

**Bernie burns the candle at both ends while
Hillary makes Herstory
but makes us wait in a long, long queue**

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Homo sum: humani nil
a me alienum puto

I. The Singular Moment

A 16-year-old girl in Rio de Janeiro is drugged and raped by 33 men who proudly post a video of their crime on Twitter, just ten days before this historic night.

The Philippines' president-elect Rodrigo Duterte refers to the gang rape and murder of a female missionary in 1989 with deep regret. He regrets that this happened in a town where he was the then-mayor because he feels that as the mayor he should have been the first to rape her because she was, as he says, "so beautiful." He will assume office on 30 June, at the end of this game-changing month.

Today, while we're getting ready to go and see Hillary Clinton's victory speech as the first female nominee for president in 240 years of US history, the cable channels stop their incessant coverage of [the Donald of Trumped-Up Self-Importance](#) to briefly focus on another story. (One might argue that the stratospheric ascent of the Tangerine Bully to become the presumptive Republican nominee for president of the US can be squarely blamed on CNN, Fox News and MSNBC which spend 23 of 24 hours endlessly discussing his insults and

inaneities, his hairstyle and his shrimp hands.) A young woman in California has written [a powerful letter](#). She is the survivor of a rape and although the rapist was caught red-handed in the act, the judge has decided to award him a mere six-month sentence because he does not believe the boy is well-suited for prison. Unlike the less privileged blacks and Latinos who make up the majority of inmates, young Brock Turner is a white Stanford student from a wealthy family who swims competitively. Although found guilty by a court of law, the judge, who conveniently also went to Stanford, seems more concerned with his future welfare than that of the woman whom he violated as she lay unconscious.

In a world of men hurting women and men protecting men who hurt women, in this man's world characterized by continual and extreme violence against women, we must stop breathing for one moment and pause, stop, and marvel. Whatever one may feel about Hillary Clinton the fallible human being and controversial public figure, today we have to celebrate Hillary Clinton, the strong and formidable woman. For decades she has dauntlessly faced down attack after attack from the public at large, political opponents, media hound dogs, and even from closer to home, in her own home.

Like millions of women, she has had to overcome the pain caused to her by her most intimate ally, her husband, a man named Bill who has hurt her time and time again. Her spouse's shameful infidelities have fuelled indelicate tabloid headlines for decades and given the Tangerine Bully more fodder for his insults when he tried to blame her for Bill's embarrassing behavior.

But Hillary has refused to hang her head and retreat in humiliation into a hermitic life far away from those who gloat over every new arrow launched at her. Instead, she has emerged victorious and at the very end of her speech tonight, a white-haired Bill briefly appears to congratulate her but he remains in the background for the most part because tonight is not about his story. Finally, it's time for her story. She has made herstory.

In June, 2008, when she had to concede defeat to Barack Obama when he won the primary election to become the Democratic Party's nominee instead of her, she had a special thank you for, "all of those women in their 80s and their 90s - born before women could vote -

who cast their votes for our campaign.” Hillary was ever cognizant of what her almost successful run meant in a country in which women only got the vote in 1920.

Her speech that day was longer and more beautiful than the one today because it was filled with gravitas and pathos. She had to comfort 18 million voters who had tried to win her the nomination. She was characteristically strong and inspirational even at that moment of bitter defeat after a bruising struggle against an upstart, insurgent Obama who literally came out of nowhere to defeat the powerful Clinton machine and steal the nomination from under her nose:

“To those who are disappointed that we couldn't go all of the way, especially the young people who put so much into this campaign, it would break my heart if, in falling short of my goal, I in any way discouraged any of you from pursuing yours.

Always aim high, work hard and care deeply about what you believe in. And, when you stumble, keep faith. And, when you're knocked down, get right back up and never listen to anyone who says you can't or shouldn't go on.”

And she has followed her own advice, walking the walk not just talking the talk. Hillary ultimately refused to fail. She did not give up. And evidence of that is all around me as I stand listening to her victory speech in June, 2016, in a hall full of waving American flags and screaming supporters in Brooklyn Navy Yard. The men are shouting just as lustily as the women and thousands of mobile phones are aimed at the stage, trying to capture her every word. I discover that the recycled paper I am using to make notes has an inspirational quote printed on the back of it: “The doors will be opened to those who are bold enough to knock.”

Gutsy, relentless Hillary has knocked so hard, she broke down the door. She has smashed the glass ceiling and now her victory means we have a chance to rebuild the whole house. She valiantly overcame her 2008 loss but she begins her herstoric victory speech tonight by recognizing the achievements of prior generations who created the foundation of her triumph:

“Tonight's victory is not about one person. It belongs to generations of

women and men who struggled and sacrificed and made this moment possible. In our country, it started right here in New York, a place called Seneca Falls, in 1848. When a small but determined group of women, and men, came together with the idea that women deserved equal rights, and they set it forth in something called the Declaration of Sentiments, and it was the first time in human history that that kind of declaration occurred.”

Hillary’s triumph in becoming the presumptive nominee of the Democratic Party is a singular moment in time. When Barack Obama clinched the nomination in June, 2008 and then won the election in November, 2008 and then assumed office on 20 January, 2009, as the first black president of a white-majority settler colony in which black people were formerly chattel slaves, these were all singular moments in time.

These are moments where the formerly impossible suddenly explodes into infinite possibility. We cannot let the singularity of the incredible moment be drowned out by whatever one may think of Obama’s subsequent presidency and Clinton’s controversy-riven past. Hillary waited her turn and her patience has been rewarded. Hillary the woman has achieved the exceptional and now perhaps the United States can finally join the likes of other nations from Malawi to Pakistan which have elected women leaders. Better late than never.

II. The Long, Long Queue

“If I have to wait much longer, I’m going to vote for Donald Trump!”

That was what one disgruntled Clinton supporter had to say after waiting for over three hours to get into the hall where Hillary was due to speak at any moment.

Hillary’s campaign staff had to know that there would be record crowds to celebrate Hillary’s herstoric victory tonight. But there was a conspicuous lack of campaign staffers communicating with the throngs of supporters. Instead, there were only beefy Secret Service guys on hand who maintained a tough guy silence or barked out monosyllabic orders to the confused crowd as they neared the airport-style security scanners. As the hour grew late and phones beeped

with updates that Hillary was expected to start speaking any moment, the crowd grew more restless and outraged. They were anxious that after having waited so long to get in, they might not even make it inside.

What added insult to injury, however, was the fact that the “general population” crowd, the hoi polloi, the average Joe and Josephine, had to wait the longest whilst watching Democratic Party bigwigs - perhaps some of those pesky “Superdelegates” central to Hillary’s nomination, the media, campaign donors, celebrities and general Friends of Hillary gain access to the venue far more quickly and easily. Because, yes, there was more than one queue - perhaps one for the 99% and a completely different line for that infamous one per cent. There is a lesson here about Hillary the politician.

She is often accused of being unable to connect to people, of emotional tone deafness and a general lack of charisma. Unlike her husband who is an extroverted natural, Hillary struggles to strike a genuine chord with the electorate, her well-written speeches often coming off as rote, typical politician recycled rubbish, just being robotically repeated by a duplicitous, untrustworthy, power-hungry politician.

As the people queuing in the general pop line gradually realize that there is indeed another line for “Group A” supporters and other mysterious points of access to the hall where the anointed few could skip the queue entirely, they begin to whisper that, true, Hillary is a flawed candidate. They are here to support her as a woman and as the Democratic candidate who must at all costs defeat the Tangerine Bully but love her, no, they don’t love her. And now she is making them wait. And wait. And wait while some, the chosen few, are being given special treatment.

This is the whole problem with American society at this particular historical moment. Income inequality has created a vast chasm between the tiny number of the Haves-More-and-More and the increasing majority of the Haves-Less-and-Less. This societal division has blasted Bernie Sanders’ platform into second place behind Hillary and now if Hillary wants to win over his voters, her campaign must in substantive, symbolic and stylistic terms ensure that she eschews the appearance of elitism and corruption that have long clung to the

Clinton political dynasty.

Both the Right and the Left have long distrusted Hillary, suspecting she is a political brand tainted by so many years in the nasty game of politics and harboring too many ties to Big Money. She claims to favor unionization but sat on Wal-Mart's board for six years and [still receives campaign donations from the Walton family](#) who own the mega-company which is universally reviled for its anti-union, oppressive employee policies which keep their workers underpaid and insecure. Unfortunately, the long, long queue on this historic night achieves quite the opposite.

Thank goodness it was not raining but the weather forecast had predicted heavy downpours. As the frustrated general pop trickled through the two security scanners (why weren't there a dozen?), more slowly than the shifting of a tectonic plate, hundreds of umbrellas were removed from bags by the beefy Secret Service men. The long, long wait allows one's brain to wonder in all directions. Does Hillary the politician display the kind of unbreachable integrity and courage of her convictions that Muhammad Ali who passed away earlier this week did? Will it rain? Why is this taking so long? Why do the Secret Service guys look so unfit, their arms and legs like over-stuffed sausages? Surely they should undertake a jog now and then or maybe do some occasional push-ups if their job is to look after America's VVIPs? Probably the extra weight burdening them accounts for their grumpiness but they are still less unhappy than the general population crowd who is by now sick of enduring the strong stench of fish at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The stunning view of Manhattan's East Side across the river and the Williamsburg Bridge is no longer enticing after so many hours of standing, standing, standing, waiting, waiting, waiting.

Ironically, even after making it through the security checkpoint, supporters were not guaranteed a clear view of Hillary. Many had to stand behind her and could see nothing besides the back of her smart, white coat. They were positioned behind her for the benefit of the TV cameras which were placed on a high platform in front of her which also had the effect of blocking the view of most of the crowd who were corralled in front of her. Although there was a large screen up near the rafters, none of her staffers had bothered to make sure that the footage from the myriad cameras was shown on the screen so that

at least the hundreds whose view was physically blocked could see her speech on the screen above.

Instead it remained blank and at the end of the evening, dozens of abandoned umbrellas lay piled next to the security scanners like a multi-colored funeral pyre. Meanwhile, across the country in California, hundreds of thousands of people were still feeling the Bern. They believe he has more integrity than Hillary, that he is more authentic. But can Hillary capture the burning passion that has propelled Bernie's fervent campaign supporters? In other words, can Hillary the triumphant woman and the flawed politician formulate a more progressive platform out of the fire Bernie has ignited?

III. Bernie's Inferno

As Hillary's umbrella-less supporters tried to find their way to the shuttles and water taxis to return home, Bernie, admirably for a man of a certain age, was burning the candle at both ends, tirelessly campaigning, his voice becoming more and more hoarse, his cute Brooklyn accent growing even stronger.

Bernie has been given a gift that most politicians would trade their right arm for: he appears to be utterly genuine. Unlike Hillary, Bernie is so real, so in touch with the average Joe and Josephine, that people actually believe that he believes what he says. And I am one such person. So here, I leave you with an excerpt from the speech Bernie delivered a few hours after Hillary's herstoric words. Hillary the woman told the packed hall that she was still absorbing, "the history we've made here. But what I care about most is the history our country has yet to write. Our children and grandchildren will look back at this time, at the choices we are about to make, the goals we will strive for, the principles we will live by. And we need to make sure that they can be proud of us."

This is a country born out of an ugly, bloody history of Native American dispossession and African slavery and delimited opportunity for women. But it is a country that continues to try to live up to its own paradoxically progressive values. Can Hillary the woman and the politician do the same? Can she truly craft a more progressive, forward-looking platform positively influenced by Bernie's admirable

campaign? Bernie supporters feel that they are part of a revolution and a movement because as Bernie reminded us, they have a vision, “a vision of social justice, economic justice, racial justice, and environmental justice, [that] must be the future of America.”

Does Hillary the woman and Hillary the politician deserve to inherit Bernie’s supporters? Because Bernie is on the war path. His fiery program demands real change, not just politics as usual. His index finger stabbing the air, his hair awry and his hoarse voice ringing out, Bernie reminds us of the severe problems facing the country:

“The vast majority of the American people know that it is not acceptable that the top tenth of 1 percent owns as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent; we’re going to change that. And when millions of Americans are working longer hours for lower wages, we will not allow 57 percent of all new income to go to the top 1 percent. And we will end a corrupt campaign finance system. Democracy is not about billionaires buying elections. And we will end a broken criminal justice system. And we will break up the major banks on Wall Street. And we will join the rest of the industrialized world and guarantee health care to all people as a right. And we will bring about real immigration reform and a path toward citizenship. And we will tell the billionaire class and corporate America that they will start paying their fair share of taxes.”

If Hillary wants to truly change the course of herstory, she will have to sunder her close ties to Big Money. American democracy is now a plutocracy dominated by the self-interest of the super wealthy. It will take a strong and formidable woman to shatter the corrupt system, as steely and impenetrable as the glass ceiling, that keeps them so rich. Can Hillary do it?

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