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Political Science

The Obama Haters: Behind the Right-Wing Campaign of Lies, Innuendo, and Racism
John Wright
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Among the far right are media personalities, politicians, and denizens of the blogosphere who spew anti-Obama venom that stirs their followers to such a fevered pitch that three preachers prayed publicly for Obama's death, notes longtime journalist John Wright. The author retaliates in his own scathing attack of the anti-Obama far right in a book that names names. Wright has worked for the Associated Press, Dow Jones Newswires as Bureau Chief for Brazil, and Knight Ridder Financial News; he is currently editor of Latin American News for *Energy News Today*.

Wright says his experience in Latin America during an era in which dictators killed their opponents has given him contempt for ideologues. His book divulges who has created the biggest lies about Obama and how their messages are spread in books, websites, and emails. Coverage includes the birth myth, Obama as Muslim, Obama's relationships with Reverend Jeremiah Wright and sixties radical William Ayers, and Obama as a communist, fascist, and/or socialist—take your pick.

The author tells of his own experiment to show how quickly unsubstantiated rumors fly over the Internet. One day after Wright posted a false entry on his blog about Obama's mother-in-law practicing voodoo in the White House, it was mentioned in the online editions of *USA Today* and the *Boston Globe*. Conservatives described as leaders of the far right anti-Obama movement include Dick Cheney, Ann Coulter, Newt Gingrich, Rush Limbaugh, Sarah Palin, and Fox News, "a free infomercial for the hatemongering right wing cult." Conversely, Wright commends Republicans Colin Powell, Florida Governor Charlie Crist, and Tom Ridge, President George W. Bush's director of Homeland Security, for criticizing Obama without indulging in character assassination.

Wright's narrative will interest primarily the far right's opposite—the far left—but the writing is unfortunately diminished by his many vitriolic descriptions of the Obama haters: "the sludge of the IQ barrel" is only one example of many such labels found throughout. Wright

demonstrates the power of the Internet in mobilizing political forces, and how a lack of civility, including his own, has come to characterize political differences.

Karl Helicher