

# Wanna Bet?

☒ I'm climbing out on a limb. I'm jumping the canyon on a motorcycle without a parachute. I'm walking the tightrope without a net. I'm out of clichés. So here goes:

I know the next presidential election is more than two years off, and all sorts of things can happen between now and then. But I am predicting right here, right now, that Hillary Clinton will run for president in 2012 – yes 2012 – challenging President Obama for their party's nomination.

Is it a long shot? Sure. But it's no longer crazy.

If it's occurring to millions of Americans who voted for Obama, it must be occurring to Hillary Clinton too: The magic is gone. Barack Obama can't walk on water no matter how hard his fans in the media tried to turn him into the messiah. And that hope and change thing? Well, it isn't working out the way it was supposed to, either.

So, for now, things look bleak for the Democrats. Independents – the ones who control elections these days – are jumping ship. According to Gallup, only 38 percent approve of the job the president is doing. A year ago, the number was 56 percent. They voted for Barack Obama in 2008 because he wasn't Bush or McCain or any other Republican. They liked him because he wasn't just another vanilla Democrat. A vote for Obama was a vote for America's future and a vote against its nasty racial past. But we're more than a year into the Obama presidency and reality has crashed the party.

Too many Americans are out of work with little hope of finding a job anytime soon. Federal spending is out of control. And Democrats, who run just about everything in Washington, will pay dearly in the fall.

Still, the president remains gloriously confident – in

himself. If the American people are *for* something, he's *against* it. If they're *against* it, he's *for* it.

When unemployment was at 10 percent and Americans were clamoring for a real jobs program, President Obama was busy pushing through a massive overhaul of our healthcare system, something most Americans did not want. Don't worry, he told them, over time you'll like it just fine.

When most Americans (52 percent according to a CBS News poll) were shouting their support for the Arizona anti-illegal immigration law (*and 17 percent more said the law didn't go far enough*), President Obama sued the state trying to block the law from going into effect.

When voters were telling the president they want terrorists tried in military courts, the president was telling the American people he wants them tried in civil courts.

When Americans said the federal government should stop spending money we don't have, President Obama said, Wrong! We need to spend more.

Cap and trade? Voters, fearing their utility bills will go through the roof, don't want that either. President Obama does. He wants it to fight global warming, an issue, according to just about every poll, the American people put way, way down on their list of concerns.

A recent Rasmussen right track/wrong track poll shows that only 28 percent of Americans think the country is heading in the right direction; 66 percent think we're heading in the wrong direction. This is very bad news for the president. You think Hillary hasn't noticed?

If things don't improve, independents, who switch back and forth from one party to another all the time, will have no trouble abandoning President Obama next time around. Blacks won't, of course, and that poses a real problem to any

challenger. White liberals would never forsake America's first black president, either – at least not to vote for some other Democrat who looks like Walter Mondale or Michael Dukakis or Al Gore or John Kerry. But Hillary gives them the opportunity to assuage their white liberal guilt – and – bonus! – make history all over again. They can drop the black guy and vote for someone they hope will be the first woman president of the United States and still hang on to their precious liberal credentials.

You think Hillary hasn't figured that one out, either?

Yes, 2012 is a long, long way off. Between now and then, all sorts of good things can happen. Democrats may *cut* spending by hundreds of billions. They may *cut* taxes – on everyone, even the rich. The economy may take off. Unemployment may fall to five percent. And the Tooth Fairy may leave a few trillion dollars under Barack Obama's pillow to bail us out of the deficit crisis that is driving America into bankruptcy.

But just in case miracles don't happen, look out for Hillary.