

CHAPTER 13

THE LAST OF THE PRIMARIES

Following the Pennsylvania primary, in which he campaigned hard but still lost by a large margin, U.S. Senator Barack Obama altered his strategy for winning the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination. He began emphasizing that he was nearing the magic number that would give him a majority of the delegates, called “pledged” delegates, that were being selected in the presidential caucuses and primaries. Obama and his supporters argued that, once he won a majority of the pledged delegates, that would prove he was the popular choice of the Democratic Party to be the party nominee for president.

It was crystal clear by this point that the 800 or so superdelegates were going to determine the Democratic nominee, no matter how the pledged delegates had voted. Barack Obama continued playing the superdelegates game skillfully. Virtually every day, the Obama campaign announced that one or more superdelegates were declaring their intention to vote for Obama when they got to the Democratic Convention in Denver in August. Barack Obama’s total delegate count, pledged delegates and superdelegates combined, was steadily climbing toward the majority required to actually give him the Democratic nomination, but his total was not quite there yet.

Hillary Clinton, for her part, was continuing to run hard in the primaries, particularly in those states which had large numbers of white working-class voters. She hammered relentlessly on the theme that she was the candidate winning the populous states, many of them battleground states, that the Democrats would have to carry in November to win the presidency from the Republicans. She pointed out that, if the votes from the “unauthorized” primaries in Michigan and Florida were added in, the total number of votes cast for her in all the primaries and caucuses was just a bit higher than the total vote for Barack Obama. That, she argued, made her, and not Obama, the popular winner of the Democratic primaries and caucuses.

As four months, early January to early June, of caucuses and primaries began to come to an end, Barack Obama was acting as if he already had the nomination won. Most of the political analysts and pundits tended to agree with him. No one used the word, but Barack Obama and

his supporters were in effect trying to project the same “inevitability” about the Obama campaign that Hillary Clinton attempted unsuccessfully to generate about her campaign back in December and early January.

Emphasizing her qualities of determination and refusal to accept defeat as positive attributes, Hillary Clinton campaigned doggedly on to the very end of the caucuses and primary trail.

NORTH CAROLINA

Unlike South Carolina, the close neighbor with which it shares a last name, North Carolina never was a significant factor in the presidential caucuses and primaries game. Whereas South Carolina established itself as “the first Republican presidential primary in the South,” North Carolina stayed out of the presidential nominating sweepstakes and traditionally voted long after the party presidential nominee had been determined elsewhere. Similar to Pennsylvania, however, North Carolina in 2008 ended up holding a key presidential primary despite voting at the end, rather than the beginning, of the presidential primary calendar.

Both the characteristics of the population as well as the early polls suggested that Barack Obama was going to win North Carolina in a landslide. That would be significant, because North Carolina is the 10th largest state in terms of population. Barack Obama could pick up significant numbers of pledged delegates over Hillary Clinton with a big win there.

North Carolina is a southern state with a large African-American population voting in the Democratic primary. Some early polls showed Barack Obama with a 23 to 25 point lead over Hillary Clinton in North Carolina.

Despite the polls, Hillary Clinton made a significant effort to gain a strong showing, if not a win, in North Carolina. She campaigned hard in the state and ran television ads there. She sent her husband, former-President Bill Clinton, into less populous cities and towns in rural North Carolina to drum up support for his wife.

A major news disaster befell Barack Obama one week before primary day in North Carolina. Speaking before the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, Obama’s pastor in Chicago, reiterated his earlier statements about the United States deserving to be attacked on 9/11 and that the U.S. Government had invented the

AIDS virus in order to kill minorities. Rev. Wright further suggested that Barack Obama earlier had dissociated himself from his pastor's remarks and viewpoints only for political advantage.

This new round of disturbing statements by Rev. Wright required immediate and dramatic action on Barack Obama's part. In his previous speech on race in Philadelphia, Obama had only disagreed with his spiritual leader but had not repudiated him. Speaking in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, following Rev. Wright's National Press Club appearance, however, Obama completely dissociated himself from both Rev. Wright and his inflammatory oratory. Obama labeled Rev. Wright's words "divisive and destructive."

This second round of news stories concerning Rev. Jeremiah Wright highlighted the race issue and was thought to be keeping white North Carolinians from voting for Barack Obama. In addition, one week before the election, Hillary Clinton picked up the endorsement of Mike Easley, North Carolina's popular Democratic governor. As election day neared, polls showed Barack Obama's support dropping rapidly, from 25 points to 12 points in one poll and 23 points to 14 points in another. A Survey-USA poll showed Obama ahead in North Carolina by only 5 points.

Presidential primary day in North Carolina was on Tuesday, May 6, 2008, just two weeks after Hillary Clinton's big win in Pennsylvania. The North Carolina results quickly took away much of what Hillary Clinton had gained with her sizeable victory in the Keystone State. Barack Obama won North Carolina by a landslide. He received 56 percent of the vote compared to only 42 percent for Hillary Clinton, a victory margin of 14 percentage points.

The basic demographics of the Democratic nomination race were reaffirmed in North Carolina. Blacks, who were one-third of Democratic primary voters in North Carolina, went for Barack Obama by 90 percent. White voters supported Clinton by 60 percent.

INDIANA

Indiana, nicknamed the Hoosier State, held its Democratic presidential primary the same day as North Carolina. Indiana attracted more media attention than North Carolina, however, because polls showed the

race between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton to be much closer in Indiana.

On the one hand, Indiana looked good for Hillary Clinton because it contained a large supply of those white working-class voters who had become the mainstay of Hillary Clinton's voter support. On the other hand, Indiana was immediately adjacent to Illinois, Barack Obama's home state. The northern one-third of Indianans watched Chicago, Illinois, television and thus were quite familiar with Barack Obama and his meteoric rise in Illinois Democratic politics. There also was a substantial African-American population in northwestern Indiana, the part of the state that contains a number of Chicago suburbs.

Hillary Clinton needed a big win in Indiana, but she did not get it. When all the counting was done in the Hoosier State, Hillary Clinton eked out a close four-point victory over Barack Obama by 52 percent to 48 percent. A win is a win, of course, but Hillary Clinton was in a position where she needed a big victory in Indiana to begin catching up to Barack Obama in the delegate count.

The reaction of the television pundits and the newspaper columnists to the North Carolina and Indiana results was to declare Barack Obama the almost-certain winner of the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination. Hillary Clinton was reduced, in much of the news media's opinion, to a determined-but-defeated also-ran who doggedly refused to give up. The *New York Times* provided a number of examples of all the "Barack's Got It Won!" commentary:

"We now know who the Democratic nominee's going to be, and no one's going to dispute it," said Tim Russert of NBC News. The Drudge Report, a popular internet political site, ran a photograph of Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle, with the headline, "The Nominee." Chris Wallace, a pundit on Fox News, said: "I think there's an increasing presumption tonight that Obama's going to be the nominee." David Gergen theorized on CNN: "I think the Clinton people know the game is almost up."

One New York city newspaper, in the state Hillary Clinton represented in the U.S. Senate, described her campaign as "Toast!" Another

Gotham newspaper headlined its election story: "Hillary Needs A Miracle." Bob Schieffer of CBS News intoned: "This race is over." George Stephanopoulos at ABC concluded: "This nomination fight is over."

The television pundits and newspaper columnists all seemed to be in a race of their own to be first to declare Barack Obama the winner. This is a frequent occurrence in the news coverage of presidential nominating campaigns. It has the effect of eliminating candidates by "news-media decree" rather than a final decision by voters in subsequent caucuses and primaries.

On the day after primary day in North Carolina and Indiana, there was even more bad news revealed about Hillary Clinton. Her campaign announced that, in order to keep going financially, she had been forced to loan her campaign \$6.4 million of her own money. On top of that, four more superdelegates announced their support for Barack Obama.

Then George McGovern, the unsuccessful Democratic candidate for president in 1972, shifted his support from Hillary Clinton to Barack Obama. It was a significant loss to the Clinton campaign. Bill and Hillary Clinton began their political careers campaigning for McGovern in Texas in 1972. George McGovern would not have abandoned such loyal past allies if he were not convinced that Barack Obama was definitely going to get the Democratic nomination in 2008.

For his part, Barack Obama announced that, by his count, he was within 200 delegates of having the majority needed for nomination. He worked hard at not seeming overconfident. Clucking too loudly about his victory in the Iowa caucuses was thought to have contributed to his loss in the New Hampshire primary back in January.

Everyone seemed to agree that Hillary Clinton had lost her nomination fight except for Hillary Clinton. She said defiantly: "I'm staying in this race until there's a nominee. I'm going to work as hard as I can to be that nominee." She then began campaigning in West Virginia, the state that would hold its Democratic primary one week after North Carolina and Indiana.

Hillary Clinton began pressing the point that she was winning the white working-class vote, particularly women, and the Hispanic vote. She

emphasized once again she was pulling in the swing voters the Democrats needed to win the general election in November. By implication, she was saying that Barack Obama was mainly getting the votes of groups that always vote Democratic, such as African-Americans and well-educated young whites, and those two groups would not be enough to win the presidency for the Democratic Party.

Surveys of voters leaving the polls in Indiana suggested there was some truth to Hillary Clinton's contention that Barack Obama would have trouble winning the voters who were supporting her in the primaries. Almost 50 percent of Clinton voters in Indiana told exit-pollsters they would vote for Republican presidential candidate John McCain or stay home on election day if Barack Obama was the Democratic candidate in the November general election.

An interesting transformation had taken place in Hillary Clinton in the course of the long and seemingly-unending 2008 Democratic caucuses and primaries. Starting out as the supposedly "inevitable" candidate, she had morphed into a tough-as-nails battler who was not going to give up no matter how great the odds against her. She began to portray herself as having to struggle in the campaign the way working-class people struggle to make ends meet in their daily lives. It was quite a feat, portraying Hillary Clinton as a member of the working class. After all, she grew up in an affluent Chicago suburb and went to exclusive Wellesley College and prestigious Yale Law School.

Hillary Clinton began questioning the strength of Barack Obama's candidacy simply because, so late in the caucuses and primary calendar, he had been unable to finally defeat her. She noted: "We are being outspent two to one, three to one, four to one, even five to one, but we have been able to battle back."

Despite all the claims by the newspaper columnists and the TV pundits that the contest was over and Barack Obama had won it, the news media continued covering Hillary Clinton and her presidential campaign following her big defeat in North Carolina and her close win in Indiana. That indicated the race really was not over yet. The only person who could really terminate it was Hillary Clinton herself, and she was cam-

paigning as hard as she could in West Virginia.

WEST VIRGINIA

Almost half a century prior to 2008, in the spring of 1960, West Virginia held one of the most significant presidential primaries in United States history. John F. Kennedy, a Roman Catholic from Massachusetts, was running for the Democratic nomination for president against Hubert Humphrey, a Protestant from Minnesota.

West Virginia was a heavily Protestant state, and most observers were expecting Hubert Humphrey to win there. It was argued that, when John F. Kennedy lost West Virginia to Humphrey, people would see that a Roman Catholic could not be elected president of the United States. Kennedy's campaign to be the Democratic standard bearer in 1960 was predicted to fade soon afterward.

West Virginia Democrats turned out to have their own ideas about whether or not a Catholic could be president. Thanks to his good looks and his well-financed campaign organization, John F. Kennedy pulled off a major upset and easily defeated Hubert Humphrey in West Virginia. The results put in doubt the widely-expressed contention that substantial numbers of Protestants would not vote for a Catholic.

Facing reality after such a jarring loss in a state he was supposed to win, Hubert Humphrey withdrew from the race and opened the way for John F. Kennedy to get the Democratic nomination, win the White House in the November general election, and become the first Catholic president of the United States.

West Virginia is an unusual state. It is one of the few states with virtually all of its land area in the Appalachian Mountains. Famous for its coal mines and the hard-working life of the coal miners, West Virginia is also associated with rural poverty. It lacks a substantial black population and is filled with working-class whites.

Originally West Virginia was the western portion of the neighboring state of Virginia. The two states separated from each other at the time of the American Civil War. Because it is so mountainous, West Virginia lacked the slavery-oriented plantations that characterized tidewater Virginia to the east. With no stake in preserving slavery, West Virginia

broke away from the rest of Virginia and remained in the Union.

The birthplace of Mother's Day, that special Sunday set aside to honor the mothers of America, is located in West Virginia. On Mother's Day 2008, Hillary Clinton stopped by the birthplace, the home of the woman who first proposed Mother's Day. Hillary Clinton gave a speech to a group of West Virginia voters. She took the opportunity to remind everyone that she was by far the stronger candidate among women voters.

After her speech, Hillary Clinton talked to reporters about how important her campaign was to women. She discussed how women changed history by fighting for equal rights and getting jobs in male-dominated professions. She implied she was keeping faith with those early champions of women's rights by continuing her struggle to win the presidency. She quoted to reporters a letter from a woman supporter that concluded with the line: "It's not over until the lady in the pantsuit says it's over."

On Tuesday, May 14, 2008, Hillary Clinton scored one of her biggest victories in the Democratic caucuses and primaries. She totally routed Barack Obama in West Virginia by some 37 percentage points, scoring about 65 percent of the vote to Barack Obama's 28 percent. Hillary Clinton had been expected to win West Virginia, but not by such a stunning margin.

Once again it was white working-class voters, which West Virginia has in abundance, that tipped the electoral scales so heavily in Hillary Clinton's favor. Real concern was growing, and not just in the minds of Hillary Clinton supporters, that Barack Obama would have a serious problem in the November general election in getting lower-economic-status working whites to vote for him.

New York Times columnist William Kristol looked at Obama's near 40 point loss in West Virginia and wrote: "I can't find a single recent instance of a candidate who ultimately became his party's nominee losing a primary by this kind of margin."

West Virginia politicians criticized Barack Obama for making only a little effort to campaign in the state and win votes there. Obama seemed

to be looking past both West Virginia and Hillary Clinton. Prior to the West Virginia voting, Obama campaigned in Missouri, a state that had already voted on Super-Duper Tuesday. Barack Obama told reporters he was in Missouri because it was a state he would need to carry to win the general election in November.

Hillary Clinton, of course, worked hard to emphasize the importance of West Virginia. Making a campaign stop for breakfast at Tudor's Biscuit World in Charleston, the capital of West Virginia, she said: "I keep telling people no Democrat has won the White House since 1916 without winning West Virginia."

KENTUCKY AND OREGON

One week after the West Virginia primary, voters in Kentucky and Oregon went to the polls to vote in those two states' Democratic presidential primaries. By this time, however, the demographic patterns in the 2008 contest for the Democratic nomination were so clearly established that everyone knew almost for certain how each state would vote. Kentucky, with a large number of white working-class voters, would join similar states such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia and vote for Hillary Clinton. Oregon, with one of the more sophisticated, upscale, and liberal white populations in the United States, was considered safe ground for Barack Obama.

With the contrasting outcomes of the two primaries so clearly predicted, the two candidates spent most of their time arguing over which one was in the best position to win the November general election against the Republicans. Barack Obama's campaign pointed out that, once the Kentucky and Oregon ballots were counted, Obama would have a majority of the pledged delegates *selected in caucuses and primaries*. That total would not include the nearly 800 superdelegates, who would not officially vote until the Democratic National Convention. Winning a majority of the pledged delegates would be a significant milestone for Barack Obama, because major party nominations for president are determined by delegate votes, not by popular votes.

Obama's campaign manager, David Plouffe, said in a note to Obama supporters: "A clear majority of elected delegates will send an unmistak-

able message. The people have spoken, and they are ready for change.”

Hillary Clinton, of course, emphasized that the race was not finished. To her campaign, the contest would not be over until Barack Obama had an unmistakable majority of all the delegates, not just the pledged delegates. Speaking in Maysville, Kentucky, the day before the primary, Hillary Clinton said: “This is nowhere near over.”

Kentucky was holding its first significant presidential primary in 2008, but that was not the case in Oregon. The Oregon primary was one of the oldest and best-known presidential primaries. At the time of the 1912 presidential election, Oregon was the first state in the United States to let its citizens vote in a presidential primary with the actual names of the presidential candidates printed on the ballot.

Some significant events in American political history took place during the Oregon presidential primary. Back in 1948, Thomas E. Dewey and Harold Stassen, both running for the Republican Party nomination, staged the first nationwide radio debate between presidential candidates just prior to the Oregon primary. Twenty years later, in 1968, Robert F. Kennedy was defeated in the Oregon Democratic presidential primary by Eugene McCarthy. It was the first time a member of the Kennedy family had lost an election in 25 years.

Traditionally scheduled toward the end of May, the Oregon primary became famous as the “gateway” to the California presidential primary. In past times the California primary was always scheduled on the first Tuesday in June. Candidates would try to boost their showing in California, a key state, by doing well two-weeks earlier in Oregon.

Sadly, Oregon and its primary simply failed to keep up with the times. Oregon doggedly stuck with its mid-May primary date while more aggressive states, including California, were *front-loading* their primaries and caucuses forward to March, and then February, and, in the early 2000s, into January. Until the unusually long Clinton-Obama contest of 2008 gave it relevance again, Oregon’s once-famous presidential primary had slipped into obscurity.

In 2008 in Kentucky and Oregon, both candidates were letting the demographics determine where they mainly campaigned. Hillary Clinton

was spending most of her time in Kentucky, counting on those now-famous white working-class voters to give her a big victory. She chided Barack Obama for spending so little time in Kentucky. “My opponent said the other day he wasn’t coming back,” she needled, “so I’ve got the whole state to myself.”

As one might expect, Barack Obama was spending his time in Oregon rather than Kentucky. He clearly demonstrated that, in a state filled with his kind of young upscale white voters, he could still draw an immense crowd. An estimated 70,000 people or more gathered at the edge of the Willamette River in Portland, Oregon, to hear Barack Obama call one more time for change and an end to partisan bickering in U.S. political life. It was a warm sunny day, and a popular band was playing for free. The newspaper photograph of the giant crowd greatly enhanced the Obama campaign’s argument that Barack Obama truly was the first choice of most Democrats and a top attraction on the campaign trail to boot.

To emphasize his anticipated winning of a majority of the pledged delegates, Barack Obama decided to spend the election night of the Kentucky and Oregon primaries in, of all places, Iowa. Barack Obama wanted to show that he was “closing the circle.” His campaign for the Democratic nomination for president had begun with an impressive upset victory in Iowa. Now, almost four months later, he was coming back to Iowa to celebrate that he had won a majority of the pledged delegates elected in caucuses and primaries.

The news media learned that Barack Obama had originally decided to name himself the winner of the Democratic nomination while in Iowa, just at the moment the Kentucky and Oregon primary results gave him a clear majority of the pledged delegates. The Obama campaign cancelled that plan, however, citing concerns about antagonizing Hillary Clinton and her legions of loyal supporters. Thus Obama did *not* declare victory. He did *not* begin referring to himself as the *designated* Democratic nominee.

When Barack Obama’s discarded plan to style himself the nominee-in-waiting became known, the Hillary Clinton campaign fought back

hard. "Mission Accomplished? Not So Fast," was the title of a Hillary Clinton campaign press memo. "Senator Obama's plan to declare himself the Democratic nominee...is a slap in the face to the millions of voters in the remaining primary states and to Senator Clinton's 17 million supporters," the memo stated.

When the votes were counted in Kentucky and Oregon, all the expectations were fulfilled. Hillary Clinton romped in Kentucky and, one more time, it was those white working-class voters who gave her such a big majority. Barack Obama scored an easy victory in Oregon, although his win did not attract the attention that Hillary Clinton's triumph in Kentucky received. Barack Obama indeed achieved a majority of the pledged delegates when the results from those two primaries were added in to the total count, but his campaign made nowhere near as much of that milestone as it originally intended.

"Tonight we've achieved an important victory," Hillary Clinton said at an election night rally in Louisville, Kentucky. "It's not just Kentucky bluegrass that is music to my ears. It is your vote of confidence."

The growing division in the Democratic Party was highlighted by the large margins by which each candidate had won one of the two primaries. Barack Obama prevailed in Oregon by 16 percentage points, a landslide victory by traditional standards. Hillary Clinton, on the other hand, swept Kentucky by a staggering 35 percentage points, an almost unbelievable blowout. It was amazing that the two different candidates, so late in the race, were each doing so extremely well in those states where the demographics favored them.

THE RULES COMMITTEE - AGAIN

On Saturday, May 31, 2008, the Rules and Bylaws Committee of the Democratic National Committee met in Washington, D.C., to try to dispose of the question of whether or not to seat Michigan's and Florida's delegations to the Democratic National Convention. Those were the two states that were penalized with the loss of all their delegates to the national convention because of holding their Democratic presidential primaries prior to Super-Duper Tuesday, a violation of party rules.

Pressure was on the Rules and Bylaws Committee to give some

representation at the convention to Michigan and Florida, otherwise those two states' Democratic voters might get mad and decide to vote Republican in the general election in November.

The meeting was a heated one. Because Hillary Clinton won both the Michigan and Florida primaries, her supporters on the committee argued for seating both delegations at full strength. This would have added to Hillary Clinton's vote totals compared to Barack Obama's. The Obama forces argued for a compromise in which only a small portion of the Michigan and Florida vote totals would be counted.

The rules committee meeting lasted all day and into the early evening. Angry threats were exchanged by the Clinton and Obama forces, both on the committee and in the audience at the committee meeting.

In the end, the Barack Obama campaign received most of what it wanted. The full Florida delegation was seated, but with only ½ vote per delegate. This in effect cut in half Hillary Clinton's delegate gain from Florida being allowed to come to the convention. In the case of Michigan, where Barack Obama's name had not appeared on the ballot with Hillary Clinton's name, the committee gave Clinton 34.5 delegate votes and Obama 29.9 votes. The Hillary Clinton forces were upset that Obama was given delegates from Michigan when no voter in Michigan had voted for him, simply because Obama chose not to run there.

One effect of the decision at the meeting was to add extra delegates from Michigan and Florida to the Democratic National Convention, thereby increasing the total votes required to gain a majority and win the nomination from 2,026 to 2,118 delegate votes.

PUERTO RICO

Puerto Rico, a tropical island in the Caribbean Sea off Florida, is a United States territory rather than a state. Starting with the 1976 presidential election, the island has sent a voting delegation to every Democratic National Convention. Although only a territory, Puerto Rico has a surprisingly large population. Its delegation to the Democratic National Convention in 2008 numbered 63, with 55 delegates elected in a primary and 8 superdelegates. Puerto Rico's delegation in 2008 was larger than the delegations from more than half the states.

All of which is interesting in view of the fact that Puerto Rico does not vote in United States presidential elections and has no votes in the Electoral College.

The United States acquired Puerto Rico in 1898 as a prize for winning the Spanish American War. Because its citizens are unwilling to decide between statehood and territorial status, Puerto Rico remains a United States territory. Large numbers of Puerto Ricans have migrated to the United States, so much so that there are as many islanders resident on the mainland, and fully able to vote, as there are disenfranchised Puerto Ricans back in Puerto Rico. That large Puerto Rican voting population in the United States partly explains why the Democrats were so anxious to have Puerto Rico send a delegation every four years to the Democratic National Convention.

In 2008, the Puerto Rico Democratic presidential primary, although near the end of the caucuses and primary calendar, became a significant event in the contest between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. Because most of Puerto Rico's population is Hispanic in origin, it was immediately assumed that Puerto Rico would be good territory for one more late-in-the-game Hillary Clinton primary victory.

The two candidates responded to Puerto Rico that way. Hillary Clinton campaigned extensively on the island, drawing large crowds and enjoying being in a place where she was so popular. Barack Obama, on the other hand, ignored Puerto Rico completely, ceding it to Hillary Clinton the way he had given up on so many of the late primaries that looked like easy wins for her.

As usual, the never-ending Democratic presidential nominating contest of 2008 provided more opportunities for negatives to come out about the candidates.

A Catholic priest, the Rev. Michael Pflieger, made sarcastic and racist remarks about Hillary Clinton from the pulpit of Barack Obama's church in Chicago. The inevitable video camera was there, and a clip of Father Pflieger badmouthing Hillary Clinton began making the rounds on the internet. The damaging clip then appeared on regular TV news programs. Rev. Pledger, speaking in a high feminine voice similar to Hillary Clin-

ton's, pretended to be her and said: "Oh, damn. Where did [Barack Obama] come from? I'm white. I'm entitled. There's a black man stealing my show."

Barack Obama acknowledged that Father Pflieger was a friend, a political supporter, and a former-member of a Catholics For Obama committee. Obama quickly apologized for the racist tenor of the priest's remarks. Barack Obama and his family then resigned from the Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, saying that his presidential candidacy was making a news story of almost anything that was said from the pulpit of the church, and the church congregation did not need that limitation on its freedom of worship.

A few days later, the Rev. Michael Pflieger was given a "leave" from his duties as a Catholic priest in Chicago and told to spend the free time reflecting on the situation.

Hillary Clinton came in for her share of news-media criticism prior to the Puerto Rico primary. Trying to justify her continuing to run for the Democratic nomination for president until the end of the caucuses and primary schedule, she mentioned that Robert Kennedy had campaigned through June in California in his 1964 presidential bid.

Because Robert Kennedy had been assassinated on the night he won the California primary in 1964, Hillary Clinton was immediately accused of suggesting that she was staying in the race on the chance that Barack Obama might be assassinated. This forced Hillary Clinton to clarify her remarks and assure everyone that such was not the case. Hillary Clinton tried to turn the issue against Barack Obama, saying that his campaign had misrepresented her initial remark far beyond its original intended meaning.

The Puerto Rico Democratic primary was held on Sunday, June 1, 2008. Once again the expectations game proved particularly damaging to Hillary Clinton. She won the Puerto Rico primary by a two-to-one margin, a smashing victory that, early in the caucuses and primary calendar, would have elicited extensive commentary in the news media and generated tremendous momentum for her campaign. As it was, most news stories about the Puerto Rico primary simply said Hillary Clinton

won by a giant margin and then went immediately to the subject of how the superdelegates were going to vote.

MONTANA

Montana, which had never held a significant presidential caucuses or primary, scheduled its 2008 presidential primary on June 3, the last day permitted by national Democratic Party rules. All signs pointed to an easy victory for Barack Obama, so neither Obama nor Hillary Clinton made any real effort in campaigning there. As expected, when the votes were counted, Barack Obama won Montana in a walk.

SOUTH DAKOTA

There is no sadder or stranger story than that of the South Dakota Democratic presidential primary. In 1992, South Dakota had a protected position, under national Democratic Party rules, as the third primary after Iowa (No. 1) and New Hampshire (No. 2). If South Dakota had held on to that privileged third position, by 2008 it would have been one of the most famous presidential primaries in the nation, easily attracting almost as much attention as Iowa and New Hampshire.

Inexplicably, South Dakota voluntarily relinquished its favored position at the beginning of the presidential caucuses and primary process. In 2008, South Dakota scheduled its primary on June 3, the last date permitted by national Democratic Party rules. In what can only be labeled an act of totally irrational behavior, South Dakota went from third in line in the presidential nomination sweepstakes to sharing last place with Montana.

Perhaps the explanation lies in the fact that South Dakota really represents a different kind of United States. It is a high prairie state, where the annual rainfall drops significantly as one goes further and further west. Agriculture has long been the principal industry, and even some of the larger cities, such as Sioux Falls, are quite small in population by national standards. There is only one major tourist attraction in South Dakota. It is the faces of four former United States presidents carved into the rocky side of Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills in the western part of the state.

Mount Rushmore is exactly where Hillary Clinton took her campaign

to win South Dakota. She walked around the visitor center with its giant plate glass windows that give a perfect view of the heads of the four former presidents off in the distance. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt appeared unmoved by Hillary Clinton's visit, but South Dakotans were taking the South Dakota primary seriously. The executive director of the state Democratic Party told the *New York Times*: "It's like rocket fuel was spread over the state. There's so much excitement."

South Dakota is a tough state in which to campaign. It is big state geographically with long distances from one group of voters to another. Hillary Clinton and her entourage of just a few dozen news-media types had to drive four hours to do a photo opportunity at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. The reward for all that travel time was no more than 200 people standing outside in a cold wind. Hillary Clinton promised them she would turn high-plains states such as South Dakota into "the Saudi Arabia of wind farming" to generate electricity to ease the energy crisis.

Trying to win South Dakota on the last day of the 2008 presidential primaries was a reach for Hillary Clinton. Barack Obama had won most of the caucuses and primaries in similar prairie states such as Nebraska, Kansas, and North Dakota. Barack Obama was forced to take Hillary Clinton's efforts in South Dakota seriously. He suspended his "I'm The Nominee!" stance long enough to stage a rally in Mitchell, South Dakota, in front of the Corn Palace, an assembly hall built out of dried corn cobs and corn stalks.

Hillary Clinton pulled out a victory in South Dakota, but it was completely overshadowed by what was happening elsewhere. Throughout this last day of presidential primary voting, Barack Obama arranged for superdelegate after superdelegate to announce his or her support for Obama. By the time the polls closed in South Dakota, Barack Obama had more than the 2,118 delegates required to guarantee him the 2008 Democratic nomination for president. Hillary Clinton's somewhat surprising win in South Dakota faded into insignificance as the news media reported that, for the first time in United States history, a person of color had

locked up a major party nomination for president.

THE FINAL EVENTS

The night of the Montana and South Dakota presidential primaries, Barack Obama staged a victory rally in the Excel Center, a giant convention center in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Obama campaign chose the Excel Center for symbolic reasons. It was the hall in which, in early September, John McCain was slated to formally accept the Republican nomination for president.

Speaking to a cheering throng of Minnesotans, Barack Obama built upon the themes that had inspired his remarkable presidential nomination campaign. “You chose not to listen to your doubts or your fears, but to your greatest hopes and aspirations,” Obama said. “Tonight, we mark the end of one historic journey with the beginning of another - a journey that will bring a new and better day to America.”

Hillary Clinton that night addressed a rally of her supporters in her home state of New York. She did not, however, concede the nomination to Barack Obama. “I want the 18 million Americans who voted for me to be respected,” she said. She continued to press her case that she was the stronger candidate for president. She then raised eyebrows by indicating that she might accept an invitation to run as Barack Obama’s vice-presidential running mate.

The following morning, after dwelling on the situation overnight and being lobbied hard by prominent Democrats to quit the race, Hillary Clinton did just that. She suspended her campaign, endorsed Barack Obama as the Democratic nominee for president of the United States in 2008, and began making plans for a unity rally with Obama.

The longest presidential caucuses and primaries campaign in United States history had come to an end.