

Wish You Here: President Obama and the Speech that Never Was

Okay...so what everyone is talking about is what an amazing speech the President gave in Osawatamie, Kansas. He started by saying that this was a make break moment for the middle class, then he talked about income inequality and how it is not only bad for the economy but also for our democracy. He invoked Teddy Roosevelt and reminded us that we have been here before over a hundred years ago in a completely unregulated era when robber barons, banksters, industrialists and uber-capitolists decimated workers, exploited children, destroyed the environment and extracted the wealth of this nation to feed their own insatiable appetite for profit – all at the expense of well, for lack of a better term, the other 99 percent.

Now it was a good speech, I guess, but not great. Not to me. To me, it was soft and obvious and full of the kind of rhetoric we've heard from this president before. You remember...in 2008...when he was campaigning.

PLAY OBAMA CLIP: “Change has come America!”

Not so much, eh? Because he has made these kinds of speeches before about change and hope and preserving the middle class and holding Wall Street accountable, only to appoint more Wall Streeters in his cabinet than anyone in the last twenty years. He also extended the Bush tax cuts and made bad faith deals with the health insurance industry. He promised to close Guantanamo and restore Habeus Corpus only to extend policies of torture and assassination and imprison Americans like Bradley Manning without due process...I mean, the list of disappointments, on an on it goes. And I know there's a list of his accomplishments out there and I know it could be a whole lot worse if we had a republican and all I have to say to that is...I'm not buying it. Because aside from the fact that this man is only at his best when he is campaigning, and make no mistake he is campaigning, which means that he will say what he thinks will get him re-elected, I think this was just a pretty mediocre speech, even by his own standards. And what it highlights for me is how desperate we are that we will grab any cracker of populist rhetoric and gobble it down like a last meal just because we are so starved for the truth.

So I'm going try something. I am going to deliver the speech I wish Obama would have given. And I'm not doing this because I want to show off, but to show that I am willing to put my money where my mouth is and show that I'm not an Obama basher, I'm an Obama mis-truster. I'm no longer impressed with his oratory because I haven't seen him back it up with a stiff spine or a set policies that makes me believe he means it. So, if he wants my support he needs to crank it up, way up, and not tell me what I want to hear, not what is fashionable, but what will set this country on the path to economic equality, social justice and environmental sustainability. So at the risk of being utterly consumed by my own self-importance, here goes:

My fellow Americans, I am here today in Osawatamie, Kansas to deliver an urgent message. You are under attack. Young and old, middle class and lower class, sick and well, working and unemployed, educated and uneducated, you must understand this and understand it now – our republic has been breeched. Our economic system has been deliberately and systematically compromised and our democracy has been rigged to keep those who love power, in power. Our environment stands on the brink of unprecedented global disaster while madmen tug at the earth's core for oil, and the myth of clean coal, and frack for natural gas that is decimating our fresh water supply and destroying our home.

Bankers, War Profiteers and Multinational Energy Conglomerates not only run our country, but our world. They have seized control of our political system, all of its resources, and now use its power against us. They strong arm our elected officials, use propaganda to distract us from the truth we need to make sense of our world, and hold our people in such utter contempt that they steal from us in broad daylight. They have dismantled our factories, discarded our workers, stockpiled our wealth overseas, extracted nearly all of our cash in debt schemes that amount to nothing more than loan sharking, and then break the kneecaps of our unions when they have the audacity to demand job security and a fair wage.

My point is that there is no longer any difference between the United States government and the economic interests that control it. Criminals not only write our laws, but now administer them. And our military has become their escort, used to decimate other countries in the good name of our people and our country while transferring

wealth to all those who make money from war and violence and hatred.

I know its not a pretty picture, but it's the truth. And that's why I am up here telling you all of this...because you need the truth. You deserve the truth, and somewhere, you already know the truth. And sure, I could get up here and conjour a bunch of cozy little aphorisms about fairness and democracy and jobs and middle class values, but then I wouldn't really be helping you. Because you need the truth, we need the truth, if we have any hope all of realizing the kind of change and hope I promised when I asked for your support in 2008.

I know I did not deliver on that and I'm sorry. But there a good reason for it. And the reason is...I'm scared, too Just like you. And maybe that's the good news, because that why we need each other. That's why we have to stick together. You see, I wasn't lying to you when I promised hope and change, it was a wish I made, a wish we made together, and I didn't hold up my end of the bargain. No. I didn't. And if I am really honest with myself and with you, I didn't even try that hard. I mean, I worked hard, you saw me working hard, I just didn't take a stand for the values you sent me here to uphold. And so, I am going to make you a promise right here and now: I am going to change the system and restore and dignity of this country, of our people, and bring justice back to America if it kills me...and folks...it just might.

But this is a time for heroes. And that means you, too. We are all the heroes of this generation, taking a stand to save the world for the generation to come. So that's why I am announcing right here and right now, not if I'm re-elected but right now, that every single person in my cabinet who has ever held a lobbying position or worked for Wall Street making more than a million dollars a year...is fired as of this moment. So my fellow citizens, if you're a smart, honest, out of work American who wants to help me figure this mess out, a whole bunch of jobs just opened up at the White House.

I am also announcing my intention to sign an executive order stating that healthcare is a fundamental human right and that any person or company not providing health services to every American, regardless of their ability to pay, is abdicating their civic responsibility and I will use the general welfare clause of the US Constitution to make sure every American has access to the health care they need.

In addition, I am ordering a proclamation that money does not equal speech and that corporations are not people. I am encouraging members of both the House and Senate to draft legislation to that effect, and when it hits my desk you can guarantee that I will sign it.

It is also my intent remove the cap on Social Security so that those who are blessed with prosperity in our system will help pay for those less fortunate, less blessed with material means, than themselves. So...problem solved. Debate closed. If you can't deal with that John Boehner, I don't care, because it's the right thing to do and you know it.

I am also going to regulate Wall Street much more tightly, starting with reinstating the Glass-Steagall Act and finishing with a one quarter percent transaction tax on every Wall street trade. That should generate a trillion dollars in the next ten years and get us off to a good start paying down the national debt that these jokers rang up with their derivative swaps and short sales.

And lastly, I am going to close nearly all of the over 1000 military bases we have stationed around the world, and we are going to bring those people home where they belong. When they get here, there's going to be plenty of good jobs for them because this country is going to cut its military spending in half over five years and use all of that money to put people to work rebuilding the infrastructure of this country. This will include a cross country, high speed rail system like they have in every other advanced country, and an alternative energy infrastructure that will one day put the oil, coal and natural gas industries out of business.

There's lots of other stuff to do, like audit the Federal Reserve, create publicly funded elections, and find a way shut Grover Norquist up, but I think that's enough for now. Because this is our country and we get to have it in a way that works for all of us, not just a few. And I know I've been wimping out on you guys, but no more. I'm not going to wait until I'm re-elected or play any stupid games like that. I'm going to start right now...but here's the thing...I'm gonna need your help. Don't go away like you did after the 2008 and pretend like everything's okay.

Occupy this country until you own it again. Call these people out every day and tell them your mad as hell and you're not gonna take it anymore. Stay creative. Stay imaginative. Stay strong. And stay

human. And together, will change the course of history by announcing a new day on this planet; a day when self-interest yields to the common good, when profit yields to shared prosperity, when cruelty yields to compassion, when militarism yields to peace, when nationalism yields to a common, global purpose, and when one, single human life means more than all the money in the all the world.

This will surely be the day when the meek inherit the earth, but it won't be because some invisible God handed it over to the – it will be because we were willing to risk our lives in great numbers to reclaim it.

And so, I start with my own life and say to the wicked and the powerful who would exploit the people and resources of this country for their own personal gain...let the battle begin. We are ready for you. Our time has come. Our moment in history has arrived...and there is no power on earth that can stop us.

Now, you might say I'm living in a fantasy world that a president can deliver a speech like that, but I say anything else is a fantasy, because one thing is for certain - half measures have availed us nothing. And so we have a choice: take a bold and vocal stand for an entirely different kind of world right now, or remain prisoners of our own cynicism, doomed to pound beat of a battered humanity...living out our last days in denial of the horrors to come.

I just made my choice. How about you?