



# A Conversation With BARACK OBAMA

The candidate talks about the youth vote, what's on his iPod and his top three priorities as president  
By JANN S. WENNER

**S**HORTLY AFTER BARACK OBAMA CLAIMED VICTORY IN THE fight for the Democratic nomination, I joined him aboard his chartered 737 campaign plane as a member of the press corps. He was flying from Chicago to Appleton, Wisconsin, for a town-hall meeting, one of a series he was doing in Midwestern and swing states to address constituencies he might have missed during the primaries—and, of course, to get some warm-up practice for any town-hall debates he has with John McCain. ¶ The first thing I notice about the plane is how low-key it is, all coach seating from back (the press) to front (the candidate). There is no separate compartment for this potential president; he just holds down the second row for himself and his newspapers. There are no more than 10 staffers on the plane, and a dozen or more rows are empty, separating the senator from the Secret Service contingent and two dozen members of the traveling press corps. It's not a big day or a big event: The primaries are done, and none of the media big names are along. ¶ So far in this campaign, despite their evident admiration, Obama has held the press at a respectful distance. The limit for our interview is going to be 30 minutes, which I think says a lot about him and his campaign. Most every other presidential candidate I've met and interviewed has

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER YANG

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