



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 25, 2014

Al Sharpton Continues to Gain Influence in the White House

In noting that Al Sharpton will be giving the eulogy in Ferguson, Missouri, on Monday at the funeral of Michael Brown, Fox News analyst Howard Kurtz reviewed Sharpton's rise to prominence despite his incendiary background and asked: "[How is this allowed?](#)" He wrote:



In the Trayvon case, he met with the family and its attorney, Ben Crump (who is also representing Michael Brown's family). One minute, he was speaking as their advocate. The next, he was interviewing them on his show. This isn't blurring the lines, it's obliterating them.

Now we see the same syndrome in the Ferguson tragedy: Sharpton with the family; Sharpton leading rallies; Sharpton quietly working with Obama; Sharpton denouncing the police on MSNBC.

How is this allowed?

A better question to ask would be: Why hasn't his tawdry, revolutionary — even incendiary — background as a race baiter a hindrance to his rise to prominence rather than its genius? Sharpton is no "useful idiot," a term used to describe people acting as propagandists for a cause whose goals they are not fully aware of, who unwittingly support a malignant cause that they naïvely believe to be a force for good. In Sharpton's case, he knows exactly what he is doing and with whom and for whom he is laboring.

Sharpton's relationship with President Obama began when Obama was an obscure state senator from Illinois in 2008. They connected, each recognizing in the other the essential self-serving interest of using race as one tool to gain national prominence. As Glenn Thrush noted in his article at *Politico*, each discovered the other to be coldly calculating, recognizing the power of racial division to promote their own agendas. When Sharpton was asked recently about how he bonded so well with Obama, Sharpton responded, "He's calculating.... He gets the game." Added Sharpton: "I realized he [Obama] was just a different kind of guy.... He wasn't going to be guided by emotions. He was not intimidated. There was no game you could play [with him]."

Their relationship was strengthened later in 2008 when Sharpton, on his own volition, planned to visit Iowa in the days leading up to a critical caucus vote. Political advisors working with Obama saw the potential for disaster and asked Obama to call Sharpton to cancel his trip. After hearing what Obama had to say, Sharpton called off his trip. Sharpton says now that Obama "told people he never forgot that." According to Thrush, this was the turning point in their relationship.

After connecting with Obama's intimate presidential advisor, Valerie Jarrett, Sharpton now has free rein



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at the White House. Says one White House official, "There's a trust factor with 'The Rev' from the Oval Office on down. He gets it, and he's got credibility in the [black] community that nobody else has got. There's really no one else out there who does what he does."

At the height of the Ferguson crisis, the White House relied heavily on Sharpton for inside information on what was happening on the ground. Jarrett quizzed him mercilessly, asking: How bad was the violence? What outside groups were involved in stirring up trouble? Where could Sharpton be used to best advantage? What did the Brown family want the White House to do?

Even Democratic advisors to the White House have questioned how Sharpton was able to make such a move into the inside of the administration. Basil Smikle, a Democratic operative long active in Harlem politics and a veteran Sharpton observer, said,

I don't know how he's managed to do it. He's an outsider's insider or an insider's outsider, depending on your perspective. He's essentially covering for the president in Ferguson.... His power has slowly and steadily supplanted that of other black leaders locally and nationally.... Obama ... has provided a platform for him to alternate between agitator of institutions and defender of its leaders.

Others are not so generous. Hard left Harvard professor and black nationalist Cornel West called Sharpton the "house Negro" of the Obama administration:

Brother Martin [Luther King] himself, I think, would have been turning over in his grave. We saw the coronation of the bona fide house Negro of the Barack Obama plantation: our dear brother, Al Sharpton.

Sharpton hasn't focused his attention entirely on the Obama administration. He has ingratiated himself into the de Blasio administration in New York City, as well. Said Sharpton, "People shouldn't forget that I opposed the black candidate for de Blasio," and now de Blasio considers Sharpton his source for inside information into the black community there as well. One of Sharpton's longtime aides at his National Action Network, Rachel Noerdlinger, is now conveniently the chief of staff to de Blasio's wife.

Sharpton is able to return the favor by giving his allies prominent positions at speaking events sponsored by his organization, the National Action Network. At the recent national convention, President Obama was the keynote speaker along with five members of his Cabinet, including Attorney General Eric Holder.

What plans does Sharpton have for the hapless city of Ferguson once the present crisis has subsided? Sharpton told Thrush that he plans "a series of nonviolent protests to get [St. Louis County Prosecutor] Robert McCulloch out of the case within the next few weeks, when everything cools down a bit." With friends such as Obama, Holder, and de Blasio, Sharpton is sure to continue to use his increasing prominence to promote racial divisions and demagoguery as the White House's go-to political racial bigot.

Photo of Al Sharpton: David Shankbone

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