

Dreadlocks in the White House

Lance N. Decker

April 12, 2007

POLS 2306.004

Professor Dennis Hurley, MA

## Dreadlocks in the White House

Dreadlocks, funky clothes, and big sunglasses may cause many to immediately dismiss kat swift [sic] as a viable candidate for the presidency of the United States, but a second look will reveal a knowledgeable, independent and articulate candidate. Like e. e. cummings and bell hooks, kat chooses to be different, a common theme in her run for the oval office. Deemed the “mystery candidate” by the Shagmar Report, Ms. swift is running a low profile campaign. As the first officially announced Green Party candidate for President, kat swift understands the monumental task before her, but, as you will see, kat is no stranger to challenge. Ms. swift’s personal history, politics, and Green Party affiliation make her a valid and respectable candidate in the pool of those running for the office of the President of the United States.

Born Katherine Lynette Swift in Shreveport, LA, kat moved many times before she turned eight years old, settling in San Antonio, TX, for a few years before moving on to places like Canada, Massachusetts, and Seattle, WA. She was a Girl Scout in San Antonio in the same area in which she now lives. These moves gave kat a view of the world from many perspectives and made her a person that is quick to view people for who and what they are. In addition to moving around quite often, kat’s family struggled with alcoholism. Ms. swift attended Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, MA, as a Pre-Medicine and Computer Science double major expanding her ideals of helping others and seeking a way to make change in people’s lives. At this point, she also became aware that the medical profession was not necessarily focused on helping people live better, but treating symptoms and pushing medications. Her political awakening occurred when she was twenty-six years old while living in Toronto, Canada. Several of

her friends had asked her to attend some political events for them because they were unable to attend. In those events, she was able to ask questions on behalf of her friends. Within a year, the subject matter of her questions developed into legislation and made law. She then realized that she could make a difference through politics. She has been an activist striving for fairness in government for many years. As an active member of the organization Clean Money San Antonio, she is working to change the way that campaigns are orchestrated at the local level. Ms. swift has also worked in low paying jobs throughout her life and has never earned more than \$28,000 in a year, recently being laid off from job as a newspaper credit manager. Life struggles have given her the drive and determination to enter the political process first as an activist and now as a political candidate. At the tender age of thirty-three, kat hopes to become both the first woman and the youngest president in history.

Politically, kat swift cannot be compartmentalized into an existing political structure or doctrine. kat's approach is to find the core issue of each political argument and address it instead of only focusing on the symptoms or outcomes of the problem. When asked of her opinion of a woman's right to abortion, she spoke of respect for human life. Ms. swift believes that in order to be consistent we should respect all life in issues including abortion, capital punishment, the environment, and waging war. In striving for consistency, she wants to have people respect life and educate them in ways that preserves life. In the abortion debate, her goal would be to educate women and men about their personal reproductive rights and what it means to bring children into this world. "It has been shown that the more education women receive, the more they plan their pregnancies. If we lower the incidence of unwanted pregnancies, you lower the

abortion rate. Isn't that truly the goal?" She has a similar approach to illegal immigration, believing that if the issues of Corporate Globalization, including commercial farming which has created a lack of jobs in Mexico and elsewhere were adequately addressed, then the citizens of Mexico would not be forced to leave their country to put food on their families', easing the burden on everyone.

Furthermore, she would like to overhaul the U. S. voting system. She strongly believes that the system is broken. To overhaul the voting system, she would add a ballot position for each race called "none of the above." If "none of the above" wins the election, then all candidates that were on the ticket would be barred from running and a group of new candidates would run. The "none of the above" vote would be a protest vote by the people and should drive more interest in the elections. She believes that we are constantly presented with poor choices for elected officials and voters either stay home or are forced to choose the candidate that they dislike the least. In addition, her goal, as well as that of the National Green Party, is to make sure every vote is counted and that every electronic voting machine is owned by the local voting district and has a voter verifiable paper receipt with open source software. The paper receipts would be used in the case of a recount.

Having lived her life in relative poverty, kat would like to establish a living wage for working people. In her plan, the federal government would create a formula in which the average cost of housing for an area would be the key value. The output of the formula would be a living wage (e.g. a minimum wage) for that area ensuring that a person could support their family adequately. In addition, she would set a new standard

for the salaries and pensions of politicians by eliminating the current pension system for the President and Congress and reduce the salaries significantly.

When asked of her plans for the first 100 days in office, kat was quick to say that there would be a great party. This would not be a self-serving party, but one that would mark the beginning of a new era in politics in America. She feels that if she were elected to the presidency Americans would have moved away from politics of money and influence and adopted an active role in a government of democracy. She believes that her election would mark a return of a government run by the people with politicians who are accountable to those that elected them and not those with the most money, power or influence. In addition, Ms. swift would have the U. S. join the International Criminal Court and try the current administration for war crimes. She would immediately end the war in Middle East and would dispatch peacekeepers to those war torn areas. After a lengthy period talking with the various federal agencies, she would work to ensure that agencies doing a good job were empowered to do their job better. Those agencies that are not fulfilling their duties would be reorganized into with the needed resources to succeed and unnecessary bureaucratic agencies and processes would be overhauled or eliminated.

In her affiliation with the Green Party, kat has held several positions at various levels within the party. She is the extremely active in the Bexar County Green Party, the co-chair of the Texas Green Party and the Public Relations person for the Women's Caucus of the National Green Party. For the Green Party primary, kat feels that she has developed a good reputation and is well known among the Green Party membership. She feels that being involved at these party levels has helped in her run for the Green Party

nomination. According to Holly Hart, the Secretary of the Green Party of the U. S., kat “has both a creative flair and a thoughtful, compassionate personality. Age notwithstanding, she is thoughtful and articulate in expressing her political point of view, better than many more experienced politicians.”

The Green Party faces many hurdles to grow into a strong national party. According to Greg Gerritt, the Green Party’s consultant to Green Party presidential candidates, the goal of the Green Party over the next ten years is to have fifty-one state Green Parties, have Green Party candidates on every state ticket and every level. The presidential race is most important to the Green Party since it affords an opportunity to reach the most people since most people pay the most attention to the presidential election, providing an avenue of recruitment to the party. A lack of money, media coverage, and access to the ballot are the major barriers to the Green Party as well as other third parties. In addition, the general populace has a misunderstanding that the Green Party’s sole focus is the environment, a one plank party platform. Many Democrats erroneously believe that the Green Party was the reason they lost the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections.

The Green Party has ten key values that it would like to permeate through American society. The first value is grassroots democracy where the individual is able to make a difference in government and be involved in the political process. The second value is social justice and equal opportunity. Ecological wisdom is the third key value seeking to increase understanding that mankind is a part of the greater nature. Non-violence is the fourth key value of the Green Party. This non-violence is not naïve in nature since some individuals and other countries may have violent intentions. The fifth

key value is decentralization of governmental power that the Green Party believes is the cause of social and economic injustice, environmental destruction, and militarization. Sixth, the Green Party seeks to have community-based economics and economic justice. This value has at its core the protection of the ecology and a living wage for workers. The seventh value is feminism and gender equity, which seeks to reverse the male dominated system of economics and politics. Respect for diversity is the eighth value focusing on respectful relationships across all diversity lines. The ninth key value is personal and global responsibility where people would be aware of their opportunities to improve their own well being while still remaining aware of their impact on others and the environment. Finally, the tenth key value is future focus and sustainability of natural resources.

In general, kat swift agrees with the platform and key values of the Green Party. She feels that the Green Party's stance on feminism needs clarity. Since the word feminism elicits various reactions from individuals, she wants to focus thought on the principle of egalitarianism, the moral doctrine that all people have equal fundamental value and deserve equal protection under the law regardless. In her mind, if egalitarianism were adopted across the country and the world, many problems would immediately be solved.

While kat swift chooses to have dreadlocks, dress eccentrically, and not capitalize her name, she is a respectable candidate for President of the United States. She asks that she not be judged by her appearance, but by the content of her message. Lack of money, staff, and name recognition will challenge kat in her campaign for the presidency, but her ambition, personal drive, and determination may propel her to new prominence for

herself and her party. Her message is based on her personal history, her political ideology, and her affiliation with the Green Party of the United States. As I suggested to her, a good campaign button would say “go kat go!”