

One Student's View of the Obama New Yorker Cover

Contributed by Eboni Farmer -- Black College Wire
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What's wrong with the idea of a First Lady in an Afro?

The July 21 cover of The New Yorker magazine could make any black woman angry.

My first thought was 'Oh no, why does Michelle Obama have to have an Afro?' But taking a closer look I couldn't help but laugh because it is all so unbelievable. In my opinion "The New Yorker" has done its job.

Although most of the things on the cover are a far cry from being true, there are a few things to take note of. Michelle Obama with a bushy Afro and the fist pound. I for one would love to see the future First Lady working a natural hair style; I think it suits her. I'm hoping she'll see the cover and notice how well it frames her animated caricature.

The cover is meant to address the craziness that some people actually believe about the Obamas.

Is Obama a Muslim? No.

Would he really hang a picture of Osama Bin Laden on his wall? No.

Do I believe Obama would burn an American flag? No.

Does Michelle need to carry a machine gun around with her? I really have to think about that.

I'm kidding. Putting all the rumors out on the table at once makes for controversial satire.

For obvious reasons, Obama's camp isn't too pleased with the New Yorker's taste in cover design, calling it "tasteless and offensive."

Obama commented recently on CNN about the cover, saying Americans have more serious issues to be concerned about, and I don't believe it deserves more--at least not from him. He has already made it clear that he is devoted to his country.

The Obamas are none of the things portrayed in the cover, and if anyone looks at it and believes it they should consider listening to him when he speaks at the Democratic national convention in August.

I digress. Back to Michelle's Afro, which makes me think of something else. Recently I came across a video on CNN.com talking about TV One being put under fire because it will only be covering the Democratic National Convention.

TV One is geared toward a black audience. Given the historical context of this year's election, TV One believes its viewers-which are 93 percent black-want to see nothing but Obama coverage. The journalist in me says, "No, viewers need to see both sides of the coin." The pride in me says "Well, there isn't anything historic about the Republican National Convention, besides John McCain's age which is admirable, but TV One is not a news station."

Critics say TV One is missing Obama's message, noting that he doesn't want to be seen as the first black president, but as a future president who happens to be black.

Critics are missing the TV One message, which I believe is: Obama is making history, he is obviously black and there is no way to discredit either.

If the Obamas weren't black, would Michelle's caricature be carrying a gun or have a large Afro on the cover of the New Yorker? I don't think so.

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All articles in the Voices section are the opinions of the individual writers and do not reflect the views of Black College Wire. Eboni Farmer is a student at Howard University and writes for the student newspaper, The Hilltop.