

Dreams From My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance

Barack Obama

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Barack Obama was born in Honolulu, Hawaii on August 4, 1961 to African-American Barack Obama Sr. and Caucasian Ann Dunham, an odd couple considering the racism in America at that time. The Obama family separated when young Barack was only two years old, Barack Sr. going to Harvard for a Ph. D with no money to take his family along. Barack Sr. returned to Africa with another woman named Ruth in 1964 because of a promise he had once made to his homeland. Obama Jr. formed an image of his father from stories his mother and grandparents told him. Barack Sr. once again visited Barack Jr. in 1971, dying later in a tragic car accident in 1982. Ann Dunham later married Lolo Soerto, a young student from Indonesia, moving the family to Jakarta before sending Obama back to Hawaii at the age of 10 for better educational opportunities available there.

Barack was enrolled in fifth grade at Punahou School where he was one of only six black students at a mostly Caucasian school. For his grandparents (who he was under the care of in Hawaii), Punahou signaled a new beginning for the family, Obama attending the private school until his graduation in 1979. It was in Punahou where he was introduced to the Afro-American community. Obama moved to Los Angeles, enrolling at Occidental College, one of the world's most renowned liberal arts colleges. Here he adopted a party life, experimenting with drugs and alcohol before transferring to Columbia University after 2 years to receive a degree in political science. After a year in business, Obama moved to Chicago, working for a non-profit by doing community organizing in the city's South Side. Obama recounted the challenge of his program facing resistance from community leaders and apathy on the part of the established bureaucracy. Before attending Harvard Law School, Obama decided to visit his relatives living in Africa, the final scene of the book.

For me, and many other people, Obama has always been one a role model. A young African American man born in the midst of the harsh racism of the 1950's America, who grew beyond the naysayers and became the President of the United States of America. He wasn't one of the most intelligent kids in his school, a product of affirmative action, he wasn't the best looking, not one of the most popular kids, not athletic, yet he still rose above all his shortcomings to become the President of the most powerful country in the world. For me especially, I look upon Obama's path as my own, my life holding many similarities with his. In this book he explores his own experiences with racism, race, and living in the shadow of an African-American father who left his Caucasian wife and went to Africa. I strongly recommend this book to anyone and everyone. If you're not looking for a cathartic read then this book will at least help provide insight into the current President of the country, something which may come in handy with the nearing Presidential elections.

Recommended Titles:

The Audacity of Hope by Barack Obama

Change We Can Believe In by Barack Obama