

May 13, 2015

New York Magazine covers the Clinton Foundation's problems with Charity Navigator, an independent non-profit watchdog.

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Matthew Continetti says Hillary Clinton is having a hard time defining herself.

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Warren's the reason for the policy shuffle. Clinton is so terrified of losing the Democratic primary—again—that she's willing to trade consistency for security against an insurgent from the left. But she may be trading electability too. The Democrats have an advantage in presidential elections, but last I checked the country hasn't turned into a really big MSNBC greenroom. One day Clinton will have to defend her positions against a non-witch Republican, and she'll have eight years of Obama to answer for as well. She doesn't have the gall, the rakishness, or the aw-shucks charm that allowed her husband to slither out of such difficulties, and judging from Bill's most recent interviews he's losing his abilities too. Indeed, the politician Hillary Clinton reminds me most of lately isn't her husband or Warren. It's Mitt Romney. ...

Mary Anastasia O'Grady writes on the Clinton way in Haiti.

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Within two weeks of Haiti's January 2010 earthquake, the word had already gone out from the State Department that Bill Clinton would be in charge of U.S. reconstruction efforts. "That means," one individual told me and I reported [in a Jan. 25, 2010 column](#), "if you don't have Clinton connections, you won't be in the game." ...

Jonathan Tobin says the Clinton war room has "jumped the shark."

By the end of last week, the Hillary Clinton camp was acting as if they had weathered the worst of the Clinton Cash scandal and emerged unscathed. While polls showed that trust in Hillary and belief in her truthfulness was heading south, support from the overwhelming majority of Democrats remained strong. She also maintained leads in head-to-head matchups against possible Republican opponents. But in spite of these reasons for confidence that the Clinton brand can survive — as it has before — virtually anything, their bold talk about no one believing the book isn't convincing anyone. The drip, drip, drip of scandal stories from a variety of news outlets inspired by Peter Schweizer's muckraking book has kept the allegations in the news rather than it fading away. As a result, the Clinton "War Room" that has been assembled to trash Schweitzer and dismiss the book is starting to show the initial signs of panic. When longtime Clinton family retainer Lanny Davis called the book and those exploring its charges an example of "McCarthyism" [during an appearance on C-Span](#), it was clear that Hillary's friends have officially jumped the shark in their efforts to silence the nation's unease about the former First Family's conduct. ...

Power Line picks up on a book store in DC with a sense of humor. This will be the start of some great cartoons

New York Magazine

[The Clinton Foundation's Behind-the-Scenes Battle With a Charity Watchdog Group](#)

by Gabriel Sherman

Last Wednesday, Bill Clinton ratcheted up Clintonworld's counter assault on *Clinton Cash*, the book by conservative author Peter Schweizer that ignited the latest media frenzy over the former First Couple's \$2 billion foundation. "There's just no evidence," Clinton defiantly told CNN's Christiane Amanpour during an interview at the Foundation's confab in Morocco. "Even the guy that wrote the book apparently had to admit under questioning that we didn't have a shred of evidence for this, we just sort of thought we would throw it out there and see if it flies, and it won't fly."

Clinton's analysis is flawed in at least one regard. As my colleague [Jonathan Chait recently wrote](#), the Clintons' web of murky relationships and opaque finances exacts a political cost whether or not their critics ever find a *there* there. The Clintons, more than anyone, should know that negative press — true or not — can have potentially catastrophic consequences. Remember, it was David Brock's 1993 *American Spectator* article alleging that Arkansas state troopers arranged Bill's trysts, which sparked Paula Jones's sexual harassment lawsuit, which led to the Supreme Court case, which led to Monica Lewinsky lying under oath about the affair, which led Linda Tripp to turn the tapes over to Ken Starr, which led to impeachment.

The Clinton Foundation scandal cycle is already spinning off new complications. A case in point: After being the subject of a spate of negative newspaper accounts about potential conflicts of interest and management dysfunction this winter — long before *Clinton Cash* — the Clinton Foundation wound up on a "watch list" maintained by the Charity Navigator, the New Jersey-based nonprofit watchdog. The Navigator, dubbed the "most prominent" nonprofit watchdog by the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, is a powerful and feared player in the nonprofit world. Founded in 2002, it ranks more than 8,000 charities and is known for its independence. For a while, the Clinton Foundation was happy to promote Charity Navigator's work (back when they were awarded its highest ranking). In September 2014, in fact, the Navigator's then-CEO, Ken Berger, was invited to speak at the Clinton Global Initiative. Of course that was before the Foundation was placed on a list with scandal-plagued charities like Al Sharpton's National Action Network and the Red Cross.

Since March, the Foundation has embarked on an aggressive behind-the-scenes campaign to get removed from the list. Clinton Foundation officials accuse the Navigator of unfairly targeting them, lacking credible evidence of wrongdoing, and blowing off numerous requests for a meeting to present their case. "They're not only punishing us for being transparent but are not being transparent themselves," Maura Pally, the Foundation's acting CEO, told me by phone from Morocco last week. "Charity Navigator doesn't disclose its donors, but we do and yet that means we're suffering the consequences."

Navigator executives counter that the Foundation has demanded they extend the Clintons special treatment. They also allege the Foundation attempted to strong-arm them by calling a Navigator board member. "They felt they were of such importance that we should deviate from our normal process. They were irritated by that," says Berger.

The feud is a microcosm of all that is exhausting about the Clintons' endless public battles. Generally, it goes like this: bad press about their lack of transparency sparks some real-world consequence or censure, the Clintons complain that they're being held to an unfair standard while their critics contend that they expect to be able to write their own rules, and the resulting flare-up leads to more bad press.

The trouble with Navigator started on Wednesday morning, March 11. Foundation officials became alarmed when they received an anonymous email from the watchdog's Donor Advisory committee informing them they would be added to the list on Friday, March 13, unless they could provide answers to questions raised in newspaper accounts. Among the press controversies the Navigator cited: A *Wall Street Journal* [report](#) that noted "at least 60 companies that lobbied the State Department during [Hillary Clinton's] tenure donated a total of more than \$26 million to the Clinton Foundation." Politico, meanwhile, [revealed](#) that the Foundation failed to report to the State Department a \$500,000 donation from the Algerian government, a violation of the ethics agreement the Clintons had arranged with the Obama White House. Politico also [reported](#) that the Foundation's former CEO, Eric Braverman, quit after a "power struggle" with "the coterie of Clinton loyalists who have surrounded the former president for decades."

With the publication of *Clinton Cash* on the horizon, Clintonworld surely knew landing on the Navigator's watch list would be a public-relations debacle. By early March, Clinton campaign officials were holding regular war-room meetings to orchestrate their [defense](#) against the book. Over the next few days, Foundation officials desperately attempted to contact Navigator executives to rebut their claims but, inexplicably, couldn't get through to anyone on the phone. On the evening of Friday, March 13, Pally sent a detailed email rebuttal. "All of the other organizations on your watch list have had substantiated allegations of financial, fiscal or other impropriety," she wrote, according to an email the Foundation provided to *New York*. "The stories you cite about the Clinton Foundation merely point to donations, or gossip around our operations, none of which constitute any wrongdoing."

It didn't work. During a tense phone conversation on the afternoon of March 17, Pally and Berger argued over the merits of the media's claims about the Foundation. Pally said they were without substance; Berger insisted that since the newspapers published the articles, they were relevant. "Our whole thing is, if major media outlets say there's something here that you should be aware of, we're not going to be judge and jury on what the media says," Berger later told me. "We felt there had been enough questions." As a matter of practice, the Navigator doesn't conduct its own investigations. On its website, they state: "Charity Navigator ... takes no position on allegations made or issues raised by third parties, nor does Charity Navigator seek to confirm or verify the accuracy of allegations made or the merits of issues raised by third parties that may be referred to in the CN Watchlist."

The Navigator invited the Foundation to respond publicly on their website. Instead, Pally asked Berger to meet and review confidential copies of the Foundation's handbook, "Global Code of Conduct," and board bylaws. Berger declined, feeling it was another effort of backroom dealing and spin. "We were not opposed to having a sit-down meeting. The point was, what is it that we're going to cover? We've already been around the block. What's the value of this?"

Last week, after I contacted the Foundation about being on the watch list, Pally rekindled talks with the Navigator. "I remain at a loss as to what information we can provide to address Charity Navigator's concerns and be removed from the Watchlist," she wrote Tim Gamory, the Navigator's acting CEO. (Berger left the group last month to start his own consulting business.)

Sure enough, the watch list designation has provided Clinton's antagonists with more ammunition with which to attack Hillary's campaign. Already, critics are citing Charity Navigator's list as a reason to open a federal investigation into the Clintons' finances. For its part, the Clinton camp sees the episode as another reason to feel aggrieved. But even some Clinton advisers have been frustrated that they don't appear to have learned from past self-inflicted wounds. One source told me that last year, a senior adviser lobbied the Foundation to appoint a Republican co-chairman to its board, which was stacked with Clinton loyalists. The adviser submitted a list of GOP names. "It was to shield [the Clintons] from the things they're reading about now," the source said. "It didn't happen."

Unfortunately for Hillary's campaign, the Navigator's policy is that charities that land on the list stay there for a minimum of six months. Sandra Miniutti, the Navigator's spokesperson, told me that, in order to get off the list, the Clintons need to publicly address each of the controversies raised by the media with a convincing response.

The clock is ticking.

Free Beacon

[Hillary Rodham Romney](#)

The battle to define Hillary Clinton is on—and she's losing

by Matthew Continetti



Hillary Clinton is moving so quickly to the left that it's hard to keep up. Her aides are telling the *New York Times* she wants to "topple" the One Percent, she's pledging solidarity with union bosses over lunch meetings at Mario Batali restaurants in Midtown, she supports a constitutional amendment to suppress political speech, she's down with a right to same-sex marriage, she's ambivalent over the Keystone Pipeline and the Trans-Pacific Partnership, she's calling for an end to the "era of mass incarceration," she wants to go "further" than President Obama's illegal executive amnesty. It's called pandering, but the press is too frazzled or

sympathetic to call her on it. There's desperation to Clinton's moves, an almost panicked energy, to close the gap between her and her party's base. If Elizabeth Warren called for full Communism, Clinton would be at the barricades the next day.

Warren's the reason for the policy shuffle. Clinton is so terrified of losing the Democratic primary—again—that she's willing to trade consistency for security against an insurgent from the left. But she may be trading electability too. The Democrats have an advantage in presidential elections, but last I checked the country hasn't turned into a really big MSNBC greenroom. One day Clinton will have to defend her positions against a non-witch Republican, and she'll have eight years of Obama to answer for as well. She doesn't have the gall, the rakishness, or the aw-shucks charm that allowed her husband to slither out of such difficulties, and judging from Bill's most recent interviews he's losing his abilities too. Indeed, the politician Hillary Clinton reminds me most of lately isn't her husband or Warren. It's Mitt Romney.

Like Clinton, Romney ran twice. Like Clinton, he established his political profile under a different set of circumstances than when he ran for president. He got his start as the modern, technocratic Republican, fixing the Olympics, delivering universal health insurance to Massachusetts, and projecting moderate sensibilities on many issues. But the dynamics of Republican presidential primaries forced him to swerve right, mix up his identity. He's not Disraeli so the moves caused him trouble. The press mocked his "severely conservative" remark, his desire to "double Guantanamo" (a fantastic idea, by the way), and his support for the "self-deportation" of illegal immigrants. There had always been a false assuredness to Romney, the Eddie Haskell feeling that he was putting you on, trying a little too hard. The policy shifts played into this aura of inauthenticity, and [by the time Eric Fehrnstrom was likening Romney to an Etch-a-Sketch](#), the battle to define the Republican nominee was [close to lost](#). Super Pac ads over the summer and the 47 percent remark in September made things worse. No way Romney could connect.

Mitt Romney and Hillary Clinton are both wealthy, well-meaning overachievers who have a habit of saying things they come to regret. Charles Krauthammer says Hillary has "[authentic inauthenticity](#)," which is a good way to sum up many people's view of Romney. Clinton hasn't had a good week of press in years. Her book launch was immediately sunk by controversies over her paid speeches and her remark that she and Bill were "dead broke" when they left the White House. She's under investigation for her response to the Benghazi attack, for her private (and deleted) email server, and bestselling authors are picking through foreign donations to her family charity. Her response has been to go underground, leave the explaining to Bill—an effort he immediately sabotaged by telling NBC News he didn't understand why people had their doubts about the foundation, and that he would keep making paid speeches because "I gotta pay our bills."

Romney lost for many reasons. The economy wasn't as bad as he said it was, he was trying to defenestrate America's first black president, he never had a gut connection with the public like Reagan or Dubya or Obama. Another reason showed up in [the exit poll](#): Romney beat President Obama on such candidate attributes as "shares my values," "is a strong leader," and "has a vision for the future," but for those who said what matters most is a president who "cares about people like me," Obama won 81 percent to 18 percent. Voters didn't think Romney cared about them because he had inadvertently played into the Democratic line of attack: His flip-flopping, career in private equity, and writing off of almost half the electorate reinforced the image peddled by Plouffe, Messina, and Axelrod of an aloof and somewhat goofy plutocrat.

Clinton might as well be telling Republicans how to run against her. This week's *Wall Street Journal* / NBC poll reported that her favorable and unfavorable ratings are now even, and

contained the stunning finding that only 25 percent of voters find her “[honest and straightforward](#).” If the Republicans can’t see the opening here to define Clinton for the public as dishonest, untrustworthy, tricky, and foul, then they don’t really deserve to win, which they might not anyway. Hillary may find it’s hard to convince someone she “cares about people like me” when there’s the possibility she’ll sell that someone out.

And selling out two decades of political centrism is exactly what Clinton has spent the last two weeks doing. The coming attack ads are obvious: clip reels of Hillary being on every side of every issue. If Clinton wins the nomination, as seems likely, and tries to “shake the Etch-a-Sketch,” she’ll still be dragging her primary baggage behind her: income inequality, climate change, immigration, and the criminal justice system are just not major concerns of the general public, which is more interested in jobs, wages, and national security. Clinton’s leftward drive is undermining her general election message—she’ll be too busy explaining, badly, all of her different positions, all of the latest foibles and accusations.

“Many factors allowed [Bill] Clinton to survive questions about his character: satisfaction with overall peace and prosperity, respect for his skill and effectiveness, and distaste for critics who repeatedly seemed to overreach,” [writes Ronald Brownstein](#). “But his most important shield may have been the belief that he understood, and genuinely hoped to ameliorate, the problems of ordinary Americans.” Brownstein’s evidence is the 1996 exit poll, in which voters said they didn’t trust Clinton but re-elected him with 49 percent of the vote anyway. It’s a clever article but not all that relevant: the electorate of 20 years ago is not the same as today, Hillary is not her husband, there is no “satisfaction with peace and prosperity,” her “skill and effectiveness” is, to say the least, a matter of dispute, and odds are the Republican nominee next year is going to do better on the empathy question than Bob Dole.

Brownstein’s piece actually is confirmation of Clinton’s dilemma: It cites two polls that asked whether she understands average Americans, and she scored less than 50 percent in each. A candidate’s honesty and ability to empathize are related: The more reasons you give a voter to doubt you, to worry you’re more concerned with appeasing an ideological base than working for the public interest, the less he’ll think you understand where he’s at. Over 60, white, affluent, famous, desperate to seem in touch, and oh so bad on the trail—Mitt Romney and Hillary Clinton are one hot match, one genuine power couple.

WSJ

[How the Clintons Worked the Angles in Haiti](#)

Bill handled earthquake aid while Hillary was secretary of state. The nation deserved better.

by Mary Anastasia O’Grady

“It is the sense of Congress that transparency, accountability, democracy, and good governance are integral factors in any congressional decision regarding United States assistance, including assistance to Haiti.”

—Assessing Progress in Haiti Act of 2014, section 4.

Peter Schweizer's new book, "Clinton Cash," has stirred up media and public interest partly by making the point that most of the dealings of Bill and [Hillary Clinton](#) have been with poor countries with a weak rule of law. The U.S. legislation cited above singles out Haiti.

There could hardly be a better example of Clinton machinations undermining development. Congress is partly to blame and now seeks to make amends.

The U.S. Founding Fathers went out of their way to establish a republic guided by the rule of law and not the rule of men. If there is a singular principle that has set the U.S. apart from countries south of the Rio Grande it's the checks and balances that protect against *caudillo* power.

Yet in the aftermath of the January 2010 earthquake, while Hillary Clinton was secretary of state, the Obama administration and Congress gave Bill Clinton carte blanche in handling hundreds of millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars flowing to Haiti for recovery and reconstruction. This translated into enormous political power for the former president in the poorest country in the hemisphere, making him a de facto *cacique*.

Mr. Clinton loves to paint himself as a third-world redeemer, as he did in an interview in Africa with an NBC reporter that aired last week. The reporter asked about charges that the Clinton Foundation's practice of pulling in big money from governments and wealthy donors during Hillary's tenure as secretary of state was a conflict of interest. Mr. Clinton countered that he's helping the poor.

As an NBC narrator described Clinton Foundation activities, the former president and his daughter were shown fitting locals with hearing aids. Pravda could not have crafted a better piece of propaganda.

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Within two weeks of Haiti's January 2010 earthquake, the word had already gone out from the State Department that Bill Clinton would be in charge of U.S. reconstruction efforts. "That means," one individual told me and I reported [in a Jan. 25, 2010 column](#), "if you don't have Clinton connections, you won't be in the game."

The "game," as my source called it, meant securing hundreds of millions of dollars in no-bid contracts from the State Department's U.S. Agency for International Development and grants from multilateral institutions like the InterAmerican Development Bank, which gets the bulk of its funding from the U.S.

The Clintons deny that Bill's power over State's purse was used to secure donations to the Clinton Foundation. But at least two contributors who gave more than \$1 million as I described [in a March 9 column](#), including the InterAmerican Development Bank, benefited from U.S. earthquake aid.

There's a lot that didn't get done. In the north of the country, the Clinton-proposed Caracol Industrial Park was supposed to feature some 40 buildings for apparel assembly supporting up to 65,000 jobs. It remains a mystery why there are still only three buildings in full operation and only 5,000 jobs, despite plenty of tenant interest.

Haitians are reluctant to criticize the Clintons publicly because of their power. "No one wants to be on the wrong side of the next president of the United States," one Haitian told me during a visit I made to the country in December.

Yet Congress was so scandalized by the dismal findings of a 2013 Government Accountability Office report on reconstruction spending in Haiti that it finally passed an "Assessing Progress" act requiring periodic reports on where tax money goes.

Congress is well aware of the Clintons' runaway abuses. Its "sense" that foreign aid, "including" to Haiti, ought to be tied to the rule of law is an admission that under the Clintons established protocols to protect against corruption were tossed aside.

Contentions

[The Clinton War Room Jumps the Shark](#)

by Jonathan S. Tobin

By the end of last week, the Hillary Clinton camp was acting as if they had weathered the worst of the *Clinton Cash* scandal and emerged unscathed. While polls showed that trust in Hillary and belief in her truthfulness was heading south, support from the overwhelming majority of Democrats remained strong. She also maintained leads in head-to-head matchups against possible Republican opponents. But in spite of these reasons for confidence that the Clinton brand can survive — as it has before — virtually anything, their bold talk about no one believing the book isn't convincing anyone. The drip, drip, drip of scandal stories from a variety of news outlets inspired by Peter Schweizer's muckraking book has kept the allegations in the news rather than it fading away. As a result, the Clinton "War Room" that has been assembled to trash Schweitzer and dismiss the book is starting to show the initial signs of panic. When longtime Clinton family retainer Lanny Davis called the book and those exploring its charges an example of "McCarthyism" [during an appearance on C-Span](#), it was clear that Hillary's friends have officially jumped the shark in their efforts to silence the nation's unease about the former First Family's conduct.

The context of Davis's rant is the fact that even after weeks of news organizations seeking new *Clinton Cash* angles to explore, it appears they aren't close to running out of material. Over the weekend, [Politico began to unravel the complicated ties](#) between Bill Clinton's speechmaking business and Hillary Clinton's State Department. According to their reporting, State Department officials vetted some of the former president's speeches. While that isn't evidence of criminal conduct, it does show how closely connected Hillary's staff was to Bill's fundraising and speaking business affairs, something her defenders routinely deny. And while questions remain about the Clinton's involvement in the egregious sale of 20 percent of the country's uranium reserves to Russia, a lot of reporting about their dubious role in vetting disaster relief for Haiti and the way Hillary's brother profited from their work was being dug up by both [the Wall Street Journal](#) and [the New York Times](#).

Just as bad for the Clintons is the reporting that [the liberal New York magazine is doing](#) about their foundation's unsuccessful attempt to get the watchdog group Charity Navigator to endorse their efforts. The group has refused to rate the Clinton Foundation as trustworthy because of its "unique business model" which has it raising hundreds of millions of dollars but only spending about ten percent of it on actual charity. The foundation works as a middle man that spends most of the vast fortune placed at its disposal paying for people to consult about helping the poor but never doing much of it itself. It can't be called a scam because donors know they are paying for influence not charity. But the more people find out about how the foundation is less of an actual charity and more of a slush fund to pay for the Clintons to crisscross the globe talking about poverty the lower Hillary's trust poll numbers will go.

But faced with these hits to the Clintons' image, their defenders are predictably escalating their rhetoric. But just for a moment, let's unpack the charges Davis has lodged against Schweitzer. Like other Clinton Cash critics, Davis kept repeating that there are no "facts" in the book. But this is absurd. The book is full of facts about the suspicious donations to the foundation and huge honorariums paid to Bill Clinton from foreign donors who had business before the State Department while Hillary was running it. What Schweitzer doesn't have is a smoking gun memo or email that proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Clintons colluded to give the people funding their family business the advantages they were seeking. Of course, Clinton opponents might say that such evidence might be in those emails that were on the server she had wiped clean. But even if we assume that they were too smart to ever commit anything like that to an email, let alone paper, that leaves critics with a circumstantial case to make against the pair that might get other politicians in trouble with the law (like Senator Robert Menendez whose favors for a wealthy friend look fishy and earned him an indictment but for which there is a similar lack of a smoking gun memo).

Davis claims that the fact that one cannot connect some very suspicious dots with the sort of certainty you could use in court is McCarthyism. But this makes no sense. It is true that Senator Joseph McCarthy was often irresponsible and made false charges that some public figures were communists. But the presumption of innocence on official charges of corruption does not mean that it is impermissible to note the tremendous conflicts of interest that were a daily affair while Hillary was at the State Department. Nor does it vindicate the questionable behavior of the foundation and the former president. Suffice it to say that were any Republican to be caught exposed in this manner, Davis and every other Democrats would be screaming bloody murder and demanding special prosecutors and indictments.

If Hillary and Bill want to put this to rest they can try answering some tough questions from the press instead of merely dismissing the issue as another invention of the "vast right-wing conspiracy" they have always hated (even though much of the reporting about this has come from the *New York Times* and other liberal bastions). Until then, they should tell their mouthpieces to stop foaming at the mouth. It's only making them look guiltier.

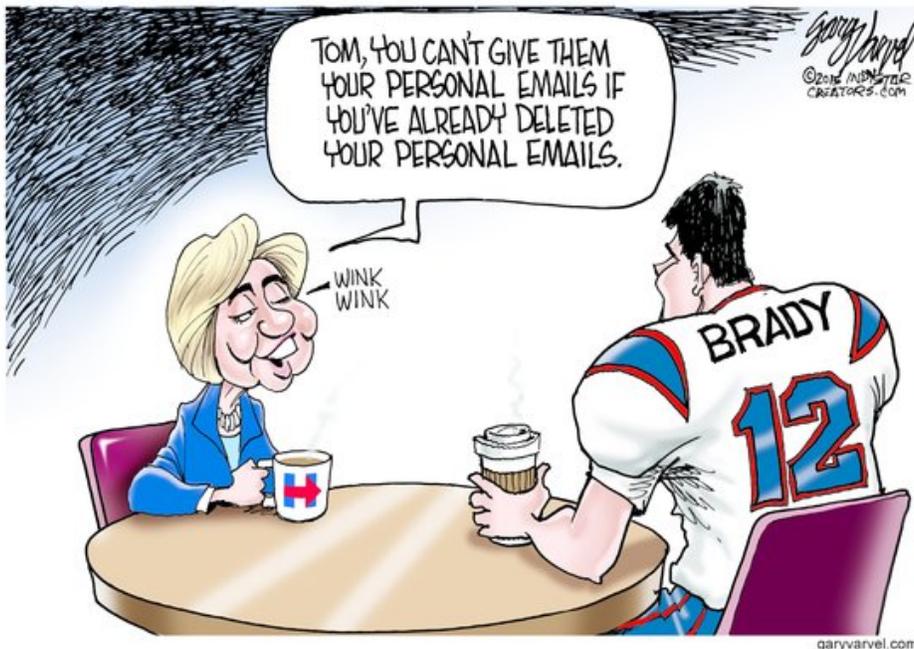
Power Line
[From a window](#)
by Scott Johnson

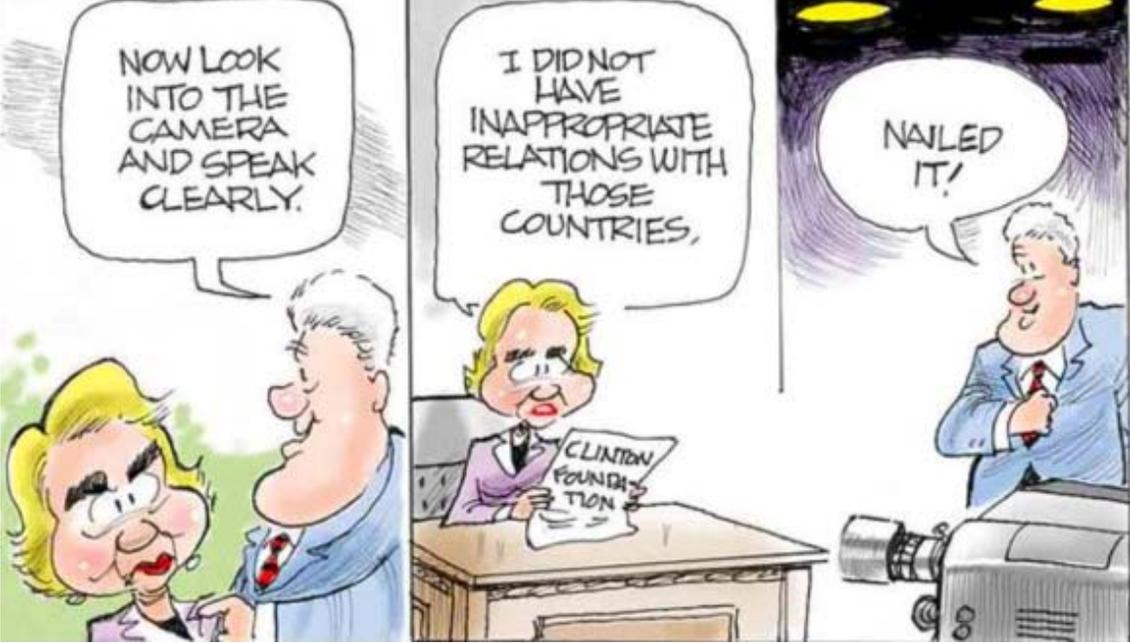
A reader sent Glenn Reynolds the photograph below of a display window at the [Kramerbooks & Afterwords Cafe & Grill](#) in the heart of the District of Columbia. Glenn views the display a Drudge-like illumination by juxtaposition. Given that the display appears in the heart of the

District of Columbia, I wonder if there isn't an esoteric message to the free world from inside the asylum here, or whether this isn't a sort of "more mush from the wimp" moment giving us an omen of things to come. The motto of the bookstore/cafe is "Serving latte to the literati since 1976." Take that!



Via [InstaPundit](#).





The "Evil" Koch Foundations...



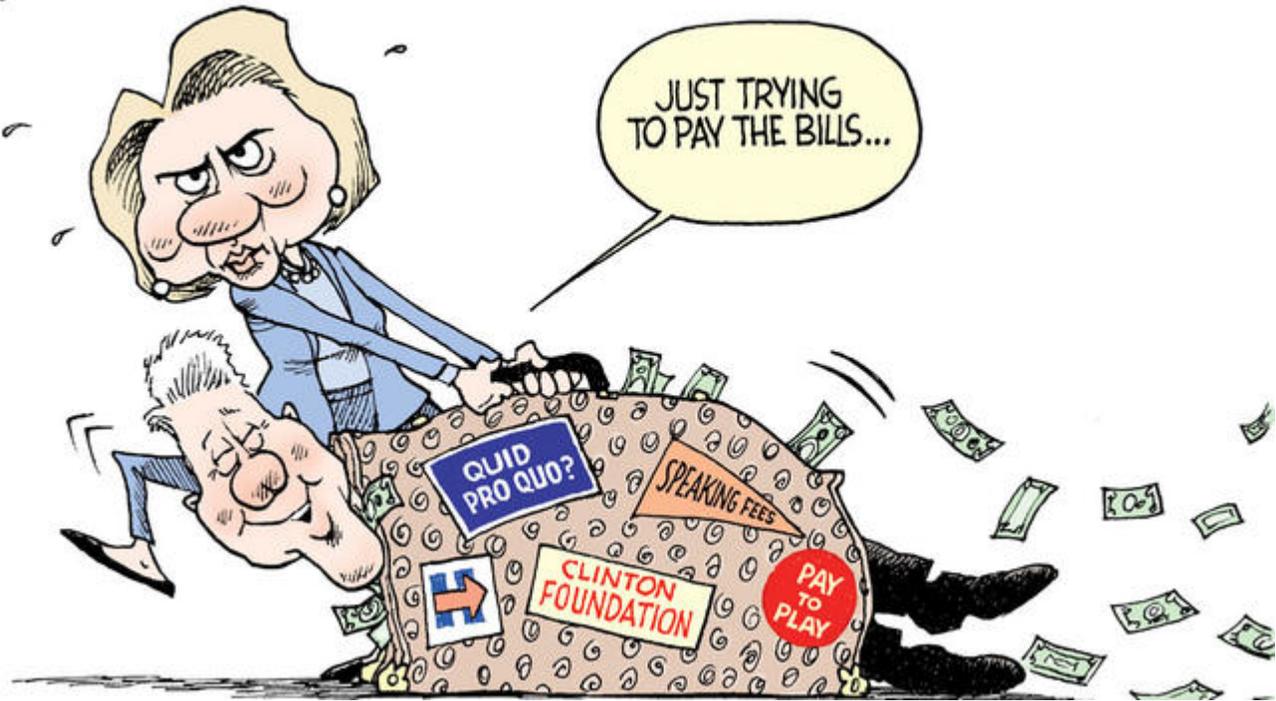
2013 Charitable distributions: \$7,542,598
2013 Managerial overhead: \$487,213

The "Benevolent" Clinton Foundation...



2013 Charitable distributions: \$8,865,052
2013 "Managerial overhead": \$84,684,494







"WE HAVE A DISTINCT ADVANTAGE. WHILE THE REPUBLICANS BEAT EACH OTHER UP, YOU CAN RUN YOUR CAMPAIGN WITH THE TYPE OF CONFIDENCE THAT COMES FROM KNOWING THAT JOE BIDEN IS THE ONLY VIABLE ALTERNATIVE."

