

May 7, 2015

We think ideas and thoughts expressed by people in the commentariat should be passed along without any reference to the race of the authors. However we will change that for today to point out we are starting with three black Americans with Baltimore comments. Readers will not be surprised to see Thomas Sowell first.

... The "legacy of slavery" argument is not just an excuse for inexcusable behavior in the ghettos. In a larger sense, it is an evasion of responsibility for the disastrous consequences of the prevailing social vision of our times, and the political policies based on that vision, over the past half century.

Anyone who is serious about evidence need only compare black communities as they evolved in the first 100 years after slavery with black communities as they evolved in the first 50 years after the explosive growth of the welfare state, beginning in the 1960s.

You would be hard-pressed to find as many ghetto riots prior to the 1960s as we have seen just in the past year, much less in the 50 years since a wave of such riots swept across the country in 1965.

We are told that such riots are a result of black poverty and white racism. But in fact — for those who still have some respect for facts — black poverty was far worse, and white racism was far worse, prior to 1960. But violent crime within black ghettos was far less.

Murder rates among black males were going down — repeat, DOWN — during the much lamented 1950s, while it went up after the much celebrated 1960s, reaching levels more than double what they had been before. Most black children were raised in two-parent families prior to the 1960s. But today the great majority of black children are raised in one-parent families.

Such trends are not unique to blacks, nor even to the United States. The welfare state has led to remarkably similar trends among the white underclass in England over the same period. Just read "Life at the Bottom," by Theodore Dalrymple, a British physician who worked in a hospital in a white slum neighborhood.

You cannot take any people, of any color, and exempt them from the requirements of civilization — including work, behavioral standards, personal responsibility and all the other basic things that the clever intelligentsia disdain — without ruinous consequences to them and to society at large. ...

Jason Riley who is on the editorial board of the Wall Street Journal is next.

The racial makeup of city leaders, the police department and other municipal workers in Ferguson, Mo., played a central role in the media coverage and analysis of Michael Brown's death, which is worth remembering as history repeats itself in Baltimore.

The Justice Department's Ferguson report noted that although the city's population was 67% black, just four of its 54 police officers fit that description. Moreover, "the Municipal Judge, Court Clerk, Prosecuting Attorney, and all assistant court clerks are white," said the report. "While a diverse police department does not guarantee a constitutional one, it is nonetheless critically important for law enforcement agencies, and the Ferguson Police Department in particular, to strive for broad diversity among officers and civilian staff."

Broad diversity is not a problem in Baltimore, where 63% of residents and 40% of police officers are black. The current police commissioner is also black, and he isn't the first one. The mayor is black, as was her predecessor and as is a majority of the city council. Yet none of this "critically important" diversity seems to have mattered after 25-year-old Freddie Gray died earlier this month in police custody under circumstances that are still being investigated. ...

Walter Williams former George Mason econ prof is the last.

... Criminal activity is a major problem in many black communities. That means many black citizens will have some kind of contact with police officers, either as victims of crime or as criminals. One of the true tragedies is that black politicians, preachers and civil rights advocates give massive support to criminals such as Brown, Garner and Scott. How much support do we see for the overwhelmingly law-abiding members of the black community preyed upon by criminals?

The average American has no idea of the day-to-day threats and fears encountered by the law-abiding majority in black neighborhoods on account of thugs. In addition to giving threats and instilling fears, criminals have turned many black communities into economic wastelands where there is a lack of services that most Americans take for granted, such as supermarkets, other shops and even home delivery. Black residents must bear the expense of having to go out of their neighborhoods to shop or shop at high-cost mom and pop stores.

The protest chant that black lives matter appears to mean that black lives matter only if they are taken at the hands of white police officers.

Now we turn to one of our favorite topics over the past few weeks - Hillary Clinton's campaign. First up is **Chris Cillizza** from the Washington Post. He says Bill Clinton still doesn't get it.

Bill Clinton is the best politician of his generation and one of the all-time greats. No serious person can dispute that fact.

And yet, in an interview with NBC News over the weekend, Bill showed, yet again, the blind spot that he and, to a lesser extent, his wife, have when it comes to their relationships with donors and how they talk about their own personal finances.

Two Clinton quotes really stood out to me.

1. "People should draw their own conclusions. I'm not in politics. All I'm saying is the idea that there's one set of rules for us and another set for everybody else is true."

Um, okay. First of all, the "I'm not in politics" line is absolutely amazing. The world has rarely created someone as political (and as good at being political) as Bill Clinton. He will always be "in politics"; it's, literally, who he is.

The second sentence is more eye-opening. This is Bill Clinton in self-pitying mode; people treat us so unfairly and we do so much good and so on and so forth. Feeling bad for yourself is never an attractive look for a politician but especially in this case. ...

Ruth Marcus, another liberal from WaPo has more on Bill.

Oh, Bill. There you go again. We knew you were going to pop off, but did it have to be so soon — and so tone-deaf?

The Clinton deal is “two for the price of one,” as Bill Clinton famously promised in 1992. But 23 years later, that bargain comes with different baggage attached.

Then it was the intimations of Hillary Clinton as co-president, Machiavelli in a pantsuit. Now — and let us pause to appreciate the role reversal and the country’s journey on issues of gender — it is the awkward reality of running not only while married to an ex-president but also as a name partner in the sprawling entity of Clinton Inc.

Into this treacherous swamp strolls Bill Clinton, on an annual Clinton Foundation trip to Africa. His interview with NBC News’s Cynthia McFadden was vintage Clinton, with its air of injured dismissiveness about concerns over his assiduous fundraising and lucrative speechifying.

Will you continue to give speeches, McFadden asked? “Oh yeah,” Clinton responded, as if the notion of calling a halt during his wife’s presidential campaign were absurd. “I gotta pay our bills.”

Oh. My. God.

As if the first \$500,000 speech, or the 11th, were not enough. As if the former president had not raked in more than \$100 million on the speaking circuit since leaving office. As if stopping would leave the Clintons huddled around the kitchen table, worrying over which bills to pay. ...

And **Ron Fournier** says the stonewall might work for the Clintons, but it should be about more than winning. Presidents, he says, need to have some moral authority to govern.

... Whether the next survey cuts for or against Clinton doesn't change what we know about her actions, what we still must find out about her actions, and how those actions might be predictive of her presidency.

What we know so far is that she violated White House ethics rules on government email and foreign donations to the Clinton Foundation. She deleted emails, disabled her rogue email server, and allowed the brazen comingling of government business and the family business.

Integrity. Transparency. Accountability. These are attributes that people, particularly younger Americans, expect to see from leaders in an era of radical connectivity, social change, and institutional decline. So far, they're not seeing such qualities in Candidate Clinton.

I think she needs to come clean to win the public's trust: Allow an independent review of the email and return foreign donations, because anything less fails to recognize how much media and information has been democratized since the 1990s, when the tactics she's now using were effective. But I may be wrong. ...

Today is the big vote in Great Britain. A [Contentions](#) post says it is very close and putting together a coalition might be as difficult as what just happened in Israel. *Britain is currently in the grips of one of the most closely fought elections in decades. Of course, the same could have been said five years ago at the last election. In a rare occurrence for Britain the 2010 election saw no outright winner, a hung parliament. That time the Conservatives managed to pull together a coalition with the country's third party, the Liberal Democrats. But as Britain's formerly solid two party system has further disintegrated it is not only once again looking unlikely that any party will have an outright majority but worse, current polls foretell of a parliament in which it is difficult to see either the Conservatives or the Labor opposition being able to form a workable coalition.*

The fact that sitting Prime Minister David Cameron looks unable to secure a majority is itself cause for comment. Yes, it is usual for incumbents to see their mandate reduced if re-elected. But it is also far from impossible for the opposite to happen. In 1983 Margaret Thatcher significantly increased the Conservative vote from what she polled in 1979. To be sure, Cameron is no Thatcher. But what his government has done in turning around the British economy from the mess bequeathed by the last Labor government ought to have been enough to have won the votes for a majority.

Britain had after all been hit particularly hard by the global recession. Unemployment spiraled and the Labor government engaged in a bout of Greek style borrowing. It was unsurprising then that the Conservatives came out of the 2010 election as the largest party, but what should concern Britain's center-right is the fact that even then Cameron failed to actually win the election outright. In fact, even with Labor having presided over one of the longest and deepest declines in GDP since the Second World War, it was still the left that essentially won that election. Combined, Labour and the Liberal Democrats took the most votes and the most parliamentary seats. ...

Jewish World Review
[Race, Politics and Lies](#)
by Thomas Sowell

Among the many painful ironies in the current racial turmoil is that communities scattered across the country were disrupted by riots and looting because of the demonstrable lie that Michael Brown was shot in the back by a white policeman in Missouri — but there was not nearly as much turmoil created by the demonstrable fact that a fleeing black man was shot dead by a white policeman in South Carolina.

Totally ignored was the fact that a black policeman in Alabama fatally shot an unarmed white teenager, and was cleared of any charges, at about the same time that a white policeman was cleared of charges in the fatal shooting of Michael Brown.

In a world where the truth means so little, and headstrong preconceptions seem to be all that matter, what hope is there for rational words or rational behavior, much less mutual understanding across racial lines?

When the recorded fatal shooting of a fleeing man in South Carolina brought instant condemnation by whites and blacks alike, and by the most conservative as well as the most liberal commentators, that moment of mutual understanding was very fleeting, as if mutual understanding were something to be avoided, as a threat to a vision of "us against them" that was more popular.

That vision is nowhere more clearly expressed than in attempts to automatically depict whatever social problems exist in ghetto communities as being caused by the sins or negligence of whites, whether racism in general or a "legacy of slavery" in particular. Like most emotionally powerful visions, it is seldom, if ever, subjected to the test of evidence.

The "legacy of slavery" argument is not just an excuse for inexcusable behavior in the ghettos. In a larger sense, it is an evasion of responsibility for the disastrous consequences of the prevailing social vision of our times, and the political policies based on that vision, over the past half century.

Anyone who is serious about evidence need only compare black communities as they evolved in the first 100 years after slavery with black communities as they evolved in the first 50 years after the explosive growth of the welfare state, beginning in the 1960s.

You would be hard-pressed to find as many ghetto riots prior to the 1960s as we have seen just in the past year, much less in the 50 years since a wave of such riots swept across the country in 1965.

We are told that such riots are a result of black poverty and white racism. But in fact — for those who still have some respect for facts — black poverty was far worse, and white racism was far worse, prior to 1960. But violent crime within black ghettos was far less.

Murder rates among black males were going down — repeat, DOWN — during the much lamented 1950s, while it went up after the much celebrated 1960s, reaching levels more than double what they had been before. Most black children were raised in two-parent families prior to the 1960s. But today the great majority of black children are raised in one-parent families.

Such trends are not unique to blacks, nor even to the United States. The welfare state has led to remarkably similar trends among the white underclass in England over the same period. Just read "Life at the Bottom," by Theodore Dalrymple, a British physician who worked in a hospital in a white slum neighborhood.

You cannot take any people, of any color, and exempt them from the requirements of civilization — including work, behavioral standards, personal responsibility and all the other basic things that the clever intelligentsia disdain — without ruinous consequences to them and to society at large.

Non-judgmental subsidies of counterproductive lifestyles are treating people as if they were livestock, to be fed and tended by others in a welfare state — and yet expecting them to develop as human beings have developed when facing the challenges of life themselves.

One key fact that keeps getting ignored is that the poverty rate among black married couples has been in single digits every year since 1994. Behavior matters and facts matter, more than the prevailing social visions or political empires built on those visions.

WSJ

The Lawbreakers of Baltimore—and Ferguson

The racial diversity of local government doesn't matter when people want to seize on an excuse to commit crimes.

by Jason L. Riley

The racial makeup of city leaders, the police department and other municipal workers in Ferguson, Mo., played a central role in the media coverage and analysis of Michael Brown's death, which is worth remembering as history repeats itself in Baltimore.

The Justice Department's Ferguson report noted that although the city's population was 67% black, just four of its 54 police officers fit that description. Moreover, "the Municipal Judge, Court Clerk, Prosecuting Attorney, and all assistant court clerks are white," said the report. "While a diverse police department does not guarantee a constitutional one, it is nonetheless critically important for law enforcement agencies, and the Ferguson Police Department in particular, to strive for broad diversity among officers and civilian staff."

Broad diversity is not a problem in Baltimore, where 63% of residents and 40% of police officers are black. The current police commissioner is also black, and he isn't the first one. The mayor is black, as was her predecessor and as is a majority of the city council. Yet none of this "critically important" diversity seems to have mattered after 25-year-old Freddie Gray died earlier this month in police custody under circumstances that are still being investigated.

Some black Baltimoreans have responded by hitting the streets, robbing drugstores, minimarts and check-cashing establishments and setting fires. If you don't see the connection, it's because there isn't one. Like Brown's death, Gray's is being used as a convenient excuse for lawbreaking. If the Ferguson protesters were responding to a majority-black town being oppressively run by a white minority—which is the implicit argument of the Justice Department and the explicit argument of the liberal commentariat—what explains Baltimore?

Tensions between the police and low-income black communities stem from high crime rates in those areas. The sharp rise in violent crime in our inner cities, which dates to the 1970s and 1980s, happened to coincide with an increase in the number of black leaders in many of those very same cities. What can be said of Baltimore is also true of Cleveland, Detroit, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., where black mayors and police chiefs and aldermen and school superintendents have held sway for decades.

Chicago's population is 32% black, along with 26% of its police force, but it remains one of the most violent big cities in the country. There were more than 400 homicides in the Second City last year and some 300 of the victims were black, the Chicago Tribune reports. That's more than

double the number of black deaths at the hands of police in the entire country in a given year, according to FBI data.

Might the bigger problem be racial disparities in antisocial behavior, not the composition of law-enforcement agencies?

It was encouraging to hear a few Baltimore officials say as much Monday night as they watched their city burn. "I'm a lifelong resident of Baltimore, and too many people have spent generations building up this city for it to be destroyed by thugs who, in a very senseless way, are trying to tear down what so many have fought for," said Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake.

City Council President Jack Young pointedly recalled the Baltimore riots after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. "We cannot go back to 1968 where we burned down our own infrastructure and our own neighborhoods," he said. "We still have scars from 1968 where we had some burnt out buildings and businesses did not want to come back to the city of Baltimore. We have to stop the burning down and the breaking in of these stores because in the end it hurts us as a people."

Sadly, Mr. Young could have been describing any number of cities that experienced black rioting in the mid-1960s and took decades to recover, if they ever did. The riot that began in the Watts section of Los Angeles in 1965 resulted in 34 deaths, 4,000 arrests and 1,000 looted or destroyed businesses. The Detroit riots two years later caused 43 deaths and destroyed 2,500 businesses. Before the riots, both cities had sizable and growing black middle-class populations, where homeownership and employment exceeded the black national average. After the riots, those populations fled, and economic deprivation set in. Some 50 years later, Watts is still showing "scars" and Detroit remains in the hospital.

The violent-crime rate in Baltimore is more than triple the national average, and the murder rate is more than six times higher. As of April, city murders are 20% ahead of the number killed through the first three months of last year. But neither Mayor Rawlings-Blake nor Mr. Young needs any lectures from the media on Baltimore crime. The mayor lost a 20-year-old cousin to gun violence two years ago. And earlier this month Mr. Young's 37-year-old nephew died from a gunshot wound to his head. Even the families of black elites in a city run by black elites can't escape this pathology.

Jewish World Review

Black Lives Matter

by Walter Williams

Before we examine the issue of police shootings of blacks, I would like to start the conversation with another question. Here it is: If a person chooses to stand on railroad tracks in the face of an oncoming train, who is responsible for his being run over? And if many people meet their maker this way, what would you recommend as the best way to reduce such deaths? Would you focus most of your efforts on train engineers, or would you counsel people not to stand on railroad tracks in the face of an oncoming train?

In principle, the answer to these questions might help with the issue of police shootings in general and particularly those of blacks. First, the Ferguson, Missouri, case: Having robbed a liquor store, the person is walking in the middle of the street and blocking traffic. A police officer

tells the person to get out of the street. What would you suggest the person do? Would you suggest that he ignore the police officer's instructions, push the officer as he attempts to get out of his vehicle and afterward attempt to take the officer's pistol?

In the case of the New York City death of Eric Garner, what would you recommend? A person is illegally selling cigarettes. The police try to effect an arrest. What would you recommend that the person do? As the police try to take the person into custody, would you advise the person to swat away the arms of the arresting officer, to tell the officer "Don't touch me!" and to continue resisting arrest?

What about the shooting of Walter Scott by a North Charleston, South Carolina, police officer? If an officer makes a traffic stop, would you advise that the driver flee so as to avoid arrest?

Let me be clear: I am justifying neither the behavior of police officers nor the deadly outcomes of their confrontations with these three black men. Similarly, I would not justify the behavior of a train engineer or the outcome a person experiences standing on the train tracks in the face of an oncoming train. I would counsel a person not to stand on railroad tracks in the face of an oncoming train. Similarly, the advice that I would give to anyone of any race in dealing with police is: Follow the officer's instructions. Do not resist arrest or attempt to flee. Do not assault the police officer or try to disarm him. Had this advice been taken, Michael Brown, Eric Garner and Walter Scott would be alive today.

Criminal activity is a major problem in many black communities. That means many black citizens will have some kind of contact with police officers, either as victims of crime or as criminals. One of the true tragedies is that black politicians, preachers and civil rights advocates give massive support to criminals such as Brown, Garner and Scott. How much support do we see for the overwhelmingly law-abiding members of the black community preyed upon by criminals?

The average American has no idea of the day-to-day threats and fears encountered by the law-abiding majority in black neighborhoods on account of thugs. In addition to giving threats and instilling fears, criminals have turned many black communities into economic wastelands where there is a lack of services that most Americans take for granted, such as supermarkets, other shops and even home delivery. Black residents must bear the expense of having to go out of their neighborhoods to shop or shop at high-cost mom and pop stores.

The protest chant that black lives matter appears to mean that black lives matter only if they are taken at the hands of white police officers.

Washington Post

[The Clintons' worst defender in chief](#)

by Ruth Marcus

Oh, Bill. There you go again. We knew you were going to pop off, but did it have to be so soon — and so tone-deaf?

The Clinton deal is "[two for the price of one](#)," as Bill Clinton famously promised in 1992. But 23 years later, that bargain comes with different baggage attached.

Then it was the intimations of Hillary Clinton as co-president, Machiavelli in a pantsuit. Now — and let us pause to appreciate the role reversal and the country's journey on issues of gender — it is the awkward reality of running not only while married to an ex-president but also as a name partner in the sprawling entity of Clinton Inc.

Into this treacherous swamp strolls Bill Clinton, on an annual Clinton Foundation trip to Africa. His [interview with NBC News's Cynthia McFadden](#) was vintage Clinton, with its air of injured dismissiveness about concerns over his assiduous fundraising and lucrative speechifying.

Will you continue to give speeches, McFadden asked? “Oh yeah,” Clinton responded, as if the notion of calling a halt during his wife's presidential campaign were absurd. “I gotta pay our bills.”

Oh. My. God.

As if the first \$500,000 speech, or the 11th, were not enough. As if the former president had not raked in [more than \\$100 million on the speaking circuit](#) since leaving office. As if stopping would leave the Clintons huddled around the kitchen table, worrying over which bills to pay. Baby needs a new pair of Louboutins.

More self-justifying on the speaking fees:

- Clinton takes 10 percent off the top of his income every year to give to his foundation. Okay, that's admirable, but does it really explain the compulsive vacuuming of six-figure checks?
- [“It's the most independence I can get.](#) If I had a business relationship with somebody, they would have a target on their back from the day they did business with me until the end.” Translation: Trust me, it could be a lot sleazier.
- [“Over the last 15 years,](#) I've taken almost no capital gains.” This justification echoes Hillary Clinton's comments on the [“dead broke” book tour](#). You can hear Bill and Hillary alone in Chappaqua, N.Y., complaining about how they pay taxes at high, ordinary income rates, when every investment banker they know — and they know a lot — benefits from the carried interest loophole.

One problem with this defense is that it probably doesn't carry much weight with Hillary Clinton's “everyday” voters. What, they'd be offended about Bill Clinton's \$500,000-a-pop speeches, but now that they know he didn't take advantage of lower capital-gains rates, they're okay with it?

Another problem is that it's factually incorrect, unless you are in the mega-rich category in which paying [close to \\$400,000 in capital-gains taxes](#) is the equivalent of “almost no capital gains.” That's what the Clintons paid just from 2000 to 2006, their latest tax filings on record.

Then, there is the trademark Clintonian, vast-right-wing-conspiracy pity party. “There has been a very deliberate attempt to take the foundation down,” Bill Clinton said. “And there's almost no new fact that's known now that wasn't known when she ran for president the first time.”

Not true. There have been lots of new facts occasioned by the simultaneity of Hillary Clinton's service as secretary of state and the operations of Clinton Inc., both its charitable arm and its speech-making unit.

“We have never done anything knowingly inappropriate in terms of taking money to influence any kind of American government policy,” Bill Clinton asserted. “Knowingly inappropriate” — the 2016 version of Al Gore’s [“no controlling legal authority.”](#)

Indeed, Clinton’s own defense refuted his no-new-fact argument. “We do our best to vet them,” he said of speaking invitations. “And I have turned down a lot of them. If I think there’s something wrong with it, I don’t take it.”

Oh, well, then. If it’s Clinton-vetted, the rest of us needn’t bother.

Some important perspective here: None of this is remotely criminal. The efforts to compare the Clintons’ behavior to that of former Virginia governor Bob McDonnell (R), [convicted of taking bribes](#), or New Jersey Sen. Robert Menendez (D), [indicted on charges of the same](#), ignore the most important fact, or more specifically, the absence thereof: There is no evidence, none, of any official act related to these donations or speaking fees.

But not remotely criminal is vastly different from being smart politically. Hillary Clinton needs a better defense and, candidly, a better defender. Bill Clinton is a terrific explainer in chief. Just not when it comes to explaining his own behavior.

Washington Post - The Fix **[Bill Clinton \(still\) doesn’t get it](#)**

by Chris Cillizza

Bill Clinton is the best politician of his generation and [one of the all-time greats](#). No serious person can dispute that fact.

And yet, in [an interview with NBC News over the weekend](#), Bill showed, yet again, [the blind spot that he and, to a lesser extent, his wife, have when it comes to their relationships with donors and how they talk about their own personal finances](#).

Two Clinton quotes really stood out to me.

1. "People should draw their own conclusions. I'm not in politics. All I'm saying is the idea that there's one set of rules for us and another set for everybody else is true."

Um, okay. First of all, the "I'm not in politics" line is absolutely amazing. The world has rarely created someone as political (and as good at being political) as Bill Clinton. He will always be "in politics"; it's, literally, who he is.

The second sentence is more eye-opening. This is Bill Clinton in self-pitying mode; people treat us so unfairly and we do so much good and so on and so forth. Feeling bad for yourself is never an attractive look for a politician but especially in this case. At issue is a family that includes the former president of the United States and the heavy favorite to be the next Democratic presidential nominee. By dint of those titles, the Clintons operate in a different space than normal people and even normal politicians. Do they get more scrutiny than some? Sure. Do they get lots of benefits from their status? Absolutely yes.

The truth is that the Clinton Foundation, the nonprofit group that Bill, Hillary and Chelsea head, has been the main vehicle for Hillary and Bill Clinton's activities since she left as secretary of state following the 2012 election. Given that, it makes perfect sense that the Clinton Foundation would be subject to questions — even if [it hadn't admitted to not adhering to its own established donation practices](#) a few weeks ago.

Stories like this one by WaPo's Roz Helderman, [which details the relationship between the Clintons and a single donor who has given upwards of \\$100 million to the foundation](#), are totally fair game — and should be.

Bill Clinton, for some reason, doesn't get that.

2. "I gotta pay our bills."

This quote comes in response to question by NBC's Cynthia McFadden about the large speaking fees (\$500,000 and above) that Clinton charged organizations during the time Hillary Clinton was secretary of state.

It brings back memories of [Hillary Clinton's claim that the family was "dead broke" when they left the White House in 2000](#). (She later said she regretted using those words to discuss the couple's financial situation.)

Here's the thing: I am sure the Clintons have big bills, as any couple would who live a lifestyle anything like theirs. But no one wants to hear about the big bills of a couple likely worth hundreds of millions of dollars. ([Bill Clinton made \\$105 million from paid speaking gigs alone between 2001 and 2013](#).) It just doesn't sit well. And it makes any attempt to portray Hillary as a "regular person" that much harder.

There's no question that Bill Clinton can be an asset to his wife's campaign. But as we saw in 2008, he can also be a problem — if he comes across as angry, self-pitying and out-of-touch. This NBC interview tilts in the latter direction more than anyone in Clintonworld would like to see.

National Journal

[Clinton Conundrum: What If 2016 Isn't Just About Winning?](#)

Scandal can affect a campaign and reflect a presidency.

by Ron Fournier

The New York Times [reported](#) today: "Hillary Rodham Clinton appears to have initially weathered a barrage of news about her use of a private email account when she was secretary of State and the practices of her family's foundation." Two-thirds of Americans consider her a strong leader, according to a [new Times poll](#), and 48 percent say she's honest. Both numbers are up since March.

Two days ago, The Wall Street Journal reported: "Hillary Clinton's stature has been battered after more than a month of controversy over her fundraising and email practices." Four in 10 people view her negatively, according to a [new WSJ/NBC poll](#), and only a quarter of registered voters call her honest. Both numbers are down since April.

Five days ago, an [Associated Press-GfK poll](#) showed that 61 percent of people don't think "honest" is a good description for Clinton.

What's going on?

First, these are all solid polls. The differences in findings are due to a variety of factors including the wording of questions, the makeup of people surveyed, and the public's inattention to an election that is still 18 months away.

Second, these vagaries are a reminder of two separate and distinct questions that journalists and operatives should ask themselves during any political controversy.

1. How does it affect the campaign? This is where polls are important; measures of voters' shifting opinions are relevant, if not reliable (see above).

2. How does it reflect the kind of president the candidate would be? This is where public opinion doesn't rule; journalists, in particular, need to follow the facts and not the polls.

Whether the next survey cuts for or against Clinton doesn't change what we know about her actions, what we still must find out about her actions, and how those actions might be predictive of her presidency.

What we know so far is that she violated White House ethics rules on government email and foreign donations to the Clinton Foundation. She deleted emails, disabled her rogue email server, and allowed the brazen comingling of government business and the family business.

Integrity. Transparency. Accountability. These are attributes that people, particularly younger Americans, expect to see from leaders in an era of radical connectivity, social change, and institutional decline. So far, they're not seeing such qualities in Candidate Clinton.

I think she needs to come clean to win the public's trust: Allow an independent review of the email and return foreign donations, because anything less fails to recognize how much media and information has been democratized since the 1990s, when the tactics she's now using were effective. But I may be wrong.

Perhaps The New York Times poll suggests that people won't base their votes upon these early controversies.

Or maybe voters will judge her harshly, but then Republicans will nominate a person whose character and leadership ability looks worse than the Clintons'.

She could win a lesser-of-two-evils election, which would further divide and polarize the nation.

That would be OK with people like [Eric Boehlert](#), an unyieldingly liberal partisan who works for the pro-Clinton [Media Matters](#). Seizing on The New York Times poll as proof that the boss had weathered the controversy, Boehlert took a victory lap around Twitter.

Team Clinton blames the foundation controversy on a book called [Clinton Cash](#), rather than acknowledging the scores of nonpartisan media outlets that confirmed many of the author's findings and uncovered several of their own. It's a cynical, disingenuous strategy. It might work.

Contentions

Will Britain's Cameron Survive the Election?

by Tom Wilson

Britain is currently in the grips of one of the most closely fought elections in decades. Of course, the same could have been said five years ago at the last election. In a rare occurrence for Britain the 2010 election saw no outright winner, a hung parliament. That time the Conservatives managed to pull together a coalition with the country's third party, the Liberal Democrats. But as Britain's formerly solid two party system has further disintegrated it is not only once again looking unlikely that any party will have an outright majority but worse, current polls foretell of a parliament in which it is difficult to see either the Conservatives or the Labor opposition being able to form a workable coalition.

The fact that sitting Prime Minister David Cameron looks unable to secure a majority is itself cause for comment. Yes, it is usual for incumbents to see their mandate reduced if re-elected. But it is also far from impossible for the opposite to happen. In 1983 Margaret Thatcher significantly increased the Conservative vote from what she polled in 1979. To be sure, Cameron is no Thatcher. But what his government has done in turning around the British economy from the mess bequeathed by the last Labor government ought to have been enough to have won the votes for a majority.

Britain had after all been hit particularly hard by the global recession. Unemployment spiraled and the Labor government engaged in a bout of Greek style borrowing. It was unsurprising then that the Conservatives came out of the 2010 election as the largest party, but what should concern Britain's center-right is the fact that even then Cameron failed to actually win the election outright. In fact, even with Labor having presided over one of the longest and deepest declines in GDP since the Second World War, it was still the left that essentially won that election. Combined, Labour and the Liberal Democrats took the most votes and the most parliamentary seats.

The leader of the Liberals subsequently infuriated much of his party, as well his voter base, when he went on to form a coalition with Cameron rather than Labor. And while some have predicted that the price will be electoral catastrophe for the Liberals, the British economy has been the beneficiary of that move.

In the past five years Cameron's government has made cuts to government spending, reduced the size of government, taken the poorest out of tax, reformed welfare to incentivize work, and made a start at reducing the deficit. The results have been promising. Last year the British economy grew faster than any other major economy in the world, making it now the second largest in Europe. Wages have risen against prices, as inflation has remained low. Along with a boom in business start-ups, some 2.3 million jobs were created in the private sector over the past five years. Indeed, between 2010 and 2013 more jobs were created in Yorkshire than in the whole of France (there are 5 million people living in Yorkshire, as opposed to 66 million in statist France).

Contrary to the predictions of the left, Cameron's government has even overseen modest improvements in public services and has reduced crime measurably. And yet despite all this it is the Labor party—led by the unpopular Ed Miliband—that has received a five or six point swing in the opinion polls. And Labor's prospects may be further boosted by the rise of the Scottish Nationalist Party, which has offered to back legislation from a Labor government in the next

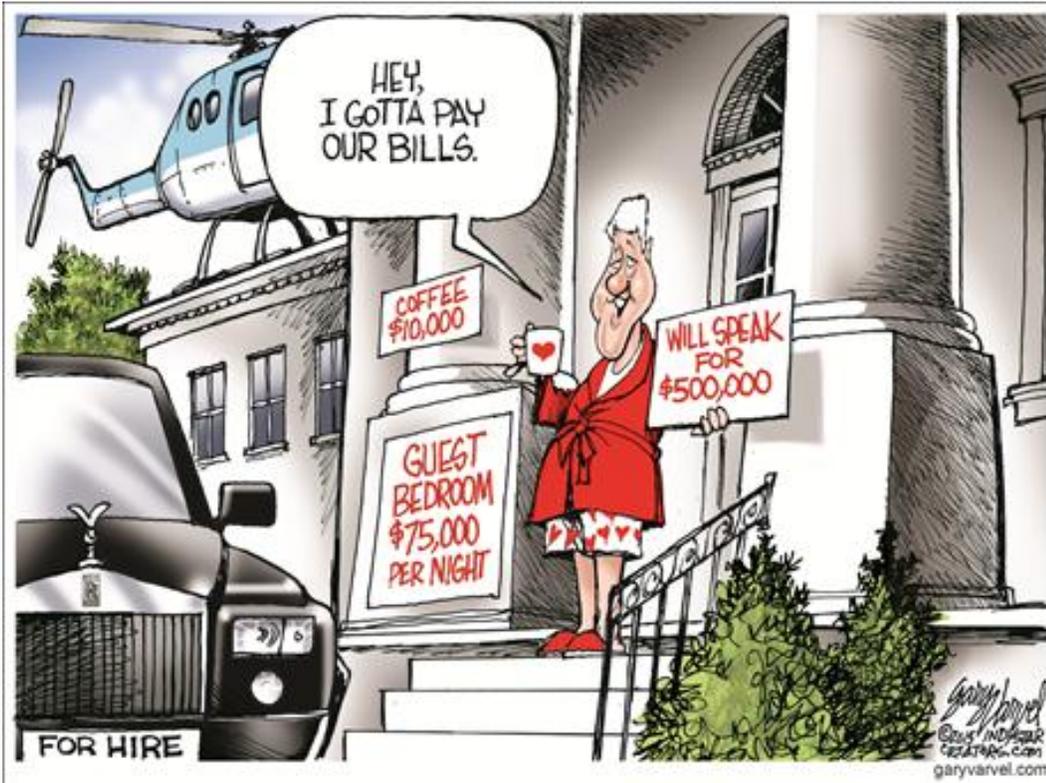
parliament. But the SNP is also a party that combines anti-English micro-nationalism with a strain of socialist economics too radical for even Labor's tastes.

So how to explain the mood of the British electorate, which is now quite possibly poised to depose a prime minister that has turned their country's economy around? One explanation could be the role of the ethnic minority vote. That is to say, Labor could be brought back into office with the help of many of the people who came to Britain as part of the policies of mass immigration and multiculturalism promoted by Tony Blair's government from the late 1990s onwards. By some estimates Labor now gets about half of all its votes in England from ethnic minorities, with some communities such as the Muslim one voting almost exclusively for the left. As Ben Judah recently argued in [Politico](#), Labor risks becoming an ethnic minority party.

But there is another factor, and that is the role of the British media and popular culture. While the UK print media may be split between the left and right, the broadcasters, dominated as they are by the BBC, have a noticeable left-liberal lean. And while the BBC may not be party political, the values it pushes are noticeably those of the liberal-left. The same could be said of the values taught in elementary schools. British children are now reared on a junk diet of "progressive" thinking.

In the popular imagination the Conservatives have been framed as the party of heartless elitism. This election you can find plenty of homes proudly displaying Labor placards. You will be hard pressed to find many Tory ones. Well, who wants to out themselves to their neighbors as "selfish"? And so Britain may now be becoming a country in which no matter what economic miracles Cameron works, no Conservative government can win a solid majority.







d