

# Mystery creator of anti-Clinton ad outed

WASHINGTON (AP) - The mystery creator of the Orwellian YouTube ad against Hillary Rodham Clinton is a Democratic operative who worked for a digital consulting firm with ties to rival Sen. Barack Obama.

Philip de Vellis, a strategist with Blue State Digital, acknowledged in an interview with The Associated Press that he was the creator of the video, which portrayed Clinton as a Big Brother figure and urged support for Obama's presidential campaign.

De Vellis, 33, said he resigned from the firm on Wednesday after he learned that he was about to be unmasked by the HuffingtonPost.com., a liberal news and opinion Internet site.

Blue State designed Obama's website and one of the firm's founding members, Joe Rospars, took a leave from the company to work as Obama's director of new media. The connection to the campaign is likely to



be a setback for Obama, who has cultivated an image as a politician who wants to rise above bare-knuckle politics.

"It's true... yeah, it's me," de Vellis said Wednesday evening.

He said he produced the ad outside of work and that neither Blue State nor the Obama campaign was aware of his role in the ad.

"But it raises some eyebrows, so I thought it best that I resign and not put them in that position," said de Vellis.

Thomas Gensemer, the managing director of Blue State Digital, said de Vellis was fired.

"Mr. de Vellis created this video on his own time," Gensemer said in a statement. "It was done without

the knowledge of management, and was in no way tied to his work at the firm or our formal engagement (on technology pursuits) with the Obama campaign."

In its own statement, the Obama camp said the campaign had no knowledge and had nothing to do with the creation of the ad.

"Blue State Digital has separated ties with this individual, and we have been assured he did no work on our campaign's account."

The Clinton campaign had no immediate comment.

In the interview, and later in a blog written for the Huffington Post, de Vellis expressed pride in his creation, while acknowledging that his employers are "disappointed and angry at me,

and deservedly so."

"It changes the trajectory of my career," he said. In his blog posting, he wrote: "I support Senator Obama. I hope he wins the primary. (I recognize that this ad is not his style of politics). I also believe that Senator Clinton is a great public servant, and if she should win the nomination, I would support her and wish her all the best."

The ad was guerrilla politics at its cleverest and had become the boffo hit of the YouTube website.

The 74-second clip, a copy of a 1984 Apple ad for its Macintosh computer, has recorded nearly 1.5 million views, with an enormous surge in the past two days. The video's final image reads "BarackObama.com."

De Vellis remained hidden for weeks, protected by the anonymity afforded by YouTube and the absence of federal regulations governing most Internet political speech. The ad portrayed Clinton on a huge television screen addressing robotic humans in a stark, futuristic hall. A female athlete tosses a hammer at the screen, destroying Clinton's image with an explosive flash. Then this text: "On January 14th the Democratic primary will begin. And you will see why 2008 isn't going to be like '1984.'"

De Vellis said he used footage of an updated Apple ad that portrayed the female athlete wearing an iPod. He said he used standard Apple equipment to modify the

video and edit Clinton's image into the clip. Obama, appearing on CNN's "Larry King Live" Monday night, said his campaign knew nothing about the origins of the anti-Clinton ad.

"Frankly, given what it looks like, we don't have the technical capacity to create something like this," he said. "It's pretty extraordinary."

De Vellis said he is an Obama supporter who was inspired to do the ad after he read reports that Clinton backers were "strong-arming" Democrats for money and support.

He added: "I didn't really like the style of some of Senator Clinton's videos and the way they were presenting her on the Internet. I just thought it was little bit disingenuous."

Still, he said, he was stunned by the reaction to the video. "This blew up much, much more than I ever thought it would," he said. "I want to make it clear that I don't think that Hillary Clinton is Big Brother or a bad person or anything."

## Nagin

(Continued from Page 6) the nation.

The suffering is great and the needs among Blacks are particularly vast, says Nagin. He largely focused on the so-called Road Home Program, a federal grant of up to \$150,000, earmarked for homeowners to rebuild.

"People who should have gotten grants to rebuild their lives and their homes, particularly senior citizens, are still waiting on their checks," he said. "Twelve thousand people are eligible and 3,000 have gotten their checks."

Nagin was broadly criticized last year when he said God wants the pre-Katrina 67 percent Black and 28 percent White New Orleans to return to being "a chocolate city." Louisiana Recovery Authority estimates the city is now about 47 percent Black and 43 percent White with only half its former population.

Though Nagin apologized for the "chocolate city" statement, he maintained last week that he believes racist attitudes are currently controlling the monetary distribution into the city.

"They can't hold this money back much longer, 'cause it's starting to hurt other folk. Y'all know what I'm talking about," he hinted to the nodding audience. "So, they've got to let it loose."

The racial disparities ex-



Photo special to Sentinel-Voice by Victor Holt

**NNPA Lifetime Achiever Simeon Booker, left, and Kay DeBow Alford, standing proxy for the Tuskegee Airmen, recipients of the Historic Military Service Award. New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin, the NewsMaker Award winner, holds his wares at the NNPA ceremony.**

tend past the rebuilding fund, Nagin says.

"There's a health care crisis in the city of New Orleans because they closed down Charity Hospital, so poor people and Black people can't get health care where they need to," he said.

"Our public education system was taken over by the state and earlier this year, they had children on waiting lists trying to get into public education. They had over a million dollars worth of ob-

ligations that they owe the city of New Orleans to rebuild our water systems and our sewer systems. The fight is not over."

Nagin is not fighting alone.

After the new Democratic Congress — in its first 100 days agenda — and President Bush, in his State of the Union Address — both failed to mention Hurricane Katrina, U.S. Democratic Rep. Maxine Waters, chair of the House Committee on Fi-

nanacial Services' Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity, took up the fight.

"I've worked out an arrangement with HUD (Housing and Urban Development) to repair 3,000 of the public housing units right away, so the people can come back from Dallas and places where they're living," said Waters. HUD had planned to demolish the units and take up to five years to rebuild them. The public housing units had

been almost totally occupied by African-Americans.

Waters says she is also helping to remove the bottleneck holding up the Road Home funds. "I'm going in to find obstructions to and impediments to moving that money that we had already given," complications that she attributes to conflicting policies between the federal, state and city governments.

Up to 200,000 city residents still live outside New Orleans as managers of the Unified New Orleans Plan last week estimated a total \$14 billion would be needed to restore the city, nearly doubling the Road Home plan, just for rebuilding homes.

But, the news isn't all bad.

Among independent donors, from the beginning, the New Orleans tragedy drew donations of money, goods and talents that far surpassed the giving within the first 10 days after Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and the Dec. 26 tsunami put together. The monetary donations to official relief agencies had surpassed \$500 million within a month after the hurricane.

Volunteerism is still rampant as even students from across the country, including those from Howard University, again participate in an Alternative Spring Break to help clean up and construction and major Black organi-

zations and churches are holding conventions in the city.

Nagin also announced the return of the July 4th weekend Essence Festival, which relocated to Houston after Katrina.

Harry Alford, founding president and chief executive officer of the National Black Chamber of Commerce, who introduced Nagin as "the greatest Mayor in the United States," is among Black organizational supporters of New Orleans who has remained committed to the city. Having sat on the prestigious "King Zulu Float" during this year's Mardi Gras Festival, the NNPA Foundation board member, pledged unwavering support to New Orleans and lamented "decades and decades of malfeasance and cutting corners" by the Army Core of Engineers.

Help from communities around the nation, public and private, is what has sustained hope for New Orleans citizens, Nagin says.

"I thank the many cities and states across America for treating our people with respect and taking care of our people," said Nagin.

"This is our moment to take a tragedy and turn it into something special for growth and opportunity, not only among the gulf coast, but throughout America."