

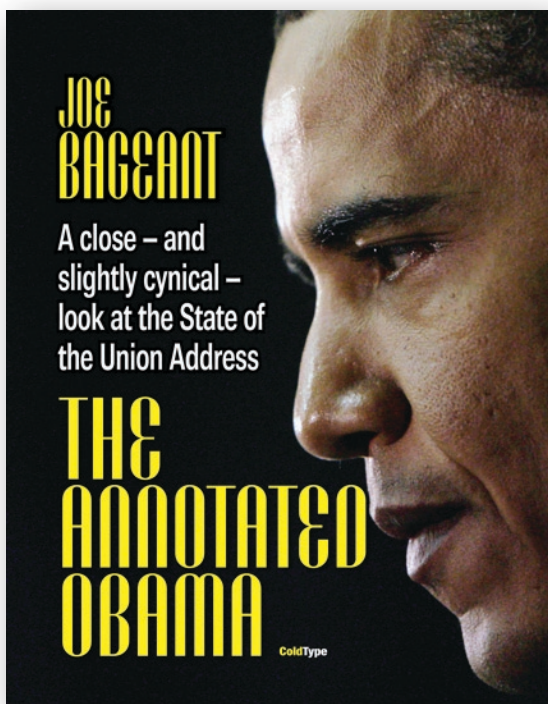
A close-up, high-contrast profile photograph of Barack Obama, looking downwards and to the left. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of his skin and the contours of his face against a dark background.

JOE
BAGEANT

A close – and
slightly cynical –
look at the State of
the Union Address

THE
ANNOTATED
OBAMA

ColdType



THE AUTHOR

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THE ANNOTATED OBAMA

I've managed to sit still through a few state of the union speeches, through the remarks of Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, one Bush (the pappy, I never could gut out one of The Dub's) and a Clinton. Brother Clinton finished me off, made me give up on state of the union speeches altogether.

Still, there was the off chance (OK, vain hope) that Obama might come out swinging in the wake of the Massachusetts massacre and the Supreme's recent sale of Congress to corporations. As in: The senator from Wal-Mart now has the floor. So I poured myself a stiff one and fell into a deep cush recliner in front of a mongo brain-wrapping TV screen. Not that I would ever own one, mind you. I watch it at my friend and fellow writer Fred Reed's house. That way he gets the rap for being a torpid brainwashed American pig.

Obama's opener was predictable enough, the obligatory patriotic refer-



Along with millions of other cranky old lefties, I wanted to scream back, Then pick up the fucking phone, damn ya!

ence for the blood and balls crowd:

... when the Union was turned back at Bull Run and the Allies first landed at Omaha Beach...

Then came the hearkening back section, in this case to 1965, a time when blacks had hope and liberals had a few guts:

... and civil rights marchers were beaten on Bloody Sunday...

More than half of Americans were not yet born in 1965, and four fifths surely have never heard of Bloody Sunday at Selma. But what the hell, it's a speech, right?

And again, we must answer history's call ...

Along with millions of other cranky old lefties, I wanted to scream back, Then pick up the fucking phone, damn ya!

And of course there were references to heartland towns, to show he can at least name a few:

... in places like Elkhart, Ind., and Galesburg, Ill.

And he reminded us if the many nights he spends in the Lincoln room crying over the mail:

... letters I read each night. The toughest to read are those written by children ...

And, as always, the American people are resilient, industrious folks living in Norman Rockwell's world:

... they remain busy building cars and teaching kids, starting businesses and going back to school. They're coaching Little League and helping their neighbors. ...I have never been more hopeful about America's future than I am tonight.

Are we living in the same country here, guy? But shsssh! At last! He's talking the economy. My man is gonna get down and grit with the peeps. Talk some real meat here.

It all begins with our economy. Our most urgent task upon taking office was to shore up the same banks that helped cause this crisis.

Wait, back up there big fella. Why?

It was not easy to do. And if there's one thing that has unified Democrats and Republicans, it's that we all hated the bank bailout.

That kicked off my little inner, the bullshit detector, the one that speaks in translative tongue. And the translation was: However, we of both parties all asked ourselves, do we really have the ass to take on the big money? The guys who pave the campaign trail with the bucks? No way Jose!

Obama rolls on.

So I supported the last administration's efforts to create the financial rescue program. And when we took the program over, we made it more transparent and accountable.

Huh?!!!

As a result, the markets are now stabilized, and we have recovered most of the money (the printing presses are white hot as I speak) we spent on (handed over to) the banks.



I'm doing my taxes next week. Care to lay folding money on that statement? I'm reading your lips

To recover the rest, I have proposed a fee on the biggest banks.

Which will be passed on to their customers.

...if these firms can afford to hand out big bonuses again, they can afford a modest fee to pay back the taxpayers who rescued them.

Pardon me, but we don't remember ever being asked if we wanted to throw the rich bastards a line.

... we extended or increased unemployment benefits for more than 18 million Americans...

This is progress? It's like creating more soup lines.

We made health insurance 65 percent cheaper for families who get their coverage through COBRA.

COBRA costs 12 grand a year for crying out loud! You're still talking \$5,500 a year for unemployed folks, uh, between jobs, people who are going to remain there unless the Chinese start a work visa program for them. COBRA?

Let me repeat: we cut taxes. We cut taxes for 95 percent of working families

Who just happen to be making less taxable dollars than ever.

We cut taxes for small businesses

Which are in the shitter, thus making less taxable dollars.

We cut taxes for first-time homebuyers

Assuming they can to get a bank to un-ass the money so they too can go in hock the rest of their lives.

We cut taxes for parents trying to care for their children

Does that include the 46 million working class Americans who don't make enough money to pay taxes at all? Much less need a tax cut?

And we haven't raised income taxes by a single dime on a single person. Not a single dime.

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I'm doing my taxes next week. Care to lay folding money on that statement? I'm reading your lips.

Because of the steps we took, there are about 2 million Americans working right now who would otherwise be unemployed.

They were lucky enough *not* to be fired. So you get to claim anyone who still has a job?

Economists on the left and the right say that this [stimulus] bill has helped saved jobs and avert disaster.

They also tend to agree that it is building an even bigger coming disaster in the process – debt collapse.

Now, the true engine of job creation in this country will always be America's businesses

Those same folks you see cheerily waving at us from Seoul and Shenzhen.

But government can create the conditions necessary for businesses to expand and hire more workers.

Hmmm ... Maybe in FDR's time. But recent administrations have damned well proven to be capable of blowing our jobs out of the water. Can't you just do whatever the Clinton administration did – but do it in reverse?

We should start where most new jobs do – in small businesses

Where benefits are the least or non-existent, the pay is lowest and the jobs most insecure...

So tonight, I'm proposing that we take \$30 billion of the money Wall Street banks have repaid

the funny money we've printed up for them

and use it to help community banks

the local banking hustlers who never managed to sell their banks to Citicorp or Capital One while the selling was good.

... While we're at it, let's also eliminate all capital gains taxes on small business



Both Goering and Hitler pointed out, then proved, if the bullshit is huge enough, normal people will not believe that anyone would have the balls to tell such a lie, and accept it as the truth. And so The Big Lie is sold

Who knows, we may even get two or three Rotary Club Republicans to vote Democratic next time.

Next, we can put Americans to work today building the infrastructure ... railroads to the interstate highway system ...

But isn't the effectiveness of those things predicated upon manufacturing something, having something to ship around?

... time to finally slash the tax breaks for companies that ship our jobs overseas

The horse has left the bar Nellie, but if we close the barn door the rest of the world might not notice they are gone. Maybe even loan us a few more bucks.

I do not accept second place for the United States of America.

Second place? We're number one in external world debt per citizen (\$7,000 a head), But yeah, we're ninth in education in the industrial world, and battling Brazil and Mexico for the biggest net debtor nation slot. Which is its own sort of number one.

Look, I am not interested in punishing banks...

Why the hell not? They stole billions. We proles get beat up for a \$50 IRS bill.

I'm interested in ... [channeling] the savings of families into investments that raise incomes.

I thought we already tried that and got robbed by the Wall Street syndicate. Or are you talking buying each family a vegetable cart to put on the street in their off hours?

We need to make sure consumers and middle class families have the information they need to make financial decisions.

We tried that too. And we got mugged by Merrill Lynch, Smith Barney and that guy on Law and Order, Sam Waterson, who's still hawking discount brokerage for T.D. Waterhouse.

We are creating more clean energy and clean energy jobs.

Now yer talkin!

But to create more of these clean energy jobs, we need more production, more efficiency, more incentives. That means building a new generation of safe, clean nuclear power plants in this country. It means making tough decisions about opening new offshore areas for oil and gas development.

In other words, drill and nuke until the green starts showing.

Third, we need to export more of our goods.

So we will buy them from China, ship 'em to Cleveland, then export them again. Twenty million new jobs in shipping and export!

To help meet this goal, we're launching a national export initiative that will help farmers

Help corporate midwestern Republican corn growers and Archer Daniels Midland get bigger subsidies

and small businesses

assembling Chinese electronic parts in American maquiladoras

increase their exports... Fourth, we need to invest in the skills and education of our people.

Awwwww right!

To make college more affordable, this bill will finally end the unwarranted taxpayer subsidies that go to banks for student loans.

No longer will we let the banks run access to higher education into a racket. You the people must come up with the full freight from here on out. Or simply do it the good old American way. Hock your house. If you still have one. Which still puts the juice in the same bankers' hands. But with different paperwork.

Instead, let's take that money and give families a \$10,000 tax credit for four years of college



There are always those citizens who will not settle for simply voting based on what they have been fed. They detect the odor of swill, but cannot quite name the ingredients

like we all make enough to owe that kind of geet.

...and increase Pell Grants...

Just make sure you print enough greenbacks to cover the current 18 billion Pell Grant shortfall.

. And let's tell another 1 million students that when they graduate, they will be required to pay only 10 percent of their income on student loans...

Let's see now, at 10 percent of say, 35 K a year if the kid is lucky enough to find a reasonably good job by current standards, it shouldn't take more than a few decades to pay off that \$50,000 education bill, which, with compound interest runs at least \$80,000. Not as good for bankers as the old student loan racket, but nothing to piss at either.

... and all of their debt will be forgiven after 20 years

for those whose degree amounted to a lifetime clerk job at Blockbuster Video and proved uncollectible anyway.

and forgiven after 10 years if they choose a career in public service.

Military service. We've got more wars in the hopper

... we're working to lift the value of a family's single largest investment – their home. The steps we took last year to shore up the housing market have allowed millions of Americans to take out new loans and save an average of \$1,500 on mortgage payments. This year, we will step up refinancing...

Here we go again! Pump the next bubble baby!

... so that homeowners can move into more affordable mortgages.

Borrow your way out of debt. All it takes is a new mortgage. Didn't we try that already? I did.

Now let's be clear – I did not choose to tackle this [health care] issue to get some

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legislative victory under my belt.

You tackled it so you could claim the certain legislative defeat?

After nearly a century of trying, we are closer than ever to bringing more [health care] security to the lives of so many Americans.

Are you sure? In 1966 I used to get total health care through my company for \$1.67 a week. And I only made \$270 a month. What century are we talking about here, bro? Closer to what?

...I want to acknowledge our first lady, Michelle Obama, who this year is creating a national movement to tackle the epidemic of childhood obesity and make our kids healthier.

Tip for Michelle: Take down the corporate corn farmers ram-jamming government subsidized corn syrup into their fat little bodies.

By the time I'm finished speaking tonight, more Americans will have lost their health insurance. Millions will lose it this year. Our deficit will grow.

Thanks!

Do not walk away from reform. Not now. Not when we are so close ...

Close to total capitulation disguised as a meaningless compromise.

Let us find a way to come together and finish the job ... [we are doing on] the American people.

At the beginning of the last decade, America had a budget surplus of over \$200 billion

Goddamned Bill Clinton's shady book-keeping.

By the time I took office, we had a one-year deficit of over \$1 trillion and projected deficits of \$8 trillion over the next decade. Most of this was the result of not paying for two wars

Which I continue to prosecute

But we took office amid a crisis, and our



**Rest assured
you will be paid
in shrinking
funny money
until you croak**

efforts to prevent a second depression

By selling you into world debt slavery for generations to come

have added another \$1 trillion to our national debt.

Tough break there folks.

I am absolutely convinced that was the right thing to do.

(sigh)

Starting in 2011, we are prepared to freeze government spending for three years.

Not the spending on our two wars mind you, or in aid to Israel, or on money to prime the bankers' pumps, and certainly not on national security programs. But you will still keep your Medicare and Medicaid, if you can afford the new charges we're adding. And naturally your Social Security, the one you paid for all your life as an insurance policy – which continues to be pillaged by Congress -- will not be affected. Rest assured you will be paid in shrinking funny money until you croak.

We've already identified \$20 billion in savings for next year

All you folks gotta do is come up with the \$20 billion so we can show it on the books

...at a time of record deficits, we will not continue tax cuts for oil companies, investment fund managers and those making over \$250,000 a year.

No further tax cuts, but they can keep the ones they enjoy now.

Now, even after paying for what we spent on my watch

Which world economists say can never be paid off anyway, so fuck it.

we will still face the massive deficit we had when I took office.

You get to hold that turd too.

More importantly, the cost of Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security will continue to skyrocket.

This is your idea of a political promise?

That's why I've called for a bipartisan fiscal commission

Which should work about as well as all the other bipartisan commissions we use to blow smoke up your ass ... assuming I can get it past the Senate, which petty much likes things the way they are.

... I refuse to pass this problem on to another generation of Americans.

It will land in their laps anyway without any help from me.

And when the vote comes tomorrow, the Senate should restore the pay-as-you-go law ...

Other nations are already threatening to quit loaning us money, so we're gonna be paying as we go anyway. Why not claim the high ground now?

I know that some in my own party will argue that we cannot address the deficit or freeze government spending when so many are still hurting.

But none of us on Capitol Hill are on food stamps, so shut the fuck up and listen to me.

I agree, which is why this freeze will not take effect until next year, when the economy is stronger

When maybe we've managed to beat some oil out of one of these dust pits we're presently bombing.

From some on the right, I expect we'll hear a different argument – that if we just make fewer investments in our people, extend tax cuts for wealthier Americans, eliminate more regulations and maintain the status quo on health care, our deficits will go away. The problem is, that's what we did for eight years.

Translation: I'm trying to pull it off, but your boy George fowled that pool for us. The man had no subtlety at all.

Rather than fight the same tired battles that have dominated Washington for de-



Other nations are already threatening to quit loaning us money, so we're gonna be paying as we go anyway. Why not claim the high ground now?

cades, it's time to try something new. Let's invest in our people.

By taking more of their money from then and giving it back. They've proven they don't know the difference.

To do that, we have to recognize that we face more than a deficit of dollars right now.

We're printing all the dollars we need, so that's not the problem.

We face a deficit of trust – deep and corrosive doubts about how Washington works that have been growing for years.

None of us in Congress believe anything in Washington works either. In fact, we are certain because we fucked it up.

But restoring the public trust demands more.

We need another sacrificial goat – another like Bernie Madoff. Ben Bernanke is off the table.

Tonight, I'm calling on Congress to publish all earmark requests on a single Web site before there's a vote, so that the American people can see how their money is being spent. Of course, none of these reforms will even happen if we don't also reform how we work with one another.

Which will never happen, so don't let the website scare you off. The most that can happen is that the leftie bloggers blow a few capillaries.

Now, I am not naive. I never thought the mere fact of my election would usher in peace, harmony and some post-partisan era.

That was just a campaign promise.

Since the day I took office, we have renewed our focus on the terrorists who threaten our nation.

Don't ask me how we renewed our focus, given that we were not here to focus at all before we took office. Ask the speech writers. I don't know but we're doing it.

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We are filling unacceptable gaps revealed by the failed Christmas attack, with better airline security...

The new x-ray panty zappers may not be a hit with the ACLU, but the airport TSA employees love 'em.

In Afghanistan, we are increasing our troops and training Afghan Security Forces so they can begin to take the lead in July of 2011 and our troops can begin to come home

At a rate of about six a week for the next 220 years.

As a candidate, I promised that I would end this [Iraq] war, and that is what I am doing as president.

Now that Afghanistan is frying hot enough to keep the military complex cooking, we can ease up on Iraq.

But make no mistake: This war is ending, and all of our troops are coming home ...

On a three legged ticket with a connector in Kabul.

Tonight, all of our men and women in uniform ...

I can't refer to them as our kids getting their cuds blown off by IEDs, so, like other presidents, I must say men and women in uniform.

... must know that they have our respect, our gratitude and our full support.

No jobs, but lots of support. Yellow ribbons and free prosthetic limbs for all. And if they still have doubts, they can watch for Michelle Obama and Jill Biden on TV. Because they have vowed to:

forge a national commitment to support military families.

A commitment, mind you, nothing beyond that. So don't go getting any unrealistic expectations. Strap on your new battery powered robotic leg and hit the streets. Rumor is that there is a job out there.

Obama on the threat of nuclear weapons:



No jobs, but lots of support. Yellow ribbons and free prosthetic limbs for all. And if they still have doubts, they can watch for Michelle Obama and Jill Biden on TV

I have embraced the vision of John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan through a strategy that reverses the spread of these weapons and seeks a world without them.

That should hold the bastards! Kennedy and Reagan in the same sentence.

And seek to reduce our stockpiles and launchers.

Let's eliminate the deteriorated junk, which we would have done anyway, at some point, and call it a reduction.

Now comes the time to bring it on home, baby. Something for everybody.

*America's greatest source of **strength** has always been our **ideals**. ... We find **unity** in our incredible **diversity**, drawing on the promise **enshrined** in our **Constitution**: the notion that **we are all created equal**...*

*We must continually **renew** this **promise**. My administration has a **civil rights** division that is once again prosecuting **civil rights violations** and **employment discrimination**. We finally strengthened our laws to protect against **crimes driven by hate**. This year, I will work with Congress and our military to finally repeal the law that denies **gay Americans** the right to **serve the country they love** because of who they are. We are going to crack down on violations of **equal pay** laws – so that **women get equal pay** ... And we should continue the work of fixing our **broken immigration system** – to **secure our borders**, enforce our laws and ensure that everyone who **plays by the rules** can contribute to our economy and **enrich our nation**.*

*In the end, it is our **ideals**, our **values**, that **built America** – **values** that allowed us to **forge a nation** made up of **immigrants** from every corner of the globe, **values** that drive our citizens still.*

The national hand job breathlessly quickens.

*Every day, **Americans meet their responsibilities** to their **families** and their*

employers. Time and again, they **lend a hand to their neighbors** and **give back to their country**. They take pride in their labor, and are **generous in spirit**. These aren't Republican **values** or Democratic **values** they're living by, business **values** or labor **values**. They are **American values**[!].

I campaigned on the **promise of change** – **change we can believe in**, the slogan went ... But remember this – I never suggested that change would be easy or that I can do it alone.

But I knew you figured otherwise. So here I am up here in the catbird seat, and down there you are moaning the blues. That's politics for ya!

We can do what's necessary to keep our poll numbers high and get through the next election instead of doing what's best for the next generation.

And why not? It's always worked in the past.

Building to a crescendo:

... that fundamental **decency** that has



I personally gagged at this one. Which is surely some kind of saccharine set up, in hopes of gaining the smarm vote out there in **Preciousville, Kansas**

always been at the core of **the American people** – lives on[!]. It lives on in the struggling **small business owner** ... It lives on in the woman who said ... We are strong. We are resilient. **We are American**. It lives on in the **8-year-old boy** in Louisiana, **who just sent me his allowance** and asked if I would give it to the people of **Haiti**.

I personally gagged at this one. Which is surely some kind of saccharine set up, in hopes of gaining the smarm vote out there in Preciousville, Kansas.

And it lives on in all the Americans who ... pull people they've never known from rubble, prompting chants of **USA! USA! USA!** The spirit ... lives on in **you**, its **people**.

Thank you. **God Bless You**. And **God Bless the United States of America!**

Well God, you don't really have to bless us. You already did that once and we blew it.

From here on out, just preserve us from ourselves. OK?

Amen.

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