



## PRESS RELEASE

3<sup>rd</sup> Degree

Tuesday 10 June at 8pm

### Is America ready for a black president?

Can Barack Obama rise above America's racial divisions and appeal to enough white and black voters to become the next President of the United States? He is a political sensation – more rock star than grey suit politician and is promising to unite America, saying that race should not matter.

In this outstanding and provocative BBC Panorama documentary, journalist Hilary Andersson finds strong support for Obama among white people in the wealthy suburbs of Chicago. But some black leaders are far less comfortable. Civil rights activists Al Sharpton – a former candidate for the Democratic nomination for the US presidential election himself – believes that Obama cannot expect African Americans to support him because he is taking a cautious stance on America's race issues in an attempt to appeal to white voters. As for hard-core right-wing whites, they cannot believe that a black person has the ability to run a modern democracy.

The political psychologist Drew Westen tells Panorama that Obama is every white person's fantasy of what they'd like a black man to be. "He's thoughtful, he's articulate, he's handsome, he doesn't fit any of the stereotypes of the dangerous dark skinned black male that people see every day on television," he says.

Derided by some in America, he has been the target of some false – but nonetheless damaging and certainly malicious – rumours. If he does become America's first black President, it will be a hard and long road...