

CORPORATE

CON JOB

HOW MAINSTREAM MEDIA AIDS THE OLIGARCHY

By Jordan Chariton

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Jordan Chariton represents what journalism is at highest aspiration, holding powerful people accountable and uncovering uncomfortable facts. Jordan is what CNN and MSNBC are supposed to be, but will never achieve.

Kyle Kulinski, Host of “Secular Talk”

Dedication

This book is for my parents, Larry and Laurie, who've always stepped in as my compass when I got lost in the woods.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank George Verongos for a stellar job of editing my drivel, aka writing, and dealing with my 100 questions a day on no sleep; Ann Szalkowski for enthusiastically offering cutting-edge and progressive public relations to someone very bad at promoting himself; Walker Bragman, a terrific, up-and-coming journalist and cartoonist who made a bad-ass cartoon of me whipping corporate media to serve as my book cover; and to the countless colleagues, friends, and supporters who've offered me words of praise and personal anecdotes for the book. Most of all, I'd like to thank all the viewers and supporters for supporting me in my pursuit of sharing my story.

Chapter Three

The Soft Bigotry of Hillary's Expectations

I'd already seen the kind of foulness American politics can leak through the air at a quasi-fascist Donald Trump rally a week before in Vermont, but there was a new stench sucking hope out of a small Iowa college gymnasium nothing could cover up...

The soft bigotry of Hillary's expectations.

"People who have health emergencies can't wait for us to have some theoretical debate about some better idea that will never, ever, come to pass," [Hillary Clinton railed on stage](#), criticizing Bernie Sanders for having the GALL to propose Medicare for All as a cornerstone of his presidential campaign.

Next to her, she was exploiting a mother whose child was saved by Obamacare, thus criticizing Sanders for proposing a single-payer system as the path America should take.

Translated for the non-politically astute: My donors and masters won't allow for single payer, and I'm merely a vessel for their desires, so let's not quibble over full coverage for everyone vs. inadequate coverage—where millions can still die or be shackled with debt. Take

what you can get in life.

That was my first up-close view of Clinton, and although I already knew politics was a sham, this was one of my main come-to-Jesus moments—where I saw how suckered the masses can be by an individual pretending to preach progress when her real goal was immediate power and securing her place in history.

In those early days on the 2016 trail, before any votes were cast and the corporate media was in full-on-Trump-derangement-syndrome mode, a feeling of frustration gnawed at me. As bad as Trump was—and Cruz, Carson, and the rest of the GOP animal house—watching Clinton serve up a parade of platitudes that history showed were empty worried the hell out of me.

Not only that she could very likely win the presidency, but the fact that *it wasn't only Republican voters* who were ignorant on a whole lot of facts, or more importantly, voting against their own interests.

“How can I not support the woman who is trying to crack the highest and thickest glass ceiling of all,” Luz Bay, a nice, middle-aged woman standing beside her son, asked me outside the University of New Hampshire before the Clinton-Sanders debate. [“Bernie Sanders says he wants a revolution.](#) he wants a revolution; well, I don’t really want a revolution, I want a president,” she concluded. And, alas, this notion

blanketed the entire Democratic primary.

To keep it real, I don't have a vagina, so I can't truly empathize with the hundreds of women I spoke to along the trail, who subtly, or overtly, told me they were voting for Clinton because she was a woman.

I would love to see a woman president and can certainly understand this desire being one of the reasons people gravitated toward Clinton. But, there were two fundamental flaws in Luz, and millions like hers, argument.

One was the CRISIS goggles millions of older Clinton supporters proudly wore. They simply didn't feel or see the crisis America is engulfed in—as in, *currently stuck* in.

When trillions of dollars are casually, and intentionally, redistributed over 40 years—from the middle class to yacht owners and Chamber of Commerce assholes—the rest of us are not exactly basking in the glow of the sunset.

When workers' productivity skyrockets over that same 40 years, yet wages stagnate or decline for everyone BUT the wealthiest among us, we're living in a toxic Corporate Con Job; one that normalizes theft and social Darwinism masked as the "American dream." But women like Luz, who again, was nice and well intentioned—didn't see or feel that. Because

the corporate media failed to inform them of the very facts I just told you. Why would they? Income inequality, socialism for the rich, giving to the rich at the expense of Luz's children—not good for business!

The other fatal flaw in the pro-Hillary argument: women like Luz didn't truly know Hillary's record, which actually helped corporate America and the oligarchy oppress and harm women—and her son's generation—in ways the corporate media would NEVER report on.

With the disclaimer that she was NOT the president, Hillary Clinton was one of the most powerful and active First Ladies in American history. President Clinton delegated, to her, the major task of overhauling the American health care industry, for which she failed, and relied on her as one of his chief strategists.

And advise she did: Clinton was part of the inner circle of brainiacs that instituted “welfare reform,” which tossed millions of single mothers, many of whom were poor minorities, off the welfare rolls while Bill kept in place those big, fat welfare lollipops for corporate America to suck on.

[As Olga Khazan pointed out for The Atlantic](#), welfare reform—which the glass-ceiling whisperer Hillary supported—did indefinite harm to the most vulnerable women.

“In 1996, former President Bill Clinton pledged to ‘end welfare as we

know it,' and AFDC morphed into TANF—Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. A five-year time limit was introduced, and mothers were required to work 30 hours per week or risk losing their benefits. States' funds were capped, pressuring them to slice welfare rolls. The effect was that thousands of single moms were promptly shoved off the program: 'The legislation reduced the number of poor single-mother families served by 63 percent within 10 years, effectively removing it as an important program in the nation's safety net for the poor,' [economist Robert] Moffitt writes."

But to Hillary and Bill, they were just helping the vulnerable help themselves. The fact that the jobs these single mothers had barely paid enough for groceries—oops. The fact that welfare reform inadequately supplied daycare services for these newly working moms—oops.

Again, I want to be fair—Hillary Clinton was NOT the president, so welfare reform; and the crime bill she championed (which locked up millions of African American *women's* boys for non-violent crimes); and the generous favors to Wall-Street known as the repeal of Glass-Steagall; and deregulating derivatives; and deregulating the media industry (see Chapter 2); and the NAFTA bill that shipped millions of jobs offshore; and every other right-wing shit sandwich Bill Clinton delivered, can't be fully placed on her doorstep.

But then there's her Senate record...with such signature accomplishments as sponsoring legislation to establish the Kate Mullany National Historic Site in New York; sponsoring a bill to name the Major George Quamo Post Office Building; and that trailblazing bill to name a highway after NBC News legend Tim Russert.

That's *literally* her major legislative accomplishments as a U.S. senator.

She co-sponsored 74 bills, but as Politifact pointed out: "There were [74 bills](#) that became law that Clinton co-sponsored. For example, she was one of 54 cosponsors on the [Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act](#), signed in January 2009 by President Barack Obama." BUT "the fact that she co-sponsored these bills doesn't tell us much about her role in their passage."

Yet, millions of Americans, and a staggering amount I met and interviewed along the campaign trail, possessed an alternative history of Clinton as a major doer. Or as my BFF Kellyanne Conway puts it: alternative facts.

The reality is she was a trailblazer—for the Wall Street bankers whose backs she scratched, the big oil executives she cast votes to help, the multi-national corporations whose trade deals she championed, the defense contractors whose wars she pushed, the pharmaceutical executives whose profits she safeguarded, and every other special interest that knew

Hillary could be counted on.

But, strangely, to me, it wasn't just older slayers for the status quo who were ready for Hillary. I encountered a large number of younger people too.

“I support Hillary because I feel like she's progressive in just the right ways and I feel like she's really going to build on what Obama's done for us so far,” [Madison Gardner, a young South Carolina Clinton supporter told me outside the Charleston primary debate.](#)

Swirling around her was a sea of Bernie and Hillary supporters. Like at the other debates I covered, the energy on the Sanders side of the street was palpably higher. The Bernie side always seemed like they were rallying and cheering *for something* greater than just this election, where as the other side was simply rallying *for someone* to get her turn.

“She's not too far left, so she's still more realistic than Bernie I think because Bernie's very far left,” Gardner continued. “We can't tear Wall Street down all at one time; that's not gonna work, it would destroy our nation. I think she really understands how to take the steps to help Wall Street out so that the middle class grows without stepping on the feet of the higher paying people.”

With the disclaimer that my intention in this book isn't to mock Trump or

Clinton supporters who I spoke with, I must say, this very nice young woman had no godly fucking clue what the hell she was talking about—which was so emblematic of millions of others who had no ungodly fucking clue what the hell they were talking about.

First off, if you've had the fortune of reading Thomas Frank's masterpiece, "Listen Liberal: Whatever Happened To The Party Of The People," Frank explains the history of how young people (and a hell of a lot of older people) got the false notion in their minds that Wall Street was a CRUCIAL part of the economy that folks like Hillary Clinton had to prop up.

Hint hint: Hillary, Bill, and other conservative "Democrats" shifted the party toward Wall Street in the 70s and 80s under the guise of being the super-duper forward thinking "New Democrats."

"Look, you can talk about the tactical blunders and the things that brought them [Democrats] down: email scandal, or the premium increase in Obamacare, and all that stuff matters," [Frank said in an interview with David Sirota of The International Business Times.](#)

More from Frank: "The way I look at it is that this is a long-term problem. This is a culmination of a very long-term problem with the Democrats very gradually, but definitely, abandoning the interests of working-class voters, identifying themselves instead with a more affluent group, with the

affluent white-collar professionals. It starts in the 1970s with the Democrats removing organized labor from its structural position in the Democratic Party, and then it goes up through Bill Clinton getting NAFTA done, the free trade deals that the Democrats have ... By the way, in my opinion, free trade or the trade agreements, I should say, was probably the issue that, if there was one issue that really did Hillary in, I think that's what it was: the trade deals under the Clinton administration, Obama sort of dropping the ball on labor's various issues, doing these incredible favors for Wall Street while he blew off the concerns of unions. The ultimate evidence is what's happening with inequality. It gets worse and worse and worse every year. It's very easy to show how the Democrats have forgotten about organized labor, but what is really striking is the passion that they show for the knowledge industries, which includes Wall Street, Silicon Valley, big pharma, that sort of thing.”

So, going back to young Madison’s brain-buster, which suggested that Bernie’s tearing down of Wall Street would “destroy our nation”—she, like so many Clinton supporters I met and spoke with—had it dead backwards.

EARTH TO MADISON AND THE REST OF THE

CLINTON-CONTAMINATED: Our nation was already destroyed—by Wall Street!

Who do you think wrote these “free trade” deals? Wall Street! Who packaged shitty mortgages and sold em off like hot cakes to the average Joe who couldn’t read or understand the finest of fine print? Who spent billions to “lobby”—aka bribe—our politicians to deregulate, cut capital gains taxes, and create tax loopholes longer than the eye can see? Who invested heavily in all the toxic “infrastructure projects” across the country—i.e. the Dakota Access Pipeline—and pays off the politicians so that they won’t fight against these climate killers destroying our planet?

She was right about one thing: Clinton *does* “understand how to take the steps to help Wall Street.” Unfortunately, just not so the “middle class grows.” Clinton and her neoliberal accomplices in her husband’s administration, and the U.S. Senate, went out of their way to help Wall Street with zero regard for the collective blood these vampires were sucking out of the American worker.

Or as the great Matt Taibbi of Rolling Stone put it: the [“great vampire squid wrapped around the face of humanity, relentlessly jamming its blood funnel into anything that smells like money.”](#)

Another young Clinton supporter dropped an astounding level of buffoonery when I spoke with him outside The University of New Hampshire on a biting cold day before the Clinton-Bernie debate.

“One of them has experience, and one of them has a track record of

actually getting results; she actually has some political currency that can get her influence over the Senate to actually get things done where as Bernie can't really get that much traction with the Senate...I don't really think that he can get the job done," [Jeremy Atie, the president for Rutgers University for Hillary, told me.](#)

In retrospect, I didn't challenge him hard enough: it was my first day on the job for TYT and I was just aiming not to sound like a stuttering imbecile. If I could go back, I would've respectfully pointed out to Jeremy that he was one of the many victims of a well-oiled ruse. One that had a resume stuffed in people's face with highlighter over the candidate's titles—and a demand not to read the rest.

This was essentially the entire establishment case for Hillary, hurled at me for a year. As one of the few journalists with the temerity to point out the fraudulence of Clinton's rhetoric in the face of her record, I was castigated on social media—and among fellow journalists.

I remember doing my stand-up reports rally-after-rally; at the end I'd give a summary to the audience of the candidate's speech with a translation for what they were *really* saying and not saying.

After Hillary's shameful Iowa monologue that attacked Bernie for the audacity to propose a bold healthcare vision, I offered my two cents, telling the audience that this kind of "pragmatism" is, in reality, a vigorous

defense of corporate donors who'd rather swallow nails than see Medicare for All, or progressive programs like it, implemented.

Several corporate reporters looked at me like I had seven heads; like, “How dare this asshole insult Queen Hillary for offering a steady diet of broccoli and bullshit to this gym of older Americans and students. After all, doesn't he (me) know this is how the game is played? Candidates make believe they're for the American people long enough to get elected—and then get straight to work serving their donors while occasionally trying to deliver crumbs to the worker bees to convince themselves they're something slightly more than unethical pushovers for the plutocrats.”

That's the thing: I was learning very quickly how the game is played. And somewhere between Clinton's empty platitudes on Medicare for All and her pulling hot sauce out of her handbag to win more minority votes, I decided it was more important to make sure as many Americans knew as well. This meant not joining the chorus in fixation on Trump, which as a result, was ignoring the fact that Clinton-ite establishment politics was a big part of the reason America had turned into an oligarchy at the expense of the middle class.

My decision to cover the Clinton campaign critically wasn't easy: besides being hammered on social media on a daily basis for “helping to elect

Trump,” friends and family of mine questioned me about “equating Clinton with Trump.”

Any time I’d tweet a fact about Clinton, or her record, or her donors, I’d be harangued online for being “part of the problem”—and complicit in the rise of fascism. My good friend Steve, who is no political aficionado and only casually pays attention, gave me shit for “only doing videos slamming Clinton” while ignoring a fascist. He’d periodically text me a new version of that complaint hoping I’d reverse course.

But, these folks simply didn’t see what I saw on the road: injustices and levels of corruption that had been strangling America for three decades—long before the political rise of Donald Trump. None of these folks saw the misery; the lack of investment robbing communities; the socialism for the rich stealing money from the middle class and showering it over political donors; and the fascism creeping into local communities.

Even my cameraman/editor, Eric Byler, who, for the most part ignored Clinton’s record to focus the majority of his time on Trump, subtly poked at me to cover Trump more and not focus as much on Clinton.

But to me, I felt a danger in, like everyone else in the media, focusing all my energy and coverage on the figure that made us viscerally sick via his words and reckless statements. If I did that, I’d essentially be giving a complete pass to someone who, if elected, had the record and likelihood of

launching us into new endless war while keeping the economic system of the country bent over so rich people could keep fucking working people.

I also asked myself, as a creative, counterintuitive thinker, what in God's name could I report on Trump that hasn't already been tweeted 200 times over the last minute by the rest of the

Trump-derangement-syndrome-industry?

And, taking off my journalism hat and speaking as a passionate progressive: when you constantly act or make decisions based on the "lesser of two evils," you create a permanent evil. Nothing ever changes because we're caving into the fear that the *short term* is more important than the long term. They're both important, but in my view, we're never going to get permanent, progressive change in America if we're constantly voting out of fear for one awful person, and, in turn, accepting a slightly less awful one.

The sad truth: things may have to get a lot worse before they get better. Of course, I've reflected on whether I should have covered Trump more than I did and, if in choosing to cover Clinton's record aggressively, I somehow played a part in people choosing Trump over Clinton.

But, I always come back to the same answer: I reported the truth. Hillary Clinton is corrupt—so is her husband. Hillary Clinton's votes and policies did a lot of damage to American workers and minorities—and she was

offering a steady diet of more of the same. Hillary Clinton's rhetoric might have been a whole lot kinder and softer than Trump's, but rhetoric isn't what's created the staggering levels of income inequality or the epidemic of climate change, water contamination, police brutality, or gender inequality and sexism.

Policies do. And I couldn't, with a straight face, join the echo chamber fixating on Trump's every tweet and awful policy proposal only to ignore a figure whose record foreshadowed more of the status quo keeping us as one country, united under greed, indivisible, with oppression for many and justice for some.

The deluge of heat coming my way for the Clinton coverage wasn't all that surprising to me, but I was surprised that it wasn't only Trump supporters I'd speak to that offered up a barrage of buffoonery.

Rally after rally, debate after debate, I struggled trying to connect with Clinton supporters. Of course, these folks were entitled to support whoever they wanted, and it wasn't my role to try to switch them over to Bernie. But the more people I spoke to, the more it became clear that their support was steeped in hazy facts and subconscious conservatism.

"I wouldn't want to risk my grandchildren's future on a man who does not have the experience, making promises that won't happen," [Glenn Smith, a Des Moines attorney, told me in Iowa before the primary.](#) This mentality

was exactly the problem: no facts with a spoon-fed heavy dose of what the establishment wants you to know.

First, on paper, Bernie Sanders had *more experience* than Clinton. As mayor of Burlington, Vermont, he was the executive of a city where Clinton was not. Between Congress and the Senate, Sanders had served for 25 years—Clinton was a Senator for eight. Sure, Clinton should be credited for serving as First Lady and Secretary of State, but Sanders had equal if not greater experience.

And on judgment and results, it really wasn't close. This handy PunditFact graphic does the work for me.

	Bernie Sanders	Hillary Clinton
Iraq War Authorization	Opposed	Supported
Wall Street Bailout (TARP)	Opposed	Supported
Breaking Up Big Banks	Supports	-
Patriot Act 2001	Opposed	Supported
Patriot Act Reauthorization 2006	Opposed	Supported
Foreign US Military Intervention	Opposes	Supports
Trans-Pacific Partnership	Opposes	Supports
Death Penalty	Opposes	Supports
Keystone XL Pipeline	Opposes	Supports
2006 Border Fence Legislation	Opposed	Supported
Offshore Oil Drilling	Opposes	Supports
Top 10 Donors	Unions 9/10	Banks 6/10
Super PAC Raised Funds	\$0	\$20,300,000
Small Donor Contributions	\$10,465,912	\$8,098,546
Donations under \$200	80.70%	19%
Large Donor Contributions	\$3,279,505	\$38,840,036
Donations of \$2,700 (maximum)	1.20%	62.90%
Personal Net Worth	\$330,506	\$21,500,000



Imagine, if instead of fixating on Trump all day, showing misleading superdelegate totals, and obsessing over missing planes, the corporate media showed and reported on that comparison. I doubt very much folks like Glenn would be spewing the “experience” nonsense. Then there was the “making promises that won’t happen” talking point that millions of older people bought hook line and sinker—from Democratic establishment politicians and their accomplices in print and cable news.

Other than old-school political mudslinging and deceit, the entire Clinton campaign was built on painting Sanders as “pie in the sky.” Yet, in reality, Sanders was proposing policies that, in a different era and time, had already been implemented in America. Whether it be FDR creating Social

Security or the advent of Medicare and Medicaid, conservative detractors and Democratic plutocrats long warned how these “pie in the sky” programs would risk America’s literal existence.

In the 60s, Ronald Regan cried at the horrors of socialized medicine.

“One of these days we are going to spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children, what it once was like in America when men were free,” Regan warned about Medicare.

Obviously, he was right and we’re all now indentured servants to the great big socialized boogeymen known as Dr. Death, aka socialized medicine.

Barry Goldwater warned that government-healthcare would snowball into paying for all Americans’ vacations: “Having given our pensioners their medical care in kind, why not food baskets, why not public housing accommodations, why not vacation resorts, why not a ration of cigarettes for those who smoke and of beer for those who drink?”

What beach vacation home did the government buy for you last year? Mine is this rustic enclave on Copacabana Beach in Rio.

In the 1930s, Nebraska Senator Carl Curtis railed against “brazen socialism” and FDR’s New Deal Programs.

“It is not only socialism—it is brazen socialism.” He later stated: “The insurance industry has a remarkable record,” and added that Medicare “is

not public welfare. It is not charity. It is not kindness. It is socialism. Socialism is not the answer to anything.”

TRANSLATED: how dare you be unkind to the wealthy and try to help the poor, elderly, or needy.

I can go on for days about the fear tactics and reverse psychology techniques powerful figures have spread to the masses to fool them into thinking bold, yet reasonable, policy proposals were “radical.” And folks like Hillary Clinton long sat at the head of the establishment table for decades, preaching “pragmatism” and “gradual change”—not because that is truly the reality of how American government works, but because they were not there to represent *the people*. They represented their class—their donors.

I mean FDR didn’t implement “gradual change.” Neither did Ronald Reagan. There was nothing incremental about extremist goodies like tripling the debt while red-baiting over the Cold War, trickle down economics, deregulating Wall Street, and decimating unions (just to name a few). For better (FDR) or worse (Reagan), American governance has long *not been* about incremental change or “what’s realistic.” When there is a will mixed with demand amongst the populous (and even when there’s not demand), real leaders GET SHIT DONE.

Yet, Clinton was able to galvanize a sea of older, and in a really surprising

way to me, a good amount of younger people, on a notion that government is about what's realistic; not strong leadership that can empower citizens to apply enough pressure on elected officials to fundamentally change what's realistic.

“She looks for common ground, but she stands her ground,” [Clinton's communication's director Jennifer Palmieri told me](#) at the December 18th, 2015 debate at The University of New Hampshire between Clinton and Bernie.

Of all the interviews I pound my head against the wall about, this one takes the cake. Bottom-line: I didn't challenge her hard enough, and let her slip and slide all around the place. Sure, it was my first day on the job for TYT, so I wasn't at my full-on-beat-em-over-the-head mode (figuratively!) just yet, but while re-watching the interview 11 months later to prepare for potentially interviewing her again, I realized it wasn't simply rookie jitters on my part. Like many in the Clinton orbit, Palmieri was a stone-cold political robot without a worry in the world for whether she was telling the truth to a reporter—or whether her candidate was truly who she said she was (this goes for most political advisors and staffers).

I could have come at her with the sharpest questions, follow-ups, and general debunking of nonsense talking points, but Palmieri was a perfect embodiment of Clintonworld—dilated pupils, frozen face, and the

uncanny ability to portray body language that emits concern for the downtrodden despite totally empty words leaking out of her mouth.

Look no further than our rematch on October 9th after the last general election debate between Clinton and the Donald in Nevada.

“I’m not sure what you’re referring to,” Palmieri answered in response to me asking what Clinton meant in a behind-closed-doors speech—or best-buddy sleepover—to Goldman Sachs bankers. In that speech, she said there was a lot of “misunderstanding” and “politicization” about Wall Street’s role in the 2008 economic crash.

OF COURSE, Palmieri knew EXACTLY what I was referring to. Thanks to WikiLeaks—gasp! I’m a secret, Kremlin-loving super spy forever referencing or reporting their findings—we know exactly what the Clinton campaign was doing, and how they were spinning, throughout the campaign.

From WikiLeaks:

From:tcarrk@hillaryclinton.com

To: jpalmeri@hillaryclinton.com, john.podesta@gmail.com, slatham@hillaryclinton.com, kschake@hillaryclinton.com, creynolds@hillaryclinton.com, bfallon@hillaryclinton.com

Date: 2016-01-25 00:28

Subject: HRC Paid Speeches

Team,

Attached are the flags from HRC's paid speeches we have from HWA. I put some highlights below. There is a lot of policy positions that we should give an extra scrub with Policy.

CLINTON TALKS ABOUT HOLDING WALL STREET ACCOUNTABLE ONLY FOR POLITICAL REASONS

Clinton Said That The Blame Placed On The United States Banking System For The Crisis "Could Have Been Avoided In Terms Of Both Misunderstanding And Really Politicizing What Happened." "That was one of the reasons that I started traveling in February of '09, so people could, you know, literally yell at me for the United States and our banking system causing this everywhere. Now, that's an oversimplification we know, but it was the conventional wisdom. And I think that there's a lot that could have been avoided in terms of both misunderstanding and really politicizing what happened with greater transparency, with greater openness on all sides, you know, what happened, how did it happen, how do we prevent it from happening? You guys help us figure it out and let's make sure that we do it right this time. And I think that everybody was desperately trying to fend off the worst effects institutionally, governmentally, and there just wasn't that opportunity to try to sort this out, and that came later."
[Goldman Sachs AIMS Alternative Investments Symposium, 10/24/13]

“We should give an extra scrub” is my favorite part of that email—it perfectly sums up the entire Clinton campaign strategy. Scrub the candidate like she’s Mr. Miyagi from “Karate Kid.” Wax this manipulated version of history or policy on, wax this part of her failed record or revealing statement off.

After Palmieri feigned ignorance as to what in the world I was talking about, I jogged her memory enough for her to offer up this doozie: “She thinks that a lot of political heat can get in the way of a substantive discussion and beyond that I don’t know the particulars.”

TRANSLATED: bankers and private equity professionals make the world go round. Demonizing them for the plight of the middle class they’ve run over with a Mack truck for the last 30 years misses the point. Shit happens in an oligarchy; let’s keep the heat where it belongs: on Donald Trump.”

Of all the women who’ve turned their heads away from me in my 30 years on earth—up until this interview, a lovely ex of mine who turned her cheek when I went in for that Ferris Wheel first kiss took the cake!—[Palmieri turned her full body away from me faster than you can say “I’m With Her.”](#)

I’m going to save more of the revelations from WikiLeaks, Clinton aides,

and the corrupt corporate media, for the chapter dedicated to that chaotic, and revealing period of releases during the homestretch of the campaign. But Palmieri's rhetorical Jiu Jitsu in response to me was very symbolic of the entire machine behind Hillary: cold, dishonest, elitist, and continuing one of the most successful Corporate Con Jobs in existence; the one which features centrist/conservative Democrats and neoliberals convincing voters they care about the middle class and poor.

But, it took two to tango in the "Hillary Clinton: Extreme Makeover" dance, and corporate "journalists" were all too happy to ask the Clinton-ites "may I have this dance?"

Granted, the corporate media went to town on Clinton over her email scandal, which I didn't cover as much because, frankly, there was a lot more substantively corrupt things about HRC and the Clintons than whether she used her personal email while serving as Secretary of State.

But journalists acted "tough," grilling her over her email without laying a glove on her over her big, fat, sloppy wet kisses to Wall Street; love for big oil and fracking—the latter for which she pushed for around the world as Secretary of State—her State Department being an open door slush fund for Clinton Foundation donors and lobbyists; her cushy relationship with foreign lobbyists; approving arms deals with 20 countries that donated to the Clinton Foundation, including Saudi Arabia, which unless

you live under a rock, you know has an awful record of horrific oppression and violence toward women. Yes, Hillary Clinton, champion for all women, unless there's money to be made or donors' asses to scratch.

David Sirota at [The International Business Times reported on the Saudi Arabia deal being “personal” for Clinton:](#)

“At a press conference in Washington to announce the department’s approval, an assistant secretary of state, Andrew Shapiro, declared that the deal had been ‘a top priority’ for Clinton personally. Shapiro, a longtime aide to Clinton since her Senate days, added that the ‘U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army have excellent relationships in Saudi Arabia.’”

With a treasure trove of inconsistencies, flawed votes, suspect conflicts of interest, and potential ethics and legal violations, corporate journalists had an endless opportunity to challenge Clinton during the Democratic primary—and inform voters of her record rather than simply aiding the Clinton campaign by regurgitating the tired talking point that “she was the most qualified candidate in American history.”

This selective “holding the powerful accountable” type journalism was harmful in many ways. Most importantly, it gave pro-Clinton voters, or Democratic primary voters on the fence between Clinton and Sanders, an easy out. After all, if you’re not an uber political aficionado and are just an average citizen who doesn’t have the time or interest in hearing about

politics as much as you or I do, you'd probably be inclined to dismiss the fact that someone used a personal email rather than a government account as a big bowl of nothing. But, what if those establishment-leaning-but-open-to-Bernie's-message voters in Iowa, New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and beyond were informed about the *full scope* of Clinton's record?

You know, like the aforementioned big, fat, sloppy wet kisses to Wall Street; fracking fuckery, State Department slush fund; warmongering; arms deals onslaught; questionable actions by the Clinton Foundation following the Haiti earthquake; flip-flopping on the bankruptcy bill (which Bernie Sanders whiffed on calling her out on); Iraq and Libya; fill-in-the-blank for the next 10 pages.

Do you think if any of this was covered seriously, on-the-fence primary voters, or frankly even some pro-Clinton voters, might have thought twice? Or at least said, "Maybe I'll go check out a Bernie rally to see what he's all about."

I believe so. And when you look at some of the states Bernie lost—and for the top three, I put the disclaimer "lost"—by narrow margins, tough and in-depth media coverage of Clinton's record could have made a difference.

Missouri

Clinton 49.6%

Bernie 49.4%

Iowa	Clinton, 49.9%	Bernie 49.6%
Kentucky	Clinton 46.8%	Bernie 46.3%
Massachusetts	Clinton 50.1%	Bernie 48.7%
Illinois	Clinton 50.5%	Bernie 48.7%
South Dakota	Clinton 51%	Bernie 49%
New Mexico	Clinton 51.5%	Bernie 48.5%

If Sanders would have won three more Midwest states (Iowa, Missouri, Illinois) on top of winning Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, the entire elitist, out-of-touch, party-pooing class of Democratic Party superdelegates would have had one-hell of a quandary on their hands. You're going to give your vote to the candidate who has the highest disapproval rating of any Democratic presidential candidate in American history—who lost EVERY MIDWEST STATE but Ohio? You're going to give your vote to Hillary Clinton, who, was part of the Bubba Clinton brain trust that pushed through NAFTA and offshored millions of jobs in that same Midwest she just lost all but one state? Against a Republican candidate skillfully conning people into thinking he is the anti-trade crusader that's going to make the last 30 years disappear and bring back all those Rust Belt jobs?

Good luck, in that scenario, giving your superdelegate vote to Clinton and

then walking down the block with your latte without a stampede of progressives stopping you to forcefully call you out for voting against your own country. And ironically in this scenario, the same corporate media that DIDN'T truly ever lay a glove on Clinton's real corruption or record would have had no real choice but to scrutinize the superdelegates for giving their votes to the candidate who lost the majority of the most crucial states on the electoral college map. All of this doesn't even include a more important notion: what about the states Bernie *narrowly won or won* by a decent amount? Non kid-gloves coverage of Clinton might have helped Sanders to run up his margins, thus increasing his delegate counts, mobilizing his exploding movement even more, and *forcing* the media narrative to change.

I know, I know, you're saying: "Oh Jordan, quit your Bernie-bro-bullshit and focus on reality. You're offering up a bunch of hypotheticals that had less of a chance of happening than President Trump considering working people or black and brown people while proposing new policies.

Well, the numbers are numbers. One more time:

Missouri	Clinton 49.6%	Bernie 49.4%
Iowa	Clinton, 49.9%	Bernie 49.6%
Kentucky	Clinton 46.8%	Bernie 46.3%
Massachusetts	Clinton 50.1%	Bernie 48.7%

Illinois	Clinton 50.5%	Bernie 48.7%
South Dakota	Clinton 51%	Bernie 49%
New Mexico	Clinton 51.5%	Bernie 48.5%

There's also another finer point: as I spoke about in Chapter 1, for better or worse, presidential candidates often live and die by the first two contests. If Sanders would've won Iowa—which I explain why I believe he actually did in Chapter 1—coupled with New Hampshire, it would have been a whole new ballgame.

IMAGINE the Clinton-world going bat shit crazy to stave off talk of 2008 2.0 following a Sanders victory in Iowa and New Hampshire. IMAGINE the Newsweek or Rolling Stone cover with “President Bernie Sanders” on Mt. Rushmore. IMAGINE the fundraising tsunami that would have dropped into Bernie's coffers if he won the first two out of three contests. IMAGINE if, after winning Iowa and knowing he was going to win NH, Bernie could have spent more time in Nevada, a state he didn't spend much time in with lots of Latino voters open to his message. Or the slew of Super Tuesday states. Remember, the more time Sanders was able to spend in various states, the better he did.

IMAGINE, unfortunately, is all we can do. In reality, the corporate media spent the majority of its time covering Trump's tweets, empty podiums,

and in my view, an important, but not critical email story. All the while, they ignored the Bernie revolution. This undoubtedly changed the outcome of the primary, and by extension, the election.

For me, it is the Brooklyn Democratic primary debate that will forever symbolize this lack of awareness, information, and critical thinking Clinton supporters held—which is almost entirely the fault of the corporate media (if I'm keeping it real, Bernie's campaign also didn't go after her critically enough).

Make no mistake: the most ignorant, hateful, uninformed, and in some cases, hysterical supporters I interviewed were at Trump rallies all across the country. But, *for the most part* (they weren't all ignorant), Clinton supporters were a different kind of ignorant; a kind much harder to undo: unaware or intentionally blind to the systemic economic CRISIS the country has been trapped in for 30 years; under illusions that the U.S. had strongly rebounded since the financial crash; and completely unaware that Hillary and Bill Clinton were complicit in many of the economic and foreign policy decisions they hated Republicans for.

“When Bill Clinton was president, we all saw the deficits was a surplus until Bush came, and started all these fake wars,” [Anthony Omisore told me amidst a sea of energized Clinton supporters outside the Brooklyn Navy Yard before the primary debate.](#)

“But she voted for that war,” I shot back.

“That’s a political decision, that’s different,” he continued.

At this point, four months into my TYT career, I’d already experienced many Trump voters serving up doozies that tested my ability to stay focused enough to think up the next question. But, the whole rationalizing her vote as “oh well, the whole killing 4,000 American soldiers and nearly 200,000 innocent Iraqi civilians was just a political thing—no biggy,” blew other idiocy out of the water.

As I stared on incredulously, Anthony continued his word vomit: “When she’s president, she’s going to make it where it’s more important for everybody in America—not as a Senator—as a president she will do better than being Senator. Senators, they only have to vote for something sometimes so that they can get something for their constituents, so a lot of times they compromise.”

I asked him if he was saying Clinton’s Iraq War vote was a “compromise.”

“I’m just saying that this war happened when she was Senator and when you’re president, you call the shots, and when Bill was president, everything was fine with this country...is Bill not gonna help her?”

The bat-shit-Brooklyn-buffoonery coming from Clinton-ites didn’t stop there (FYI: I’m currently on my second whisky to help me cope with the

emotional trauma being triggered from remembering this Clinton-ite cockamamie drivel!).

“Both sides voted [for the Iraq War],” Robert Constino told me. When I responded that Bernie didn’t vote for it, the gold star for idiocy sprung back at me: “Well that’s alright: because he [Bernie] don’t know what he was doing,” he continued.

“He voted no against it,” I again responded.

“He was a junior Senator, he don’t know how to go, you know what I mean?” Constino continued. At this point, I felt like I’d have a better shot getting a coherent answer out of my 16-month-old nephew, but, alas, I tried one more time.

“So you think he didn’t know what he was doing even though he voted right?” I asked. Constino offered up one more string of words that lacked coherence.

W.....T.....F!

But, it was an interview with a gritty, middle-aged woman that will forever stand out to me as the visual representation of the misinformed and confused Clinton supporter—and in this case, it seems like I momentarily broke through to her.

Nilsa Medina began her answer to me like so many others before her did:

doling off the resume of Clinton as the main reason she should be the president.

“She’s for it, not Bernie,” she said. I remember her voice screeching to a higher decibel when she said “Bernie”—like she was mad at him for stealing her newspaper or something. I also haven’t the foggiest idea what Clinton was “for” that Bernie was not.

“I know she’s gonna win, not Bernie,” Medina continued. I asked her why she said not Bernie in a derogative way, as if he wasn’t qualified. “No, Bernie is not qualified, he doesn’t have that much education, no experience like Hillary,” she said.

“What do you mean no education?” I asked.

“Experience, you know, like he’s never been for policy, politicals, and stuff like that; like Hillary she knows,” she responded.

If you can translate for me what “politicals” means, you get a lovely NYC dinner on me! But the real telling moment was when I asked her whether experience is always the best thing if that experience comes with mostly bad results.

“But is experience always the best thing? I mean she voted for the Iraq War, Libya, and that hasn’t turned out so well,” I pointed out.

This was the moment. Despondently, Medina shrugged: “I know, I know,

it hasn't turned out...yea...I know that."

As her tone changed to a sad quelled whisper, she looked at me and simply said: "I know."



This was one of the rawest moments I had with a supporter of any candidate during the entire campaign. Not that I'm so special, but it showed what can happen when aggressive journalists actually challenge the false notions, false information, or ignorance of voters—or politicians for that matter.

If prodded enough with facts, they can rethink their position.

Unfortunately, the majority of Clinton voters—which data shows were predominately over 40—consume most of their news from CNN, MSNBC, the New York Times, Washington Post, Newsweek, TIME

Magazine, the Associated Press, Mother Jones, and other mostly establishment and legacy outlets.

As I explained in Chapter 2, almost all of these outlets from whom older voters receive their news—on everything from potential foreign policy conflicts (that become wars), to the now unprecedented deadly storms sinking American cities under water (due to climate change) to presidential candidates like Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton—are owned and operated by multi-billion dollar conglomerates with no desire to expose corruption, conflicts of interest, criminal fraud, or anything that would awaken the masses to the systemic inequality, oligarchy, and illegality that's hijacked America since the late 1970s.

If they did, people might start asking more questions; or organizing protests; or rallying behind populous candidates like, say, I dunno... Bernie Sanders! And there was always one thing more objectionable to Time Warner, Comcast, Amazon, Viacom, News Corporation, or any of the other billionaire bozos that own our media than a President Donald Trump.

President Bernie Sanders.

President Clinton or President Trump wasn't going to raise their corporate taxes—they'd cut them. Or get rid of loopholes and subsidies they've taken advantage of for decades. Or tighten rules on corporate lobbying

influencing elected politicians. Or fight to overturn Citizens United—thus blocking them from dumping endless hauls of money in the candidate’s coffers who will provide them the most corporate welfare.

These corporate outlets masquerading as jewels of journalism could live with a President Clinton because, to them, her corruption was just your typical Tuesday in D.C. Sure, funneling money from special interests and, in turn, voting for policies that will help said special interests, isn’t the *ideal way of doing business*—but that’s just the way Washington works. Corporate anchors and journalists have long rationalized this way—and many of them said as much in response to the WikiLeaks bombshells in the fall of 2016 (that most of them called a collection of “nothingburgers”).

These faux titans of journalism could live with a President Clinton because, although war isn’t a good thing for the country, it’s a great thing for news outlets. Sure, corporate journalists will attack me for DARING to suggest they like war because it boosts ratings and profiles. But, fuck em—it’s the truth. If there’s one thing CNN executives long for more than missing planes to obsess over, or Trump’s tweets, it’s warmongering and pitting America vs. the bad guys.

Same goes for The New York Times and Washington Post: whose false reporting and regurgitation of spoon-fed lies from Dick Cheney and other

Bush-ies helped launch us into the Iraq War. Sure, none of these cable news anchors or columnists *consciously* cheer for war or think they're jonesing for war to benefit themselves. But in practice, they are. They are the first ones to ask what a war with Iraq or North Korea would look like, interviewing military generals—who now work in the defense industry that profits off of war—about how swift or quick the “operation” will be.

Take President Trump's decision to launch 59 Tomahawk missiles into Syrian airfields—corporate media gasbags practically orgasmed on screen. [Brian Williams marveled at the “beautiful” weapons being used to launch America's next war.](#)

“We see these beautiful pictures at night from the decks of these two U.S. Navy vessels in the eastern Mediterranean,” Williams said. “I am tempted to quote the great Leonard Cohen: ‘I am guided by the beauty of our weapons.’”

Fellow NBC gasbag Tom Brokaw was chomping at the bit on “Morning Joe” at the prospect of another war.

“Then you think about what follows next, and to be successful you're probably going to have to *put more boots on the ground* again and engage on very tough terms with Russia, which has been defiant today,” [Brokaw said, concluding that the question is what happens to Assad.](#)

But, the corporate “journalists” wouldn’t have been able to wax poetic to the beauty of weapons or stoke for war less than 24 hours after dropping missiles under President Sanders. Sanders has pushed diplomacy and restraint in the face of terrorism, calling war the absolute last resort. He voted against the Iraq War and was certainly never getting advice from the likes of Henry Kissinger—a war criminal—for who Clinton wrote a review of his book and admitted to enjoying his advise and counsel.

So, if corporate media executives and parent companies wouldn’t get their tax cuts, open door to buy off politicians through lobbying, or deregulation from Sanders, they certainly weren’t going to risk pounding Clinton too hard, thus setting up the scary likelihood of a President Sanders—which all the polls and data showed would’ve happened if he faced off against Donald Trump.

There’s a much simpler reason that corporate journalists chose to suppress coverage of Bernie’s movement, obsess over Trump, and treat Clinton with relative kid gloves when there was an embarrassment of riches to go after in terms of her corruption and quid-pro-quo. But, alas, corporate journalists and folks like Hillary Clinton are part of *the same club*.

As New York Times’ correspondent Mark Leibovich expertly portrayed in [“This Town”](#) politicians and Beltway journalists have long been embroiled in an incestuous relationship. They break bread together, reside

in the same neighborhoods, and attend the same cocktail parties. Why? Because they're two of the biggest groups of ladder climbers in the history of civilization.

So, to the corporate media clowns I traveled with on Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders' plane (shocker, the Clinton campaign never granted my request to travel with the campaign), Clinton's corruption and 20-year love affair with mega-donors wasn't that big a deal because, to corporate journalists, that's just a part of being in the club—that's just "how Washington works."

Well, as I've reported and commented on for nearly two years at TYT—as journalists, we should *not normalize corruption*. We should not grow complacent to politicians who water down legislation or look the other way at bad corporate behavior to help those bad corporations and plutocrats who fill their coffers. That is *legalized bribery*—and is something too many neoliberals and Clinton supporters I met on the campaign trail had grown too comfortable with.

We will never get the progressive change we want to see in America—the kind Bernie Sanders stands for—by looking the other way at figures like Hillary Clinton's corruption.

And, in the end, that's what the legacy of Clinton's second failed presidential campaign will be: she was not a progressive and she was

corrupt. And despite her campaign, and their allies in the corporate media's best attempts, those obvious facts could not be swept under the rug.

So, whenever you see the usual suspects foaming at the mouth on social media about *everyone but Hillary Clinton* that's responsible for President Trump, remember a simple truth: politicians are supposed to be elected to represent us—not big investment banks, big pharmaceutical companies, big oil, or Silicon Valley.

Man, woman, or alien, real journalism requires exposing figures that pretend to represent the people—or be the “progressive who gets things done”—when their record so clearly shows something radically different. Hillary Clinton and her allies thought she could rewrite history and fool the masses.

Unfortunately for her, the masses started waking around the same time she was closer than ever to closing her grip on power. Clinton and her most loyal Hillbots can remain “Stronger Together” into eternity. But their brand of politics has been rejected. And despite having the short-term awfulness that is President Trump—I believe America is greater for it in the long-term.