

'Shattered' Reveals the True Villains of Hillary Clinton's Campaign

The 2016 presidential campaign was supposed to end with something being shattered. And it did. It just didn't end with the sort of shattering that Hillary Clinton had long had in mind. Poised to bring that proverbial glass ceiling crashing down, Ms. Clinton instead presided over the smash up of her White House dreams.

Perhaps "presided over" may not be the correct choice of words, at least not according to journalists Jonathan Allen and Amie Parnes, authors of [*Shattered*](#), the *New York Times* bestseller that takes readers inside the "doomed" campaign. Thanks to Bernie Sanders, there was no regal path to the nomination. And thanks to Hillary herself, there was no stately journey to the White House.

Instant histories are invariably problematic and eventually replaced. But this one will last a while—and one day provide a reasonable amount of grist for its eventual successors.

Doomed campaign? One wonders if that adjective best captures her 2016 effort or her failed quest for the presidency in 2008. In truth, neither campaign was doomed. Both were essentially coronations-in-waiting. But neither turned out that way. In 2008 Clinton was blinded and blindsided by Barack Obama. In 2016 she was blinded by, well, Hillary Clinton (among others).

Really, 2008 should have been not just her turn, but her year. But, having lost the nomination to Sen. Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton should have remained in the senate or retired quietly to Chappaqua—or pursued some combination of the two—until complete retirement was at hand.

Once a politician wins a senate seat or a governorship, both logical stepping stones to the presidency, he or she has about a decade in which to take that next step. If the wait turns out to be longer than that, the leap is not likely to happen. For Hillary, the gap between her elevation to the senate in 2000 and her run for the White House in 2016 was simply too great to overcome.

The likes of Henry Clay and Hubert Humphrey met a similar fate. But a Clinton would be different. Or so the Clintons thought. In retrospect, if this campaign was doomed, more than one Clinton may have been in on the dooming.

The villain in this story was certainly not Vladimir Putin. Nor was it Donald Trump. For that matter, blame cannot be heaped on Bernie Sanders, for pushing her to the left, or James Comey, for pushing to reopen the FBI investigation of her home brew email arrangements. No, the real villains here are both named Clinton. But only one of these villains is the focal point of the story that Allen and Parnes seek to tell. That, of course, would be Hillary Clinton.

To be sure, the authors do their best to treat her as gently as possible. But the story they have to tell is pretty darn damning nonetheless. It's all here: the big buck speeches, the email end-around, the tone-deaf campaign, the candidate's Nixonian impulses.

And that's just for starters. The inside story here dwells on her loyalty demands and enemies lists, both of which have ample Nixonian overtones. Then there was her revolving door of speechwriters, the themeless campaign, and her reliance on smart (meaning numbers crunched) analytics, as opposed to old-fashioned polling.

And then there was the failure of the campaign to nail down the rust belt states, especially Michigan and Pennsylvania. In an effort to run up the electoral vote total by going after

states like Arizona and North Carolina, the campaign neglected to make its pitch to the white working class where it really counted.

This failure speaks volumes about the modern Democratic party and its unTrumanesque and even unRooseveltian, priorities. It also speaks to an unClintonian priority. That would be Bill Clinton, not Hillary. According to Allen and Parnes, the one individual in the 2016 Clinton campaign who was quite aware of the unfolding rust belt blunder was Bill. More than once, he blew his top over this blind spot.

To some extent Allen and Parnes have managed to reverse the public perception of this power couple. What is the common perception but amiable Bill and seething Hillary? Not necessarily so, contend these journalistic sleuths, who do not hesitate to give us Bill at his angriest and Hillary at her most tender. It may be difficult to imagine, but Hillary in these pages almost comes off at times as a victim, a victim of her own campaign, and a victim of her own husband.

Did Bill Clinton really want his wife to win in 2016? It's fair to wonder. Allen and Parnes offer no smoking gun revelation to this question. But it really is fair to wonder. After all, nothing was stopping him from camping out in Michigan and Pennsylvania in a search of white working class votes. And nothing did stop him from [running off at the mouth](#) about the "craziness" of Obamacare. For that matter, apparently nothing was going to stop him from running the Clinton Global Initiative at full tilt with his wife in the White House.

So, just who was it who did the most to shatter the campaign that didn't shatter the glass ceiling? Hillary Clinton would have to be at the top of this list of candidates, but a place might be reserved for Bill as well. Together, they did manage to doom a campaign that was theirs to lose. And they did.

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