

Obama for a Miracle
By Veronica Mackey

It is a day that will live on forever—the day America elected its first black president. Where were you, and what were you doing when you got the news?

I was too excited to stay home to wait on the results, too nervous to risk hearing news of defeat, I grabbed my daughters and hit the streets. Before I left I saw an Obama party going on in Inglewood, CA, just outside L.A. A man at the Savoy Club told a reporter, “He makes me want to pull my pants up. He makes me want to put on a suit and tie.”

Throughout the night, jubilant anticipation filled the air. There was something different about the way folks related to one another. It was like a big 60s lovefest. The Obama campaign office in Century City hosted a celebration party at the Hyatt Regency. The line wrapped around the corner. The usually quiet Ave. of the Stars came alive with cheers and honking cars while supporters stood in line talking on cell phones.

Suddenly a woman yelled from her car, “Obama won!” Some wept; others hugged like it was New Year’s Eve. The party which I had hoped to attend—too packed—was shut down.

But there was plenty of room in Leimert Park, so away I went.

A small party had already begun by the time we made our way to Crenshaw Blvd. and 43rd St.—L.A.s “African American Central.”

“This night means everything to me, and for black folks. I’m so happy,” said a middle-aged man. “It means we’re finally going to have what we have fought for.”

The night held sentimental value for one woman who smiled brightly among the banners, flags and honking cars. “My mother always saved a dollar to pay her poll tax. She only made \$13 a week, but she was determined to vote. Now that we have a black president, it’s just so exciting.”

Poll tax and literacy tests were among the tactics used by white Southerners to keep blacks away from the polls in the 50s and 60s. These practices have been banned, but voter suppression is very much alive. During this election, voters reported being told that Republicans and Democrats had different voting days and that if they owed money for a parking ticket they could not vote until they paid it.

Regardless of their tactics, Obama came out with a landslide 349-173 victory over Senator John McCain. Speaking to a crowd of about 100,000 in Chicago on Election Night, Obama noted:

“To all those who have wondered if America’s beacon still burns as bright, tonight we’ve proved once more that the true strength of our nation comes not from the might of our arms or the scale of our wealth but from the enduring power of our ideals, democracy, liberty, opportunity and unyielding hope. That’s the true genius of America.”

The significance of Obama's win for African Americans goes deeper than words can say. It is a combination of affirmation, vindication, justice, respect, hope and pride. Given the history of African Americans in this country, from slavery to the struggle for civil rights, a black president is something most never thought they would see in their lifetime.

Obama, being biracial (black and white) seems perfect for unifying a country divided along racial lines for much too long.

The impact of electing the first black president goes beyond U.S. borders. Globally, it brings promise of a new world, the hope of prosperity and peace, the return of honor. In Rio, Brazilians partied on the beach. In the town of Obama, Japan, dancers cheered for their namesake.

The Obama victory is also linked to destiny. In 1968, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy said, "Things are moving so fast now, we could have a black president in 40 years." Exactly 40 years later, it happened. Renowned prophet Kim Clement said in 2006: "God is going to raise up African Americans. He is going to stand them up."

A couple of months before the election, I visited the Obama campaign office near my home. A campaign worker answered the phone saying, "Obama for America." But what I heard *in my spirit* was "Obama for a miracle!" It certainly was.