

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 6, 2009

CONTACT: John Walter 646-319-5524
jwalter@truemirror.com

"Blame It on the Hair Part"

As the country has watched the increasingly bizarre actions of Rod Blagojevich, one question keeps coming up over and over again: What is the story behind his behavior?

Is he suffering from narcissism, does he have a bipolar disorder, is he a sociopath? What makes him so brazen and so out of touch with reality in his actions and his subsequent self-justifications?

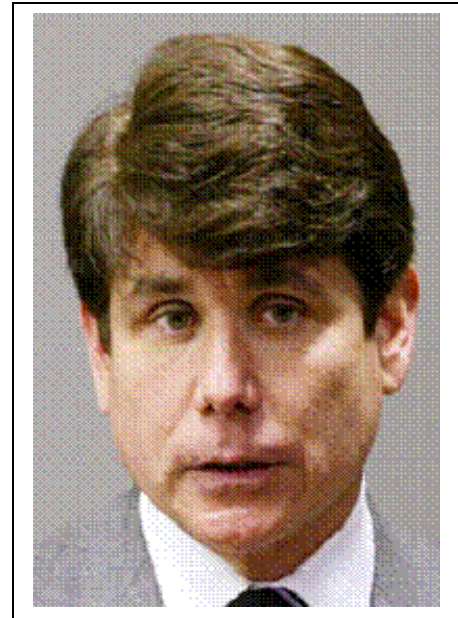
In an in-depth, Chicago Magazine article by David Bernstein titled, "Mr. Un-Popularity," (2/2008)¹, the printable words used to describe him throughout the piece give an unbelievable impression of a man who has only recently become known country-wide. Almost a year ago, political and personal insiders who were interviewed for the article called or characterized Blagojevich as greedy, dumb, paranoid, phony, iron-fisted, untrustworthy, rude, mediocre, infuriating, a liar, a used-car salesman, unremarkable, remorseless, insensitive, demonizing, glib, unapologetic, stubborn, uncontrolled, hot-tempered, disdainful, odd, strange, erratic, insane, a sociopath, a madman and a monster.

His embarrassing behavior exhibits opportunism, pugilism, pettiness, vengefulness, and "delusions of grandeur." Incapable of compromise, he had "a complete personality change once he won the gubernatorial primary." Other comments include, "He is in continual campaign mode, [rather than governing];" "He never grows, and he never learns;" "His certitude and self-righteousness are almost a sickness;" "He is the Alfred E. Neuman, 'What, me worry?' governor;" "He is chronically and unapologetically late;" and "He is an introvert in an extrovert's business." His initial supporter was his influential father-in-law, "the powerful Northwest Side alderman Richard Mell" who, among other indignities suffered, was shut-out post-election, despite his having practically engineered the win. He said, "I really liked Rod. I thought there was great promise for him. I thought he could be the president. He went askew somewhere. Something happened-the power, or whatever. I don't know."

Positive adjectives and statements used to describe Blagojevich are far fewer, and include, "easygoing, unshaken, self-assured, tenacious, passionate, committed, a masterful campaigner, and, of course, a prodigious fundraiser."

So why is he the way he is? Especially in ways that seem incomprehensible to most people - even to the hardened political pundit class?

We say, "**Blame It on the Hair Part**", specifically, his "**right hair part**." We know this sounds even more bizarre than his behavior, but the Hair Part Theory² gives a surprising but statistically accurate classification of behaviors associated with choice of hair part. The Hair Part Theory describes perceptual and associated behavioral effects that hair parting can have on social appraisal, reaction and subsequent personality development. The entire "Hair Part Theory" document, with detailed statistical analysis, can be seen at <http://www.truemirror.com/hp/hptmc1999.pdf>. The theory is often misinterpreted, since people think it states that if you have a certain hair part, you will be a certain way, but it has more to do with what initial assessment others make of you, their resultant behavior, and how that affects your personality development and behavioral pattern adjustments.



The different social effects of wearing a right or a left hair part were discovered by physicist John Walter in 1979, when, as a right-parted up to the age of nineteen, he switched his hair part to the left, and experienced dramatic changes in his interpersonal communications. (The fact that this very oddball observation and theory originated with a "right-parted" only reinforces the theory!) The change he experienced in the perception and treatment of him by others was so startling that he sent a letter to then right-parted President Jimmy Carter, with advice for him to change his hair part. Inexplicably to the rest of the world, a few months later, the President changed to a left part, which he has kept ever since. In 1998, John's sister, anthropologist Catherine Walter, researched and formalized the Hair Part Theory by making a statistical analysis of elected national officials and extrapolating societal behavior patterns. Amazingly, the majority of political and business leaders, both male and female, have left parts, as do the majority of male film stars.

Excerpts from The Hair Part Theory state that:

The way a person parts their hair is related to many subconscious associations when assessed by others. Each hair part type initiates cycles of behavior toward, and response from, the individual. Over time, these cycles affect personality development, perpetuating a system of cumulative and interactional continuity.³ Parting the hair on the left or right initiates, in viewers of the individual, subconscious associations with the aspects of cognition generally ascribed to the same cranial hemisphere that is accented by the hair part (i.e. left part, left hemisphere). When there is a center part, no part or baldness, the subconscious associations are more balanced or neutral, with neither cranial hemisphere's activities given more importance in the assessment.

Most of the possible choices generally do not negatively affect perceptions of the individual, but the individuals who are potentially put in the worst position are men who part their hair on the right AND who are also striving to be assessed positively within a traditional male role. A right part on a man might interfere with positive social interaction and personal development, and might lead to highly atypical behavior, occupations and preoccupations. [Case in point, Rod Blagojevich.] A right-parting man in a traditionally male role is at risk for having difficulties in interpersonal relationships, since he is sending a mixed, subconscious message by emphasizing the activities of the brain traditionally attributed to femininity. He will always have slightly negative interactional continuity due to initial assessment, pattern responses that his "gender-opposite" part is causing.

A right part on a man is usually unnatural for men. It can create an uncomfortable image and can cause social shunning, sometimes leading to unusual or eccentric behavior. However, a right part on a man can work okay if the man is very confident, attractive, or striving to be respected in a non-traditional male role. Examples: Al Gore, Rush Limbaugh, Robert F. Kennedy, Charlie Rose, Paul Newman, Tom Snyder, Harry Reid, Tom Cruise, Jimmy Carter (before he switched to a left part in 1979), and, amusingly, Alfred E. Neuman. Frighteningly, the most extreme and negative examples of the right part on men in leadership positions include Hitler, Pol Pot and Jim Jones.

A man who parts his hair on the right is consistently perceived and described as "unusual," "atypical," "unique," and "different," adjectives that run counter to innate human desires to fit into social units and environments. Resulting personality characteristics will differ, depending on each individual man's ability to positively adjust his personality to this seemingly inexplicable social isolation, a right hair-part. Right-parting men in roles that are not traditionally male, such as therapists, interviewers or artists, will not have the same level of interpersonal difficulties or negative interactional continuity patterns.

It is amusing and interesting to watch how this subtle effect on personality assessment is reflected in films, television and advertising. In Superman, Christopher Reeve parted on the right for Clark Kent and on the left for Superman. Tobey Maquire in the first Spiderman movie has a left part for the whole movie except for the scene where he is looking wistfully up at his girlfriend on the balcony with another man. In that instance, the film was actually cut and flopped to give Maquire a right part. In Liar, Liar, Cary Elwes, as the man courting Jim Carey's ex-wife, is a right-parted up to the point where he asks Carey's ex to marry him, whereupon he has a left-part. In Law and Order and other crime dramas, the highly focused scientists and the criminals are often right-parting men. In television and print advertising, where making a quick first impression is imperative, the man who "doesn't quite get it" is often a right-parting man, as in the Alltel commercial where the right-parted always portrays the loser to the slick Alltel representative.

A recent example of a public figure changing a life-long hair part is Katie Couric, who, with her new short haircut, finally changed her part to the left. Unfortunately after a week of the left hair part, which helped her look more serious while she was presenting the evening news, she changed back to her life-long right hair part, which worked well for her perky morning personality, but which falls short when she is not interviewing guests.

Most recently in the news, Stewart Parnell, the president of the company which knowingly distributed salmonella-tainted peanut butter under his direction when he callously said to "turn them loose," is, not surprisingly, a right-parter.

In the case of Rod Blagojevich, much has been made of the big head of hair that he has, but no one has remarked that it's parted on the "wrong" side for men. Is it possible that, in addition to all of the other theories to explain his behavior, he has, to coin a new phrase, "**Right Hair-Partitus**"?

For more information, please visit the True Mirror(r) website section on hair parts - www.truemirror.com/hp. The connection between the The Hair Part Theory and the True Mirror is that a traditional, flat mirror image shows an opposite side part. For example, Blagojevich's reflection in a flat, regular mirror shows him as a left-parter. To illustrate what the True Mirror does differently from a flat mirror, when you hold up writing to a True Mirror, you can read it, because the letters are not reversed. A True Mirror is a non-reversing mirror which, among other benefits, will show the hair part as others see it, since the image reflected in the True Mirror is non-reversed.

For a revealing look at how someone on television sees themselves in a traditional mirror, watch them via a mirror - in other words, sit with your back to the TV, hold a mirror up and watch the TV in the mirror. When the differences in the image are significant, it becomes easier to see why someone would perceive themselves so differently than what they are actually projecting. Al Gore is a perfect example of this phenomenon, since, in a traditional mirror, he really seems presidential, instead of stiff and somehow off-step. George Bush also looks quite different backwards -- he looks quite serious backwards, with his ever present half smile just not perceivable somehow. One of the applications of the True Mirror is to provide a correct reflection that matches what others see so each person can choose the look that, truly, is best for them.

References

¹ <http://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/February-2008/Mr-Un-Popularity/>

² The Hair Part Theory ©1998, John and Catherine Walter, describes the effects that hair parting can have on social appraisal and personality development. The full paper with graphical analysis can be seen at www.truemirror.com/hp. John Walter originally discovered the effects because he had worn a right hair part every day until aged 19, when he found dramatic changes in switching to the left, and then eventually the middle. Not that it necessarily proves the theory, but this very oddball theory did originate with a "right parter"!

³ Caspi, Avshalom; Elder, Glen H.; and Bem, Daryl J. Moving Against the World: Life-Course Patterns of Explosive Children, *Developmental Psychology*, 1987, Vol. 23, No. 2, 308-313