So you want to be President..

As the figurehead of the most prosperous nation on the planet, being President of the United States seems like *the* job to have. The numerous perks that accompany the position alone warrant desire, not to speak of the incredible power, stature, and influence that come with the job. However being the President isn’t exactly easy: in fact, being President of the U.S. is the most stressful job on the planet. Even when running for the title of President, every aspect of one’s life is placed under extreme inspection for multiple years. Barack Obama, seeking to usher in a new age with the agents of hope and change, ran for office anyway in 2008. Through strong belief in the ideals that he supports, a fantastically charismatic personality, and a tendency to get things done, Barack Obama quickly won the hearts of many Americans. His campaign, personal life, and time in office have been some of the most scrutinized in the history of the world (which is why I chose him for this essay.) Though Obama’s great vision of America may not have taken the shape he imagined four years ago, his unyielding determination and methodical modus operandi have transformed many of his hopes into actualities during his presidency.

The main attraction of being the President is the level of direct influence he or she has over both domestic and global affairs. The President has a direct say in the generation of laws, whether or not laws will come into effect, and international affairs. As President it is impossible to be ignored; Theodore Roosevelt coined the term “bully pulpit” for the opportunity, as President, to focus public attention on any issue he or she pleases. This opportunity, in addition to the ability to influence domestic programs, allowed for Barack to bring matters such as Healthcare and Education into the limelight. The President of the United States also experiences many pleasantries in addition to the heavy mental and emotional pressures that come with the job. The monetary rewards should not go unmentioned, as the President earns a hefty $400,000 a year, plus the added benefit of being able to utilize expense accounts for food, travel, and entertainment. Camp David, the President’s private country retreat, is also available for visit, and the President can even use Air Force One to traverse the country when mixing political and personal business. To help cope with the pressures of the job, Presidents are encouraged to take vacations, to relax and unwind with their families and friends. Such opportunities were probably not primary incentives for Barack running, but rather perks that come on the side. As a family man, these small excursions likely brought some peace of mind to a man who would soon have severely less time for his family.

Though he may not have known it at the time, Obama has been preparing himself for his presidency since he was a child. At a very early age it was apparent that Barack would exceed was expected of him. As a youth he strove to go above and beyond, causing his peers to recognize that that he was no lesser than them, despite having a black father and white mother. Described as a “perfectionist” by his peers, Barack would not take on a problem or task unless he was certain that he could solve it. Barack himself stated that the, “experience of a variety of cultures in a climate of mutual respect became an integral part of my world view, and a basis for the values that I hold most dear,” showing just how deeply the concepts of respect, acceptance, and equality are embedded into his psyche. These ideals would become a foundational part of his campaign platform, as Barack aimed to provide for legal immigration, fight discrimination against same-sex couples, and turn America on a path to her former glory. Today many of the policies that he supports would generate opportunities similar to the ones he experienced as a youth - increasing the affordability of college, for example. His persistence and diligence as a youth were also recognized and rewarded; Barrack was able to attend Punahou school, a prestigious college preparatory academy, due to a financial scholarship, and eventually study at Columbia University and Harvard as a result. Throughout his schooling Barack pursued academic, athletic, and social avenues, and succeeded in these areas due to his natural charisma, intelligence, and work ethic. He did not and does not waste any of the opportunities that he earned, nor any that were bestowed upon him - to do so would be against the core principles of his very being. These same attributes serve him to this day, as he continues to pursue the lofty goals he has set for his time in office.

After four years as President, Barack has certainly garnered quite a bit of attention, both good and bad.. His winning of the Nobel Prize for “extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples” seems a bit unusual, as the award is normally given for a distinct, tangible achievement, rather than a supposed course of action. However the committee stated that the award was given primarily for Barack’s moves to rid the world of nuclear weapons and for initiating peace talks between Palestine and Israel, challenging the world to solve problems diplomatically instead of violently. Barack did humbly accept the award, but donated all of the prize money to charity - a selfless (and smooth) move in keeping with his core principles. However he has not been entirely honest throughout his ascent to power, but then again nobody is. For example he stated that, “the vast majority of the money that I got was from small donors across the country,” when in fact much of the campaign funding came from Political Action Committees and Super PAC’s. While taking money from big businesses is exchange for supporting what they want isn’t exactly honorable, not very much is in today’s political system. A presidential nominee doesn’t stand a chance without the kind of funding that these mega-corporations can offer, making these funds a necessary evil.

Though Barack Obama has encountered much resistance, he has done well with his time in office. He has pushed for the furtherance of ideals that he supports, tried to bring this nation out of a time of uncertainty and strife, and above all “preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.” Despite the noticeable toll that stress has had upon him, such as greying hair and more defined wrinkles on his face, Obama is still running for reelection in 2012. Barack Obama plans to prove to the world that he can outdo himself a second time around, and continue trying to fulfill the promises that he made back in 2008.

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