

Obama, dawd:whos fooling who

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Ali Bujassoum Kelly Gehlhoff ENG 101 28th April, Obama, Dawd: who's fooling who? This article d, " No Bully at the Pulpit", by Maureen Dowd, a distinguished commentator and a winner of the Pulitzer Prize for distinguished commentary. She argues that President Obama may have learnt how to feel the pain of Americans and grieve with them, but he has not learnt how to govern. She questions the fact that President Obama was able to convince the American public to share his opinion on gun control, but was not able to get 60 senators to support him pass the bill in Capitol Hill. Dowd claims that the senators are not intimidated or afraid of him in the least; even republic statesmen who would never have voted for the bill were amazed that the president could only get 54 percent in a house that his party controls. The influence in the articles are evident in the fact that it is easy for the ordinary American readers who make the bulk of readers for the daily to buy into her reasoning, considering her reputation and the fact that her claims are seemingly supported by the retrospective actions of the senators and president. President Obama thinks, according to the writer, he can make use of emotion to influence the senators like he does to the public (Dowd). However, she posits that the senators are " grown men with power" and they cannot be moved by emotive speeches. The president looked set to make some regulations after the massacre in Newton and he said to a loud applause that the Newtown families deserved a vote. It looked like he was going to get exactly what he wanted but he somehow lost his momentum and even told journalist he suspected his bill would not be passed by the congress (Dowd). Thesis: Was Dowd objective in presenting her article as she did? Was her reasoning true about the president? How did the column

succeed in convincing the audience as she claims? Was the president weak in handling the senators or were the senators impossible to handle? If Obama had wanted to have his way, the writer suggests he should have gone off the highroad and talked to specific senators directly and made them see it his way instead of using his vice president. For instance, he could have brought Mark Begich the Alaskan senator and asked him how the bill could be adjusted to make him vote and defend it. Better still, he could have consulted the view of someone like Heidi Heitkamp from North Dakota and sweet-talk her into voting for the bill based on the fact that she was a mother and she had a term long enough to make such tough calls. Dowd further suggests that he could have strong armed some of the republican senators in whose states he won with the public or used his friendship with the likes of Tom Coburn to get an extra vote in. For instance, why did he give the moving speech about the shameful acts before the vote and not after, when that could have helped him go a long way in votes? Dowd believes that there were many ways Obama could have used to get 60 votes; he simply did not try hard enough. She argues that the president simply does not like to sell his ideas; he assumes that he is on to the right thing and everybody else can see it his way. The article closes by saying it is not just about doing the right thing for the senators, since they have to sell their ideas to their electorate back home; and if they cannot convince them they may not get re-elected. In logical reasoning, Dowd was true in ascribing the fears of the senators to the electorate opinions. Moreover, she uses emotive language in ascertaining that the president had no room for other people's opinions. She finds him to be just some sort of demagogue who can influence the public's feelings by

manipulating them, but loses out when it comes to convincing those who matter. However, in the first paragraph she begins by saying something positive about him; she talks of the greying man weeping with American families and acknowledges that he has learnt experience how to share the grief of Americans. This statement is placed strategically to enhance the appeal to emotions in her appeal. She uses the sympathy Americans have for the grieving families to create a comparison that paints the president and a man who can appreciate sadness, but is incapable of doing nothing about fixing its cause, thus the sympathy they felt for him is used to make them question his leadership qualities. Before she claims he hasn't learnt how to lead, she establishes a common ground especially with those who may not agree with the subset opinions. This is done so that when she lashes out, the readers will be in a frame of mind to think her reasonable. Through this, they are likely to agree with her negative sentiments as they did with the positive ones she has cast herself as an open minded and realistic person. She uses logical appeal in the percentages of 90% Americans not translating into 60 votes in the house. How is it that he can talk to the public and convince them yet be so unsuccessful with the senate? Having covertly posed the questions on the audience, she goes ahead to overtly answer them, she say Obama is a weak leader and no-one in the senate is afraid of him. However, this is a fallacious argument since the audience would assume that the public is afraid of Obama and that's why they supported him. Furthermore, contrasting the senate with the public by claiming they are grown adults also implies that the public is immature. However, she cleverly makes it sound as though Obama is only good at talking to people, but not getting the job

done. To illustrate to the audience how easy it was, the task Obama failed to accomplish, she gives a few hypothetical examples of how he could have convinced democrat senators or even republican senators to see things his way. By making it look simple, she manages to depict Obama as being more incompetent. She makes it appear as if the whole responsibility of seeing and implementing the right things is the president's and the senate is just there to be convinced. She seems to agree with Obama, since she says he assumes that everyone will see things the right way like him. However, this brings out Dowd's own illogical reasoning, clearly, if she can see that he is right, it means that even the senators who have been elected by the people to safeguard their interests should also see it; thus, leaving the responsibility of convincing them to Obama and blaming him of bad leadership when he fails to make them think like the grown adults she described earlier is in more ways than the one; hypocritical. Ultimately, through rhetoric, Dowd puts across a fairly strong attempt of convincing the audience that despite the fact that the president was right and the senator failed to agree with him (possibly because they were worried about their re-elections), it was the president who deserved the blame for failing to pass the bill. When one thinks about it objectively and logically, it is not really a realistic point of reasoning; however, it is likely that even audience who would support Obama may be convinced to put the blame on him if they do not carefully read between the lines. As such, the article can be acknowledged for being convincing, but it does not portray the true situation on the ground. Could Dowd be objective, she would not only have focused on the president's failure as a result of his character, but more deeply examined the reasons

the senators did not approve the bill. Therein she would have likely unearthed conspicuously, among other things, a fear to offend the electorate and jeopardize future re-election. If she had brought forward that side of the argument, the audience would have been more sympathetic to the president's failure. However, since that was clearly not her intention, she opted to expose plainly the weak point of the president for her own malicious gain. Works Cited Dowd Maureen. "No Bully in the Pulpit" New York Times. 2013. [Accessed on 11/5/2013] Web: Category of evaluation 5-6 points (C) 7-8 points (B) 9-10 points (A) Title Unoriginal or missing Original but bland Creative and purposeful Introduction paragraph Weak beginning – not enough backgrounding Generally informative but not a perfect setup Draws the reader into the topic and critique Thesis statement Unclear or misplaced Appropriate but general Argues about quality of NYTimes article rhetoric Topic sentences and transition sentences Structure of paragraphs is illogical or needs help General sentences to buffer each paragraph Paragraph structure advances argument Strengths identified Identifies 0-1 Identifies 2 strengths Identifies 3 or more Weaknesses identified Identifies 0-1 Identifies 2 weaknesses Identifies 3 or more E-L-P Analysis Scarcely mentions E-L-P Some examples of E-L-P Deep analysis of E-L-P Conclusion paragraph Repetitive or too short Responds to intro. Ideas Supports an effective argument overall Sources and citations Only the NY Times cited Adds 1 source/citation Adds 2 or more sources and citations MLA formatting Significant visual issues Minor formatting issues No visible errors in style