerfully reinforce Obama’s intersection with the American dream.

THE SYMBOL SPEAKS

In light of its success as a campaign symbol and Obama's electoral triumph, the "O" concept seems like an obvious choice. But this is clear only in retrospect. Politicians thrive on name recognition, and the possibility of omitting the candidate's most important message – his name – was a bold and unprecedented move in the history of campaign graphics.

So why did it work so well? The Obama "O" was an effective political logo precisely because of the qualities that made it a beautiful design. Without using a single word, the logo served as a stand-alone narrative of American hope and optimism. Its stunning aesthetic simplicity allowed it to contain and encompass rich possibilities for evocation and symbolism, and yet it was a clear and distinctive representation of the candidate. The "O" was efficient visual shorthand for the candidate's name, but also represented a sun rising up over the "amber waves of grain" that recalled the stylized stripes from the American flag.

The logo lived a number of lives throughout the campaign, and its intricacies were among the many details polished over a long campaign. In order to separate the two visual elements more distinctly and to make the logo read clearly at a smaller size, Sender's original mark was slightly modified to include a stroke or line between the blue horizon element and the red stripes. Sender's original font for the "Obama 08," the Perpetua

typeface designed by Eric Gill, was changed to Requiem, a typeface designed by Jonathan Hoefler and Tobias Frere-Jones, which we modified to reduce the sharp pointed terminals that are the end strokes of a letter's form. We also decided to use small caps for the words instead of lowercase in order to create a barbell shape that made the wordmark appear more stable and masculine. And inevitably, much of the work was redesigned once again when Joe Biden joined the campaign as Obama's running mate.

As we wove the logo into the campaign and adapted it for every aspect of the campaign, it took on a life of its own: It became a visual icon that surpassed its ideographic meaning. Because the logo could stand alone and did not need the "Obama '08" to support its message, it came to represent a wide swath of ideas that were keystones of the campaign while also offering room for a variety of interpretations and iterations. Simple enough for nearly anyone to render it effortlessly, supporters raised the logo high into the air, painted it on the sides of barns, baked it into cookies and cakes, and carved it into pumpkins. The logo became a means to express support for the campaign in a way that drew on individual creative expression but that was united by a basic visual unity, and it did so through the traditions and symbols that make us proud to be Americans.

A LOGO MADE FOR YOU

The logo had many other lives as well. We created specific versions of it to function as visual identities for the many constituency groups who came together to support Obama. To create these specialized logos, we integrated symbolic forms that signified a demographic's distinct qualities into the visual centerpiece of the logo. These constituent logos ran the gamut of the American social spectrum: Republicans for Obama used the swinging trunk of an elephant to bring in the traditional symbol of the GOP. First Americans for Obama made the "O" into the center of the ritual object known as a "dream catcher," which represented Native American's cultural and religious heritage. Students for Obama rendered the logo's waves of grain as lines on a notebook, and placed the "O" among the equations and diagrams that are the territory of students everywhere. The logos reflected one of Obama's signature campaign themes: In his words, "*There is not a black America and a white America and Latino America and Asian America. There's the United States of America.*" The logos were a visually tangible expression of the candidate's belief in *E pluribus unum*: Out of many, one. All of them used the original logo as their visual common ground, combining it with a variety of themes and symbols. This approach balanced diversity with unity, using variety to highlight the power of individuals while maintaining a unified and consistent visual identity.



Logo Variations

One-color, two-color, and four-color variations of the logo were designed for both white and blue backgrounds.



Symbol of the Movement

Logo Variations



OBAMA'08
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Logo Variations

Logos were redesigned using a modified version of the typeface Requiem. The Obama '08 was used during the primaries, and the Obama Biden was released the day Biden was announced as Obama's running mate.



OBAMA
BIDEN

WWW.BARACKOBAMA.COM

FULLMARK
PREFERRED



FULLMARK
HORIZONTAL



LOGOMARK



WORDMARK



FULL
COLOR

TWO
COLOR

ONE
COLOR

FULL
COLOR



TWO
COLOR



ONE
COLOR



FULLMARK
PREFERRED

SECONDARY MARK
ONLY TO BE USED UPON
ABSOLUTE NECESSITY

LOGOMARK

WORDMARK

ALABAMA ALASKA ARIZONA ARKANSAS
CALIFORNIA COLORADO CONNECTICUT
DELAWARE FLORIDA GEORGIA HAWAII
IDAHO ILLINOIS INDIANA IOWA KANSAS
KENTUCKY LOUISIANA MAINE MARYLAND
MASSACHUSETTS MICHIGAN MINNESOTA
MISSISSIPPI MISSOURI MONTANA NEVADA
NEBRASKA NEW HAMPSHIRE NEW JERSEY
NEW MEXICO NEW YORK NORTH CAROLINA
NORTH DAKOTA OHIO OKLAHOMA
OREGON PENNSYLVANIA RHODE ISLAND
SOUTH DAKOTA SOUTH CAROLINA TEXAS
TENNESSEE UTAH VERMONT VIRGINIA
WASHINGTON
WEST VIRGINIA WISCONSIN WYOMING

State Logos

Logos for each state were designed using the Obama logo as the "O" letter form, and the stripes of the logo were used to modify "A," "C," "E," and "P."

COLORADO CONNECTICUT
FLORIDA GEORGIA HAWAII
ILLINOIS INDIANA IOWA KANSAS
LOUISIANA MAINE MARYLAND
MASSACHUSETTS MICHIGAN MINNESOTA
MISSOURI MONTANA NEVADA
NEW HAMPSHIRE NEW JERSEY
NEW YORK NORTH CAROLINA
WISCONSIN WYOMING
IDAHO ILLINOIS INDIANA
KANSAS KENTUCKY LOUISIANA
MAINE MARYLAND MASSACHUSETTS
MICHIGAN MINNESOTA MISSOURI
MONTANA NEVADA NEW HAMPSHIRE
NEW JERSEY NEW YORK NORTH CAROLINA
OHIO OKLAHOMA PENNSYLVANIA
RHODE ISLAND SOUTH CAROLINA
TEXAS UTAH VERMONT VIRGINIA





REPUBLICANS
— FOR —
OBAMA

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Constituent Logos

Logos were designed for the constituent groups,
including the many Republicans supporting Obama.



**AMERICANS
ABROAD**
— FOR —
OBAMA



**AFRICAN
AMERICANS**
— FOR —
OBAMA



LATINOS
— FOR —
OBAMA



OBAMA

PRIDE

PRIDE.BARACKOBAMA.COM





Beards
FOR
OBAMA



Yes We Carve

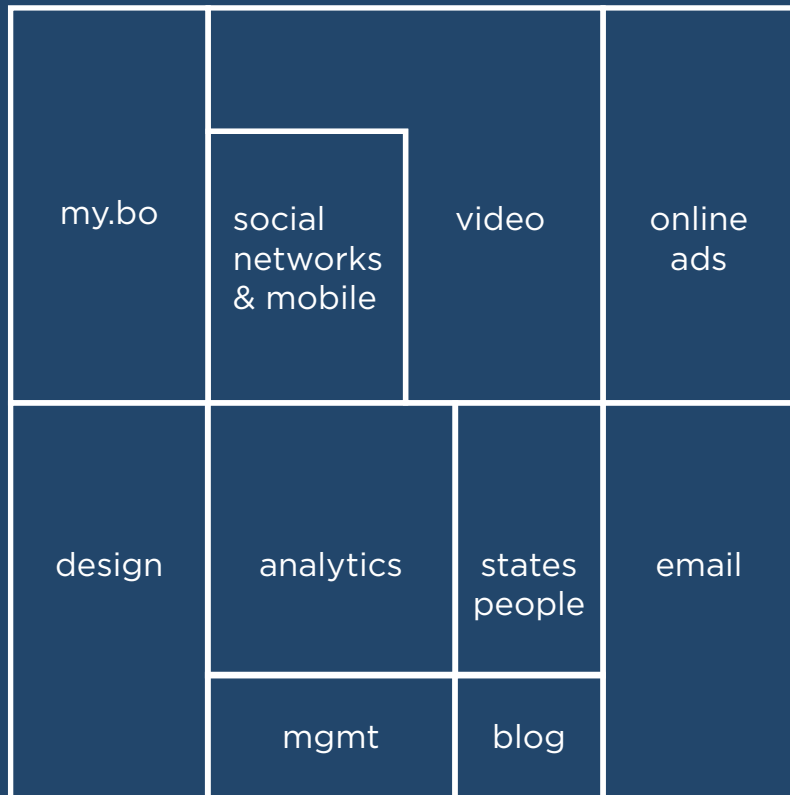
Corrie Loeffler's pumpkin, shared on the website yeswecarve.com organized by Josh Horton, Jason Powers, and Josh Jeter.

Photo credit: Kendall Bruns



Cathy Wu
CATHYWU.COM

Grand Prairie, Texas



FORMING THE TEAM

CHAPTER 2



olitical campaigns often operate on the fly, and the Obama campaign was no different. Working with little money and staff, each department had to become scrappy and resourceful. Although David Axelrod had hired Sol Sender and his team of designers to develop the “O” logo before the campaign launched in Springfield, all the other campaign literature and collateral was created by campaign staffers, none of whom were professional designers. The rapid pace of the campaign and the lack of a full-time design staff led to mistakes that threatened to dilute the campaign’s message. Sender’s “O” logo was unveiled at Obama’s launch speech, where it adorned campaign standbys such as placards, stickers, and buttons. As Sender watched coverage of the speech back in Chicago, it didn’t take him long to notice how easy it was to fail at properly implementing the design he had worked so hard to create. On the front of Obama’s podium was a logo that looked like the one Sender had created. But something was askew: Somewhere along the way from Sender’s studio to Springfield, the white negative space in the center of the circle had been dropped from the sign, leaving a dark void in place of the rising sun.

This type of slip-up was no trivial detail. Inconsistent or sloppy design sent the wrong message about the candidate and his campaign. The importance of visual information in how people perceived the campaign and the candidate made design a key element in “controlling the message.” Consistency in design was necessary to reinforce Obama’s image as a serious candidate with a rock-solid set of principles – indeed, when the Mitt Romney and John McCain campaigns abruptly modified their visuals to imitate Obama’s design scheme, it smacked of desperation. Consistent design was also necessary to reinforce the campaign’s image as a professional and highly

organized operation – a particularly important message to send given the need to enhance Obama’s credibility as a candidate.

In the first months after Obama threw his hat in the ring, most of the design collateral was created by Michael Slaby, the deputy director of new media. Though not a designer himself, Slaby had a basic understanding of the graphic designer’s standard toolkit, including Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. While he had originally been hired to focus on the campaign’s website, he quickly became inundated with work requests from various departments because he was one of the only people on the campaign who understood how to use the tools.

But while Slaby was a brilliant strategic thinker and understood the possibilities of design for strengthening the campaign, he soon recognized that his lack of a traditional design education or deeper knowledge of typography hampered his efforts to give design a central role in the campaign’s public image. The hectic pace of a presidential campaign in an age of 24-7 media coverage meant that the campaign’s most pressing consideration with regard to design was not aesthetic excellence but expedience. In the effort to keep up with the frenetic environment of the campaign, design materials were created and modified ad hoc, with little consideration of visual impact. All the bad effects in the book were cropping up: drop shadows, beveled edges, and other elements that professional designers try to use at the very most in moderation.

To ensure the impeccable execution so prized by Sender when he created the “O” logo, the campaign began to realize that in-house designers were needed to manage the creation and production of future materials. As the campaign intensified in anticipation of the primaries, Slaby wanted to focus on the campaign’s new media strategy rather than coming up



A view inside Obama HQ

Joe Rospars, director of new media, masterminded the team which revolutionized online campaigning. A founding partner of Blue State Digital and having previously worked on the Howard Dean campaign, Joe was instrumental in incubating the creative space that allowed much of the design work to materialize.

with off-the-cuff ideas for materials to complement another speaking engagement. That summer, the early success of the campaign's fund-raising strategy gave Slaby the opportunity to hire professional designers to improve the quality of the campaign's design work and to maximize the potential of a coherent design strategy.

Slaby began scouring the web for portfolios. He was seeking multi-dimensional designers who were comfortable both on the web and in print, and who were comfortable working with software tools like Illustrator and Photoshop as well as wrangling the details of a website at any given moment using coding tools like HTML and CSS. Slaby didn't look for people with political experience; he was more interested in finding the best designers and was willing to do whatever on-the-job training was necessary to attune them to the specific demands of a campaign. He found two people who met his criteria: John Slabyk and myself. On August 26, 2007, I received an email from Slaby with the subject line: "An opportunity to join us."

Scott:

I found your portfolio online via Creative Hotlist and am impressed by the quality and breadth of your work. I am the Deputy Director of New Media for Obama for America and am looking to expand our team. I don't know if you are looking for full-time work, but if you're interested in working in a fast-paced team environment with a lot of creative freedom and the chance to work toward something incredible, I hope you'll get in touch with me. I'm eager to discuss our needs with you.

*Best,
Michael Slaby*

Click-thru the Unicorn

Click-thru is a giant pink unicorn and decorated member of the new media team. He stood strong, assisting in the creation of many smiles and much laughter throughout the campaign.

I'd spent the previous few years working for a design firm in Chicago, creating advertising and other materials for clients such as Kohler and Patagonia. I had been wrestling with the lack of passion I had for the work I was doing: After establishing my career, I was tired of using my energy and skills to sell sinks and refrigerators. I was originally trained as an architect, and even after leaving the field I'd retained the architect's impulse to sculpt society for the better. Slaby's email presented the possibility of creating meaningful design for a cause I cared about. I responded immediately:

Wow. I was just thinking about the Obama campaign and would really love to talk to you. My portfolio has expanded far beyond what is currently on my site, and I would love to help in your efforts. Michael, let's try talking tomorrow about this opportunity. What time works well for you?

Scott

After a brief phone call, Slaby and I arranged a time to meet in person the following day with Joe Rospars, the campaign's Director of New Media. The next day, I left early from my job and walked up Wacker Drive to the Obama campaign's national headquarters at 233 North Michigan Avenue.

I took the elevator to the 11th floor and was greeted by a young staffer who led me to the back corner of the office: the new media department, which consisted of a few cubicles and mismatched chairs that looked like they had just come from a thrift



store. Scattered along the walls were Post-it Notes and scraps of paper scribbled with lists and ideas. The space was full of boxes that did double duty as makeshift tables for overflowing desks. There was even an improvised basketball hoop, which I later learned was the department's major source of recreation. The ramshackle setup of the office was endearingly at odds with the brilliant collection of minds working within it – not least because their goal was determining the next president of the United States.

Michael Slaby invited me into a glass-paneled office and introduced himself and Rospars. Rospars's office looked disheveled with writing and diagrams scribbled all over the glass and whiteboards that lined the walls. As we discussed my interests and experience in design and politics, I mentioned that I was from Iowa and had caucused in 2004. Joe asked me whom I caucused for. My answer: Dennis Kucinich. He paused – Joe had played a major role on the Howard Dean campaign – and the room erupted with laughter. He then began introducing me to the rest of the new media team: Stephen Geer, who headed the campaign's email and online fund-raising, and Chris Hughes, the co-founder of Facebook, who managed the campaign's online organizing via its social network, My.BarackObama.com. In another cluster sat Scott Goodstein, the man behind Obama's successful social media strategy and its text message program. Kate Albright-Hanna, an Emmy-winning producer from CNN, sat a few steps away, surrounded by loads of equipment and stacks of MiniDV tapes. Kate was responsible for telling the story of the campaign through the videos that would be featured on the website throughout the campaign. After the interview and introductions, Slaby and I stepped outside, and he asked, "When can you start?"

The next day, I received a formal offer to join the campaign. I began working the following day, along with John Slabyk, the campaign's other new full-time designer. Slaby had paired us to complement each other: While my previous projects had focused on web design, John's had been oriented toward print and branding. We both had little idea of what to expect, but it didn't take long for us to grasp the scope and magnitude of our endeavor. After the primaries, the design team was expanded and we could rely on a larger staff, but for now it was up to the two of us to take the "O" from here.

DESTINATION: NEW YORK CITY

Our first major task was to design graphics for Obama's New York City rally on September 27, 2008. The event was in the backyard of our biggest opponent, Hillary Clinton, and was anticipated to be the campaign's biggest rally yet. On September 21, our video team uploaded a video of Senator Obama asking the people of New York to come together for the event: "We can believe we can be one people. ... See you in New York." If we were working for a design firm with a conventional work schedule, a project the scale of the New York rally would normally take months to develop. We had just about a week. John and I quickly realized that our days of traditional design process were over. As Slaby had told me in my interview, our mission was to build a plane in mid-flight.

We were hoping for our largest crowd yet, and we had only a few days to design posters, billboards, flyers, tickets, e-tickets, T-shirts, email graphics, landing page graphics, feature graphics for the homepage, a streaming live web page for the speech, and donation pages to take advantage of the rally's momentum. As we plunged into the work, the original division of labor that

Slaby had in mind for the two of us vanished. Distinctions between print and web design became irrelevant because of the sheer volume of work we were doing in so little time, and because of how tightly we had to integrate our work on all the elements for the rally. We had to trust each other to make the right changes on any and all of our materials at any given time, both in print and online.

Slabyk and I began sketching ideas, exploring possible paths, and eventually combining our concepts into one design. I pulled from Milton Glaser's famous "I Heart NY" piece as my inspiration, replacing the symbol for love with Obama's "O" logo and making it function as a verb. Slabyk drew on the techniques of classic 20th century European poster design and experimented with a "Dutch" angle – positioning the text and image at an angle to the viewer. Over the course of the week, our materials for the rally came together. Together, our concepts made a design that was sleek and stylish enough for New York City. Before we had a chance to reflect on our work and decide how to proceed from here, the New York rally was happening. 24,000 people – the largest crowd to date for the campaign – gathered in front of the brightly lit arch of Washington Square Park to hear Obama give a passionate and personal speech:

"There are those who are saying you should be looking for someone who can play the game better, but the problem is that the game has been rigged. The time is too serious, the stakes are too high, to play the same game over and over again."

After we had finished live-streaming the event, Michael Slaby looked at me and asked, "Did you ever think you'd design an entire event in less than a week?" I replied, "Not like that."



The Desk of John Slabyk
John surrounded his work space with images from the campaign, inspiring graphics, and the many buttons he designed on the campaign.





Photo credit: Matt Ipcar



Will Wan and Jess Schlueter (top).

John Slabyk (bottom).

A look inside the new media department, our desks cluttered with computer monitors, various liquids, and plenty of Obama art.

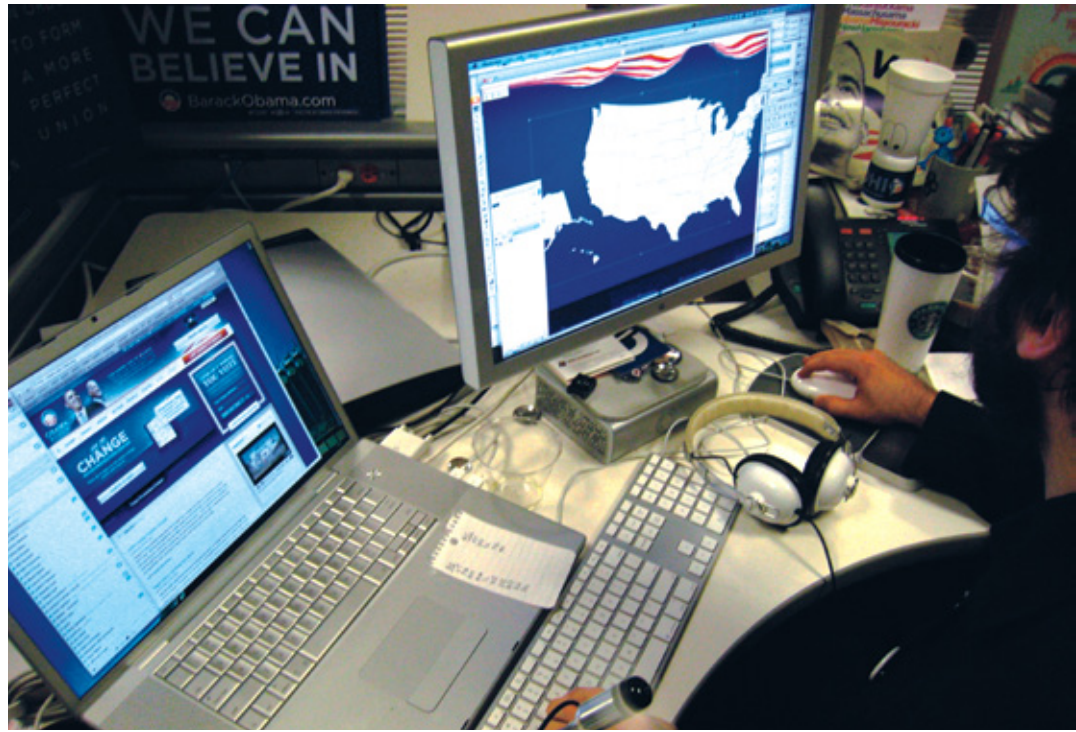


Photo credit: Matt Ipcar



My desktop (top) from a bird's eye perspective, gearing up for Election Day.

Wade Sbernard (bottom) working on a print piece.





THE CHALLENGE

CHAPTER 3

As we turned our attention to the primary season, we faced the challenge of executing a 50-state campaign. We would need to design official assets for organizers at every rally, large and small – from materials at a neighborhood cakewalk fund-raiser in Bettendorf, Iowa, to banners for the national convention in Denver. We had to field requests from the various groups within the new media department as well as the other departments within the campaign.

It was clear to John and me that we were not going to have much time to reflect on possible ideas for our projects. Understanding the implications of not having the support staff typically afforded by advertising and design firms made for a tough transition to the world of a political campaign. There was no time for working out a concept, building brand standards, and extensively thinking through how we were going to “roll out” a product. Instead, we would have to design a particular graphic in one day. We never saw anything we printed until it was in the field. The only printer’s proofs we had were what we saw on breaking news coverage from CNN. Our copywriters were the email team, and our clients were hundreds of campaign staffers requesting design help. Unlike most traditional advertising campaigns, after creating a graphic or updating the homepage, a stream of comments would begin to pour in. Our work was going to have to change quickly and evolve to the constant pressures of a presidential campaign.

CAPTURING THE MOOD OF THE PAST AND PRESENT

John and I were working so quickly that we needed a way to see the components we were doing separately from day-to-day at a single glance. Our fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants process led us to use what are known as “mood boards.” The boards made

it easier for us to collaborate and to explore different design directions. They also ensured that designs appeared consistent across the several mediums we were working on when one new design would be distributed via print, email, and the web. We built the boards from large pieces of black foam core, and we covered them with printouts of designs we were working on, archived imagery we were collecting for our projects, and any other ideas that could inspire our designs.

A major feature of our mood boards were design elements that were already familiar parts of America’s visual vocabulary. Redeploying images that were already engrained in the American mind created an avenue for communicating ideas and associations that both complemented and transcended words. When using an iconic vocabulary, it’s possible to fumble. At one point in the campaign, we designed a sign similar to the Presidential Seal for a governors’ summit. After some debate as to whether the design was a good idea in the first place, it was released and poorly placed directly in front of Obama during the event, causing a flurry of criticism from the right. In politics, these types of images have such potent meaning that we needed to employ them in a way that was effective but not gratuitous.

We developed an aesthetic that combined the past and present appropriately for our candidate. Obama aspired to be a new kind of president, but he was also one who drew upon the American historical tradition. We implemented design elements and typographic styles from the American political past, including the kind of detailing that marks objects as possessing authority and authenticity in the American mind, such as scrolls used for certificates and elements of currency. We also remixed the classic Uncle Sam U.S. Army poster with



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WE CAN
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his finger pointed at the reader with a smiling Obama saying “I Want You” to caucus. We issued reprints of Obama’s speeches using the kinds of lettering and embellishments associated with the Constitution. This kind of design used a common visual language that evoked American history in simple but powerful ways.

QUALITY CONTROL

It was no easy task for just two people to handle the entire design workload of a presidential campaign. Yet, despite the small size of our team relative to the scope of the operation, and despite our lack of time to employ the traditional review process used by design firms, we managed to turn out work that adhered to our standards with a level of consistency that astonished outsiders. In an interview in *Newsweek* in February of 2008, designer Michael Bierut observed: “I have sophisticated clients who pay me and other people well to try to keep them on the straight and narrow, and they have trouble getting everything set in the same typeface. And [Obama’s campaign] seems to be able to do it in Cleveland and Cincinnati and Houston and San Antonio. Every time you look, all those signs are perfect. Graphic designers like me don’t understand how it’s happening. It’s unprecedented and inconceivable to us. The people in the know are flabbergasted.”

Ironically, it was the very lack of time and resources that are usually available in the design process that made these high standards possible. This was not “design by committee”, there was no committee. The campaign was small enough that there were no elaborate chains of hierarchy and approval so common among corporate clients. We also benefitted from the trust we earned from the other staffers once they saw what we could do.

Slaby had deliberately chosen John and me because we hadn’t been schooled in the conventions of political campaigns. He knew we could raise the bar for the role of design in a political campaign, and that we understood that the same design principles that applied to products and brands could be applied to a political candidate. The initial results we were able to produce made the staff willing to let us work independently, and gave them confidence in our insistence that there was a better way to design a campaign than what they were used to. Because of this trust, we were able to work without depending on approval from the typical ladder of departments as with most organizations – a review and approval process that often leads to less-than-consistent execution.

Being able to work with and rely on just one other designer led to many late nights at the office. But being able to rely on and collaborate with just one person was precisely what allowed us to maintain the consistency that was so key to effective visual messaging. Every single piece of campaign collateral that incorporated design passed through our hands, and we were able to diligently make sure that each of those items met the standards that John and I had worked out together. We didn’t even create an official style guide for the campaign until we expanded our staff for the general election. After some frustrations with outsourcing our printing to local vendors for events, such as inconsistent color, we decided to buy a large-format printer for our use in-house to create the hundreds of podium signs needed for events. This created more work for us, but it also let us control the process to get the results that so astonished Bierut.

Our consistent design standards and our direct link to the people who were actually using and implementing our work

We the People

insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common
and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution

Art. I

Section. 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of Representatives.

Section. 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People in each State shall have ^{the} Qualifications requisite for Electors of that State. No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and seven Years, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be admitted into or exist within the Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Year, and the Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall direct: but the Number shall never exceed thirty Thousand, but each State shall have at Least one Representative. New Hampshire three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New York six, New Jersey four, Pennsylvania seven, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina three, Georgia three. When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the State in which the Vacancies happen shall chuse new Representatives in such Manner as they shall direct. The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other Officers.

Section. 3. The Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of that State.

on the ground also gave us another unexpected advantage. We couldn't respond to every individual email in our inbox asking for a JPEG of the "O" logo or a file for the "Change" banner, and we couldn't hire someone just to distribute art. We made the decision to place all the design assets online, where anyone could download them and use them for their particular needs, context, and purpose. This wasn't an obvious solution. Coming from a corporate advertising design environment, this open-source approach was a total shift away from traditional thinking about visual branding, in which proper brand management means centralized brand control. This was especially useful once we initiated the Artists for Obama campaign, when our design repertoire expanded to include the many artists who were inspired by the campaign and contributed their creative talents to the cause.

For the general election, we decided that our small team of designers needed to expand to a larger group that would be structured by a more distinct division of labor, with print, web, and production handled separately. Our print team was responsible for designing much of the printed materials being distributed throughout the states and used for direct-mail campaigns, as well as many of the flyers, tickets, and posters for events occurring around the country. Our production team was responsible for physically producing these elements, and spent much of their time printing out design components, mounting the print to foam core, and cutting out the signs with X-Acto blades. The web team spent their time designing online campaigns, working on general site maintenance and enhancements, and creating media-oriented microsites, including Fight the Smears, The McCain Record, and the Tax Calculator. Some staff specialized in design and user interaction, while others

focused their attention on front-end programming that would make the sites function as efficiently as possible.

Our goal was to implement the principles of the campaign in visual form, and to employ the principles of the campaign into our design process. This posed a different set of challenges, one that required equally innovative solutions.

A MESSAGE OF HOPE

One of the ideas that formed the bedrock of the campaign was reintroducing hope into American politics after years of deepening cynicism among potential voters. The "Hope" visual was iconic and beautiful in its simplicity, but we also knew it was a difficult platform to run on. Hope could seem intangible and unrealistic – especially to voters who were disenchanted by the limitations of the American political system, the very people we were trying to reach. But while we were wary of the risks that came with placing hope at the center of the campaign, Obama's unique persona made it a successful strategy to win over hearts and minds. Obama's idealism was balanced by a sense of gravitas and pragmatism, and his focus on creative problem solving made hope seem real and sound-minded, not a pie-in-the-sky illusion. Instead of being turned off or dismissive, people responded to Obama's call for a belief in new possibilities.

The theme of hope quickly took on a life of its own among our supporters, and we were in no position to tell them not to be hopeful. So instead of changing course, we embraced the moment and took advantage of the momentum. Placing hope at the center of our visual campaign tied in with Obama's message, bringing out the American longing for a plausible form of optimism. Hope also was a consensus-building tool: It didn't



OLD STYLE NO. 1

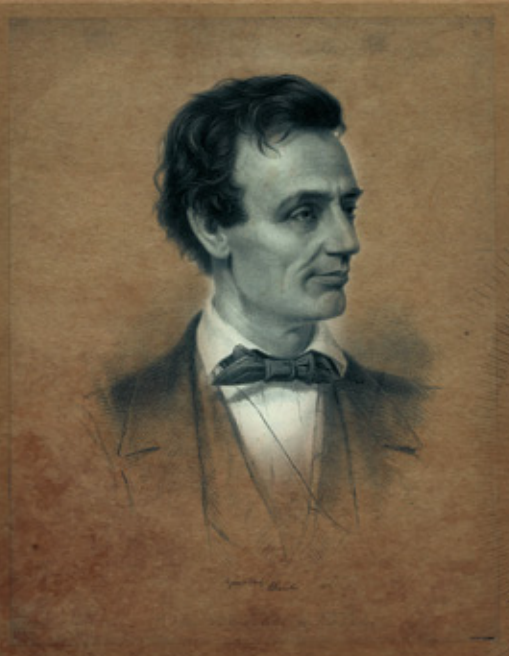
— TRADE MARK —
LINOTYPE —

OLD STYLE NO. 1, one of the early Linotype faces, is still extremely popular with publishers, printers and trade composition plants. Although it is primarily a book face, it has been used for periodicals and a miscellany of job printing quite successfully.

The design is of English origin, and was extremely popular with the MacKellar, Smiths and Jordan foundry. It has the simplicity and freedom from "frills" characteristic of the better English old styles just prior to the introduction of the modern letter.

As a body type, Old Style No. 1 brings an even-textured page and may be read with maximum comfort and ease. For display purposes Caslon Old Face and the related series of Linotype Caslon decorative material will be found an excellent combination, or Linotype Narciss may be used to advantage as in this folder. The following pages show the size range of Old Style No. 1—5 to 18 point inclusive, and also indicate the variety of faces with which Old Style No. 1 is combined in two-letter matrices.

MERGENTHALER LINOTYPE COMPANY
 BROOKLYN, N. Y. · CHICAGO · SAN FRANCISCO · NEW ORLEANS · CANADIAN
 LINOTYPE, LIMITED, TORONTO · Representatives in the Principal Cities of the World



have the partisan charge of words like “security” or “life.” Early on, we used the word “hope” as a message on yard signs, with the ‘o’ in “hope” replaced with the Obama “O” logo. Later, we realized that “hope” didn’t have to be communicated just with typography but could also be communicated through visual imagery. Whether it came in the form of a white glow behind an image, a radiant sunbeam, or a graceful waving flag, visual expressions of hope could inspire people in a way that was concretely embodied in these forms and symbols.

“WE” NOT “HE”

One of the core goals of the Obama campaign was to engage voters by making them feel like they mattered. We wanted to actively involve individuals in the political process to show that they could make a difference, and we wanted to build a campaign that had a reciprocal relationship with the grassroots rather than being a separate entity removed from our supporters on the ground. As staffers, we didn’t view ourselves as superior to the people on the ground; we saw ourselves as an extension of the grassroots. As we were brainstorming event titles or developing specific campaigns, we sought to focus our message on a theme of “we,” the people, rather than “he,” Barack Obama.

We wanted to bring the movement we were creating into the campaign. So we tried to use every opportunity we had, visual and otherwise, to welcome and engage everyday people and to be inviting and empowering rather than isolated and hierarchical. We hoped that this kind of message would instill a pride and loyalty in our supporters that would in turn reinforce the link between our supporters and our message. We wanted a sign we designed to be something a supporter could hold

with pride, and that they would feel was a direct statement by them. This would both create and reinforce participation within the movement, using design to create a unity of image and conviction.

The main way to do this was to make sure we kept our supporters at the forefront of our decisions. Direct feedback from our supporters poured in through the comments on our social media projects, including the official campaign blog and My.BarackObama.com, as soon as any speech was over or when we made a new addition to the website. We paid close attention to these comments, because they offered us a true measure of the effectiveness of our efforts without the misguided conclusions that often come with official focus groups. Reading what our supporters had to say gave us ideas and guidance that made our campaign truly grassroots in character. I could scout message boards to get the kind of helpful feedback that normally would have required a bigger staff and a lengthy review process. When commenters noticed an inconsistent serif font in our “Veterans for Obama” logo or thought that our use of a rainbow in our Pride logo looked too childish, I could implement changes immediately. Our commitment to erasing the distinction between voters and the electoral process didn’t just make for good politics; it made for good design.

TRANSPARENCY 2.0

The Obama campaign was also committed to opening up the political process from the top down. After eight years of a secretive administration that made crucial decisions behind closed doors, we wanted to make our campaign open to the public and to make our choices open to scrutiny and discussion. The 2008 campaign came just at the moment that Facebook, Twitter, and other forms of social media provided

new lines of communication among people and heightened expectations for the level of disclosure available from politicians and organizations.

To bring the principle of transparency together with these new types of interactive media and to make the campaign a genuine grassroots endeavor, we created a campaign headquarters blog that generated the highest traffic of any part of our site. Bloggers Sam Graham-Felsen, Chris Hass, and Amanda Scott delivered content that told the entire story of the campaign. Rather than merely a daily diary following the candidate, the blog told the stories of supporters across the country. The blog posts were followed by thousands of readers every day. They generated hundreds of comments that we could use to gauge what our movement wanted to see, and that gave individual supporters another way to exchange thoughts and ideas. The popularity of the blog had a unifying effect, as our users' interest in and demand for more information required us to offer them new ways get that information. The website also became our biggest fund-raising channel. The Obama campaign was built on small donations from individuals, and just as individuals drove the

design process, they also drove the fund-raising process. As our interactive tools reached more and more people, design and fund-raising reinforced each other.

Interactive features like our campaign blog, the video diary, and individual My.BarackObama.com microsites gave us a way to make design decisions that were based on what voters really wanted, as opposed to what we thought they wanted, or what we wanted to tell them they wanted. Combined with web analytics, they gave us direct, firsthand information about what worked and what didn't, and let our design process be driven by hard data about voters' responses and opinions, not hypothetical speculations. Our design decisions could be genuinely responsive because we could pay close attention to both qualitative feedback and site traffic data, and avoid preemptive spin in favor of actually listening to what people had to say. Voters had a voice that mattered.



OBAMA'08



I WANT YOU TO CAUCUS

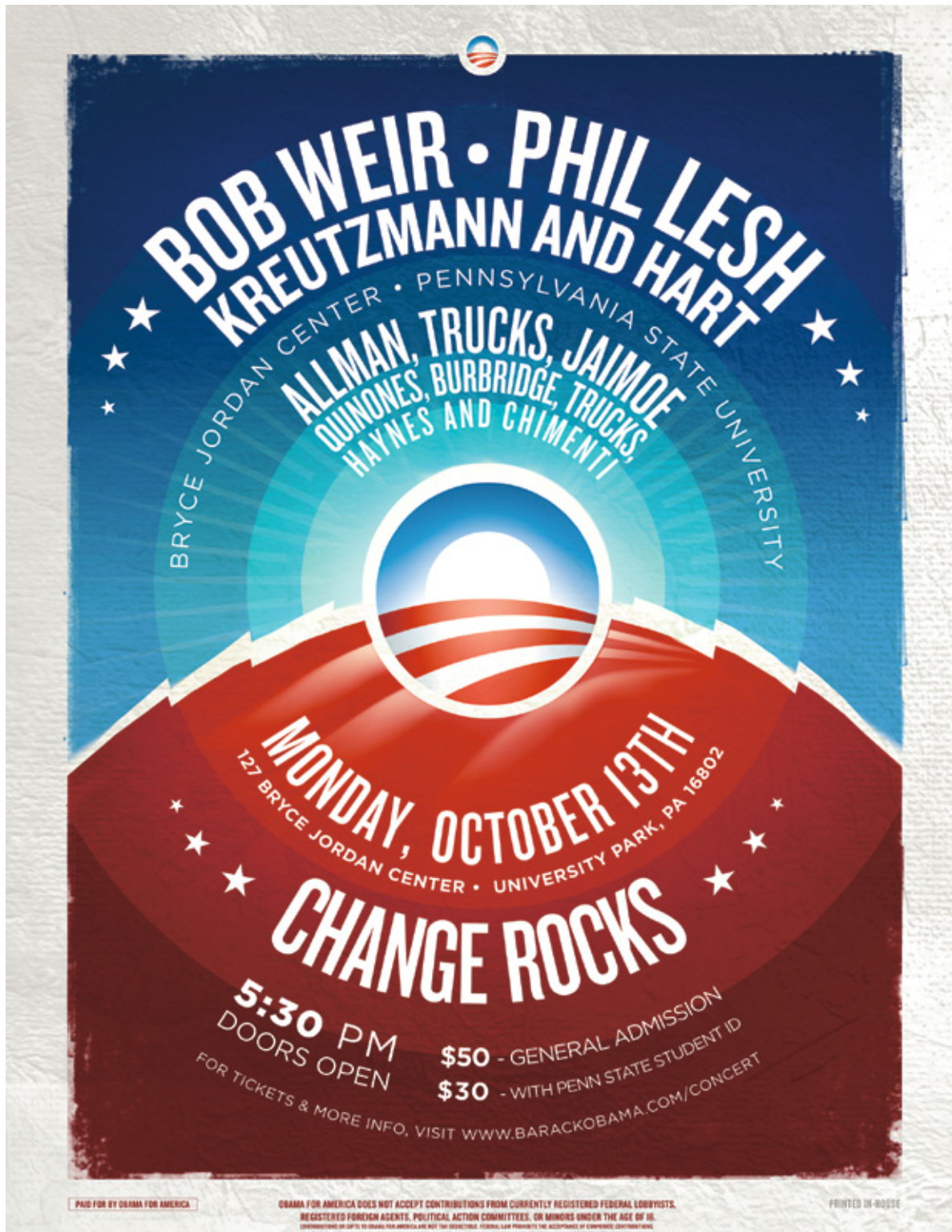
ON THURSDAY, JAN. 3RD | 6:30 PM

IOWA.BARACKOBAMA.COM

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PAID FOR BY OBAMA FOR AMERICA

PRINTED IN HOUSE



John Slabyk
Washington, D.C.

CHANGE
WE CAN BELIEVE IN



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WWW.BARACKOBAMA.COM

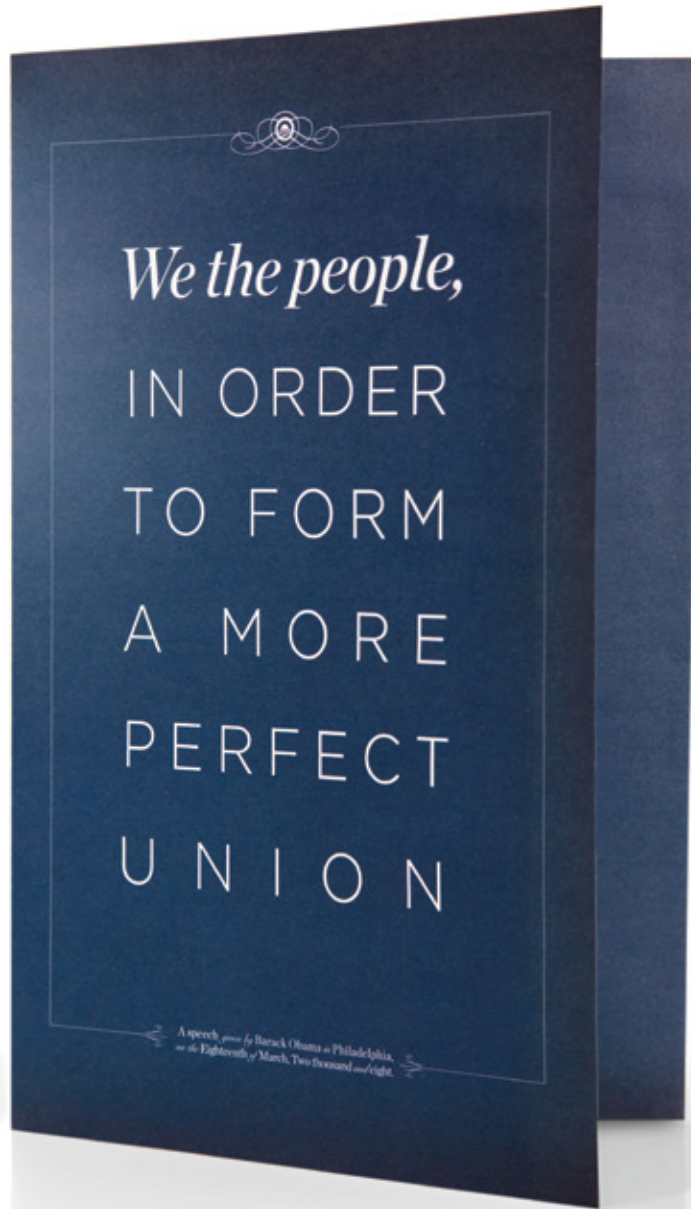


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CHANGE

WE CAN BELIEVE IN





WE *the* PEOPLE IN ORDER TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION



A speech given by Barack Obama

TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY ONE YEARS AGO, in a hall that still stands across the street, a group of men gathered and, with these simple words, launched America's improbable experiment in democracy. Farmers and scholars; statesmen and patriots who had traveled across an ocean to escape tyranny and persecution finally made real their declaration of independence at a Philadelphia convention that lasted through the spring of 1787.

The document they produced was eventually signed but ultimately unfinished. It was stained by this nation's original sin of slavery, a question that divided the colonies and brought the convention to a stalemate until the founders chose to allow the slave trade to continue for at least twenty more years, and to leave any final resolution to future generations.

Of course, the answer to the slavery question was already embedded within our Constitution - a Constitution that had at its very core the ideal of equal citizenship under the law; a Constitution that promised its people liberty, and justice, and a union that could be and should be perfected over time.

And yet words on a parchment would not be enough to deliver slaves from bondage, or provide men and women of every color and creed their full rights and obligations as citizens of the United States. What would be needed were Americans in successive generations who were willing to do their part - through protests and struggle, on the streets and in the courts, through a civil war and civil disobedience and always at great risk - to narrow that gap between the promise of our ideals and the reality of their time.

This was one of the tasks we set forth at the beginning of this campaign - to continue the long march of those who came before us, a march for a more just, more equal, more free, more caring and more prosperous America. I chose to run for the presidency at this moment in history because I believe deeply that we cannot solve the challenges of our time unless we solve them together - unless we perfect our union by understanding that we may have different stories, but we hold common hopes; that we may not look the same and we may not have come from the same place, but we all want to move in the same direction - towards a better future for our children and our grandchildren.

This belief comes from my unyielding faith in the decency and generosity of the American people. But it also comes from my own American story.

I am the son of a black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas. I was raised with the help of a white grandfather who survived a Depression to serve in Patton's Army during World War II and a white grandmother who worked on a bomber assembly line at Fort Leavenworth while he was overseas. I've gone to some of the best schools in America and lived in one of the world's poorest

nations. I am married to a black American who carries within her the blood of slaves and slaveowners - an inheritance we pass on to our two precious daughters. I have brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, uncles and cousins, of every race and every hue, scattered across three continents, and for as long as I live, I will never forget that in no other country on Earth is my story even possible.

It's a story that hasn't made me the most conventional candidate. But it is a story that has seared into my genetic makeup the idea that this nation is more than the sum of its parts - that out of many, we are truly one.

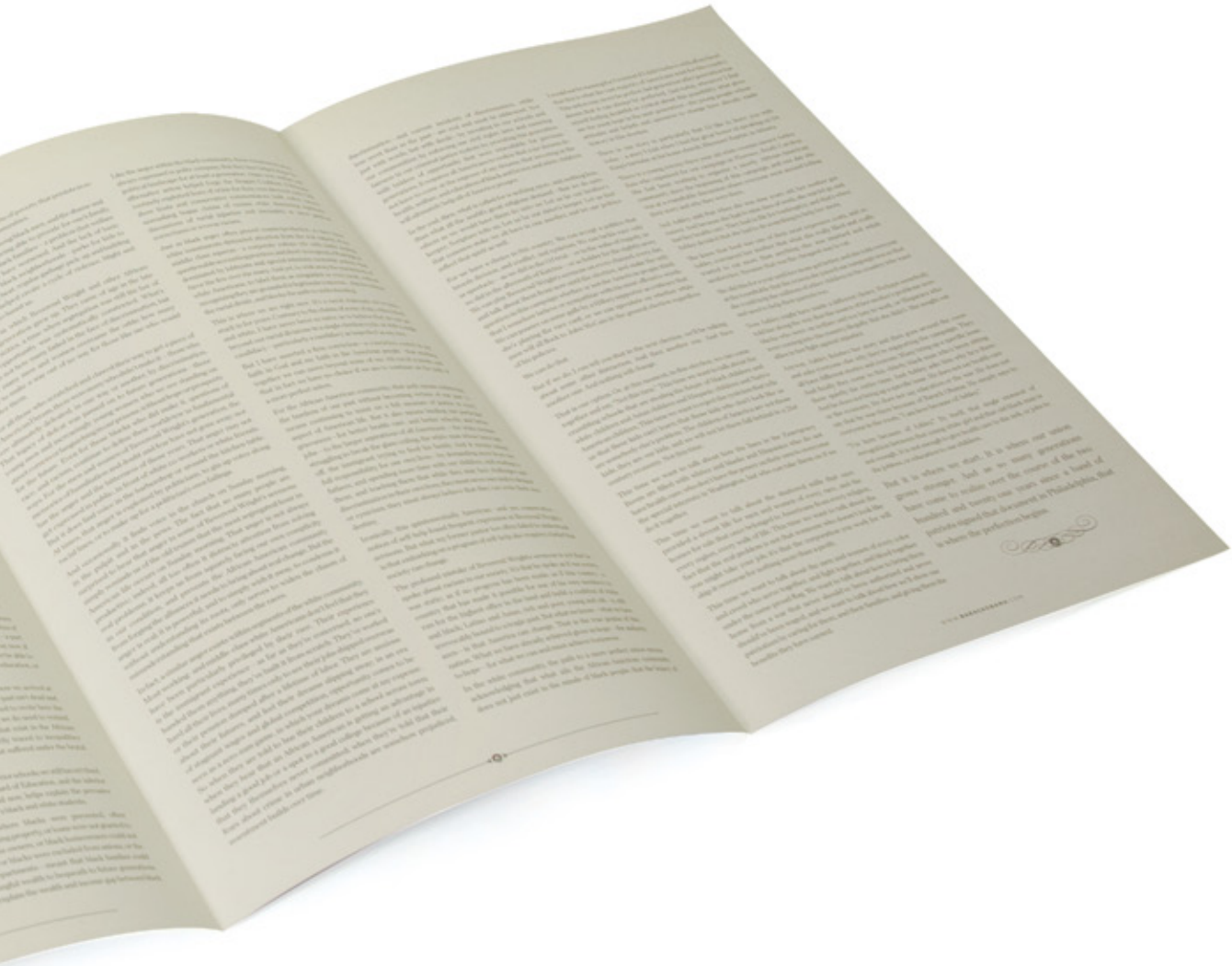
Throughout the first year of this campaign, against all predictions to the contrary, we saw how hungry the American people were for this message of unity. Despite the temptation to view my candidacy through a purely racial lens, we won commanding victories in states with some of the whitest populations in the country. In South Carolina, where the Confederate Flag still flies, we built a powerful coalition of African Americans and white Americans.

This is not to say that race has not been an issue in the campaign. At various stages in the campaign, some commentators have deemed me either "too black" or "not black enough." We saw racial tensions bubble to the surface during the week before the South Carolina primary. The press has scoured every exit poll for the latest evidence of racial polarization, not just in terms of white and black, but black and brown as well.

And yet, it has only been in the last couple of weeks that the discussion of race in this campaign has taken a particularly divisive turn.

On one end of the spectrum, we've heard the implication that my candidacy is somehow an exercise in affirmative action; that it's based solely on the desire of wide-eyed liberals to purchase racial reconciliation on the cheap. On the other end, we've heard my former pastor, Reverend Jeremiah Wright, use incendiary language to express views that have the potential not only to widen the racial divide, but views that denigrate both the greatness and the goodness of our nation; that rightly offend white and black alike.

I have already condemned, in unequivocal terms, the statements of Reverend Wright that have caused such controversy. For some, nagging questions remain. Did I know him to be an occasionally fierce critic of American domestic and foreign policy? Of course. Did I ever hear him make remarks that could be considered controversial while I sat in



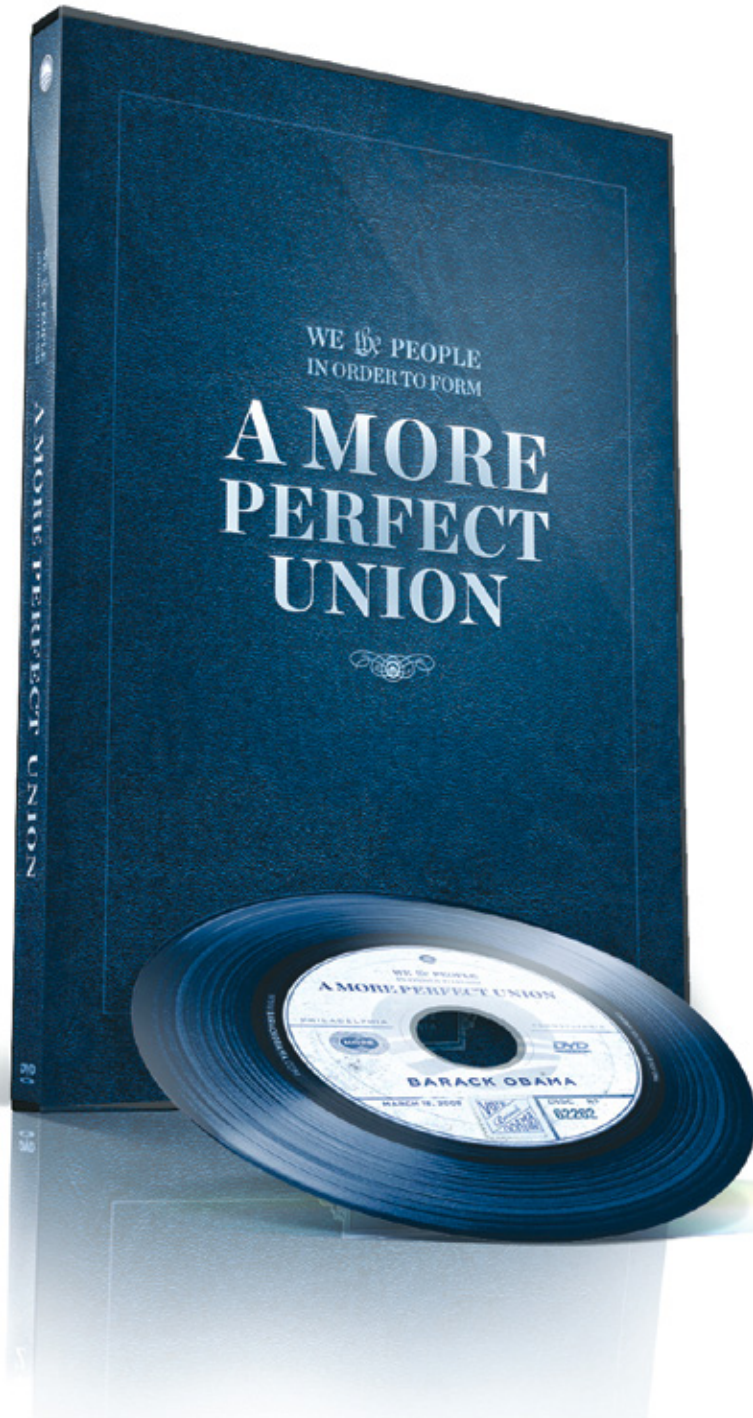
The Challenge

A More Perfect Union DVD

WE *the* PEOPLE
IN ORDER TO FORM

A MORE
PERFECT
UNION







STAND FOR CHANGE RALLY

with **BARACK OBAMA**

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8

KEY ARENA
305 HARRISON STREET
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

DOORS OPEN AT 11:00AM

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
RSVP IS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED

You can **RSVP ONLINE** *at*
WA.BARACKOBAMA.COM/SEATTLE



SPACE IS AVAILABLE ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVED BASIS.
FOR SECURITY REASONS, BAGS ARE NOT ALLOWED INSIDE AN EVENT.
PLEASE LIMIT PERSONAL ITEMS. NO SIGNS OR BANNERS ARE PERMITTED.
MEDIA COVERAGE: THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO THE PRESS.
FOR CREDENTIALS PLEASE VISIT WWW.BARACKOBAMA.COM/MEDIA/RSVP

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**CHANGE
WE CAN
BELIEVE IN**







THE POWER OF
ONE VOICE

WHEN YOU CHANGE THE MOOD OF

A ROOM

SUDDENLY, YOU CHANGE THE MOOD OF

A CITY

IF YOU CHANGE THE MOOD OF A CITY

THEN YOU CHANGE THE MOOD OF

A STATE

IF YOU CHANGE THE MOOD OF A STATE

THEN YOU CHANGE THE MOOD OF

A COUNTRY

IF YOU CHANGE THE MOOD OF A COUNTRY

THEN YOU CHANGE THE MOOD OF

THE **WORLD**

BARACK
OBAMA
2008



**YES
WE
CAN**



★
TEXAS
Two Step

EMAIL TICKET

November 4th, 2008



ELECTION NIGHT EVENT

**GRANT PARK
HUTCHINSON FIELD**

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4TH
GATES OPEN: 8:30PM**

**PLEASE ENTER FROM
EAST CONGRESS PKWY
OR EAST JACKSON BLVD**

For security reasons, do not bring bags. Please limit personal items. No signs, banners, or chairs allowed.

EMAIL TICKET

IDENTIFICATION WILL BE REQUIRED

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THE VISUAL VOICE

CHAPTER 4

One of the campaign's most dramatic innovations was our formation of a successful political brand, a type of messaging that had never been applied so systematically to politics. "Branding" is a scary word to apply to a political candidate, because it suggests that electoral politics has become just another consumer product. But branding isn't about creating a commodity. As Marty Neumeier notes in his book *Brand Gap*, branding is "a person's gut feeling about a product, service, or organization." Branding, in other words, is essentially emotive and evocative. The Obama "brand" consisted of the full range of sentiments and associations people had about the candidate, the feelings that he inspired among his supporters, and the emotions that those supporters successfully conveyed to other people to make their case for the candidate.

This approach to branding reveals perhaps the most important key to the success of the Obama brand. It was not contrived or manufactured by a marketing team or by political operatives. Rather, it was built on a reciprocal relationship between the candidate as a human being and the sincerity and commitment of his supporters. Branding naturally involved careful and thoughtful choices about design: as *Newsweek* noted, the campaign's design strategy was "much more cohesive and comprehensive than anything we've seen before, involving a logo, typefaces, and web design in a way that transcends the mere appropriation of commercial tactics to achieve the sort of seamless brand identity that the most up-to-date companies strive for." But because of the evocative character of both design and branding, our design choices would not have been compelling if they had not been driven by the genuine passion of the people who created them.

When we thought about the kind of campaign we wanted to create, we drew on our own belief in Obama and his ability to change politics and America for the better. Our design choices were the direct result of our own emotions about the candidate, not our purported expertise in branding. Our design scheme wouldn't have struck a chord among millions of Americans if it hadn't originated in a genuine set of feelings. Moreover, it would not have been compelling if the emotive elements of the brand hadn't been reiterated on every level of the campaign. The designers who took pay cuts or did work for free on the campaign did so because they believed in Obama and were not manufacturers of the brand. Instead, we created an emotional vehicle that was affirmed and diffused by our supporters on the ground. No slick campaign literature would have been sufficient to create a message that would change minds. It was people's experience of the campaign – their encounters with the people who took the time to knock on doors and set up tables outside of supermarkets – that ultimately conveyed the brand. Our representation of Obama was a vehicle for this emotional content, but it was not a replacement for it. Indeed, it would have been nothing without it. Every voice in the campaign was one part of a broad matrix, of which design was one of many constituent elements.

There was another critical element of the success of the Obama brand: It had nothing to do with the smoke and mirrors usually associated with terms like "brand management." Successful branding creates symmetry between image and substance, and brands work only when the organization corresponds to the individuals it is working to organize. In certain respects, our job was easy: We weren't trying to convince anyone that Obama was something that he wasn't. The Obama brand

worked because it was an accurate and transparent rendering of what Obama stood for, not a distortion of who he was or a way to pander to voters. It conveyed Obama's key qualities in a way that was both effective and accessible without compromising his intellectual heft or his eye for complexity. Obama was eloquent but down to earth. He was attuned to the concerns of everyday Americans without resorting to demagoguery. He didn't need distortion or spin, and our charge was to design a campaign that reflected his substance rather than trying to manufacture it. We drew our inspiration from his words and energy throughout the campaign, and our strategy would not have worked if Obama's message hadn't rung so true and hadn't resonated so deeply with the American public. Our work expressed the message and served as the messenger, but it was never more important than Obama himself.

THE MEANING OF THE MESSAGE

Part of why branding is effective is because it reinforces the consistency and stability of a particular message. This is especially critical for a political campaign: Without consistency, people find it difficult to find you credible or worth their loyalty. To gain the trust of the American people, Obama had to stay "on message," and part of being "on message" is maintaining consistency – including visual consistency. Barack Obama was a relatively young junior senator, and his opponents frequently attacked him for his lack of experience in elected office. Design elements like typography and the use of color would not add years of experience to Obama's resume, but they could play a role in determining what people perceived as the benefits of experience, such as a high level of organization, clear thinking, and flawless execution.

Accordingly, we conceived and implemented every element of our design scheme to deliver a consistent experience. We knew that people tend to vote for people they trust, and we made design choices that would consolidate voters' perceptions of Obama as a candidate who was worth their trust. Because of their evocative power, design and branding elements can create a stable personal bond between voters and the candidate. We wanted voters to see and think the same things every time they thought of Obama, and we wanted to elicit the feeling that he was a familiar figure whose attributes and values they could relate to and trust. If our designs were all over the map, people would think the same of our message. Our tightly integrated visual strategy strengthened our public image of Obama, and served as a counterweight to the charges of inexperience that other candidates tried to level against him.

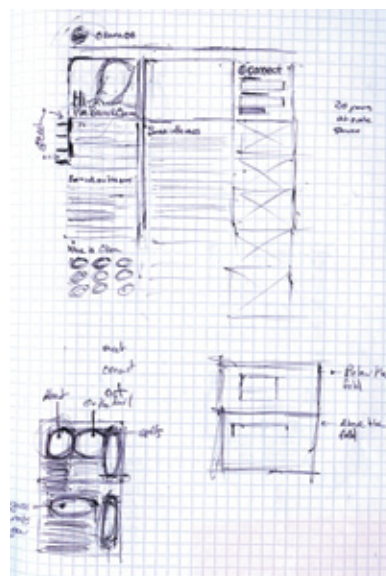
A NEW VISUAL LANGUAGE

Designers often want to pull in new creative solutions for each project or task, but in a sustained campaign this would have diluted our design vocabulary with too many dissonant elements. To establish a distinctive visual message, we created a customized visual language for the campaign, utilizing color, typography, and specific design components to build a visual narrative. We wanted people to make connections between the many different experiences of the campaign, like watching a rally on television, visiting the Obama website, or reading a piece of direct mail from the campaign. To make this relationship concrete, we experimented with elements such as typefaces, icons, and gradients to forge a cohesive visual vocabulary that would become the Obama brand standards.

Our visual language consisted of four styles that we created to give us a framework for each particular direction of our wide range of tasks. We referred to these styles as Campaign, Instant Vintage, Timeless, and Supporters. Each language consisted of a distinctive color palette, typography, and set of imagery. The Campaign style used the Obama bright blue gradient, the radiating white glow emanating from the horizon, and glossy “buttons” for actionable items. The Instant Vintage language adopted elements from America’s visual heritage to communicate the historic nature of the campaign and create connections with America’s past. The Timeless visual language pulled in imagery that was specifically associated with presidential and American history. Supporters was a catch-all category for the individual creative work created by our grassroots supporters that we wanted to incorporate into our efforts while distinguishing it from official campaign material.

A PALETTE FOR POLITICS

One of the subtlest yet most powerful choices designers make is how to use color. To create a controlled and consistent color palette to match our visual language, we used a simple primary bright blue color for the Campaign style to symbolize the Democratic Party, a marbled gray for the pediment of the White House, and Republican red as our “accent” color to illustrate the campaign’s theme of unity. The Instant Vintage colors were more muted: They were derived from historical images whose tones had faded over the years, and conveyed the historic qualities of those images. The Timeless visual language used a darker navy blue in place of the bright blue used in the Campaign style, as well as silver and a yellow that was reminiscent of parchment.



Blue – the color of the sky, the flag, and the Democratic Party – was our dominant color. The variety of mediums we were working in made it hard to make sure that our blue was consistent, whether it appeared on the web, in email, or in print. In different kinds of light, different camera lenses, and different television screens, the blue printed on placards and banners was never the exact same color as the one in our original swatch book. Over the course of the campaign, our ability to maintain a blue that would be bright and vibrant became more controlled and consistent in a broader range of media, and had the effect of making the campaign seem brighter and brighter as we inched toward Election Day.

BARACKOBAMA.COM

Even as recently as the 1990s, a political campaign's message was limited to a poster and a segment on the nightly news. Now, the internet is a central part of our culture, and voters can get information from independent blogs, campaign websites, YouTube videos, email, and social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. This has made more information than ever before available to voters, and has dramatically expanded the potential interface between voters and candidates. To maximize the potential of these technologies, we needed our website to attract visitors, give them a reason to stick around, and link their experience online with our efforts on the ground. User-friendly information architecture and site design would be the foundation for such features as our campaign blog, videos, social networking, and volunteer mobilization. Since our fund-raising strategy was focused on small individual donations, our website would also play a central role in determining its success.

In the fall of 2007, Michael Slaby, Joe Rospars, John Slabyk, and I stayed up for a late-night brainstorming session to discuss what the site needed to do for Obama to be successful in the primary races. We started by identifying key verbs, such as “persuade,” “raise,” and “connect,” and used them to determine the basic infrastructure that we would use to re-design the site.

This process was an opportunity for John and me to consider the full range of design questions we had been mulling over in our first months on the campaign: How should we use color, typography, and photographs? Does this color of sky blue make the senator appear “in the clouds”? Does this dark blue make him appear sinister? Can we bring in grays and whites that resemble the polished marble facade of the White House without it seeming presumptuous? Can we use only Gotham for headlines, or should it be a serif typeface?

We zeroed in on key objectives: to systematically control the use of color, adhere to consistent typographic styles, to communicate hope through emotive design elements, and to separate various components of content in a logical order would create a familiar user experience no matter what page a user landed on. We also needed consistent design elements, navigation, and page layout that would look the same in whatever browser our users happened to use.

However, we had some serious constraints. We'd inherited a site that already had hundreds of pages that were live, and more were being created every day. The site was going to constantly evolve, and we needed to develop work-arounds that accommodated constant additions and were custom-made to bridge the gap between what we had and what we wanted. We were also short on time and personnel. Most websites for major operations, corporate or otherwise, let designers start from the

beginning and give them months to create site infrastructure and to code and test the site. We simply did not have the luxury of time and extra staff that usually comes with working in an agency or web development shop, and that meant that we had to rethink much of the conventional wisdom about how to create a website.

We knew that our site was going to receive very high traffic at certain moments, such as during speeches, election results, and televised debates. To create a well-oiled machine we were going to need to deliver content during and after key events. We also needed to make our content static so we could distribute it over a content delivery network, maximizing bandwidth and avoiding backlogs when the site received a swarm of visitors at once. This would require new design templates for every page, so we created a library of assets to make the production work as simple as possible.

We were using the back-end structure for MyBarackObama.com, which had been developed by Blue State Digital. Our other main domain, BarackObama.com, would be accessed through different servers. We would compensate for our lack of time by developing the website live, something that just isn't done in most professional web development operations. There were also certain standard server administration tasks that we weren't going to have time to attend to. Initially, the pace of our development process didn't give us the room for instituting a file versioning repository to control files. This meant making edits on live pages, which was risky business. We also faced another problem: Since we weren't creating every single page from the ground up, we didn't have the time to go through every bit of code before going live to make sure every page complied with standards for page validation. This would

have made sense for a single product, but not something this expansive, and not at this pace. We were working on all pages at once, in real time.

These weren't ideal working conditions for a web designer, but they created opportunities to rethink how to make the site do what we wanted it to do. Because we didn't have time for formal focus groups, we relied on A/B testing and Google Analytics to make decisions about how to tweak the design and optimize it for our users. This let us base our changes and choices on solid empirical evidence, rather than a small sample pool. Because we could quickly see what was working and what wasn't from direct feedback and hard data from users, we could take much of the guesswork out of the site design. The people who tested our site and determined our decisions were our visitors.

Our reliance on analytics made designing and building portions of the website as much of a grassroots effort as knocking on doors and making phone calls. In our case, the grassroots served as the measuring stick of success. By running experiments we could easily solve problems, answer questions, determine best practices, and understand our supporters.

This approach extended to our other choices about design. For example, most designers see splash pages as taboo. They are seen as an annoying imposition to users, since they require an additional click to enter the main site. However, to build our stock of usable data for targeted volunteering and fund-raising emails, we decided to use a splash page to ask visitors for their email address and ZIP code. This built our email strategy into our site design from the top down. The information users gave us from our splash page created the bulk of our email list, which became the largest of any campaign in history. It

enhanced our stock of direct contact information campaign, letting us reach as many interested people as possible without resorting to such clumsy techniques as “robocalls.”

We also designed the site to invent new ways of making our campaign as participatory as possible. To draw on the particular talents and resources of our supporters, we asked everyone who donated to our campaign for their profession. We used this information to generate specific funding appeals, but we also used it in other ways: When we decided to design a campaign T-shirt, we sent an invitation to every user who had described themselves using the words “artist,” “designer,” or “creative.” If they wanted to submit a design, the e-mail gave them a link that sent them to a page with the requisite visual assets so they could create a design and upload it to the site. In just a few days, we had thousands of T-shirt designs. We made the contest into a vote for “Tees By the People, for the People,” letting users cast their ballots. The shirt with the highest number of votes won, and was available for purchase on the site.

Design and analytics were critical to the success of our online campaign because we could use them to fine-tune how to communicate most effectively with users. We could see, for example, that more people donated when our fund-raising page was in one column instead of two, and then make future decisions accordingly to maximize the potential of each visit. Our grassroots orientation became more than an ideal; it was a way to create good design. This in turn fulfilled our ambition for our work as designers: We didn’t just make things pretty – we made things work.

The science of web analytics will change dramatically over the coming years. Previous campaigns have relied on polls and focus groups to nail down that nebulous thing called “public

opinion.” But these approaches involve extrapolation and projection, which means that they are often at several degrees removed from what people actually think. The optimization technology that we used to make our decisions is the same technology that lets Google target ads to you based on how you use the web. In the consumer context, this will give advertisers the ability to direct ads to people who are more likely to respond to them. In the political sphere, it means that web analytics, complemented by the qualitative feedback of site comments, can provide far more direct information to campaigns much more quickly than ever before. They also give campaigns a measure of success that has never been available in such tangible form before an election.

This technology has dramatic implications, because it has the potential to transform how citizens interact with both political candidates and their elected representatives. As more and more of politics goes online, this technology can democratize the relationship between voters and politicians, making government and electoral politics far more responsive to individuals based on how they access and use information resources. These technologies are not merely an adjunct to other elements of campaigning. They are going to fundamentally change how campaigns are run and how people go about the business of democracy. They will play a central role in future campaigns because they are the best way to communicate information, mobilize support, and respond to voters. In this case, the medium really is the message, and we are just beginning to understand the implications. Our use of analytics in the Obama campaign heralds a new era: The future of politics will be online.



**REBUILD NEW ORLEANS.
REBUILD TRUST.**
WATCH THE VIDEO ▶

COUNTDOWN TO CHANGE Host a House Party ▶

Join Obama Mobile
TXT GO TO **OBAMA (62262)**

Iowa HQ **NEVADA HEADQUARTERS**
NEW HAMPSHIRE HQ **South Carolina HEADQUARTERS**

Upcoming Events

- Missouri Women for Obama Organizational Meeting
September 10 | St. Louis, MO
- Barack Obama Policy Speech in Clinton
September 12 | Clinton, IA
- Barack Obama Town Hall Meeting in Davenport
September 12 | Davenport, IA
- Barack Obama Town Hall

Visit the Official **OBAMA STORE**

In the News

- Barack 2, Hillary 0; Bishop backs Obama**
Atlanta Journal-Constitution | September 10, 2007
- Obama scheduled to make Iraq speech in Clinton, Iowa**
Quad-City Times | September 10, 2007
- Obama Rocks the House in San Francisco**
BeyondChron | September 10, 2007
- Obama hits familiar themes for enthusiastic Oregon crowd**
Associated Press | September 08,

Obama HQ Blog

- Q&A with Colorado director Ray Rivera**
by Sam Graham-Felsen | September 10, 2007
- Obama calls for immediate change of course in Iraq**
by Sam Graham-Felsen | September 10, 2007
- Barack to deliver major Iraq speech**
by Sam Graham-Felsen | September 10, 2007
- Video: Students for Barack**

BARACKTV

- A Rally with Barack in Waukegan**
Barack leads a rally with several hundred Iowans in Waukegan on Sept. 4, 2007.
- Barack Obama: Labor Day in Manchester, NH**
Barack spoke to the crowd at a rally held in Manchester, NH on Labor Day 2007.

My.BarackObama.com

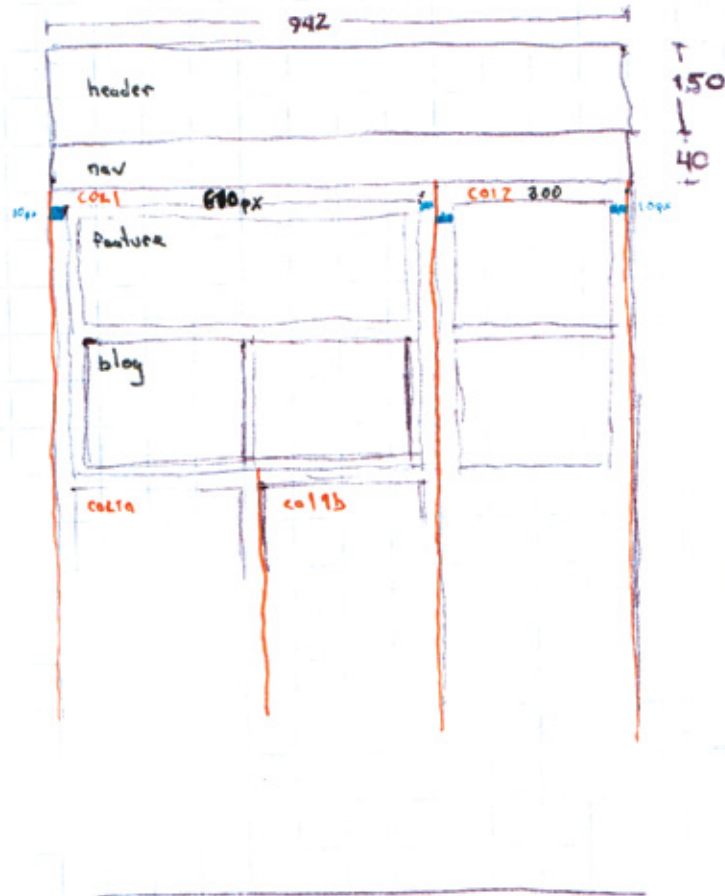
- Profile
- Events
- Friends
- Blog
- Groups
- Fundraising

Action Center
CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ▶

Original Site Design

The campaign website before the redesign in December of 2007.

OBAMA 08



padding: 10px

Sketch of Website's Pixel Dimensions

This sketch from my sketchbook was used while programming the site.

OBAMA'08

TODAY'S FEATURE:
FIRED UP AT THE JJ
[> Learn More](#)



WE *The* PEOPLE

- Phone
- Fundraise
- Travel to an early state
- Reach out to friends

VOLUNTEER

BARACK TV



Barack's Speech at the JJ Dinner
 Des Moines, Iowa Saturday, November 11, 2007

OBAMA BLOG

Honoring Those Who Serve on Veterans Day
 Check out some pictures from this weekend. This slideshow includes the sign war on Friday night and all the events on Saturday. [Read more](#)
 By Jane Mulligan | November 12, 2007

Obama says he'll fight for middle class
 Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama said Wednesday he would take on banking, insurance and corporate interests to give the struggling middle class relief. [Read more](#)
 The Nashua Telegraph | November 08, 2007

[View All Blogs](#)

GET INVOLVED

Email Address Zip Code

GROW THE MOVEMENT

Own a piece of this historic campaign.
[DONATE](#)

MEET AN OBAMA SUPPORTER

Marissa Medeiros from San Francisco, CA
 Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama said Wednesday he would take on banking, insurance and corporate interests to give the struggling middle class relief. [Read more](#)

[Become a supporter](#)

THE NEWS

Obama says he'll fight for middle class
 Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama said Wednesday he would take on banking, insurance and corporate interests to give the struggling middle class relief. [Read more](#)
 The Nashua Telegraph | November 08, 2007

Obama says he'll fight for middle class
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 The Nashua Telegraph | November 08, 2007

[View the News](#)

EVENTS



October 23, 2007
Boston Rally
 in San Francisco, CA

October 23, 2007
Boston Rally
 in San Francisco, CA

November 12, 2007
South Carolina Countdown to Change
 in San Francisco, CA

[View All Events](#)

SHOP & SUPPORT



Ladies Obama Ploose
 \$60.00
[Add to Cart](#)

SHOP & SUPPORT

- Obama Yard Sign \$5.00
- Obama Button \$4.00
- Obama Bumper Sticker \$3.50

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?



BARACK ON THE ISSUES

Barack Obama supports full civil unions and Federal Right for LGBT Couples.
 Barack Obama supports full civil unions that give same-sex couples equal legal rights and privileges as married couples, including the right to assist their loved ones in times of emergency as well as equal health insurance, employment benefits, and property and adoption rights. [Read more](#)

[View the Issues](#)

THE CAUCUS CENTER

Take a look inside the caucus

ACTION CENTER

Take action today?
 How can help in this movement for change?

SIGN UP FOR MY.BARACKOBAMA.COM

- Friends
- Groups
- Events
- Fundraising
- Messages
- Blog

- Facebook
- MySpace
- YouTube
- BlackPlanet
- Flickr
- LinkedIn
- Rock the vote
- Obama Mobile

IOWA	NEW HAMPSHIRE	NEVADA	SOUTH CAROLINA
<p>JJ Pictures Check out some pictures from this weekend. Read more</p> <p>JJ Dinner: In the News Check out some pictures from this weekend. Read more</p> <p>Barack's JJ Speech Is can you missed it? Here is the speech everyone is talking. Read more</p>	<p>Happy Veterans Day Barack Obama today released the following statement on Veterans Day. Read more</p> <p>Deval Patrick Leads Caucuses from Massachusetts to New Hampshire On Saturday Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick... Read more</p>	<p>Veterans' Day with Major General Scott Grimes Retired Air Force Major General Scott Grimes spoke yesterday. Read more</p> <p>Big Weekend for Team Obama Across the Country... and South Carolina! Maybe you've been watching the national blog and getting fired up. Read more</p>	<p>Veterans' Day with Major General Scott Grimes Retired Air Force Major General Scott Grimes spoke yesterday. Read more</p> <p>Big Weekend for Team Obama Across the Country... and South Carolina! Maybe you've been watching the national blog and getting fired up. Read more</p>

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OBAMA'08



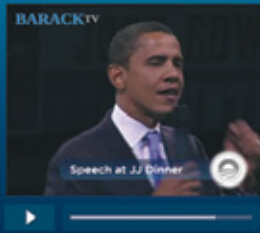
"I'm asking you to believe.
Not just in my ability to bring about
real change in Washington...
I'm asking you to believe in yours."

EN ESPAÑOL

- LEARN
- MULTIMEDIA
- TAKE ACTION
- THE UNITED STATES
- THE PEOPLE
- DONATE**

TURNING *The* PAGE ON CONVENTIONAL THINKING

- ARTICLE 1**
- 2
- 3
- 4



View more videos

NEWS

NOV 13 2007
Iowa Independent on Obama's crossover appeal
Story posted by New York Times
CONTINUE >

NOV 13 2007
Iowa Independent on Obama's crossover appeal
Story posted by OC Times
CONTINUE >

SHOP & SUPPORT



Ladies Obama Fleece
\$50.00
Black
Buy Now

- SHOP & SUPPORT
- + Obama Yard Sign \$8.00
 - + Obama Button \$4.00
 - + Obama Bumper Sticker \$3.50

BLOG

STORIES EVENTS **VIEW**

NOV 13 2007
Iowa Independent on Obama's crossover appeal
Here's a must-read from the Iowa Independent: "To Iowans, electability means that we need to win this election," said Dale Hedgecoth, ...
CONTINUE >
Story posted by Sarah Ranney

NOV 13 2007
Iowa Independent on Obama's crossover appeal
Here's a must-read from the Iowa Independent: "To Iowans, electability means that we need to win this election," said Dale Hedgecoth, one of... for Obama's most out-spoken ...
CONTINUE >
Story posted by Sarah Ranney

View all blog posts

EVENTS

- NOV 17 2007
Texas Countdown to Change
LARGO, TX
- DEC 2 2007
Boston Countdown to Change
BOSTON, MA
- DEC 13 2007
Charlottesville Countdown to Change
CHARLOTTESVILLE, SC

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Phonebanking
- Fundraising
- Travel to an early state
- Reach out to friends

VOLUNTEER

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Email Address

Zip Code SIGN UP

MAKE A MATCHING DONATION

MEET A SUPPORTER



Marissa Medenza
from San Francisco, CA
Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama said Wednesday he would take on banking, insurance and ...[Read more](#)

Become a supporter!

BARACK ON THE ISSUES

Barack Obama supports full civil unions and Federal Right for LGBT Couples.

View the issues

THE CAUCUS CENTER

Take a look inside the caucus

ACTION CENTER

Take action today?
How can help in this movement for change?

SIGN UP FOR MYBARACKOBAMA.COM

Have your own ObamaBlog®

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?



VISIT YOUR STATE PAGE

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- North Dakota



OBAMA'08

LEARN ABOUT BARACK

ISSUES FACING US

ACTION GET INVOLVED

PEOPLE COMMUNITIES

TURNING THE PAGE ON CONVENTIONAL THINKING

Hong Kong Phooley, number one super guy. Hong Kong Phooley, quicker than the human eye. He's got style, a groovy



PLAY VIDEO



MEET BARACK OBAMA GET TO KNOW HIS STORY

GET INVOLVED

1 PHONEBANK

2 FUNDRAISE

3 VISIT AN EARLY STATE

4 SPREAD THE WORD



BARACKTV



OBAMABLOG



RECENT VIDEO
RECLAIMING THE AMERICAN DREAM



Title one
QUICK DESCRIPTION



Fire it up, ca
QUICK DESCRIPTION



Title one
QUICK DESCRIPTION

MOST RECENT | MOST POPULAR | NEXT 3

A Week - in Pictures
by Gray Brooks

A Week - in Pictures
by Gray Brooks

This Week in the Early States
by Sarah Ramey

Sunday Clips
by Sarah Ramey

Obama speaks to UAW members in Ottawa, IL
by Sam Graham-Felsen

RSS View Archives

Hong Kong Phooley, number one super guy. Hong Kong Phooley, quicker than

DONATE NOW



I'M ASKING YOU TO BELIEVE. Not just in my ability to bring about real change in Washington ... I'm asking you to believe in yours.

BARACK OBAMA
OCT 22 2007



THE NEWS



ACTION CENTER

OCT 5 [VIEW] The Associated Press
Obama pledges better veterans care

OCT 5 [VIEW] The Des Moines Register
Obama says soldiers should not get unexpected tour extensions

OCT 5 [VIEW] The Hill
Obama, Harkin write to Bush about USDA stance on black farmers

RSS View Archives



17 Maryland Countdown to Change
Largo, MD

17 Madison Countdown to Change
Madison, WI

17 Charlottesville Countdown to Change
Charlottesville, VA



ARE YOU FROM IOWA? Get local news and event info

"I'm asking you to believe.
Not just in my ability to bring about
real change in Washington...
I'm asking you to believe in yours."

EN ESPAÑOL

GET INVOLVED

Email Address

Zip Code SIGN UP

- LEARN
- THE SOLUTIONS
- MULTIMEDIA
- TAKE ACTION
- THE UNITED STATES
- THE PEOPLE
- DONATE



ARTICLE
1

2

3

4

OBAMA AT FOREIGN POLICY FORUM [Read More...](#)

NOV 20 2007

Barack Talks to Students and Local Residents in Alton, New Hampshire

After releasing his plan to provide a comprehensive, world-class education for every child at Manchester Central High School this morning, Barack headed north for a series of Meet the Candidate events at high schools in the Lakes Region and Mount Washington Valley as snowfall marked the beginning of another New Hampshire winter. [Read more...](#)
Story posted by Sarah Ramey

OTHER STORIES

- Women for Obama
- Obama on VetVoice now
- Tell us your stories
- Bring Your Passion for Barack to UNLV
- Morning News
- Iowa Independent on Obama's crossover appeal
- Barack Talks with Google & YouTube

[VIEW THE ARCHIVE](#)

NEWSROOM

NOV 20 2007

Iowa Independent on Obama's crossover appeal

Story posted by New York Times

NOV 20 2007

Iowa Independent on Obama's crossover appeal

Story posted by QC Times

SUPPORT STORE



Ladies Obama Fleece
Black \$50.00
[Buy Now](#)

SHOP & SUPPORT

- Obama Yard Sign \$8.00
- Obama Button \$4.00
- Obama Bumper Sticker \$3.50

OBAMA EVENTS



NOV 14 2007

Rally in San Francisco

San Francisco, CA

DEC 2 2007

Boston Countdown to Change

Boston, MA

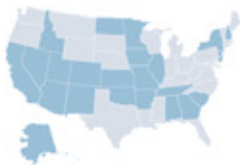
DEC 2 2007

Boston Countdown to Change

Boston, MA

[VIEW ALL EVENTS](#)

STATE PAGE



GO TO YOUR STATE PAGE

- | | | |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| Alabama | Louisiana | Ohio |
| Alaska | Maine | Oklahoma |
| Arizona | Maryland | Oregon |
| Arkansas | Massachusetts | Pennsylvania |
| California | Michigan | Rhode Island |
| Colorado | Minnesota | South Carolina |
| Connecticut | Mississippi | South Dakota |
| Delaware | Missouri | Tennessee |
| Florida | Montana | Texas |
| Georgia | Nebraska | Utah |
| Hawaii | Nevada | Vermont |
| Idaho | New Hampshire | Virginia |
| Illinois | | |

TAKE ACTION THINGS YOU CAN DO

- Phonebanking
- Fundraising
- Travel to an early state
- Reach out to friends

MEET BARACK OBAMA

EARLY STATES FIND YOUR LOCAL HQ



BARACK TV FIND YOUR LOCAL HQ



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OBAMA SUPPORTERS

 **Marissa Medenza**
from San Francisco, CA
Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama said Wednesday he would take on... [Read more ...](#)

THE SOLUTIONS

Create a Transparent and Connected Democracy

Read about Barack's Technology and Innovation for a New Generation

ACTION CENTER TAKE ACTION TODAY



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Make Friends • Host Events
Help Fundraise • Have a Blog

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OBAMA EVERYWHERE

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"TODAY WE BEGIN IN EARNEST the work of making sure that the world we leave our children is just a little bit better than the one we inhabit today."

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SIGNUP FOR EMAIL UPDATES

Email Address

Zip Code SIGN UP

- LEARN
- ISSUES
- ACTION
- PEOPLE
- STORE
- BLOG

DONATE NOW

December 12
Turning the Page on Conventional Thinking

The Women for Obama Story
NY Times on Obama and local media
Digg Obama
The Women for Obama

TURNING *The* PAGE ON CONVENTIONAL THINKING

MEET BARACK OBAMA

BARACK TV

BARACK'S SPEECH
at the Jefferson Jackson Dinner

▶

OBAMA BLOG

November 13
Our Kids, Our Future: Town Hall Events at New Hampshire Schools

"I'm impatient with a school system that is leaving too many children behind," Barack said during his return to Kennett High School in Conway earlier this evening. Barack spoke to jam-packed high school gymnasiums

CONTINUE READING

- Dec 12 The Women for Obama Story
- Dec 11 NY Times on Obama and local media
- Dec 13 Our Kids, Our Future: Town Hall Events at New Hampshire Schools
- Dec 13 Digg Obama
- Dec 12 The Women for Obama Story
- Dec 11 NY Times on Obama and local media
- Dec 10 Our Kids, Our Future: Town Hall Events at New Hampshire Schools

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Phonebank
- Fundraise
- Visit an Early State
- Spread the Word

OBAMA NEWS

November 13
Obama's Cheering Section Ups The Volume

"I'm impatient with a school system that is leaving too many children behind," Barack said during his return to

CONTINUE READING

- Dec 12 Obama's wife meets local working women by NEW YORK TIMES
- Dec 11 Obama offers plan for averting credit trouble by DES MOINES REGISTER
- Dec 13 Barack Talks with Google & YouTube by TIME
- Dec 13 Bring Your Passion for Barack to UNLV by NEWSWEEK

EARLY STATES



WINTER GEAR
Obama Fleece Vest

OTHER ITEMS
Holiday Items
Yard Signs
Buttons

OBAMA EVENTS



Dec 7 **Barack Obama: Change Rocks**

at CHICAGO, IL

Dec 15 Meet the Candidate with Barack Obama

at TOMPLICE, IA

Dec 18 Join Michelle - Women for Obama

at EVERYTOWN, IL

I SUPPORT OBAMA BECAUSE

He is genuine. Unlike so many, Barack Obama shows a true understanding of the challenges facing the country and is true in his convictions.

Jim
Chicago, IL

OBAMA MAP



- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
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- Virginia
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- West Virginia
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OBAMA BIDEN

WE'RE ASKING YOU TO BELIEVE.
Not just in my ability to bring about
real change in Washington... I'm
asking you to believe in yours.

ILLINOIS
FIND AN EVENT NEAR YOU [GO](#)

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New Energy for America
Pop In Street

ORGANIZE FOR CHANGE

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OBAMA BLOG
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Joe Biden!

Breaking news: the lead message is out and it's official... Barack Obama has selected Joe Biden to be his running mate! Please take a minute to share your story with Joe and welcome him into our movement for change. For those of you who are from Delaware and know Joe best, we'd love to hear your experiences as a constituent of Senator Biden's. We'll make sure to share some of your stories with Senator Biden so he gets a chance to better know the...

CONTINUE READING

OTHER STORIES

- Aug 23 LMC: Senators Obama and Biden in Springfield, Illinois
- Aug 23 "I look forward to calling you Mr. Vice President!"
- Aug 23 Republican Senators Praise Senator Biden
- Aug 23 Message from Barack: The Vice Vice President
- Aug 23 Senators Come Together for Obama
- Aug 23 Friday, Fast Cheer: Another Misleading Attack Ad

VIEW THE BLOG

OBAMA NEWS
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The Obama Tax Plan

Even as Barack Obama proposes fiscally responsible tax reform to strengthen our economy and restore the confidence that has been lost in recent years, we hear the familiar problems and distortions from the guardians of the broken status quo. Many of these very same critics made many of these same overhyped predictions in previous elections. They said President Clinton's 1993 deficit-reduction plan would wreck the economy. Eight years and 23 million new jobs later, the economy proved them wrong.

CONTINUE READING

OTHER NEWS

- Aug 20 Obama promotes his economic plan in Marlborough
- Aug 19 Obama talks about immigration, border security
- Aug 17 Obama Backs Middle-Inn Bid to Win States From Republican Grip
- Aug 15 Man's Name will separate Democratic candidates
- Aug 11 One convention theme: No unity, security, change

VIEW ALL ARTICLES

OBAMA EVENTS
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SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 2008

Barack Obama in Springfield, IL in Springfield, IL

Search for Obama Events:

Zip Code: Search Radius: miles

Find Events

OBAMA MAP
DONATE NOW

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

Alabama	Kansas	Ohio
Alaska	Kentucky	Oklahoma
American Samoa	Louisiana	Oregon
Arizona	Maine	Pennsylvania
Arkansas	Maryland	Puerto Rico
California	Massachusetts	Rhode Island
Colorado	Michigan	South Carolina
Connecticut	Minnesota	South Dakota
Delaware	Missouri	Tennessee
District of Columbia	Montana	Texas
Florida	Nebraska	Utah
Georgia	Nevada	Vermont
Hawaii	New Hampshire	Virgin Islands
Idaho	New Jersey	Virginia
Illinois	New Mexico	Washington
Indiana	New York	West Virginia
Iowa	North Carolina	Wisconsin
Missouri	North Dakota	Wyoming

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YOU TO BELIEVE.
ability to bring about
in Washington ... I'm
to believe in yours."

ILLINOIS

FIND AN EVENT NEAR YOU **GO**

LIVE NOW **ON AIR**

AUGUST 23
Barack with Joe Biden
in Springfield, IL

WATCH NOW

BARACK TV [VIEW MORE](#)

Play Video

Barns for Obama: Ohio

<p>The Globe endorses its candidate to New Hampshire's Democratic presidential primary, Jan. 8th - Obama's candidacy leads America.</p> <p>WATCH A SPECIAL VIDEO MESSAGE FROM THE OBAMAS</p> <p>PLAY</p>	<p>OBAMA AND OPRAH in SOUTH CAROLINA and IOWA</p> <p>WATCH A SPECIAL VIDEO MESSAGE FROM THE OBAMAS</p> <p>PLAY</p>	<p>BY BEER DRINKING WOMEN IOWA PRECINCT CAPTAIN SWITCHES TO OBAMA</p> <p>WATCH A SPECIAL VIDEO MESSAGE FROM THE OBAMAS</p> <p>PLAY</p>	<p>JANUARY 8TH HISTORY WILL BE MADE</p> <p>500,000 CURRENT 800,000 CURRENT 1,000,000 CURRENT</p> <p>MAKE A HISTORY-DEFINING NIGHT AND DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT</p> <p>DONATE</p>	
<p>NEW HAMPSHIRE WATCH PARTIES TUESDAY • JANUARY 8TH</p> <p>HOST FIND</p>	<p>CROWDS BUILD IN NEW HAMPSHIRE</p> <p>FIND YOUR POLLING LOCATION</p>	<p>KEEP BUILDING the MOMENTUM AROUND NEW HAMPSHIRE</p> <p>DONATE</p>	<p>YES WE CAN THANK YOU, NEW HAMPSHIRE</p> <p>BUILD THE MOMENTUM</p>	<p>NEVADA RESULTS</p> <p>OBAMA 13 DELEGATES CLINTON 12 DELEGATES</p> <p>BUILD THE MOMENTUM</p>
<p>THIS CAMPAIGN RELIES ON YOU</p> <p>DONATE NOW</p>	<p>The SOUTH CAROLINA PRIMARY SATURDAY JANUARY 26TH</p> <p>FIND YOUR POLLING LOCATION</p>	<p>Caroline KENNEDY A PRESIDENT LIKE MY FATHER</p> <p>READ NOW</p>	<p>OBAMA WINS SOUTH CAROLINA</p> <p>BUILD THE MOMENTUM</p> <p>DONATE NOW</p>	<p>Thank you ELIZABETH & JOHN</p> <p>READ MORE</p>
<p>THE GOAL ONE MILLION PEOPLE WHO OWN THIS CAMPAIGN</p> <p>As of Jan 21 at 3:00pm 931,633</p> <p>DONATE NOW</p>	<p>THIS WEEK'S ENDORSEMENTS</p> <p>INTERNATIONAL METROPOLITAN LEADERSHIP & CHANGE TO WIN & INTERNATIONAL METROPOLITAN LEADERSHIP</p> <p>JOIN US</p>	<p>LIVE from FORT WORTH</p> <p>LIVE</p>	<p>WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH</p> <p>Women's History Month isn't just a chance to celebrate women's history. It's a chance to honor the pioneering role women have played in shaping American history.</p> <p>READ MORE</p>	<p>THE BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE OBAMA'S PLAN FOR AMERICA</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>
<p>OBAMA ORGANIZING FELLOWS</p> <p>This summer we are looking for students or recent graduates who want to be a part of a new generation of leadership that serves, like Senator Obama, but that change comes from the ground up.</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>	<p>MIDNIGHT TONIGHT LAST CHANCE TO MAKE AN IMPACT IN MARCH</p> <p>31 DINNER</p> <p>DONATE NOW</p>	<p>YOU CAN HELP GET OUT THE VOTE in PENNSYLVANIA</p> <p>START MAKING CALLS</p>	<p>AMERICA AND THE WORLD OBSERVE EARTH DAY</p> <p>It's with this in mind that we ought not to act. It is a reminder that what is now a global effort began as a grassroots movement for change.</p> <p>READ MORE</p>	<p>FIND YOUR POLLING PLACE in PENNSYLVANIA</p> <p>FIND NOW</p>
<p>FIND YOUR POLLING PLACE in NORTH CAROLINA</p> <p>FIND NOW</p>	<p>TOGETHER WE CAN HELP the DISASTER VICTIMS</p> <p>VISIT THE American Red Cross</p> <p>HELP THE VICTIMS</p>	<p>MEMORIAL DAY HONORING GENERATIONS OF PATRIOTS</p> <p>READ BARACK'S STATEMENT</p>	<p>DEFEAT THE BUSH-MCCAIN FUNDRAISING MACHINE</p> <p>DONATE NOW</p>	<p>DEADLINE: SATURDAY LAST CHANCE TO MAKE AN IMPACT IN MAY</p> <p>Show the strength of our movement.</p> <p>DONATE NOW</p>
<p>TOGETHER WE CAN HELP the VICTIMS of the MIDWEST FLOODS</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>	<p>AL GORE OBAMA</p> <p>WATCH LIVE</p>	<p>FIGHT the SMEARS</p> <p>"Because we may still ourselves Democrats and Republicans, but we are Americans first. We are always American first."</p> <p>HELP PUSH BACK ON THE FALSE AND DIVISIVE METHODS OF OUR OPPONENTS.</p> <p>SPREAD the TRUTH</p>	<p>LIVE MICHIGAN BARACK OBAMA STUDENTS</p> <p>WATCH LIVE</p>	<p>CHANGE THAT WORKS FOR YOU ECONOMIC TOUR</p> <p>SOURCES THAT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR WORKING AMERICANS</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>
<p>LIVE from PITTSBURGH CHANGE THAT WORKS FOR YOU</p> <p>WATCH LIVE</p>	<p>UNITE CHANGE</p> <p>WATCH LIVE from UNITY, NH</p>	<p>UNITE CHANGE</p> <p>OVER 4,000 PEOPLE</p> <p>On June 28th, over 30,000 people attended leader parties in 47 US states to talk about why they have become engaged in the political process. Take a look at what happened.</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>	<p>DEADLINE: MIDNIGHT LAST CHANCE TO MAKE AN IMPACT IN JUNE</p> <p>Make a decision and show the strength of our movement.</p> <p>DONATE NOW</p>	<p>BARACK OBAMA the spirit of PATRIOTISM</p> <p>WATCH LIVE from INDEPENDENCE, MO</p>
<p>SENATOR OBAMA & MAYOR VILLARAIGOSA LIVE at the 29th ANNUAL LULAC CONVENTION</p> <p>WATCH LIVE</p>	<p>LIVE from NYC SENATOR OBAMA CAROLINE KENNEDY</p> <p>WATCH LIVE</p>	<p>OPEN CONVENTION BACKSTAGE BARACK</p> <p>DONATE NOW</p>	<p>JUDGEMENT to LEAD BARACK DISCUSSES THE WAR in IRAQ</p> <p>WATCH LIVE</p>	<p>BARACK OBAMA'S TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST and EUROPE</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>

IOWA CAUCUS
WATCH PARTIES
THURSDAY • JANUARY 28



HOST FIND

OUR MOMENT IS NOW

WATCH BARACK SPEAK FROM THE WHITE HOUSE



PLAY

IOWA
CHANGE
BEGINS HERE

CAUCUS TONIGHT ARRIVE BEFORE 6:30

FIND YOUR CAUCUS LOCATION

CHANGE IS COMING

OBAMA
WINS
IOWA

SEAL THE MOMENTUM

DONATE NOW

NEW HAMPSHIRE
OUR TIME
CHANGE
HAS COME
JANUARY 27

JOIN US

YES WE CAN

TO FAR IN 2008
128,604
OF YOU HAVE DONATED
AND STILL COUNTING

BUILD THE MOMENTUM

THE
GREAT NEED
HOUR



WATCH BARACK OBAMA'S SPEECH
AT EMERSON COLLEGE CAUCUS IN ATLANTA

REMEMBERING
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



PLAY

SOUTH CAROLINA
WATCH PARTIES
SATURDAY • JANUARY 25TH



HOST FIND

THE
ROAD TO
CHANGE
SOUTH CAROLINA

WATCH THE MOVEMENT

STATE of the RACE

30 of 34

BUILD THE MOMENTUM

DONATE NOW

TOGETHER WE CAN
HELP THE VICTIMS
of the SOUTHERN STORMS

HELP THE VICTIMS

OBAMA STRONGER AGAINST MCCAIN

In the past few weeks, seven different organizations have pulled the money and on average Obama beats McCain by 3.2%, while Clinton loses to the Arizona senator by 2.9%. Not a single (profit) has Clinton doing as well as Obama.

THE NEW REPUBLIC
FEB 3, 2008

READ NOW

Michelle and I were heartbroken to learn about the terrible tragedy that occurred in DeKalb today, and our thoughts and our prayers are with the victims and their families. While the full details are still unclear, what is clear is that this kind of senseless violence must stop, and all of us have a responsibility to do what we can to stop it.

BARACK OBAMA

THIS WEEK'S ENDORSEMENTS

SEIU & UFCW

SEIU: SERVICE EMPLOYERS INTERNATIONAL UNION
UFCW: UNITED FOOD AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS

JOIN US

THIS WEEK'S ENDORSEMENTS



TEMPERATIONAL LIVERS & WARRIORS
FEB 10, 2008

JOIN US

A MORE PERFECT UNION

WATCH BARACK SPEAK WITH RACE RESEARCHER



PLAY

MORE
VOICES
VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

GET INVOLVED

Governor
RICHARDSON
ENDORSES
BARACK



DONATE NOW

DINNER



Go down with Barack Obama and talk about the issues that matter to you. Make a donation to Barack's Fund, and you can get your own dinner tickets for an intimate dinner with Barack.

DONATE NOW

VOTE for CHANGE

You can send a powerful message to the special interests that dominate the old politics if millions of voters get registered to vote. Make the change in an environment of voter registration and mobilization drive. Find an event near you.

GET INVOLVED

DEADLINE: MIDNIGHT

LAST CHANCE TO
MAKE AN IMPACT
IN APRIL

Make a donation and show the strength of our movement.



DONATE NOW

STATE of the RACE

34 of 34

BUILD THE MOMENTUM

DONATE NOW

1,500,000
PEOPLE OWN A PIECE OF THIS CAMPAIGN

Supporters like you have built the largest grassroots movement in the history of presidential politics.

DONATE NOW

FIND YOUR
POLLING PLACE
in INDIANA



FIND NOW

GET WELL SOON
a message from
KENNEDY



OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE WITH YOU

WE DID IT

DEMOCRATIC
NOMINATION

DONATE NOW

WATCH
BARACK'S SPEECH
FROM ST. LOUIS



PLAY

THANK YOU
a message from
CLINTON



SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

UNITE
CHANGE



Now is the time to come together, around our campaign stations and hold a 10-state campaign to take on John McCain. Reach out to your community and host a Unite for Change party on June 28th.

FIND AN EVENT

OBAMA
ORGANIZING
FELLOWS



CHANGE
CONGRESS FROM
GROUND UP

LEARN MORE

LIVE—CHICAGO

GOVERNORS'
ECONOMIC
SUMMIT



WATCH
LIVE

FOR THE
COUNTRY I LOVE



WATCH OUR FIRST POST-PRIMARY AD
ON TV: 10:30 PM-11:00 PM EST, JAN. 23

NEW ENERGY FOR
AMERICA



LEARN MORE

LIVE—VEGAS

NEW ENERGY FOR
AMERICA
DISCUSSION



WATCH
LIVE

OPEN
CONVENTION
DENVER, COLORADO



MAKE A DONATION OF \$1 OR MORE, AND YOU CAN JOIN BARACK AT THE OPEN CONVENTION

LEARN MORE

BARACK
OBAMA



A NEW ERA OF SERVICE

WATCH LIVE from COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

FOR
INDEPENDENCE



WATCH BARACK'S SPEECH at PATRIOTISM

LISTENING
AMERICA



THIS MONTH, SEVEN OF SEVEN OF THE SENATE WILL HAVE HEARD IN how our communities to Barack's ideas. This summer will help shape the Democratic Party's Platform for Change.

GET INVOLVED

BARACK DISCUSSES
ECONOMIC
SECURITY
AMERICAN FAMILIES



WATCH
LIVE

OBAMA in BERLIN



PLAY

COMMEMORATING THE
18TH ANNIVERSARY
of the
AMERICANS
WITH DISABILITIES ACT



LEARN MORE



WATCH A SPECIAL
VIDEO INVITATION

BARACK OBAMA'S PLAN TO
SUPPORT
WORKING
WOMEN
AND THEIR FAMILIES



WITH A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM MICHELLE

READ NOW

WHO WILL BE
BARACK'S VP?



BE THE
FIRST
TO KNOW

SIGN UP NOW

<p>FIGHT SMEARS</p> <p>It's time to say it: Insults, Demagogues and Deceptions. But we are Americans. And we are always, <i>always</i> first.</p> <p>— BARACK OBAMA, FEB. 6, 2008</p> <p>HELP PUSH BACK ON THE FALSE AND DIVISIVE METHODS OF OUR OPONENTS.</p> <p>SPREAD THE TRUTH</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>	<p>ORGANIZE CHANGE</p> <p>Don't stand alone. Join a party in your neighborhood so the right Barack accepts the Democratic nomination.</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>	<p>MEET BARACK</p> <p>Learn about Barack's early years and his career in public service.</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>	<p>NEW ENERGY FOR AMERICA</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>
<p>SHOW YOUR SUPPORT</p> <p>Be the first to show your support for our team. Make a donation of \$15 or more right now, and get a free virtual OBAMA BIDEN car magnet.</p> <p>DONATE NOW</p> <p>OBAMA BIDEN</p> <p>— FIRST EDITION, \$7 CAR MAGNET</p> <p>WATCH THE VIDEO</p>	<p><i>Watch</i> MICHELLE'S SPEECH and SEND HER A PERSONAL MESSAGE</p> <p>WATCH THE VIDEO</p>	<p>DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION</p> <p>RENEWING AMERICA'S PROMISE</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>	<p>DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION</p> <p>ONE NATION</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>
<p>BARACK OBAMA ACCEPTS HIS DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION</p> <p>Show your support for our team by making a donation.</p> <p>DONATE NOW</p>	<p>BARACK HAS CHOSEN JOE BIDEN TO BE HIS RUNNING MATE</p> <p>SEND HIM A WELCOME NOTE</p>	<p>BARACK OBAMA ACCEPTS HIS DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION</p> <p>WATCH THE SPEECH</p>	<p>TOGETHER WE CAN HELP THE VICTIMS</p> <p>HURRICANE GUSTAV</p> <p>HELP NOW</p>
<p>NEIGHBOR FOR NEIGHBOR</p> <p>MAKE CALLS WITH BARRY AND THE VICTIMS FROM THE 9/11 TRAGEDY.</p> <p>KNOCK DOORS IN YOUR OWN NEIGHBORHOOD.</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>	<p>"NO MAVERICK"</p> <p>McCain and Palin will say anything to seem like agents of change. But they represent none of the same American George Bush policies.</p> <p>WATCH THE VIDEO</p>	<p>Today, we honor the memory of the lives that were lost on September 11, 2001, and grieve with the families and friends who lost someone they loved in New York City, at the Pentagon, and in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. We will never forget those who died.</p> <p>READ THE FULL STATEMENT</p>	<p>TOGETHER WE CAN HELP THE VICTIMS</p> <p>HURRICANE IKE</p> <p>Help those in need by visiting the American Red Cross</p>
<p>DEBATE WATCH PARTIES</p> <p>FRIDAY • SEPTEMBER 26 • 8PM EDT</p> <p>HOST OR ATTEND AN EVENT</p>	<p>STRONGER ECONOMY</p> <p>WATCH THE VIDEO</p>	<p>LEARN ABOUT BARACK'S PLAN FOR THE ECONOMY</p> <p>READ MORE</p>	<p>JUDGMENT FOR LEAD</p> <p>SECURING AMERICA RESTORING OUR STANDING</p> <p>READ MORE</p>
<p>"SPENDING SPREE"</p> <p>See the highlights of John McCain's big spending, including his tax plan, foreign aid, and more. In 2008, his plan to promote social security and the tax breaks for companies that report jobs.</p> <p>CAN WE AFFORD JOHN MCCAIN?</p> <p>WATCH THE VIDEO</p>	<p>See Biden's check list on the track about John McCain's health care plan, killing America's small business, and his health care plan for his health care plan by taking your health care benefits, and he calls them "the ultimate bridge to nowhere."</p> <p>WATCH THE VIDEO</p>	<p>"ONE WORD"</p> <p>John McCain promises a health care tax credit, but doesn't tell you that for the first time ever, he will make you pay more on your health care benefits.</p> <p>WATCH THE VIDEO</p>	<p>TWO NEW ADS FOCUSING ON HEALTH CARE AND ECONOMY</p> <p>WATCH NOW</p>
<p>"TAKETH"</p> <p>Obama tells Americans the truth about John McCain's health care plan, explaining that McCain pays for his tax credit by taking your health care benefits.</p> <p>WATCH THE VIDEO</p>	<p>"TESTED"</p> <p>John McCain's own company plan would reward families for their transparency and even taxpayer dollars to do it.</p> <p>WATCH THE VIDEO</p>	<p>WHAT'S YOUR OBAMA TAX CUT?</p> <p>BARACK OBAMA'S PLAN WILL CUT TAXES FOR 95 PERCENT OF WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES.</p> <p>FIND OUT</p>	<p>"90 PERCENT"</p> <p>McCain may say he's for George Bush, but he tells America honestly, "I voted with the President over 90% of the time..."</p> <p>WATCH THE VIDEO</p>
<p>A NEW DIRECTION FOR HEALTH CARE</p> <p>WATCH THE VIDEO</p>	<p>"BETTER OFF"</p> <p>Senator Obama knows that we simply can't afford more of the same. We need a new direction. Now. And that's why he is running for President.</p> <p>WATCH NOW</p>	<p>LAST CHANCE VOLUNTEER NEAR YOU TODAY</p> <p>FIND YOUR LOCAL VOLUNTEER EVENT</p>	<p>"HIS CHOICE"</p> <p>John McCain, in his own words, admits that he doesn't understand the economy well.</p> <p>WATCH NOW</p>
<p>FRONT ROW HISTORY</p> <p>You could join Barack on Election Night.</p> <p>DONATE NOW</p>	<p>VOTING INFORMATION FOR YOUR STATE</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>	<p>CALL SUPPORTERS IN BATTLEGROUND STATES</p> <p>ONE CALL COULD MAKE THE DIFFERENCE. HELP SET OUT THE VOTE IN THE LAST HOURS.</p> <p>MAKE CALLS NOW</p>	<p>RESULTS</p> <p>VIEW</p>



"SEVEN"

MCCAIN HAS LOST TRACK OF HOW MANY HOUSES HE HAS - HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND HOW TEN MILLION AMERICANS ARE GOING THROUGH?



WATCH THE VIDEO

"OUT OF TOUCH"

Yes, McCain thinks anyone making less than \$5 M lives in a trailer camp, which explains why he has little to offer working families that are struggling to make ends meet.



WATCH THE VIDEO

BARACK HAS CHOSEN JOE BIDEN TO BE HIS RUNNING MATE



SEND HIM A WELCOME NOTE



DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION SECURING AMERICA'S FUTURE

LEARN MORE

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION CHANGE WE CAN BELIEVE IN

LEARN MORE

MEET JOE BIDEN

Learn about Sen. Biden, and his history of fighting for change.



LEARN MORE



NATIONAL GRANDPARENTS DAY

THIS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH

SEND AN E-CARD



BARACK RESPONDS "WHAT YOU DON'T SEE AT THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION"

Watch Barack talk about the issues at stake in this election.



WATCH THE VIDEO

BARACK OBAMA'S PLAN FOR PROGRESS AMERICA'S PROMISE

This video key speeches from the 2008 campaign.



LEARN MORE



"STILL"

John McCain is simply out of touch with the lives of ordinary Americans. After 3 years of George Bush, he can't afford even to be sane.



WATCH THE VIDEO

"HONOR"

John McCain is making the most negative and dishonest campaign to ensure presidential history. He has demonstrated that he'll rather lose his integrity than lose this election.



WATCH THE VIDEO

PLAN FOR CHANGE



WATCH THE VIDEO



"ZERO"

Could have never won. McCain questioned the results. Close to the last presidential debate.



WATCH THE VIDEO

"PARACHUTE"

Obama is fighting to stop the practice of corporate executives getting thousands of dollars in golden parachutes while leaving workers high and dry.



WATCH THE VIDEO

OBAMA DETAILS HIS PLAN TO RAMP-START OUR ECONOMY, CREATE MILLIONS OF JOBS, AND BRING BACK OUR MAIN STREETS ALL ACROSS AMERICA.



WATCH THE VIDEO - READ THE PLAN



KEATING ECONOMICS

SEE THE DOCUMENTARY ABOUT JOHN KEATING AND THE BONDING OF A FINANCIAL GIG.



WATCH NOW

THE TRUTH ABOUT TAXES

Track Obama's plan to raise taxes for 98 percent of Americans voluntarily.



WATCH THE VIDEO

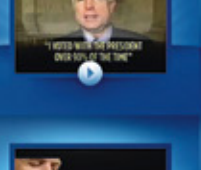
NEIGHBOR FOR NEIGHBOR



LEARN MORE

MAKE CALLS AND BATTLEGROUND VISITS FROM YOUR OWN HOUSE

KNOCK DOORS IN YOUR OWN NEIGHBORHOOD



YOU DECIDE

Don't be afraid to speak up. It's time to decide where we fight, and how strong our voice will be.



WATCH NOW

LEARN ABOUT THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

SEE CHILDS'S POWERFUL STORY



WATCH THE VIDEO

CHANGE VOTER PROTECTION CENTER

Stay up to date on the latest voting myths and rumors.



CHECK IT OUT



AMERICAN STORIES, AMERICAN SOLUTIONS



WATCH NOW



CHANGE VOTER PROTECTION CENTER

Stay up to date on the latest voting myths and rumors.



CHECK IT OUT



Thank You CHANGE CAN HAPPEN



"What you won't hear from this campaign or this party is the kind of politics that uses religion as a wedge, and politicians as a bludgeon — but even our opponents are not as competitors to challenge, but enemies to denigrate."
— Barack Obama, June 3, 2008

JOIN *the* OBAMA ACTION WIRE

STAY UP TO DATE ON RIGHT WING SMEARS

Email Address

Zip Code

SUBMIT

Sign up for the Obama Action Wire on Facebook

Sign up for the Obama Action Wire on MySpace

REPORT A SMEAR

WATCHDOG@BARACKOBAMA.COM

Received an email smear? Forward it to us at watchdog@barackobama.com

TWO WAYS *to* FIGHT BACK

SPREAD THE TRUTH ON YOUR SITE OR BLOG



FIGHT THE SMEARS WIDGET ACTION WIRE WIDGET

WHO'S BEHIND *the* SMEARS?

FIND OUT

HELP US SPREAD THE TRUTH

DONATE NOW

Not the Smear you're looking for? Search All Smears



Fight back against "hateful," "vicious," and "desperate" robocalls and mailers.

GET THE FACTS AND TAKE ACTION NOW



The McCain campaign is maliciously distorting Barack's strong record on crime.

GET THE FACTS



Obama has always been a democrat, despite what "partisan attack dog" Stanley Kurtz claims about the New Party.

GET THE FACTS



Barack's campaign is funded by millions of everyday Americans, not the foreigners claimed in email smears.

GET THE FACTS



Obama's connection to Bill Ayers is "phony," "nebulous," "exaggerated at best if not outright false."

GET THE FACTS



Columbia University scholar Rashid Khalidi is not one of Barack's foreign policy advisors.

GET THE FACTS



Discredited Swift Boat smear-master Jerome Corsi is peddling more lies about Barack and Kenya's Raila Odinga.

GET THE FACTS



Attacks claiming Obama secretly tried to sway the Iraqi government to ignore Bush policy are completely false.

GET THE FACTS



Obama doesn't take advice from Fannie Mae execs, despite claims made by smear emails and McCain attack ads.

GET THE FACTS



Republican voter-suppression guru Ken Blackwell falsely claimed Barack was an organizer for ACORN.

GET THE FACTS



Voters who arrive at the polls wearing campaign gear such as buttons or T-shirts can still vote.

GET THE FACTS



A fallen soldier's mother is "ecstatic" Barack mentioned her son's bracelet during the presidential debate.

GET THE FACTS



The NRA is pushing misleading research and distorted claims about Barack's record on illegal guns.

GET THE FACTS



Radical anti-abortion ideologues are running ads that make wild 'Born Alive' accusations against Barack Obama.

GET THE FACTS



An amateur web video attacking Barack Obama's faith is full of outright lies.

GET THE FACTS



A campaign vendor has already retracted an angry email claiming that Joe Biden owes him thousands of dollars.

GET THE FACTS



Jerome Corsi attacks Barack with lies and distortions in new hit book.

GET THE FACTS



The Swift Boaters are back with a TV ad that falsifies and exaggerates in order to tie Barack to William Ayers.

GET THE FACTS

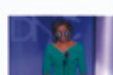


Barack was honored to visit our troops overseas, but that didn't stop email smears from claiming otherwise.

GET THE FACTS



Barack Obama is a committed Christian, not a Muslim.



The preposterous "whitely" attack against Michelle Obama is completely disproven.



UNDER THE RADAR

REVEALING THE HIDDEN ATTACKS FROM THE MCCAIN CAMPAIGN AND ITS PARTNERS

"SOONER OR LATER, PEOPLE ARE GOING TO FIGURE OUT IF ALL YOU RUN IS NEGATIVE ATTACK ADS YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH OF A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OR YOU'RE NOT READY TO ARTICULATE IT."
- JOHN MCCAIN

HOME LATEST NEWS REPORT AN AD OR ROBOCALL WWW.FIGHTTHESMEARS.COM

DONATE NOW

Revealing the Attacks

The McCain Campaign and its allies have begun an unprecedented nationwide negative campaign that uses robocalls, direct mail, and other techniques to quietly poison voters' information with lies and fear tactics. This map is an effort to track some of the most toxic attacks — all of which are approved by the McCain campaign or its Republican partners.



CLICK A POINT ON THE MAP TO LEARN THE TRUTH.

Robocalls and Push Polling
These calls target voters by demography or geography with thousands of recorded messages or pre-recorded telemarketers to push a sticky message.

Direct Mail and Door Hangers
Print materials are cheaper than TV ads and avoid most of the scrutiny, so their shocking images and menacing text often go unreported.

The Latest News

McCain says he's proud of mailer linking Barack Obama to terrorists

John McCain told reporters last week that he is proud of a mailer his campaign sent to residents of Missouri and Virginia titled "Terrorists Don't Care Who They Hurt." It then suggests "Barack Obama thinks terrorists just need a good talking to."

[Read More](#)

Palin says voters "irritated" by robocalls

Despite her recent charges that Barack Obama was "palling around with terrorists," Republican Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin said October 19th that if she were running the campaign, the McCain-Palin campaign would not be flooding battleground states with negative robocalls.

[Read More](#)

In 2000 campaign, McCain condemned negative robocalls as "hate calls"

In his 2000 primary campaign against George W. Bush, John McCain was the victim of a number of notorious robocall campaigns that spread lies about his family.

McCain was outraged by the calls, calling them "hate calls," and complained about being "inundated" by them.

[Read More](#)

GOP Senators denounce anti-Obama robocalls

Republican Senators Susan Collins, Olympia Snowe and Norm Coleman have called on the McCain campaign to end the robocalls linking Barack Obama to Williams Ayes.

[Read More](#)

Gen. Colin Powell calls McCain campaign robocalls inappropriate

On NBC's "Meet The Press" on October 19th, General Colin Powell announced he was endorsing and voting for Barack Obama.

[Read More](#)

Search SEARCH

You Can Help

Report inaccurate or hateful campaign material here

This kind of negative campaign depends on flying under the radar to make their full effect felt. If you spot one, please send it to us right away so we can add it to our database.

REPORT

Join Us!

Sign up for Updates

Email
Zip

SIGN UP

I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

of the

United States of America

AND TO THE REPUBLIC FOR WHICH IT STANDS

ONE NATION UNDER GOD

indivisible,

with

LIBERTY *and* JUSTICE

FOR ALL



AN AMERICAN TYPEFACE

CHAPTER 5

When Sol Sender created the “O” logo, he used two typefaces that the campaign would rely on for almost a year: Gill Sans and Perpetua, created by the British type designer Eric Gill. Perpetua, a Roman face designed in 1925, can be found in the naves of churches in West Sussex, England. Gill Sans, a geometric sans-serif, was inspired by Edward Johnston’s London Underground typeface. Both are truly British in influence and style, and both – especially Gill Sans – appear elegant, sophisticated and classic. However, these qualities also made them seem stylistically formal, and somewhat reminiscent of a European black-tie affair. We wanted the message we sent to be much different, so we began exploring other possibilities. Typefaces speak for the words they compose, and some of the more obvious options said the wrong things. A Swiss face like Helvetica, the font of choice for many government organizations, would communicate a sense that our campaign was official, but it would also make Senator Obama seem generic and part of the establishment. We were looking for a typeface that was versatile and bold, simple but elegant, and that looked historically and stylistically American.

Our top choice quickly became Gotham, a typeface created by Jonathan Hoefler and Tobias Frere-Jones, who have also designed typefaces for *The Wall Street Journal*, Rolling Stone, and the United Nations. Gotham was initially commissioned by GQ magazine, whose editors were looking for a typeface that appeared masculine, new, and fresh. The Gotham typeface was inspired by the signs at the Port Authority Bus Terminal on Eighth Avenue in New York City. Frere-Jones had grown up the city, and was always fond of the distinctive lettering of the “old” New York. The typeface was attractive but unassuming. It appeared blue collar but could dress up nicely. In other words, it was a perfectly American choice.

Gotham made its campaign debut on October 12, 2008. That day, the feature graphic on the campaign website included the phrase “Lessons from Iraq.” We noticed that in the Gill Sans typeface, the curling “r” and “q” in “Iraq” just weren’t appropriate for the subject at hand: The face had quill-like terminals that made the image look too fancy, like a wedding invitation. The campaign decided to go with Gotham from then on out. In the following weeks, Gotham began to appear both in the feature area of the website, as well as throughout the campaign’s graphics, literature, advertisements, and placards. Around the same time, I began designing graphics for Obama’s appearance at Arizona State University, where we premiered our “Change We Can Believe In” credo using Gotham on placards and banners.

As Gotham became our standard typeface, we tried out varying weights and styles. We decided to give priority to segmented terms that created a visual hierarchy to reflect our message. For example, “Change We Can Believe In” featured “change” as the most prominent word, with the rest of the phrase balanced below it. We also aligned the edges of the letterforms along the same grid line to both the right and left of the block of text, known to designers as full justification. This was rooted in the tradition of letterpress printing, where letters were often spaced evenly line after line to create a solid and stable form.

Although Gotham was the campaign’s official typeface, no type collection can be complete with a geometric sans-serif alone. For smaller sizes of type and large blocks of text, we needed a more readable serif, and for a personal touches, a script. John started using a face with the appropriate name of “Liberation Serif,” while I preferred Chronicle and Hoefler text for a serif face. We often used Liberation Serif for mastheads and stuck with Chronicle and Hoefler Text for body copy. Pulling from

Type used by the campaign before
October of 2007

PERPETUA

ABCDEFGH
IJKLMNOP
OPQRSTU
VWXYZ

GILL SANS

ABCDEFGH
IJKLMNOP
OPQRSTU
VWXYZ

Type used by the campaign after
October of 2007

GOTHAM

ABCDEFGH
IJKLMNOP
OPQRSTU
VWXYZ

LIBERATION SERIF

ABCDEFGH
IJKLMNOP
OPQRSTU
VWXYZ

the past, we often mixed the geometric sans-serif, Gotham, with an old-fashioned script for words such as “and,” “for,” and “the.”

The effect of typography and visual design is delicate and often subliminal. As a result, explaining the importance of a strict adherence to typographic standards to staff members, most of whom had no background in graphic design, was a challenge. Before John and I came on board, staffers often changed the typography to accentuate the specific talking point of the event. To a non-designer, this might seem to make sense, but it is actually a logistical nightmare since it requires constant redesigning for every possible occasion.

To streamline the process, we created a system of elements that used a typographical template to manufacture everything that used type and design. This took the burden of day-to-day redesigning off the shoulders of campaign staffers, and allowed them to concentrate on their individual fields of expertise.

Working closely with advance team, who prepped for events on the ground, we were able to maintain the unprecedented consistency throughout the long campaign that made Barack Obama a viable political candidate and a household name.

As the campaign’s visual composition began to evolve into a professional design system, pragmatic decisions on typographic consistency prompted a flood of media requests seeking interviews with the campaign’s “font guru.” This was a gratifying moment for us. It was proof that our decisions about design were playing a role in how people perceived our campaign, and that design was making a difference.

Typography standards used by
the campaign

GOTHAM IN A GRID

Gotham is used in varying weights, segmented out in terms of messaging hierarchy. In standard display format, a fully justified grid is preferred for strength and symmetry.

For all headline displays, text should always be set in ALL CAPS. Lowercase letterforms are only to be displayed in body copy.

CHANGE
WE CAN BELIEVE IN

CHANGE
WE CAN
BELIEVE IN

**NATIONAL
VOTER
PROTECTION
CENTER**

OCCASIONAL *Snell* ROUNDHAND

Snell Roundhand should be used sparingly on items such as “to”, “the”, “from”, “for” and “by”. Be aware of how often this technique is implemented in a single design, as well as the appropriateness of it in context of the message itself.

JUDGMENT *to* **LEAD**

OUR TIME
for
CHANGE
HAS COME

The
OBAMA
ACTION WIRE

STATE *of the* **RACE**

SERIFS

STANDARD DISPLAY SERIF

Liberation Serif Bold is the Standard Display Serif (it is available free online). When seeking the look of a bridge between “campaign” and “timeless” aesthetic, this is the way to go.

Standard Web / Body Serif

GEORGIA is the Standard Web Serif. The effect intended when using Snell Roundhand in graphics can also be executed by italicizing Georgia.

SPECIAL SERIF

CHRONICLE is the Special Serif, to be used when creating items solely in the “timeless” look.



VOTE FOR CHANGE

CHAPTER 6

Inside the campaign, we knew both the primary and general elections came down to a question of voter turnout. But before we rallied to get voters to the polls on Election Day, we had to get them to register.

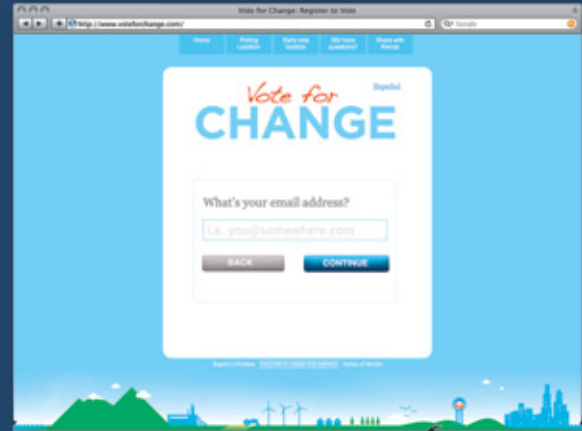
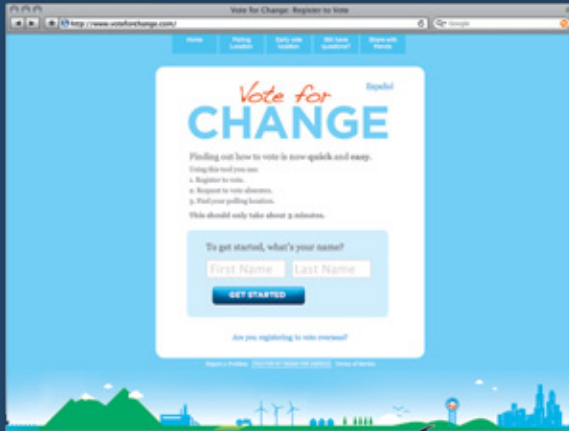
As a community organizer on Chicago's South Side, Obama had spent the early part of his career stressing the importance of participating in the democratic process. In 1992, as director of Project Vote, Obama helped to register 150,000 voters in Chicago's underrepresented neighborhoods on the city's South Side. Project Vote helped Illinois elect the first African-American woman to the U.S. Senate, Carol Moseley Braun.

The challenge for the campaign became turning polls and projections into electoral reality, and that meant finding out why so many potential voters don't always make it out to vote. The campaign had already established a sizeable lead among younger voting demographics. But as any political analyst will tell you, young people aren't the most likely voters to make it to their polling place on Election Day, in part because their transitory nature often leads to uncertainty about where and how to vote. If we could register a landmark number of new voters and give them clear information on how and where to vote, we would have a significant edge come Election Day.

In early July of 2008, a few staffers decided we would use the Internet to help get out the vote in an entirely new way. Chris Hughes approached me with a concept that built on the success of VotePoke and Rock the Vote, which used technology to make information on registering and voting more accessible. Hughes thought we could use a similar approach to assist people in registering to vote online. After analyzing various existing projects, I came up with an idea that would become VoteForChange.com, the site that would function as a central hub for our registration efforts.

With voting laws and regulations varying by state, county, and municipality, we discovered that the main reason many people weren't voting was because of confusion about eligibility and registration. VoteForChange used the Internet to simplify an often convoluted process. The initial concept for the site was simple: Users would answer a series of questions about where they lived, and VoteForChange.com would search voter files and provide the users with either their polling place or a step-by-step breakdown of how to register and where to vote. All the questions were made as user-friendly as possible. They were also based on a logical progression that reduced the number of questions people had to complete while allowing us to acquire enough data to give them the information they needed. For example, if the user entered "February 19, 1945" for his or her birthday, the system would not follow up with, "Are you a college student?"

The site was a simple and quick method of determining voting status. But behind the scenes, the information architecture that would lead a user through it in the most efficient manner possible was quite complex, and the logic diagram we created to guide people through the various steps resembled the schematic for launching a rocket ship rather than building a website. We also used web analytics to determine which parts of the questionnaire users were leaving blank, and at what points they were leaving the site without completing the process. This allowed us to adjust and reformulate the questions accordingly. For example, we decided to inform users why we were asking sensitive questions – such as, "What is your social security number?" – and gave them options for printing out the form and completing it by hand before submitting it.



REASONS TO VOTE FOR CHANGE

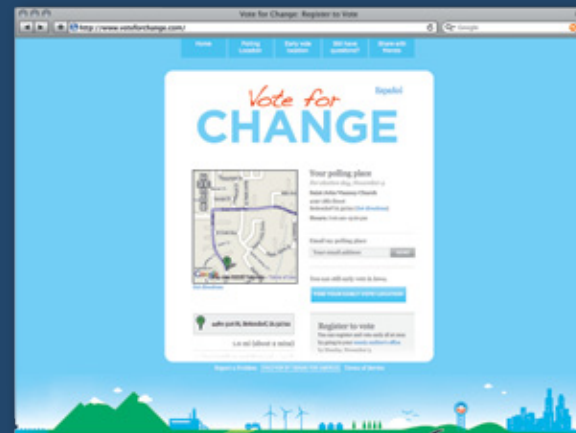
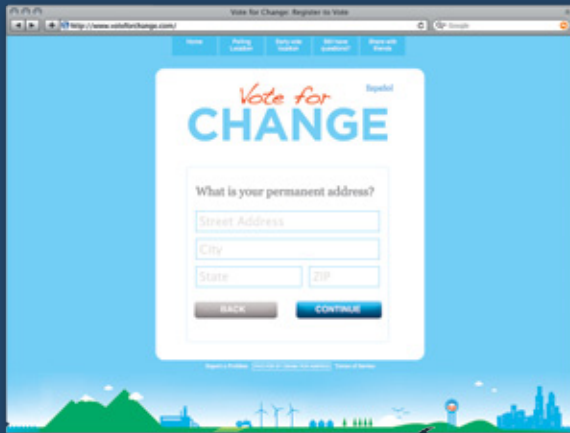
With a firm concept and a visual structure for the site in place, we needed a fresh way to promote it. Working with SS+K, an advertising agency in New York, we came up with a campaign titled “Reasons.” Rather than using manufactured appeals devised by campaign headquarters, it highlighted individual responses from our supporters about why they were registering to vote. We didn’t want to give potential voters rationalizations crafted by seasoned political consultants. Instead, we wanted to hear what reasons made people passionate about voting in this election. In tandem with expressive illustrations, we hoped their messages would be heard by new audiences.

The next step was to create visuals that would illustrate people’s reasons for making it to the polls. With our design team already pressed for time, we called in a group of illustrators from all across the country to create the visual aspect of the campaign. Each design utilized an artist’s illustration style that would demonstrate a reason to vote. The result was the Vote for Change advertising campaign and poster series.

The increasingly prominent role of graphic design in the campaign raised some interesting questions about the role of

visual communication in a democracy. Imagery has a long and distinguished tradition in American politics, ranging from Thomas Nast’s Tammany Tiger to the World War II war bond campaign. Political posters have always been a traditional visual point of reference for political and social movements, often becoming the most memorable record of historical events.

Our posters also drew on another long-standing American political tradition. As a form of positive advocacy, they drew on Americans’ cultural inclination toward optimism. Americans do not want to be pessimistic; we believe that we can fulfill our dreams, and we want to believe that something better is possible. The fearmongering of the Bush campaign in 2004 and the Nixon campaigns of 1968 and 1972 are, in some respects, exceptional: The American political sensibility regards negative and antagonistic campaigning with distaste. This is why appeals to American optimism have been so successful across party lines, including John F. Kennedy’s vision of Americans as “confident, courageous, and persevering” in the face of peril, and Ronald Reagan’s assurance that it was “Morning in America.”



The emerging role of independent artists and designers in the campaign prompted some critics on the right to dismiss their creations with the notoriously vague term of “propaganda.” Obama’s right-wing critics seemed to define “propaganda” as anything they disagreed with. Yet while their charges weren’t thoughtful arguments, the question of what constitutes propaganda is worth considering.

Visual communication seems to be especially vulnerable to the charge that its purpose is not persuasion but manipulation. This suspicion of imagery stems from its reliance on emotion and association rather than reason. Images are evocative, rather than logical. But that does not make visual imagery prone to distortion any more than any other kind of appeal, including classical political rhetoric. And in America, where people choose their president based on whom they’d like to have a beer with, emotions and associations matter, because the emotive qualities of images are precisely the qualities that move people to vote. We wanted to use the full range of ways that there are to say something, and sometimes images are a better way to communicate than words. The use of images and symbols affords a level of communication that can be far more direct

and effective than words, as seen with everything from the Golden Arches to the icons on your computer keyboard. The effectiveness of the poster series and the art created by individuals inspired by the campaign came from our recognition that even an ostensibly simple image can offer a more thorough and integrated message than a speech or a press release. To place design at the center of a campaign in a culture that operates on visual messaging was effective, but it was the concept of participation that placed the American people at the core of that message.

As with our use of branding, we weren’t using visual imagery to distract voters from our intentions, but to make our principles transparent. Voting is the essence of the democratic system, and participation in the electoral process is the cornerstone of democracy. Exercising the right to vote is our privilege and obligation as Americans, and the imagery in this work was created to inspire true participatory democracy. The illustrators variety of styles was a representation of the many voices that make up the American chorus.

I'M **VOTING**
BECAUSE THE
ECONOMY *stinks*



I REGISTERED BECAUSE
THE FUTURE WON'T
RUN ON OIL.

-Josie K.

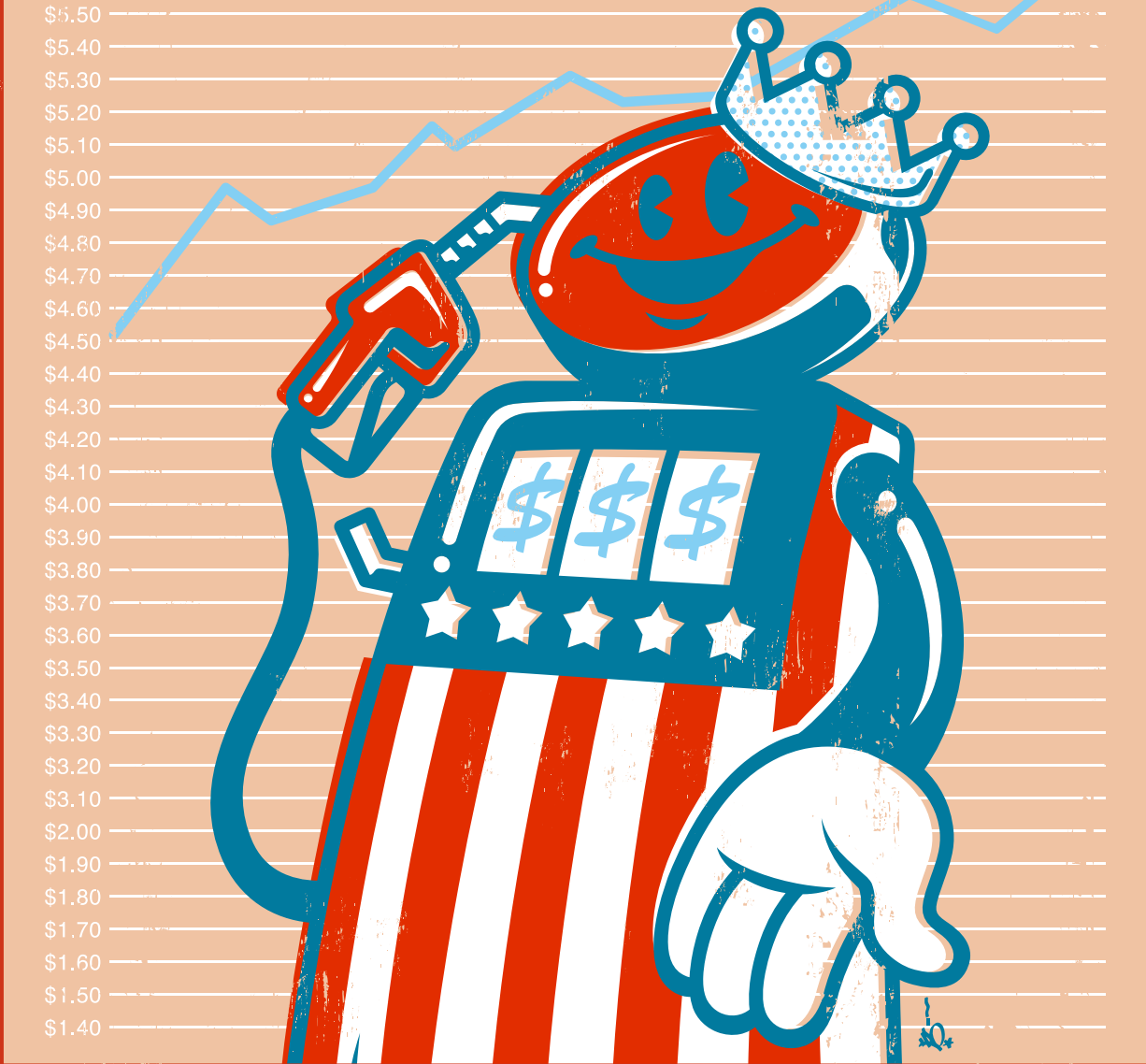
Brian Flynn

HYBRID-DESIGN.COM

San Francisco, California



"I'M VOTING BECAUSE I MAKE
TWO GALLONS OF GAS AN HOUR."



DON'T GET MAD. GET REGISTERED.
VOTEFORCHANGE.COM

THE DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS OCTOBER 6

Tristan Eaton

THUNDERDOGSTUDIOS.COM



Long Island City, New York

**I'M VOTING BECAUSE I WANT TO
RETIRE BEFORE I'M 90 YEARS OLD.**



**DON'T GET MAD. GET REGISTERED.
VOTEFORCHANGE.COM**

THE DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS OCTOBER 6



**I'M VOTING BECAUSE
I'M TIRED OF OIL
RUNNING OUR COUNTRY.**

-Diane C.

Caleb Kozlowski

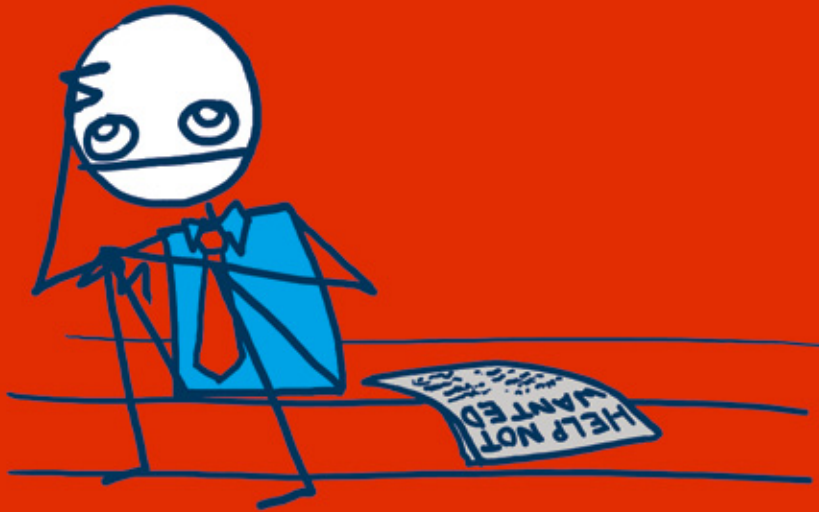
POP-FUSION.COM

Brooklyn, New York



I'm voting because I've been laid off
four times in the last eight years.

BEN Y



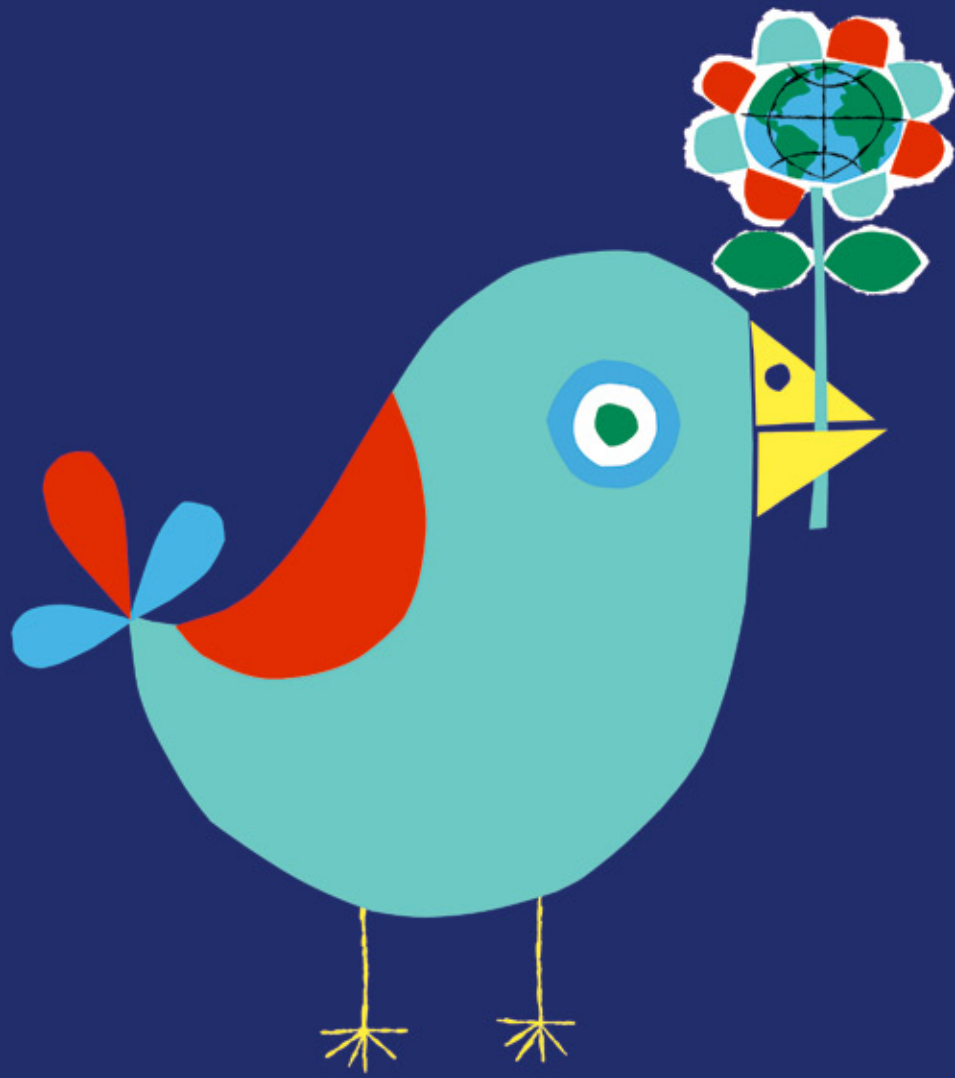
Sam Brown
EXPLODINGDOG.COM

West Hartford, Connecticut



Melinda Beck
MELINDABECK.COM

Brooklyn, New York



**i am voting
because the
economy stinks.**

Xanthe Hohalek, Santa Monica

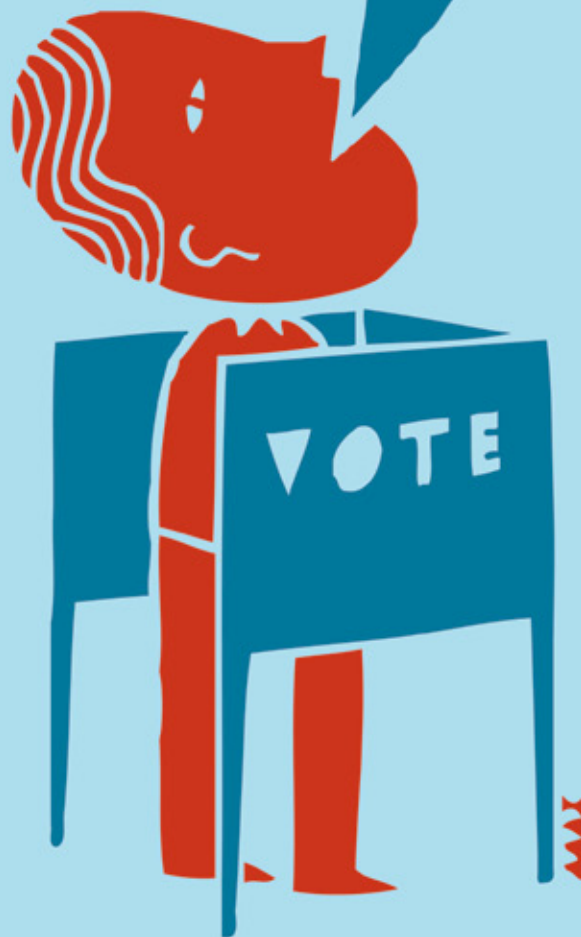
Cody Hudson
STRUGGLEINC.COM

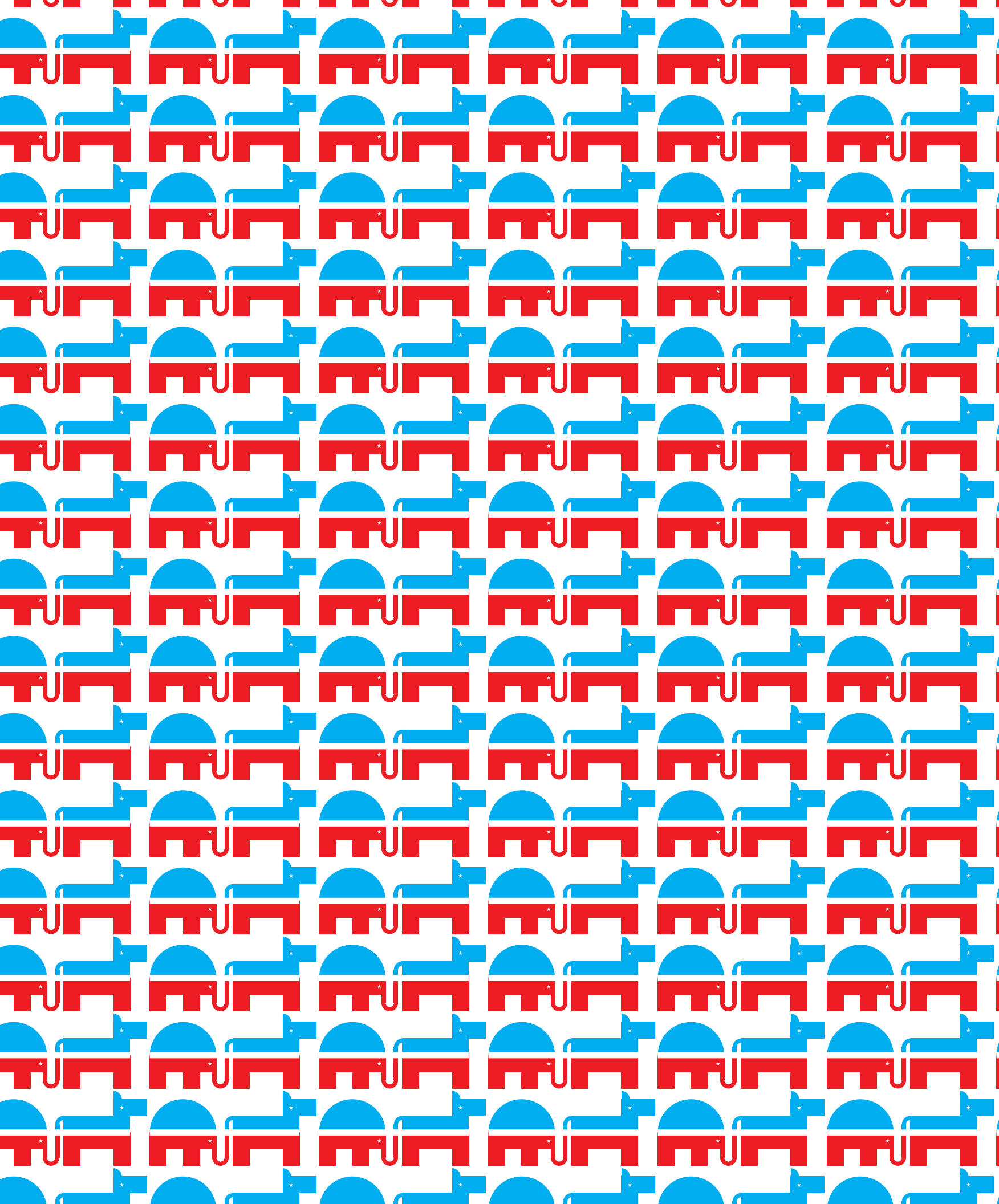
Chicago, Illinois

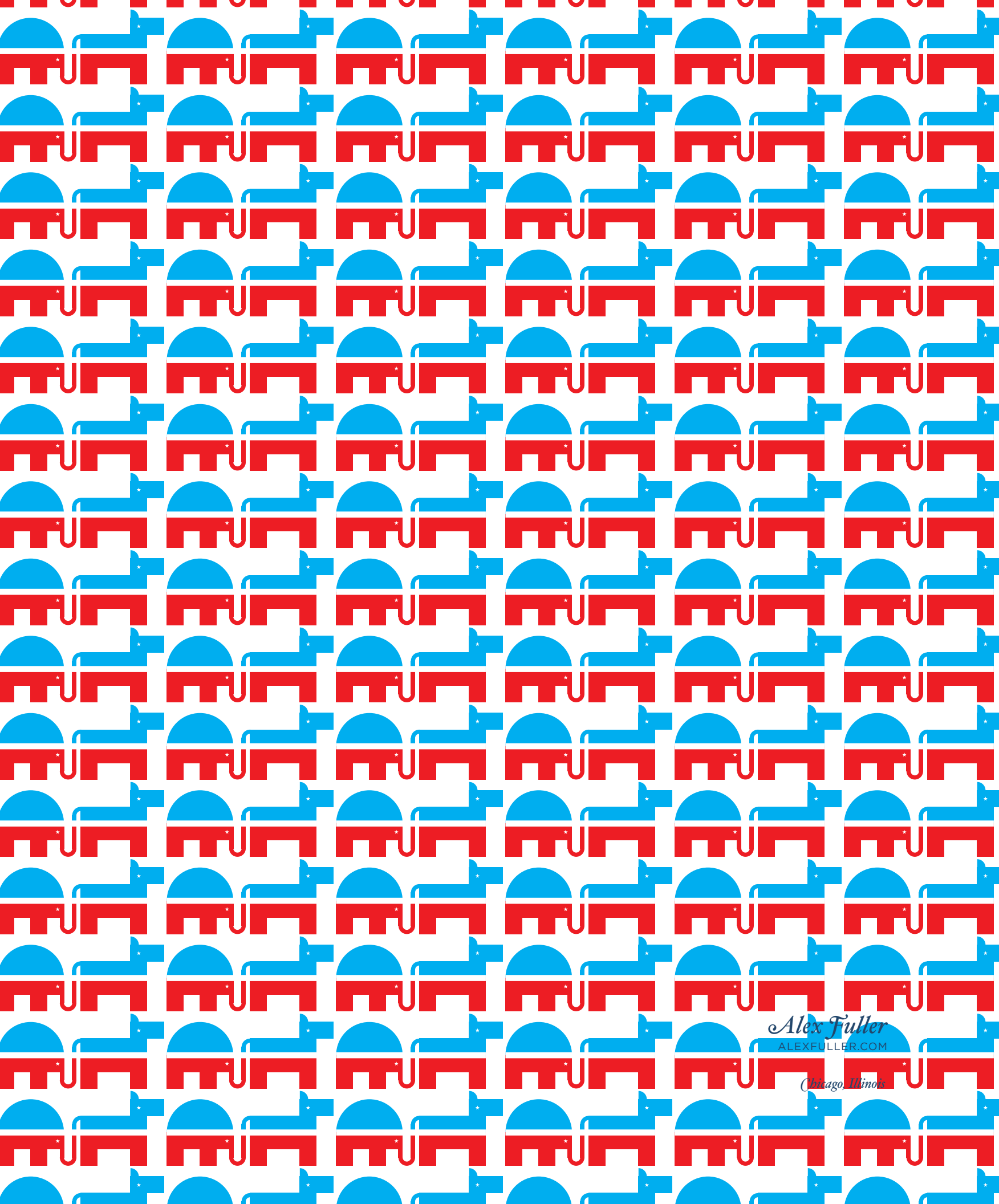


**I'M VOTING BECAUSE I REFUSE
TO BE A BYSTANDER.**

KELLY K.

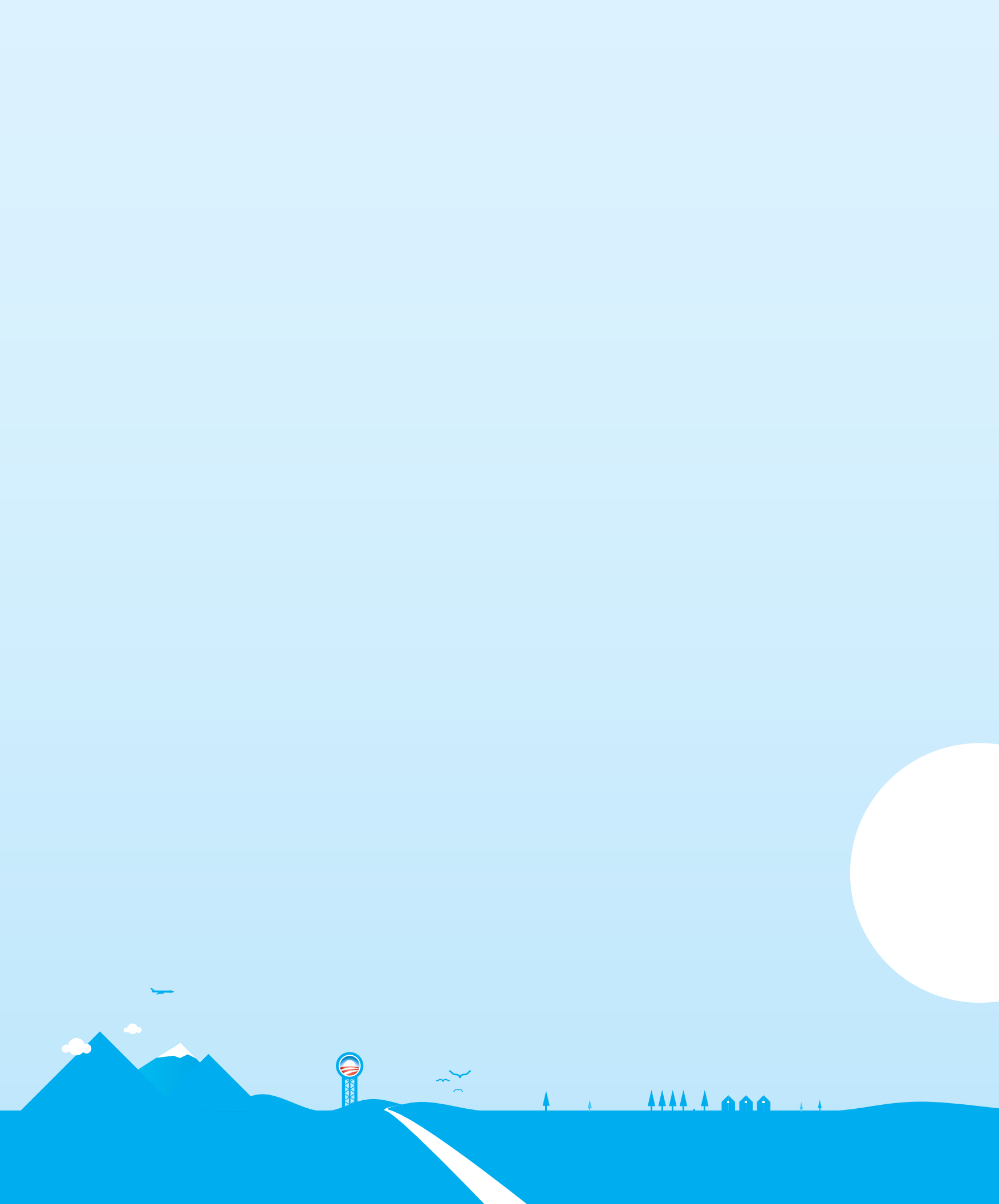






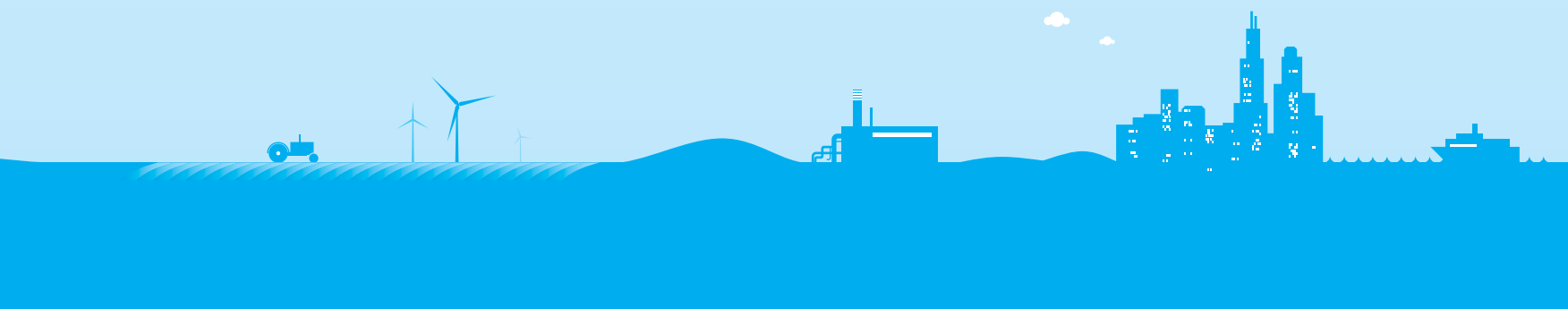
Alex Fuller
ALEXFULLER.COM

Chicago, Illinois



Alex Fuller
ALEXFULLER.COM

Chicago, Illinois





7/02

Jim Hsu



ARTISTS FOR OBAMA

CHAPTER 7

The campaign's design strategy also served as a point of departure for individual artists, whose independent work strengthened the message of the campaign. To engage the art community that had stood on the sidelines of politics in recent years, we initiated the Artists for Obama poster series. Our idea was to invite artists to participate in the creation of a new kind of campaign poster, one that would be the expression of the individual artist rather than a reiteration of campaign materials.

The original concept was to create posters that would be printed on fairly nice paper stock, designed by artists from around the country, and sent to supporters who purchased the posters through our online store. We hoped the Artists for Obama poster series wouldn't be just another method of campaigning, but would create images that would be cherished by anyone who owned one. We invited artists to participate in the process with this creative brief:

"Our nation's creativity has filled the world's libraries, museums, recital halls, movie houses, and marketplaces with works of genius. The arts embody the American spirit of self-definition. Barack Obama uniquely appreciates the role and value of creative expression. The campaign is inviting artists from multiple areas of visual arts to produce a poster that will be available in the Obama Store for purchase; all proceeds are donations to Senator Obama's Presidential Campaign. Our hope is that the artists participating create memorable works of art that communicate their passion for this campaign of Change."

Street artist Shepard Fairey provided the first contribution to the Artists for Obama series with his poster, "Change." Before the campaign, Fairey's work had been consistently anti-establishment. When "Change" debuted on the Obama website on March 12, 2008, it was accompanied by a statement from Fairey:

"I wanted to make an art piece of Barack Obama because I thought an iconic portrait of him could symbolize and amplify the importance of his mission. I believe Obama will guide this country to a future where everyone can thrive and I should support him vigorously for the sake of my two young daughters. I have made art opposing the Iraq war for several years, and making art of Obama, who opposed the war from the start, is like making art for peace. I know I have an audience of young art fans and I'm delighted I can encourage them to see the merits of Barack Obama."

Fairey's use of the word "change" in the poster highlighted a central campaign theme, but it was his use of a stylized version of Obama's face that showed how an image could both reinforce a message and convey an entirely different level of meaning. Using reds and blues, Fairey's portrait configured Obama's body, face, and eyes to communicate to the viewer that he was a man who was looking forward to the future but who was also resolute; one who was both an idealist and a pragmatist. Artists for Obama was primarily intended for campaign fund-raising efforts, but Fairey's image took on a life of its own. Along with his "Hope" and "Vote" posters, the "Change" image became one of the main visuals of the campaign.

The use of Obama's image by Fairey and others recalled other campaigns that used portraits successfully, such as those of John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan. But never before had a candidate's physical image become the object of both artistic invention and advocacy. Artists almost always use faces from politics for antagonistic purposes, ranging from satirical commentary to outright critique. The way in which artists appropriated Obama's image made him into an iconic figure without making him into an icon in the classic sense, that is, a static image removed from everyday life. It was not an attempt to make the race into a beauty contest – if

anything, the use of Obama's face was a risky move, because it underscored the ways in which he didn't look like the standard American president.

Fairey's contribution to Artists for Obama was followed by work from Scott Hansen, Antar Dayal, Jonathan Hoefler, Lance Wyman, Gui Borchett, and Rafael Lopez. As word of the series began to spread, artists everywhere picked up the tools of their trade to show their support. These independent artists donated their time and energy to produce some of the most memorable images of the campaign. We welcomed them into the movement as a group that could create new ways for people to recognize the significance of the election.

Beyond the official commissions, Artists for Obama created a movement of creative minds who were inspired by the campaign to a degree that was totally unprecedented in the history of American politics. These artists had never lent their exceptional talents to something as mainstream as a presidential election. For the most part, they had been wary of conventional politics, and their political beliefs were often expressed in an idiom ranging from a certain degree of irony to outright cynicism. The change of heart among these artists, many of whom had the same contempt for the establishment shared

by so many Americans disillusioned with politics, reinforced two related elements of Obama's message: that he was a new kind of politician, and that his candidacy was an opportunity for change that made it worth getting involved in the political process. The efforts of these artists were not pledges of blind allegiance, but acts of faith that Obama would serve as the representative of the many voices who elected him.

The campaign threw open a set of possibilities for artists, and they took their own inspiration from Obama's ideas about what American politics could be. The works created by the artists represented here are equal parts expression and persuasion. They aren't repetitions of the campaign's message – rather, they are responses to it. Viewed as a body of work, they show how artists drew on our design team's choices about color, typography, and imagery and took them in a variety of directions. They are an example of how our design strategy achieved a balance between solidity and consistency on the one hand and versatility and modularity on the other. The Obama brand became a visual paradigm that could encompass many variations on a set of themes, all of which shared an underlying visual unity. Here, *E pluribus unum* worked both ways: Out of many, one, and out of one, many.



Y
A



Antar Dayal
WWW.DAYALSTUDIO.COM

Santa Barbara, California





PAID FOR BY OBAMA FOR AMERICA



STYLING BY LIZZY



WWW.BARACKOBAMA.COM

ISO50

WWW.ISO50.COM

San Francisco, California



PAID FOR BY OBAMA FOR AMERICA



S. HANSEN 4 15050



WWW.BARACKOBAMA.COM

Jonathan Hoefler
WWW.TYPOGRAPHY.COM

New York, New York

FOR AS LONG AS I LIVE, I WILL
NEVER FORGET THAT IN
NO OTHER COUNTRY
ON EARTH IS MY
STORY EVEN
POSSIBLE

BARACK OBAMA 2008

PAID FOR BY OBAMA FOR AMERICA



Jonathan Hoffer

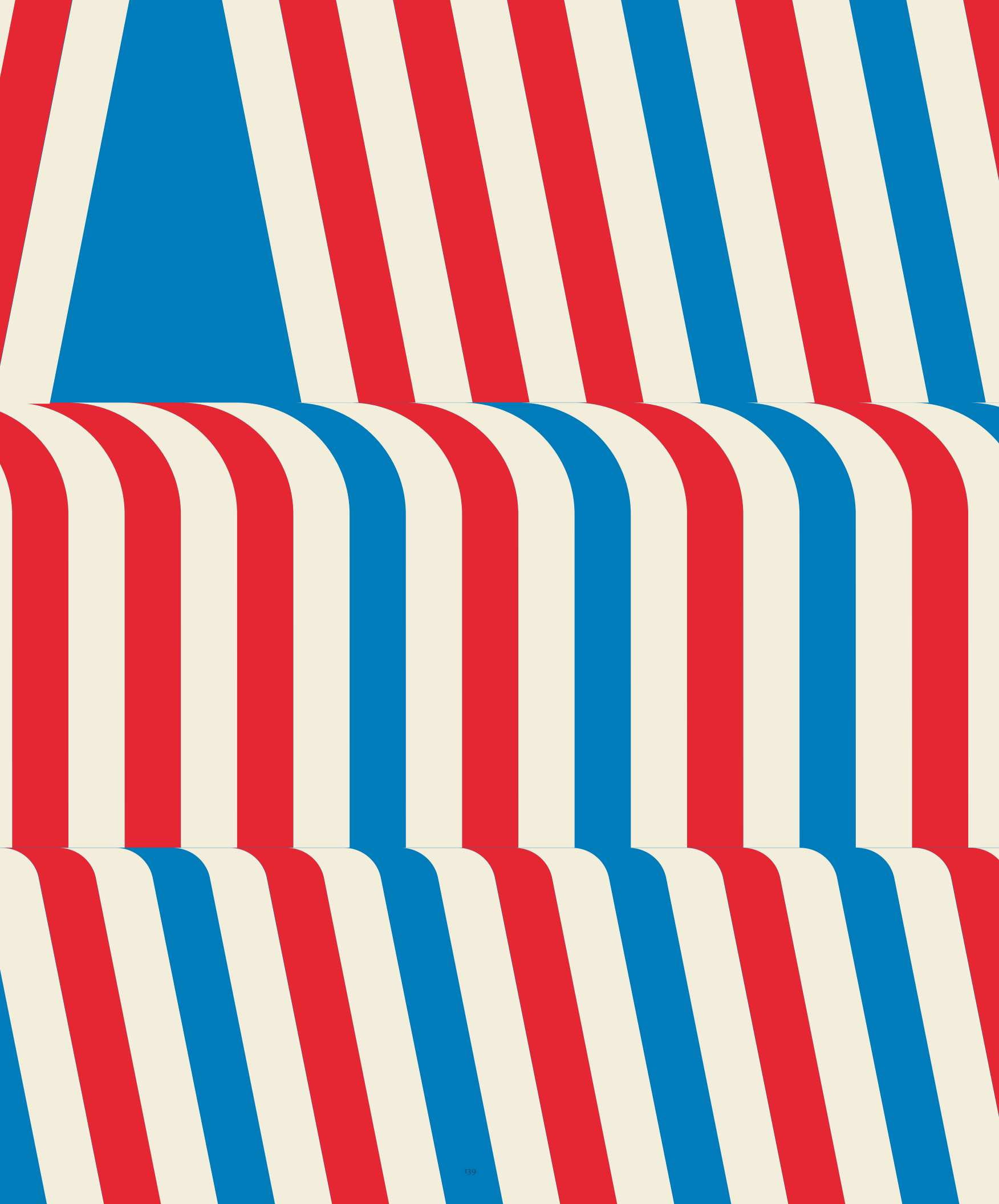


WWW.BARACKOBAMA.COM

Lance Wyman

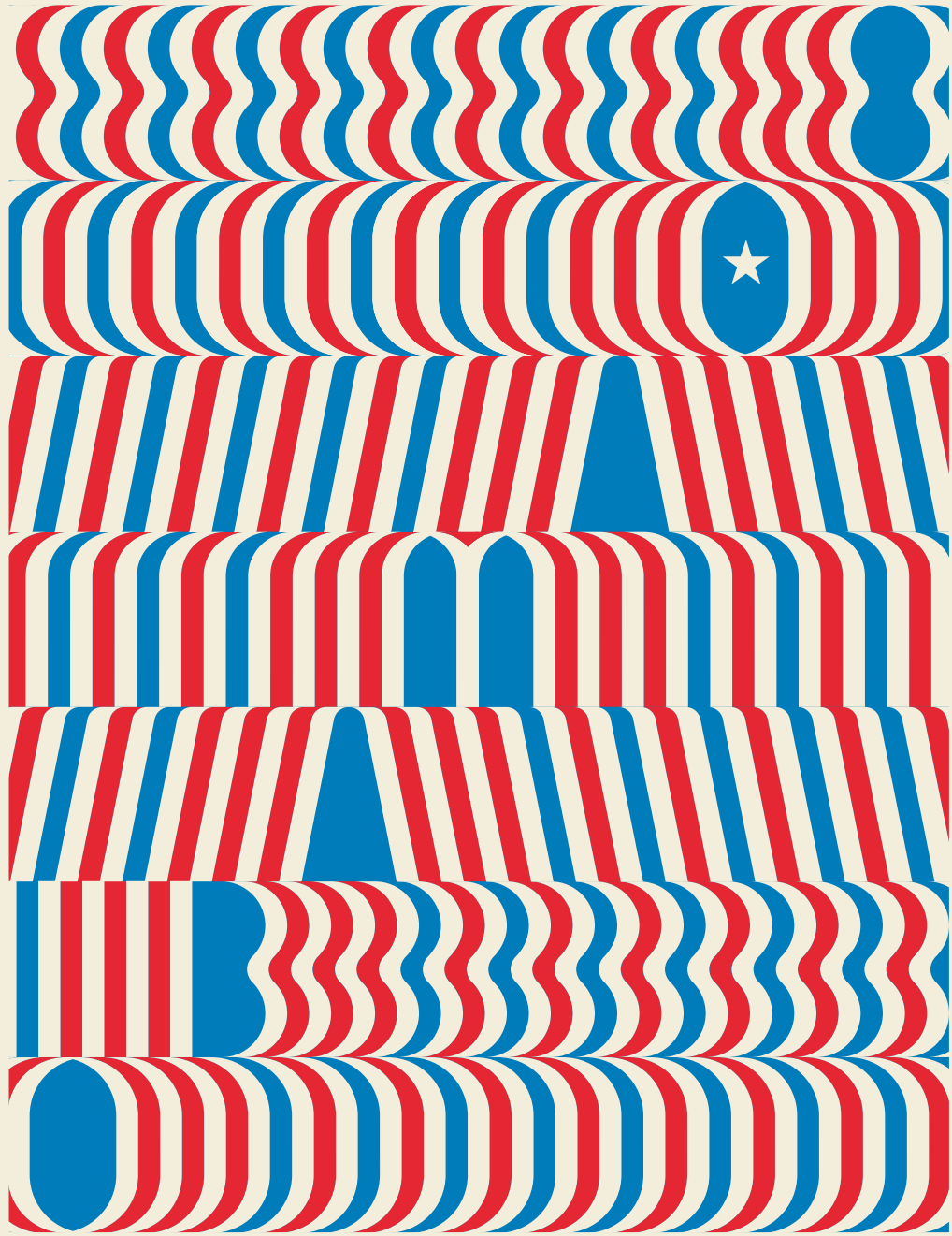
WWW.LANCEWYMAN.COM

New York, New York



Lance Wyman
WWW.LANCEWYMAN.COM

New York, New York



PAID FOR BY OBAMA FOR AMERICA



Barack Obama

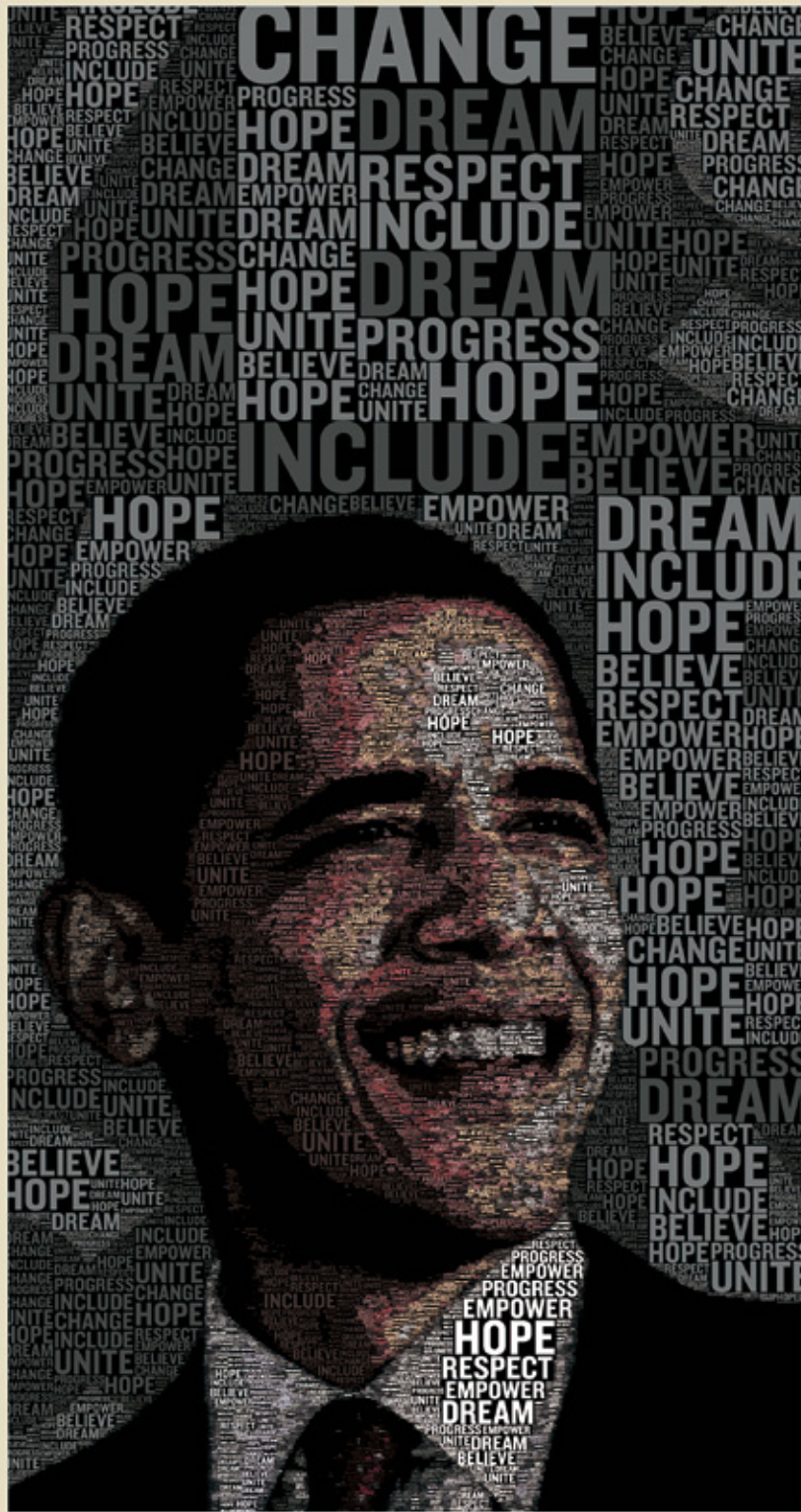


WWW.BARACKOBAMA.COM

GE HOPE
DE RESPECT
EMPOWER
TE BELIEVE
CHANGE
HOPE
CHANGE UNITE
HOPE UNITE
RESPECT
INCLUDE
DREAM UNITE
RESPECT HOPE
EMPOWER DREAM
HOPE DREAM
UNITE
HOPE UNITE
BELIEVE

Gui Borchert
WWW.GUIBORCHERT.COM

Brooklyn, New York



PAID FOR BY OBAMA FOR AMERICA



get.leadnet



WWW.BARACKOBAMA.COM



Rafael Lopez

WWW.RAFALLOPEZ.COM

San Diego, California







THE ART OF THE GRASSROOTS

CHAPTER 8

Artists for Obama represented only a fraction of the full scope and variety of our supporters' creativity. Our emphasis on building a campaign on individual empowerment and the energy and ideas of everyday Americans inspired people from around the world to take their own initiative to conceive and create works of art, inventing new and visually stunning interpretations of Obama's message. The art our supporters created offered their own visions of "the change you want to see." This vivid body of work is a testimony to how powerfully Obama's call for change resonated with people across the United States and around the world.

The individuals who invested their creative energies in the campaign did so in every kind of public and private space. The posters pasted to city walls, the paintings that hung in galleries, and the spray paint that decorated underpasses transformed the visual landscape and spread the news that something important was happening in America. It cropped up everywhere and in every possible form, whether it was graffiti portraits by a pseudonymous street artist in Oakland, California, or a massive earthwork in Barcelona, Spain.

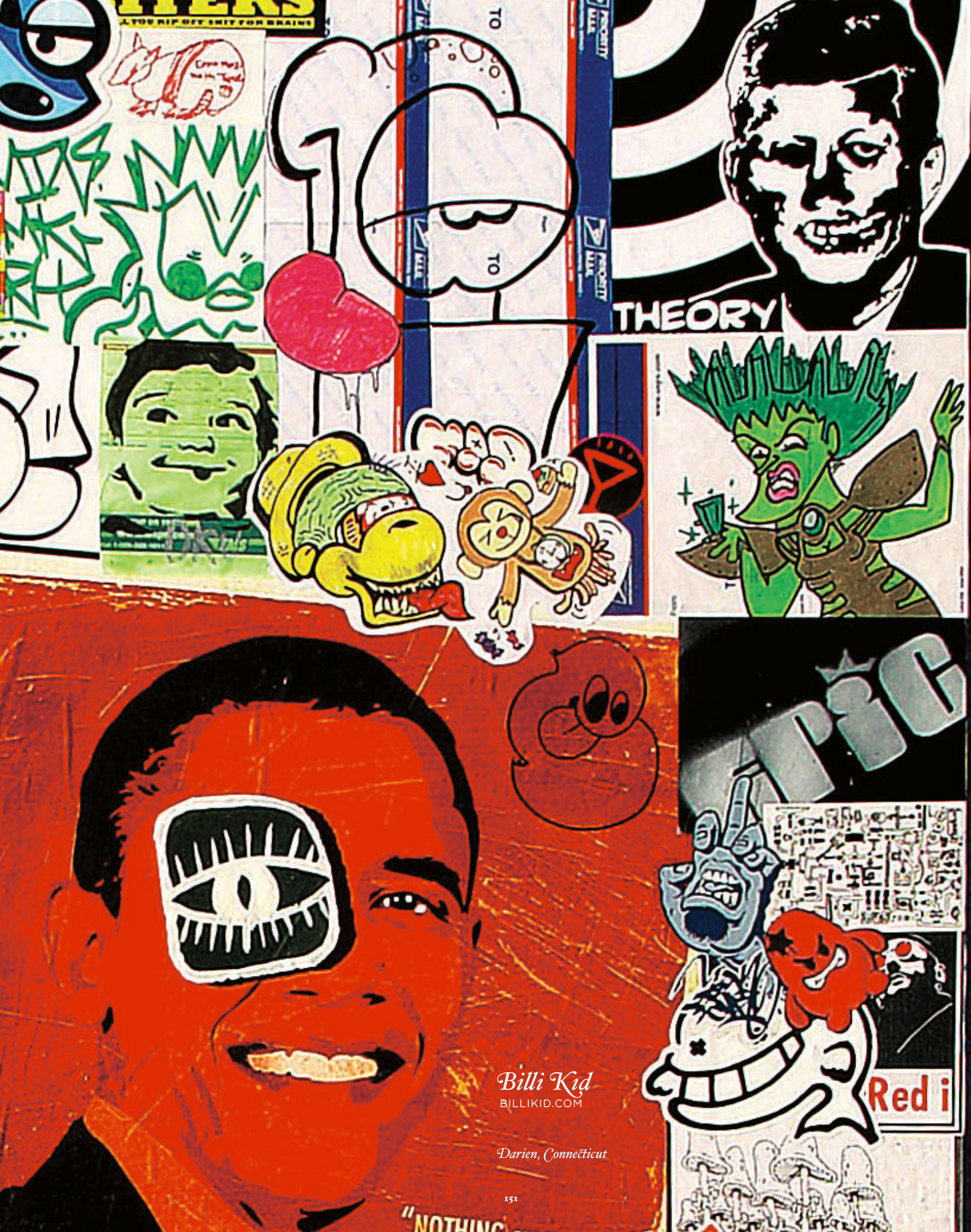
Through design, we developed a relationship with our supporters that not only made our message meaningful, but also moved them to create statements of their own which were as powerful as any official campaign material. Their ambitions were both modest and global: They could turn a few heads and change a few minds, ultimately persuading a few people to cast a ballot, but in doing so they could also change the world. The saturation of these images into every layer of society showed how much of a stake people had in

this election – how momentous it felt, the sense of how much it mattered. As creative acts, these artworks were an affirmation that individuals were, ultimately, what would make the difference. Their work will live on as part of the campaign's legacy.

When we saw these creations, we knew that what we had started was quickly spreading. The work of these individuals was a fulfillment of our mission to engage the voices and the visions of the American people in our movement. This outpouring of creativity, breathtaking in its range of medium, form, and content, was a direct outcome of our campaign's engagement of the grassroots, and it was as much a measure of our success as the records we set in fund-raising and voter turnout.

Our design message had not just won votes; it had prompted a creative response that expressed both the values of our candidate and the unmistakable stamp of particular individuals. We had succeeded in creating a visual campaign that could sustain a consistent message and yet be ready-made for a kind of innovation and variation that integrated and reinforced the core themes of the campaign. Our campaign offered our supporters something that was substantive enough to connect to, and yet elastic enough to take it in a multitude of directions, employing it and redeploying it in a dazzlingly diverse array of ways. Rather than diluting our message, the independent work shown here strengthened it.

As much as they represent different voices, all these works speak together, tied by an underlying unity of conviction. They are the far-flung cousins of the original "O," the earliest visual point of origin for the campaign, but they are easy to recognize as members of the same family: a diversity of voices within a movement for unity. This patchwork of art in every craft, medium, and style also manages to be something else – beautiful.



...ERS
A YOU RIP OFF SMIT FOR BRAINS!

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TO

TO

THEORY

Billi Kid
BILLIKID.COM

Darien, Connecticut

151

"NOTHING"

Red i

esta rua é uma galeria de arte

Ride
Ride
Ride

SWEET
HATE!

SHINE

Tango

FAT BUDDHA
DHA

FOR ORA

REXONES

STOP
SNITCHIN

LAZAR
STINKER

Let's ROE
The Street!

AVIOE

SEMPY'S

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PRO-LIFE

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Oakland, California



FORWARD







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Ray Noland

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Chicago, Illinois



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 **OBAMA** 

BarackObama.com



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Oakland, California



LOVE
IS
THE
ANSWER



MR. BILLYWASH



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Oakland, California



Rosa Parks sat,
so that Martin
Luther King Jr.
could walk.
Martin Luther
King Jr. walked,
so that Barack
Obama could run.
Barack Obama
ran, so we could
fly.
M. Brown 2008

FOLLOW
YOUR
DREAMS



QUINCY'S

Mr. Brainwash

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Oakland, California





Steve Deer

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John Locke

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EVERYTHING!

193A

SHO
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Seminole, Florida



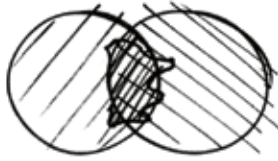
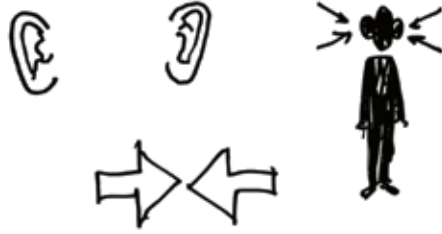


UNITE *THE* **STAT**

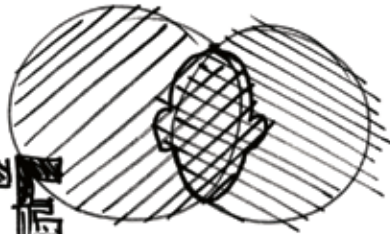
Aaron Allen
Portland, Oregon



united states
Unite THE states



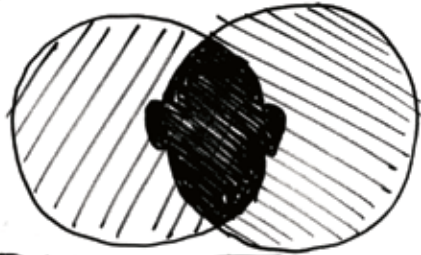
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UNITE

UNITE THE STATES OF AMERICA

UNITE THE STATES OF AMERICA



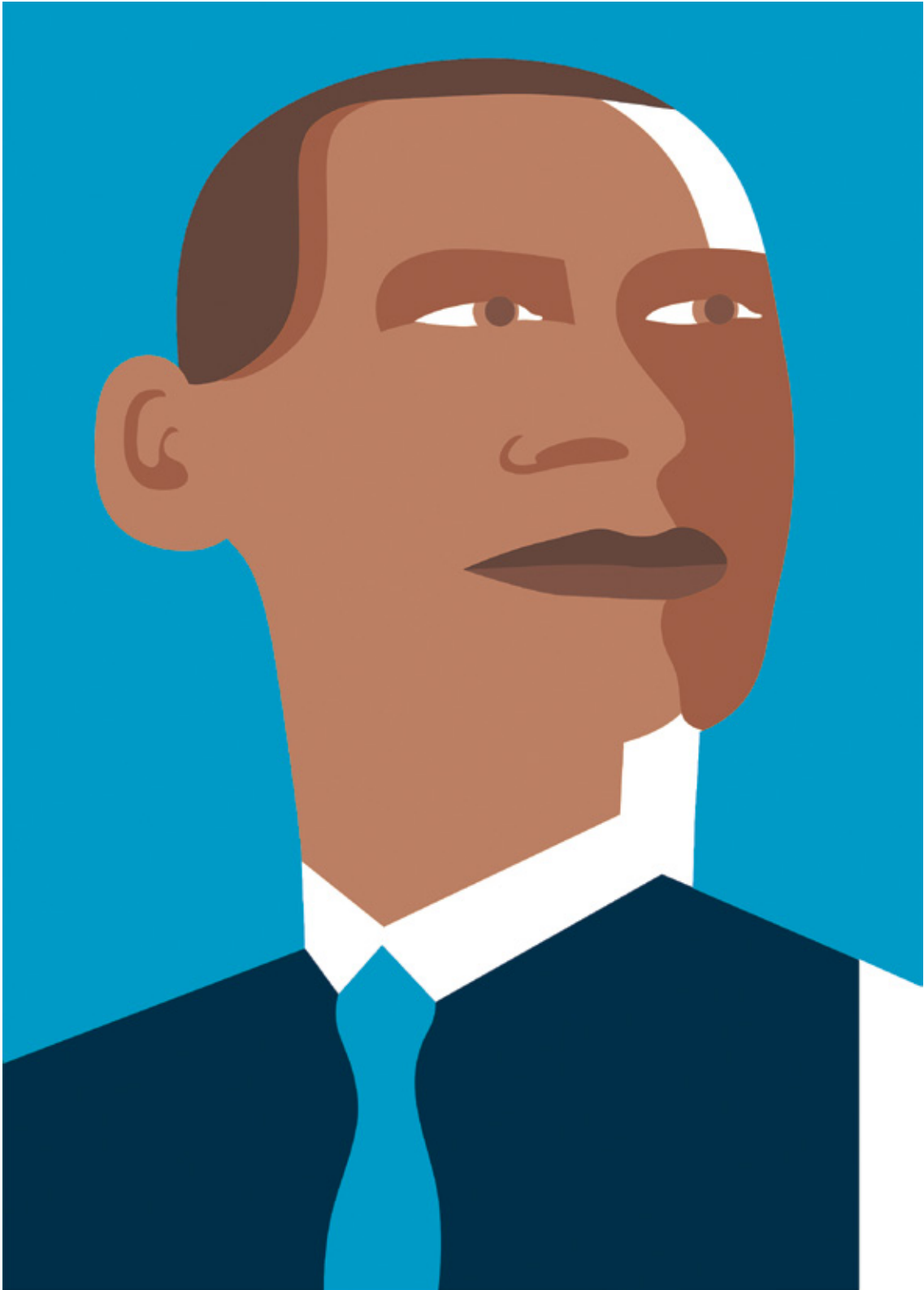
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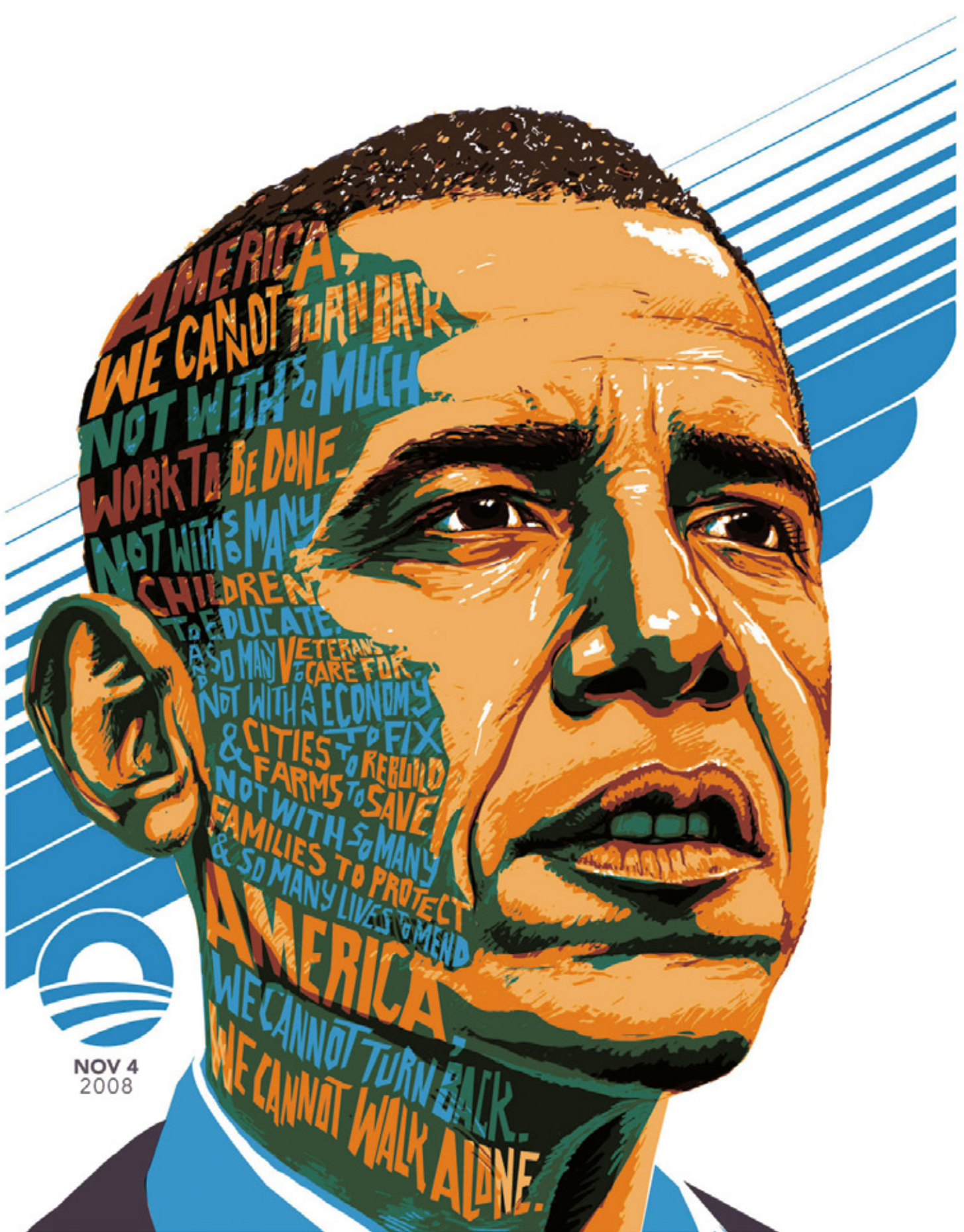
James O'Brien
JAMESOBRIEN.US

Saint Paul, Minnesota









NOV 4
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Burlesque of North America
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THE WORLD FOR OBAMA

Which economy is TV talking about, John??
I have money for more in a panic?

WHICH ECONOMY IS TV TALKING ABOUT, JOHN??
I have money for more in a panic?

VIETNAMESE AMERICANS
OBAMA-BIDEN

HOPE
VIETNAMESE AMERICANS
OBAMA-BIDEN

Vote

Vote

Vote

Vote

Vote

Vote

Vote

Vote

Vote

Vote

NOW

Sarah Palin ≠ Hillary Clinton

Sarah Palin ≠ Hillary Clinton

Sarah Palin ≠ Hillary Clinton

Sarah Palin ≠ Hillary Clinton

OBAMA

OBAMA

OBAMA

OBAMA

OBAMA

OBAMA

Sarah Palin ≠ Hillary Clinton

Sarah Palin ≠ Hillary Clinton

Sarah Palin ≠ Hillary Clinton

Sarah Palin ≠ Hillary Clinton

Sarah Palin ≠ Hillary Clinton

Sarah Palin ≠ Hillary Clinton

Sarah Palin ≠ Hillary Clinton

Sarah Palin ≠ Hillary Clinton

AMERICA MOMMA FOR OBAMA!

AMERICA MOMMA FOR OBAMA!

AMERICA MOMMA FOR OBAMA!

AMERICA MOMMA FOR OBAMA!

AMERICA MOMMA FOR OBAMA!

AMERICA MOMMA FOR OBAMA!

AMERICA MOMMA FOR OBAMA!

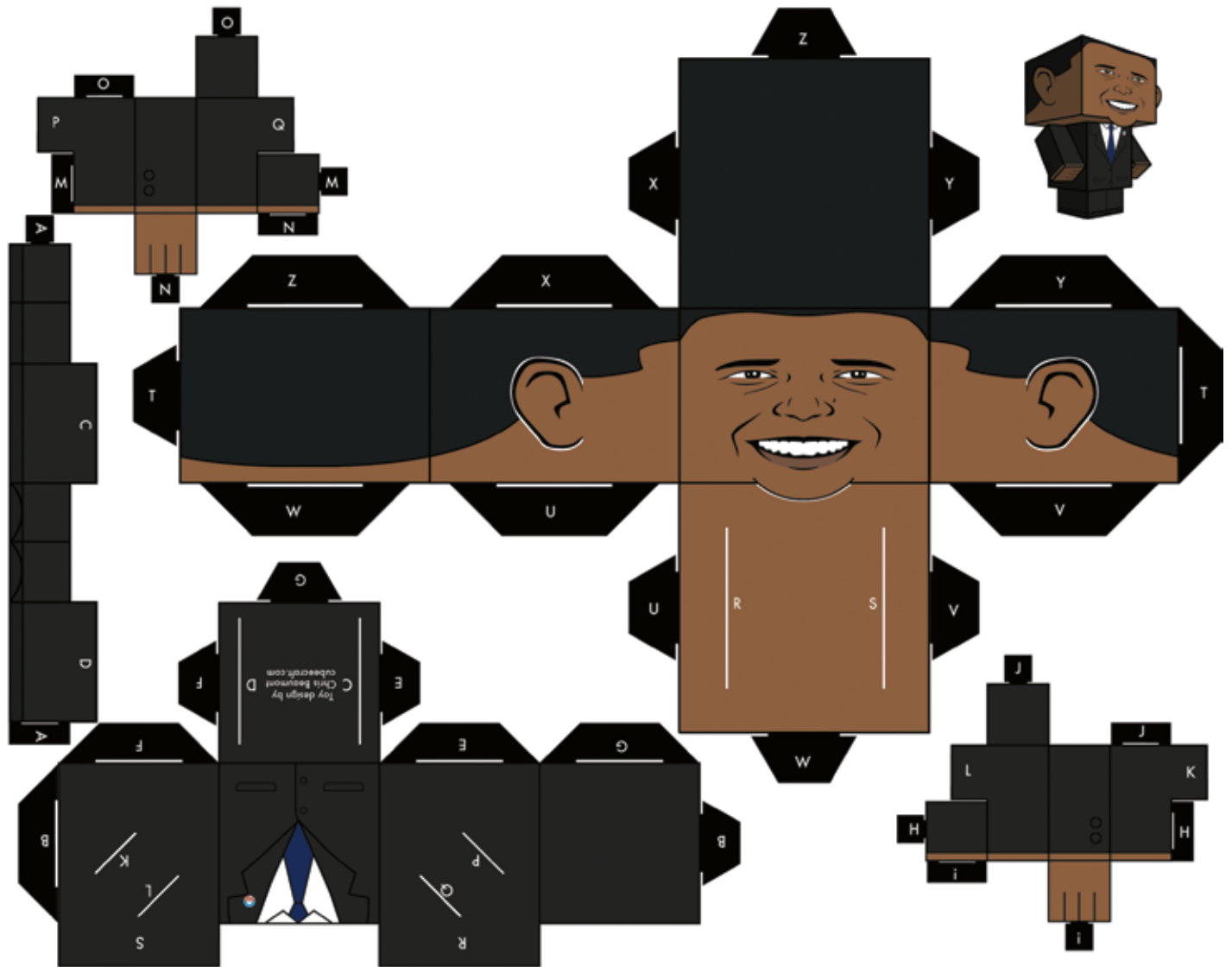
AMERICA MOMMA FOR OBAMA!

AMERICA MOMMA FOR OBAMA!

AMERICA MOMMA FOR OBAMA!

AMERICA MOMMA FOR OBAMA!





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CUBEECRAFT.COM

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George Vlosich III
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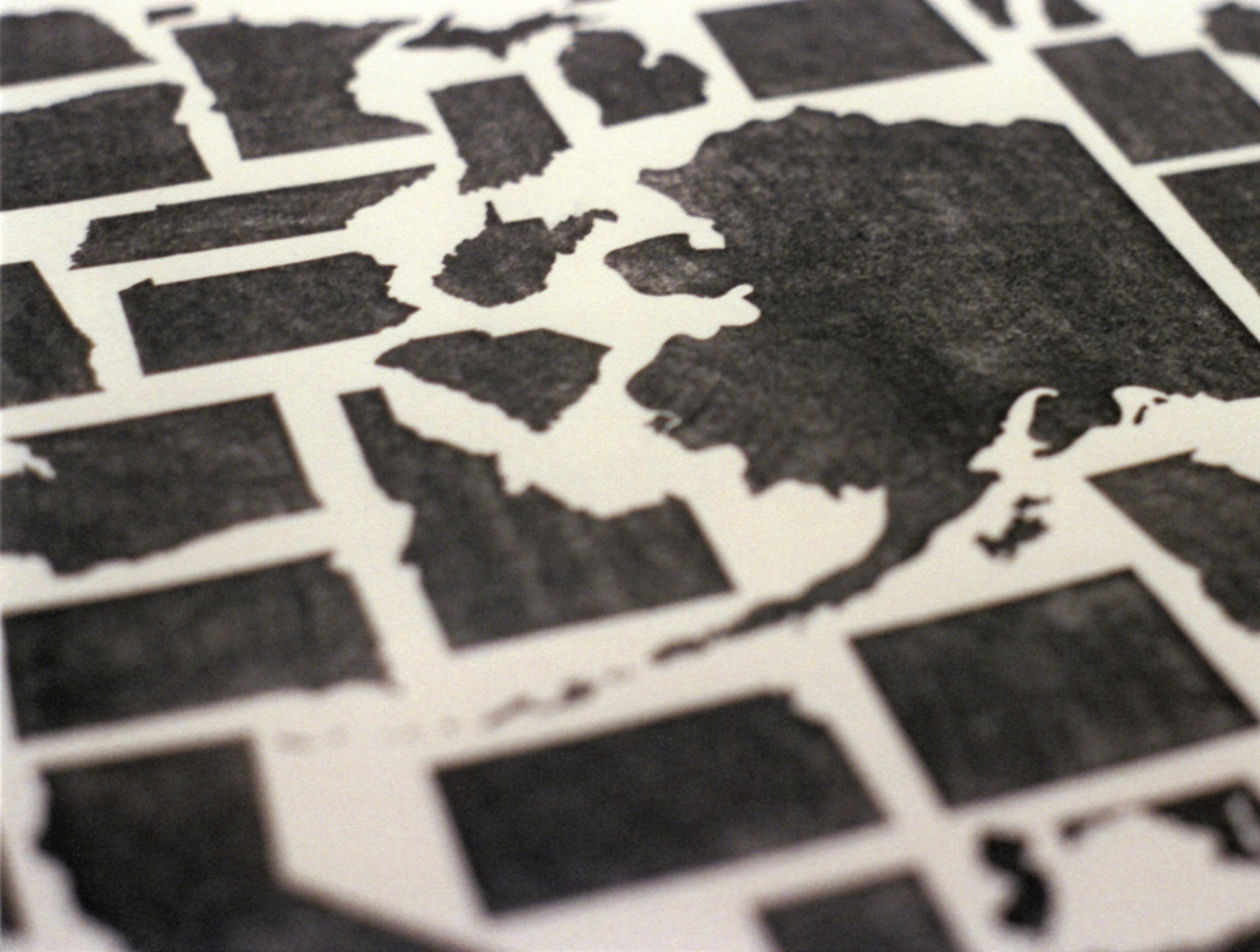




STATES UNITED

We The People

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
|  ALABAMA |  INDIANA |  NEBRASKA |  SOUTH CAROLINA |
|  ALASKA |  IOWA |  NEVADA |  SOUTH DAKOTA |
|  ARIZONA |  KANSAS |  NEW HAMPSHIRE |  TENNESSEE |
|  ARKANSAS |  KENTUCKY |  NEW JERSEY |  TEXAS |
|  CALIFORNIA |  LOUISIANA |  NEW MEXICO |  UTAH |
|  COLORADO |  MAINE |  NEW YORK |  VERMONT |
|  CONNECTICUT |  MARYLAND |  NORTH CAROLINA |  VIRGINIA |
|  DELAWARE |  MASSACHUSETTS |  NORTH DAKOTA |  WASHINGTON |
|  FLORIDA |  MICHIGAN |  OHIO |  WEST VIRGINIA |
|  GEORGIA |  MINNESOTA |  OKLAHOMA |  WISCONSIN |
|  HAWAII |  MISSISSIPPI |  OREGON |  WYOMING |
|  ILLINOIS |  MISSOURI |  PENNSYLVANIA | |
| |  MONTANA |  RHODE ISLAND | |



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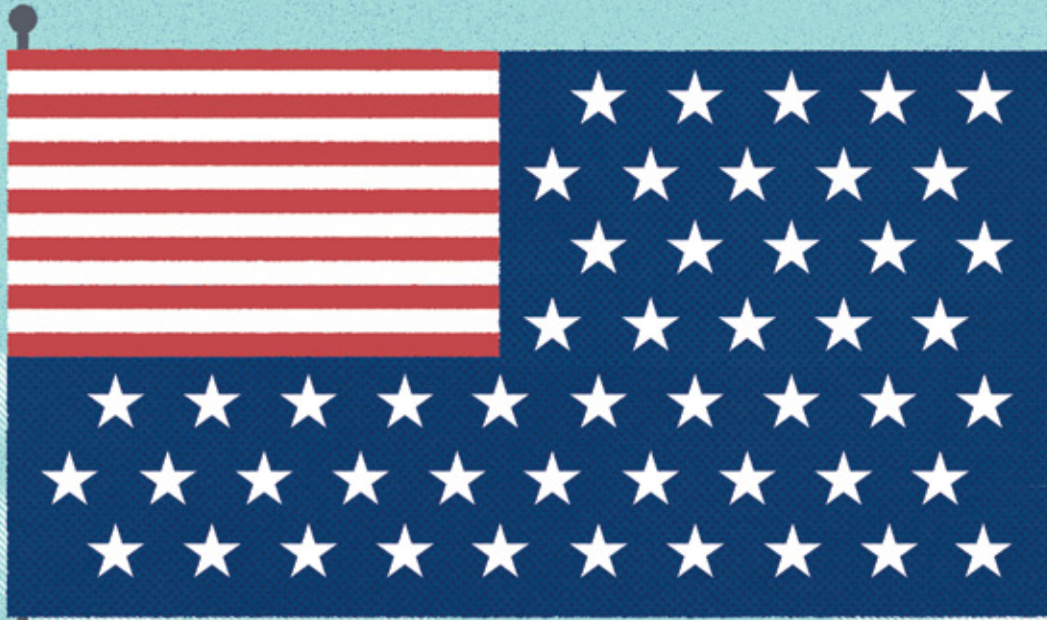
Vote 2008

emek.net

Emek Studios

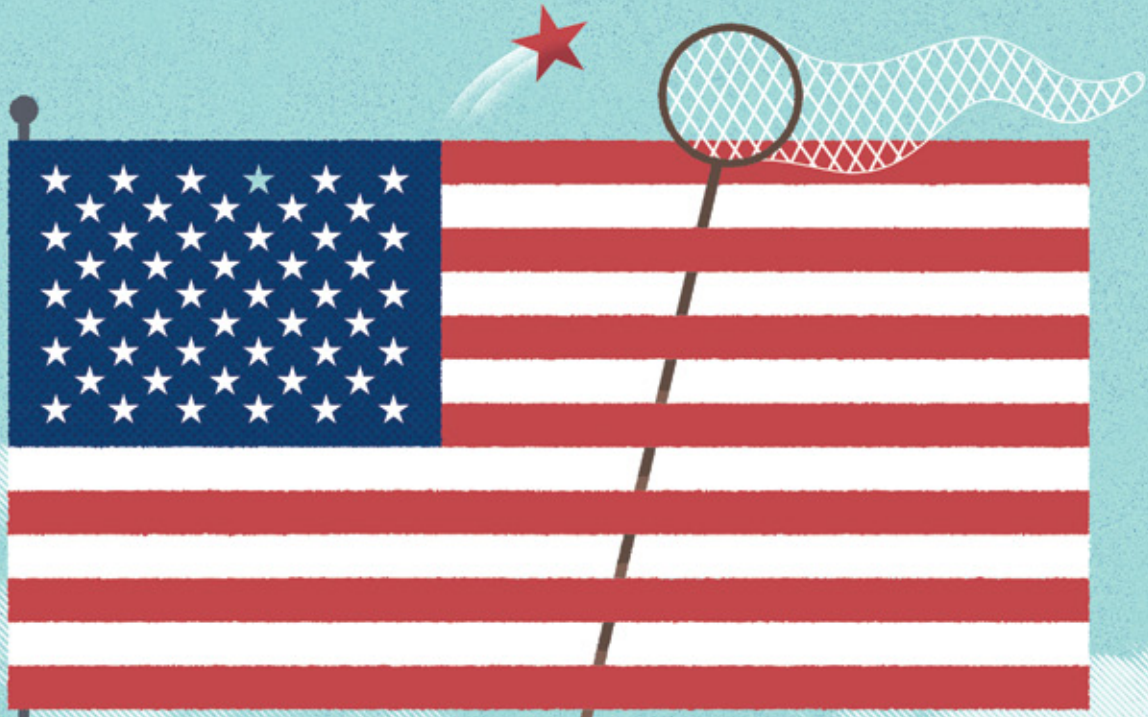
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change

Springfield, Missouri



hope

VICTORY

ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE





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Jeff Domke

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Brooklyn, New York

Rene Garcia Jr.
RENEGARCIAJR.COM

San Francisco, California

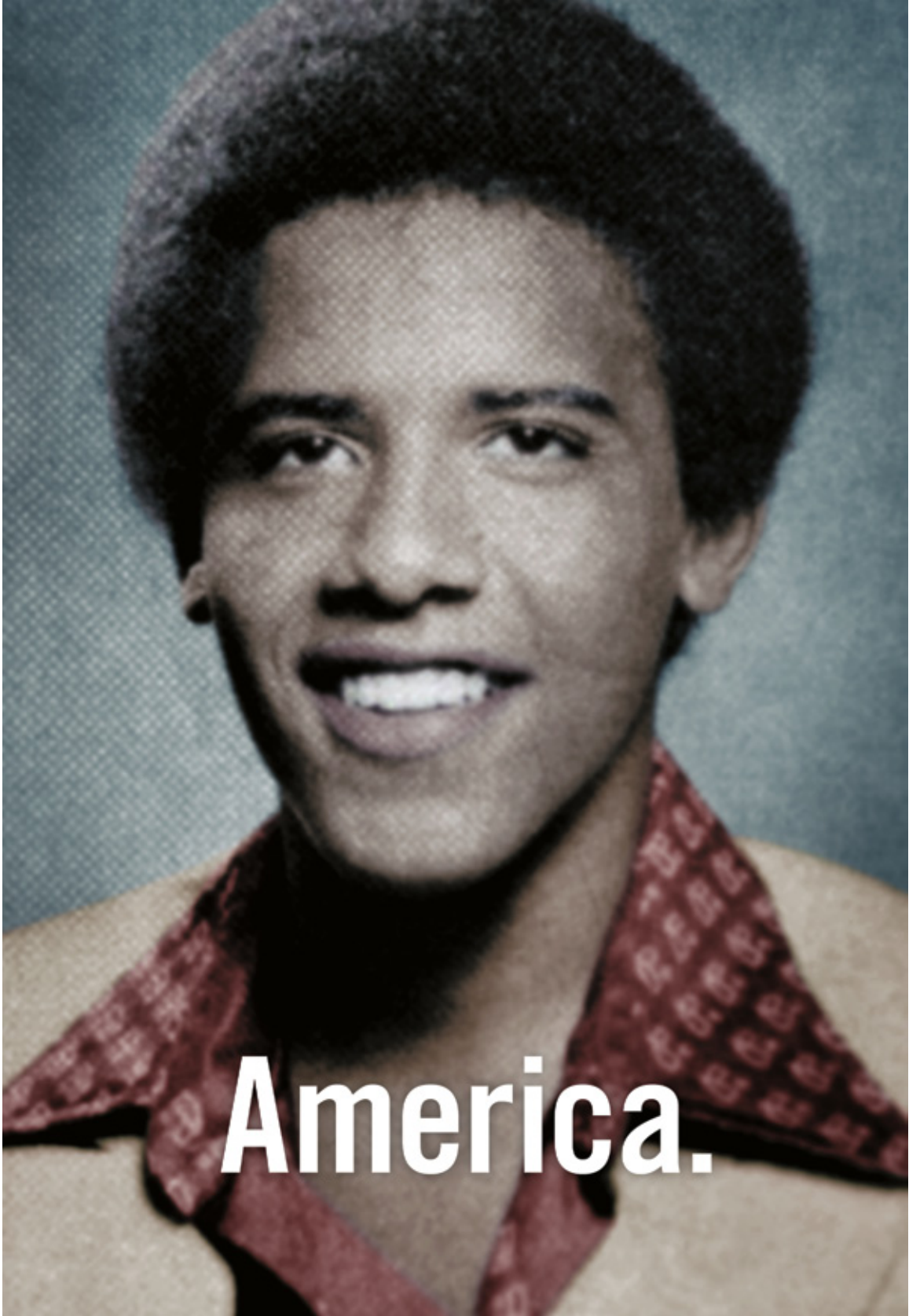






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MAYBE WE SHOULD TRY A DIFFERENT DIRECTION
PLEASE VOTE OBAMA**

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FOR AMERICA





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CoDama!

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Michael Bierut

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Jimm Lasser

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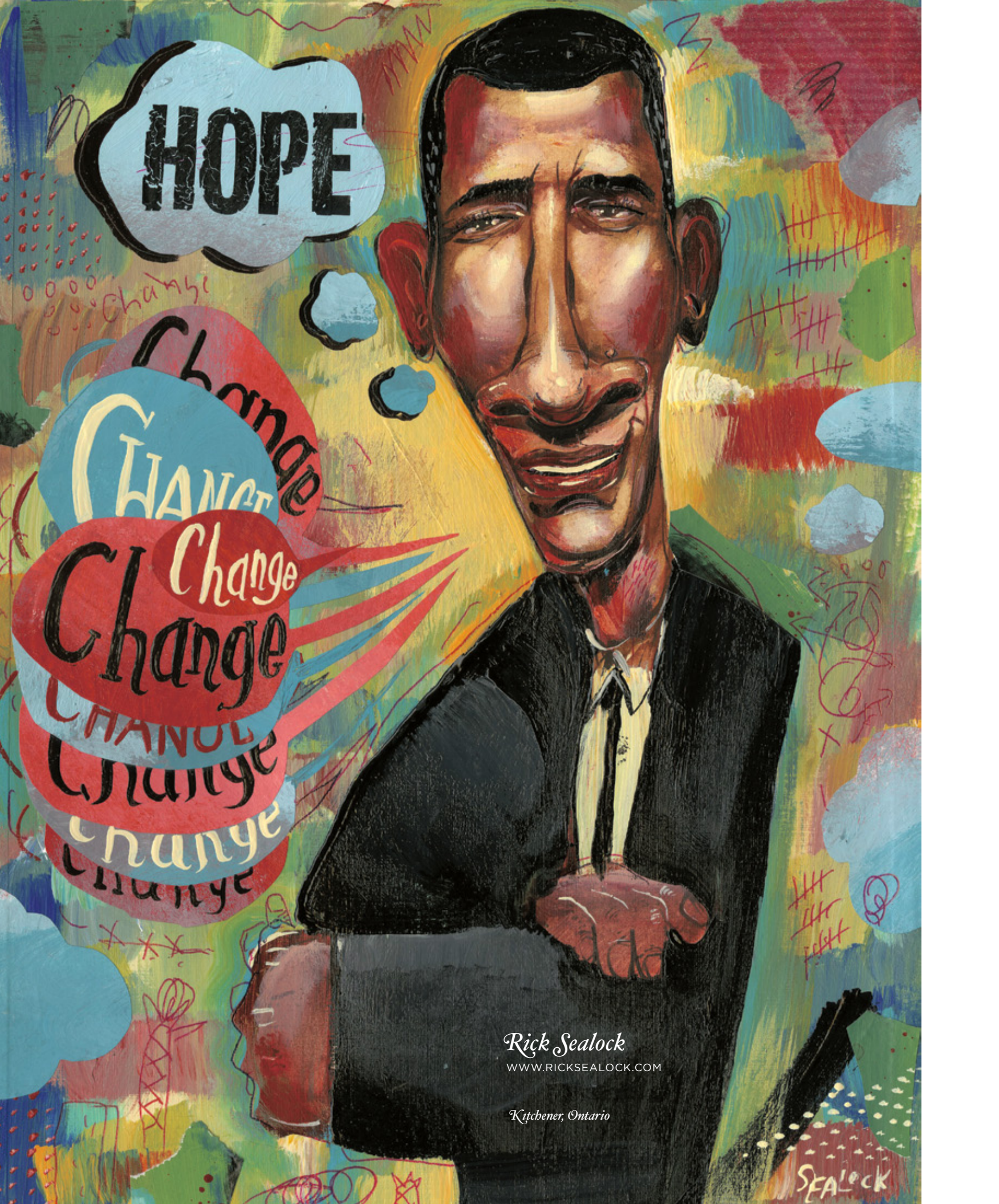
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South Plainfield, New Jersey



HOPE

Change

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Change

Change

Change

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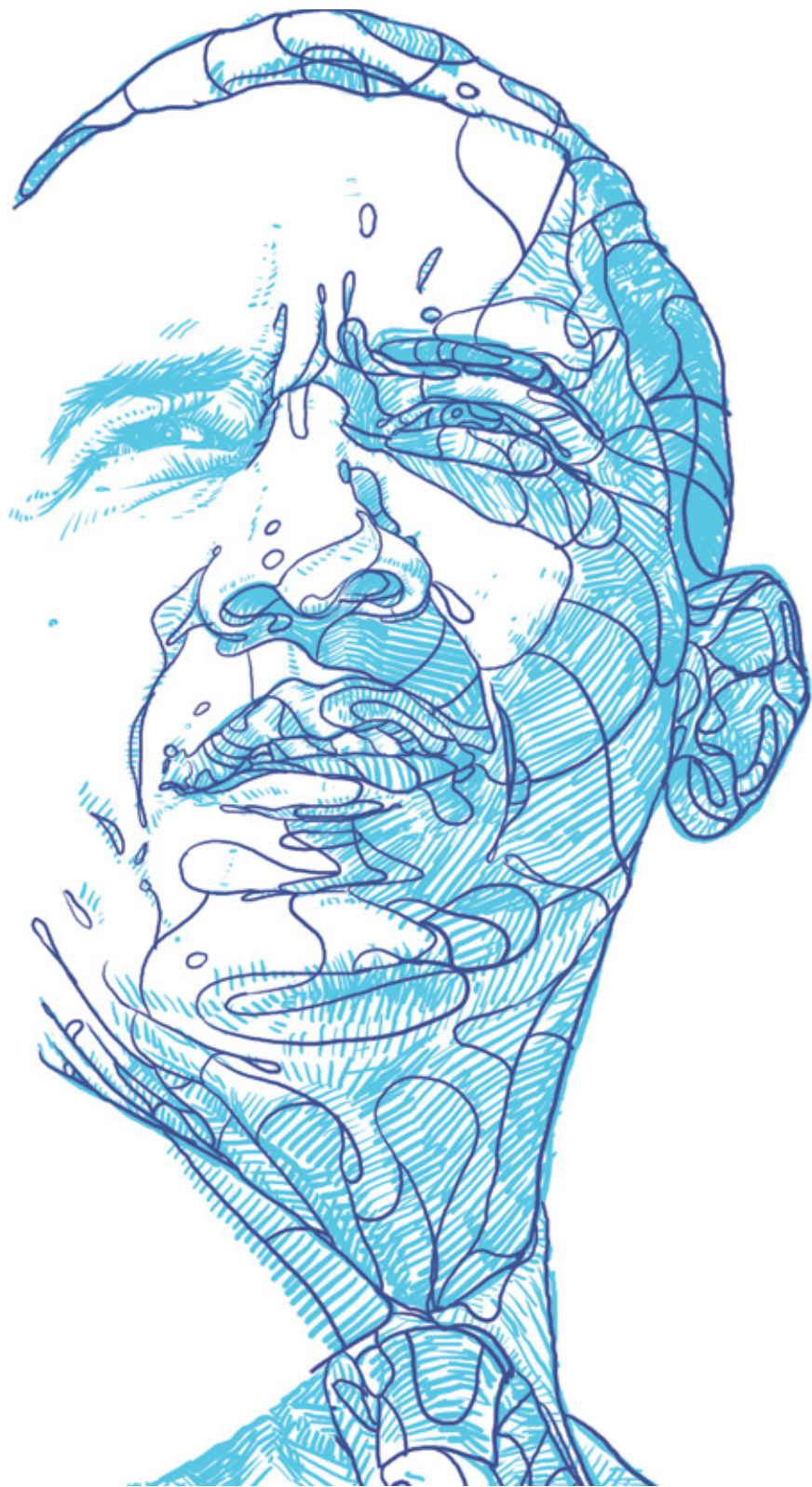
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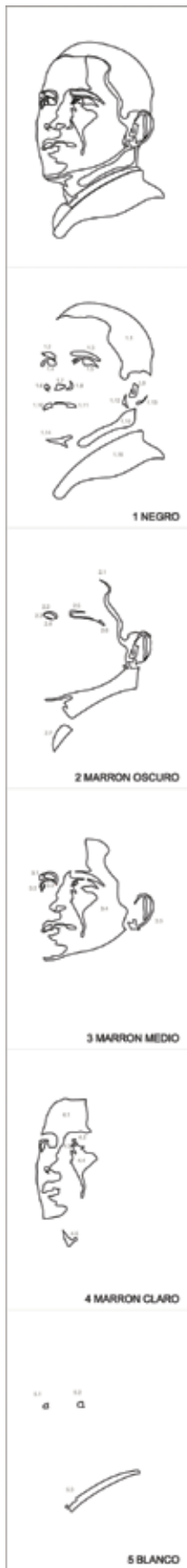


Marlene Dumas

WWW.DAVIDZWIRNER.COM

New York, New York





SUPERFICIES

Núm. concepto	m ²	m ³	Kg
1.1 pelo	1.346,91	45,47	10.841,14
1.2 cara derecha	24,05	0,74	1.320,64
1.3 cara izquierda	26,33	1,75	3.149,62
1.4 ojo derecha	22,20	1,00	1.796,04
1.6 ojo izquierda	45,95	1,37	2.428,70
1.6 orilla del ojo derecho	5,41	0,28	528,14
1.7 orilla del ojo izquierdo	10,42	0,54	1.248,64
1.8 labio superior izquierdo	8,38	0,25	452,02
1.9 labio inferior	28,70	0,89	1.693,90
1.10 labio derecho	12,19	0,62	959,36
1.11 labio izquierdo	20,36	0,61	1.068,90
1.12 labio superior interior	11,76	0,35	638,12
1.13 labio superior exterior	7,17	0,22	387,18
1.14 barbilla	48,04	1,49	2.675,18
1.15 cuello	276,47	8,38	15.289,58
1.16 torso	1.352,85	43,88	10.289,30
1.17 espalda	3.225,27	95,78	179.897,78
2.1 frente del pelo, angulo, cuello	1.176,00	38,90	62.291,00
2.2 frente del pelo cara derecha	10,57	0,36	678,78
2.3 labio cara derecha	0,18	0,01	9,72
2.4 labio inferior cara derecha	0,98	0,03	50,70
2.5 frente cara izquierda	21,42	0,64	1.198,50
2.6 labio superior izquierda	0,11	0,15	273,54
2.7 cuello cara izquierda	175,30	5,34	9.294,66
2.8 cuello cara izquierda	1.262,00	38,08	62.532,00

3.1 banda exterior cara derecha	26,80	1,20	2.192,00
3.2 banda exterior izquierda	7,31	0,23	304,74
3.3 fragmento del postcabeza del	0,38	0,02	4,80
3.4 media izquierda	2.319,28	69,94	126.687,80
3.5 oreja	120,49	3,28	8.210,30
	2.446,26	74,54	134.307,64
4.1 frente y parte del torso	1.290,28	38,88	69.980,72
4.2 cuello y parte del torso	2,76	0,08	140,24
4.3 labio superior izquierdo	0,91	0,03	182,54
4.4 labio inferior	282,40	7,87	13.027,20
4.5 cuello	37,13	1,11	2.035,52
	1.592,87	47,97	85.346,24
5.1 blanco del ojo derecho	0,26	0,26	402,80
5.2 blanco del ojo izquierdo	12,22	0,38	610,36
5.3 cuello derecho	256,43	7,29	13.787,22
5.4 cuello izquierdo	257,38	7,73	13.844,22
TOTAL	8.884,88	267,85	482.211,26

3.000 de gesso	260,00 kg
cantidad media gesso	1800 kg/m ²
precio total gesso	480,00 €



EXPECTATION

Un proyecto artístico de / Un proyecto artístico de / An artistic project by Jorge Rodríguez-Gerada

Alex Gómez, arquitecto
Marques de Barberà, 8 08001BCN
9344 107 10 / 609274008
alex@artjammer.es

















Colophon

Body text is set in Adobe Garamond Pro
by Claude Garamond and Robert Slimbach

Headlines and Crossheads are set in Hoefler Text
and Gotham by Hoefler & Frere-Jones

The paper is Sappi Gallerie Art Silk Text

The endleaves are Cordenons Astrosilver
Cannete Cover

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Scott Thomas

COMPILED WITH
Kori Schulman

MANAGING EDITOR
Mia Sara Bruch

COPY-EDITED BY
James H. Ewert Jr.

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&
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