

# How JFK helped Barack Obama on his way to the White House

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As US President Barack Obama turns 51 this month, new research suggests imagery of one of his most iconic predecessors, JFK, helped Obama on his way to the White House.

Similarities between the imagery of President Kennedy and President Obama have been highlighted in a new University of Warwick paper, due to be published in the August issue of *Comparative American Studies Journal*.

Researcher Greg Frame, from the University of Warwick's Film and Television department, has explored how Obama, whose birthday is Saturday August 4, has shaped himself in Kennedy's image.

He said: "The American president is often captured in a way that makes them more than just a human, and the two men that have achieved this perception more than the rest are JFK and Obama. The image which Kennedy projected was one of perfection and would come to serve as the model for the popular conception of the [president](#) as leader, superhero, and, subsequently, father.

"In terms of style, the Obama presidency is clearly indebted to the Kennedy legacy; elegant, stylish, disguising an enormous intellect beneath the veneer of relaxed sophistication."

Greg Frame said Obama may look to the political ideals of Lincoln, Roosevelt and [Martin Luther King](#), but it is to the image ideals of

Kennedy to which he turns in the presentation of himself.

He said: "It is these ideals which are of such continued significance to the [cultural understanding](#) of a vigorous, potent, and successful American presidency."

Frame bases his studies on four particular images; the first is the cover of *Rolling Stone's* March 2008 edition , which attempts to frame Obama as a superhero. The second is a picture of Obama searching underneath his desk when Kennedy's daughter, Caroline, comes to visit , demonstrating Obama's attempt to recreate the third image, a famous Stanley Tretick photograph of Kennedy's young son John Jr, peering out from underneath the table. The final image is one of Obama gazing up at Aaron Shikler's posthumous portrait of Kennedy

Provided by University of Warwick

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