

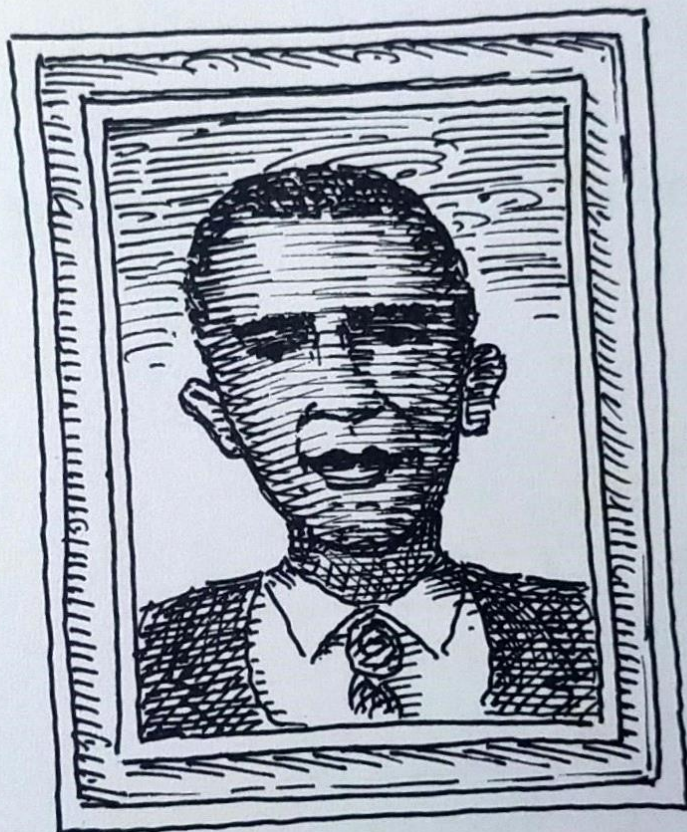
# Who Is Barack Obama?



By Roberta Edwards  
Illustrated by John O'Brien



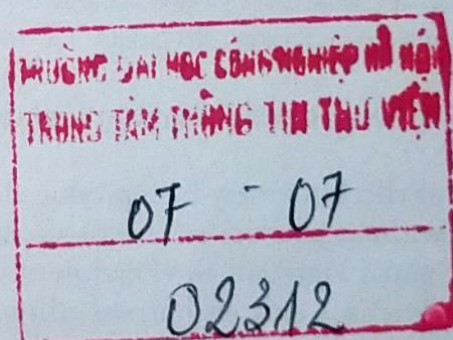
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For Tess—JO

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## **Who Is Barack Obama?**

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There once was a young man who was a student at Columbia University. He had never lived in New York City before. It was 1981 and, for a year, he spent his free time walking all around the city. He was not only interested in seeing famous sights like the Statue of Liberty that many tourists visited, but he also wanted to visit other parts of the city, like Harlem. Harlem is a famous neighborhood where many black families have lived since the 1920s. The young man visited historic churches and the Apollo Theater. He heard Jesse Jackson, the civil rights leader, give a speech.





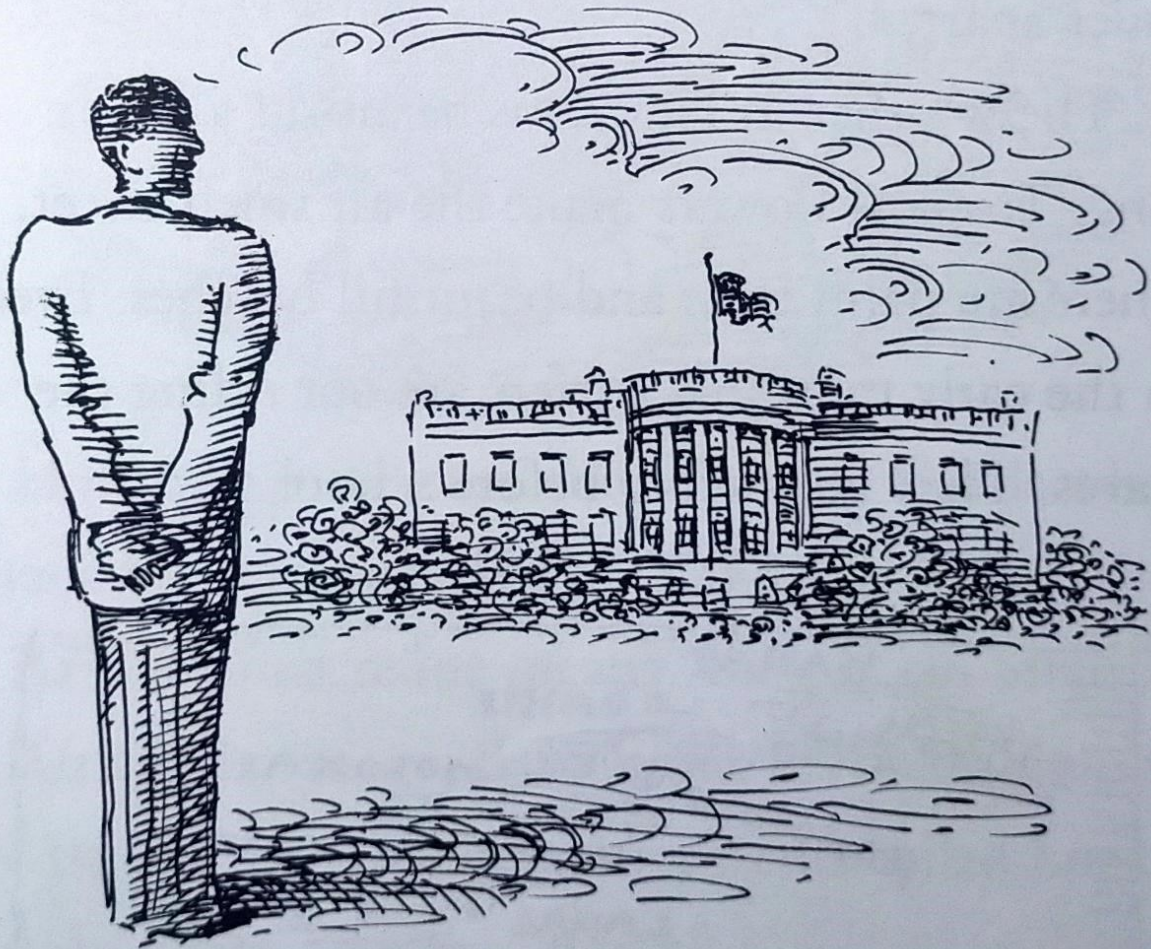
On his long walks, the young man kept looking at people. He hoped to find where he fit in. The young man's name was Barack Obama. Tall and skinny with an Afro, he was half white and half black. Often he felt he didn't belong anywhere. He was unsure of his future. What would he make of his life?



Back in 1981, if someone had said, “Guess who will be president of the United States in less than thirty years,” Barack would never have said, “Me.”

Yet on January 20, 2009, that is exactly what happened. Barack Hussein Obama was sworn in as the 44th president.

Imagine how surprised that college kid would be to find himself living in the White House!





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## Chapter 1

### Born in Paradise

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Hawaii is a group of islands that lie in the Pacific Ocean. Hawaii became a state in 1959, the same year as Alaska. The closest state to Hawaii is California, but they are more than two thousand miles apart.

The weather in Hawaii is beautiful all year long. Tropical flowers make the air smell sweet. There are palm trees and beautiful beaches. Even in the early morning, surfers are out riding the waves. They go surfing before school starts.

#### HAWAII

