



Clinton, Inc.: The Audacious Rebuilding of a Political Machine

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Weekly Standard editor Daniel Halper provides a meticulously researched account of the brilliant calculations, secret deals, and occasionally treacherous maneuverings that led to the Clintons' return to political prominence.

In the twelve years since the Clintons left the White House, they have gone from being virtually penniless to multi-millionaires, and are arguably the most popular politicians in America--respected and feared by Republicans and Democrats alike. But behind that rise is a never-before-told story of strategic cleverness, reckless gambles, and an unquenchable thirst for political power.

Investigative reporter Daniel Halper uses a wealth of research, exclusive documents, and detailed interviews with close friends, allies, and enemies of the Clintons to reveal the strategy they used and the deals they made to turn their political fortunes around. Clinton, Inc. exposes the relationship between President Obama, the Bush family, and the Clintons--and what it means for the future; how Bill and Hillary are laying the groundwork for the upcoming presidential campaign; how Vice President Biden and other Democrats are trying to maneuver around her; Chelsea's politi(more...)

Clinton, Inc.: The Audacious Rebuilding of a Political Machine Details

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Author : Daniel Halper

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Daniel Halper

From Reader Review Clinton, Inc.: The Audacious Rebuilding of a Political Machine for online ebook

Jane says

I enjoyed reading this for three primary reasons: (1) a compelling description of just how carefully the Clintons have managed their support base for decades (2) the role of Chelsea in the Clinton Foundation and upcoming Hillary campaign and (3) a surprising account of how methodically they have worked to court Republican politicians since the 2008 election and how very successful they have been in softening opposition.

It was marred, I believe, by gossip and innuendo which I found very tiresome.

However, the book is carefully researched for the most part, and I am glad I read it.

Phillip W. says

A scrupulous reporting of how Bill and Hillary Clinton have rehabilitated their political images and expanded their sprawling and power political empire.

If you want to know how real contemporary power politics work, this is the primer to read. The Clinton's are fascinating because they are unabashed political grotesques and have no capacity for shame or embarrassment in pursuit of their ambitions.

The book offers revealing portraits and new insights into the Clinton's we thought we knew so well. Who knew Bill was really friendless, despite his gregarious appetites? Or that Hillary surrounds herself with a close coterie of life-long lady friends and is warm and considerate in private company.

However, these people are voracious and vicious political animals who view most of life as transactional for the purposes of power. Why are they fascinating? Because, in the end, they are sad grotesques that hold your attention because you just can't believe your seeing what you saw.

Were it not for raging incompetence of Barack Obama, the Clinton's would be political museum pieces. However, while Obama may have defeated "Billary" in 2008, his incompetence as president has left a whole wide enough in the political universe to cause us to have something like nostalgia for these tawdry and ambitious creatures known as the Clintons.

They get an A+ for raw political will, for sure.

Cheryl says

Clinton Inc. was a fascinating look into the political machine of Bill and Hillary Clinton. At the end of his presidency, Bill Clinton's reputation was severely damaged. His reckless behavior with Monica Lewinsky (and others), his unseemly pardon of Marc Rich in exchange for large contributions to his Hillary's Senate

campaign, the Democratic National Committee, and the Clinton Library from Marc Rich's ex-wife Denise, his staff taking everything they could get their hands on as they left the White House all served (among other things) to seriously damage his image in the eye of the public. This is the story of how Bill and Hillary Clinton became (yet again) the comeback kids. They are both shrewd, smart, manipulative political animals who know how to play the rough game of politics, how to rehabilitate their image, and how to destroy their opposition when crossed. A number of years ago my oldest son took a course at Duke University called "Leadership in American History." Well aware of my interest in history and politics, he recommended that I read two of the books that he was assigned to read in the course. The books were "All the King's Men" by Robert Penn Warren, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and arguably one of the best novels ever written about American politics and "Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership from Nixon to Clinton" by David Gergen who served in both Republican and Democratic administrations. If this course is still offered at Duke, "Clinton Inc. The Audacious Rebuilding of a Political Machine" would be an excellent addition to the required reading list, not to mention a must read before the 2016 presidential election campaign.

Maria says

The title is both deceiving and truthful. Yes, it does tell you how the Clintons literally "started from the bottom" to the pinnacle of American political power and celebrity. However, it does not tell you that inside the book is just a bunch of Clinton poison.

While every single page of the book was interesting, and while Halper was able to interview reliable sources such as John McCain, Newt Gingrich, and Bob Shrum, there are too much anonymous sources that I no longer bothered to count how many times the author would say "a source."

Maybe ClintonWorld is as terrifying as he makes it sound — filled with blackmail, calculation, and pure spite — but is it really that bad that no one would bother to want to publicize their comments? What is this, the communist Soviet Union? And if that were the case, it has made me question the courage it would take for someone to write a book like this. (Better call up the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library for a nomination on a Profile of Courage).

At some points the book sounded like an episode right out of *Scandal*. And any nonfiction work that seems like a fictional TV show is never a good sign.

I'm not saying Bill and Hillary aren't what they are like on television or in interviews. I know nothing personal about Bill and Hillary, except those that have been made public, but I questioned the credibility of the sources far too many times to give this book more than three stars — which, by the way, is a generous rate considering how I actually persevered to finish this book.

Joseph says

Ah, not particularly well researched and not particularly informative. Kind of a waste of time, but I did plow through it. The biggest point that is reiterated here is that the Clinton marriage is one that above all else is currently calculated on the politics of getting Hillary elected president. That is very likely to happen.

I did like the fact that Huma and Anthony Weiner got their due. "The problem was her husband. "I think

Huma was trying to separate the same way; the problem is she married a fucking douche bag. You know, I think she was trying to make that same transition that Doug made," says a ClintonWorld associate. "She was transitioning out of State. She was trying to be an advisor but still make money on the side. Then her husband turned out to be the biggest fucking asshole in the world."

And, the gloves came off, at long last, with regard to Chelsea. "Chelsea might not know everything that goes on around her. Nevertheless, "She's really inserted herself," says a source, building a reputation as something of a ruthless operator prone to self-pity and entitlement. Just like dear old dad, who is now actively encouraging her entry into another aspect of the family business. Some sympathetic to Band quietly wonder whether Chelsea will be able to manage the sprawling network given her young age and limited experience. As for her mother's 2016 hopes, Chelsea's emergence poses similar problems, ones which her rivals hope to take advantage of."

Okay, that gives you the flavor. Basically, this book surveys the usual conservative sources and was timed to come out just before the 2016 election to maximize sales.

Lee says

A book obviously mainly told from one side which tells of the Clinton Dynasty and mainly the continuation of the money raising political after Bill left the White House to continue working for Hillary.

Justin Tapp says

I worked through Clinton Inc. by Daniel Halper and Clinton Cash by Peter Schweizer subsequently. I found Clinton Cash to be much more intelligent and factually accurate, the author investigates financial records and the timing of Sen. Clinton's meetings, votes, and policy changes when she was at the State Department. Clinton, Inc. is a much longer view of the lives of the Clintons, is less precise in its focus, and definitely biased in its commentary. The author focuses less on their actual income and business dealings than Clinton Cash does so the title is sort of a misnomer. I recommend the latter highly over the former. (I have also read Hillary's previous two memoirs and two other books written about her, so I'm not approaching these books ignorantly.)

Clinton, Inc. opens with an apt quote from The Great Gatsby:

"They were careless people, Tom and Daisy--they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back to their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made."

This book actually reminded me more of Michael Lazenby's acclaimed biography of Michael Jordan, as the author mainly just compiles 30 years of other people's articles and books on various Clinton controversies. Similarly, Daniel Halper did not interview the Clintons but interviewed everyone else remotely connected to them that would grant him time. He writes that he was contacted by Clinton handlers like James Carville to find out what he was writing about and warned repeatedly.

It is not a balanced view, there are too many times when Halper inserts opinion as fact. When Hillary cries, the tears are "prepared," without citing a source saying as such. There is too much armchair psychiatry-- is

Bill Clinton subconsciously trying to wreck his wife's campaigns because the scrutiny and security details he would face if she is President would hamper his lavish lifestyle and numerous mistresses? (Halper provides documents and interview sources for both of those).

There are the reminders of what was publicly criticized about Bill Clinton's presidency:

The last-minute pardon of Mark Rich that stunned Carville and other long-time friends and made a "lifelong enemy" of future Obama AG Eric Holder. Rich was pardoned after he and his wife made lavish donations to Clinton's library, Hillary's Senate campaign, and the DNC.

After the bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, Bill Clinton gave no help to Louis Freeh who was investigating and needed cooperation from the Saudis. Clinton met with Saudi leadership but came away with over \$10 million in donations to his library and Freeh's investigation was never brought up.

While Governor of Arkansas and running for re-election as President, Bill Clinton (and the DNC) illegally took Chinese money for his legal defense fund or campaign and later had to give it back.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1996_Un...

Similarly, Hillary Clinton's first presidential campaign and the Clinton Global Initiative saw an inflow of donations and speaking fees (for Bill) from India and Indian ex-pats, something the Obama campaign pointed out and later apologized for. Both campaigns had donations where it appeared the money was coming from foreigners funneled by U.S. proxies.

The Clinton Global Initiative has similarly taken millions in foreign donations that it has not been as transparent about as promised under its Memorandum of Understanding with the White House when Hillary became Secretary of State. The timing of many of these donations and "speaking fees" for Bill coincide either with key votes and hearings in the Senate or policy decisions while Hillary was Secretary of State. The Clintons have always had multiple staffers getting multiple salaries from both government agencies, the Clintons' foundation, and other private sources creating a complex web of interest conflicts. Just this past week, it was revealed that Huma Abedin, Hillary's "second daughter," was investigated for playing fast-and-loose with her time sheet and compensation while at the State Department.

<http://www.politico.com/story/2015/09...>

Likewise, the man who supposedly maintained Hillary's private email server did not disclose his multiple income sources to the State Department and could be in trouble. Abedin, according to Halper, was intent on having her own career outside Hillaryland until her husband Anthony Weiner resigned his congressional seat in disgrace and suddenly she needed income and away back in. Now, she's active on the presidential campaign for "rehabilitation."

Then there is the not-illegal-but-disgusting aspects of Clinton World:

Bill Clinton's playboy lifestyle. Halper cites many "anonymous" insiders on the exploits of Clinton and his Global Initiative business partners and what they do on their private jets and offices. The guy who plays President Bartlett's "body man" in The West Wing said he had modeled himself after Clinton's own body man, Doug Band, whom he had spent a lot of time with. Band knows Bill "better than anyone" and has profited off it. Here is one New Republic article if you want a criticism from the Left:

<http://www.newrepublic.com/article/11...>

Bill Clinton's mistress on the 2008 campaign trail was an open secret. Israeli intelligence supposedly had recordings of Clinton's phone sex conversations with Lewinsky and used it for blackmail, the Russians seem to also have had some intel on his exploits.

Hillary became the first Secretary of State to have a spokesperson for her personal affairs and office rather than one which represented the State Department as a whole. Halper writes that it was the Clinton campaign that started the Obama "birther" rumors in 2007 that the Republicans have since been blamed for. There is Media Matters and other pro-Clinton outfits that try to manipulate or intimidate the media into favoring Hillary, these got ugly during the 2007 campaign as many in the Democratic establishment (such as the

Kennedys) began to favor Obama, who Bill Clinton was famously reluctant to support. Halper interviews John McCain who reveals that Bill Clinton and he conversed frequently throughout the campaign, Clinton advising the opponent of his own party.

The Clintons, particularly Bill, have a way of charming their enemies and Halper devotes much of the book to this aspect. Halper quotes former enemies such as Trent Lott, Ken Starr, Newt Gingrich, and the Bush family as praising and defending Bill Clinton after he repeatedly reached out to them over the years, sometimes sending a note of condolence after tragedy or inviting them to meetings where he'd be quite personable. People who have lent rooms to Clinton only to see him trash them in his escapades still get calls from Bill in which he again endears himself to them and they remain loyal.

But what can be said about Hillary's improprieties? Clinton, Inc. contains much less damning evidence than Clinton Cash. She was a true "team player" in Obama's cabinet. She got along with Bob Gates and other cabinet members, and earned the respect of John McCain and others when she was Senator. But Halper spares no punches in discussing Bhengazi, writing that Clinton "did not lift a finger" to offer any aid to the besieged consulate, make phone calls to the White House or the Defense Department, or seem to even be getting updates as it was going on. He quotes her Senate testimony as simply avoiding the questions. It is clear Halper has convicted Hillary on these points in his own mind. Halper relies heavily on previous muck-raking books regarding Hillary's relationship with Vince Foster and the mysteriousness of his death.

Contrary to other journalists, Halper takes the Obama-Clinton joint appearance on 60 Minutes as an overt endorsement of Clinton for President, even though Halper writes often that Team Obama "despises" the Clintons and see Bill as "overrated." Here is where I see one potential inaccuracy of Halper's reporting: he writes that Obama "disdains" Joe Biden, hence the endorsement of Hillary. This is the opposite of what Ed Klein has written, that the Clintons were irked by what they perceived as reneging on the deal made during the re-election campaign-- Bill Clinton would campaign hard for Obama and do his magical speech at the DNC in return for Obama's endorsement of Hillary. Ed Klein wrote that the 60 Minutes bit was not an overt endorsement of Clinton because Obama liked Joe Biden and thought he should also consider running. I have read Bob Gates and Leon Panetta's memoirs, as well as the Broadwell biography of David Petraeus, and all write about how Biden is the last person in the room with Obama on major decisions and meetings. They certainly seem to have a chummy relationship, even though Obama obviously struggled with Biden's gaffes. This contrasts with the "insider" portrait of Obama hating his "non-person" VP, and I don't buy it.

I give this book 2.5 stars. If you're looking for a summary of all that has been written about Clinton scandals through the years, this book will save you the time of reading the previous ones. If you're looking for original thoughts or research, there is not many. I find it amusing that several of the 1-star reviews for this book state that it was too favorable and didn't go far enough, as it leaves out some of the more incredible conspiracy theories about the Clintons.

Kym Robinson says

I read this book with the presumption that it would be an anti Clinton piece tainting them as egotistical socio paths. An image which to be honest I had already held for them, based upon my my own outsiders determinations. I was in many ways expecting this book to be a softer version of Christopher Hitchens' book 'No one Left to lie to', which goes to the jugular of Bill Clinton and his political legacy in a less than balanced way. This book is in no way so direct or personal in its attacks on the family.

I found that in reading this book my opinions on Bill Clinton remained the same, as it confirmed what many other sources and anecdotes had painted of the former president. That he was a self absorbed, though intelligent man possessing a super memory while having the dangerous addictive lust for women, whether they were obliging or not. The book gave examples of Bill and Hillary's characters that can be admired as well as something to be shunned and found concerning. It was the many depictions of Hillary however that I found most interesting.

Though this book, and many others like it, does not portray Hillary as a super woman nor as the shining hope for America. It does however show her as being an actual woman, a mother and a human being with all of the faults and virtues that are found in most individuals thrown onto the grand stage of political and historical theater. I found that this book removed some of the illusions of the cold political witch that seems to surround Hillary and instead related to examples of her being a driven, loyal and focused woman who remains strong in many ways to some of her ideological convictions. Whether or not you agree or disagree with her ideology (I disagree) one can not help to respect an individual that for the most part stays the course according to their beliefs. Despite the inevitability of compromise found in popular politics. That being said there are many recent examples of a more recent Hillary showing her true political colours of chameleon and populist politics which at times defies her earlier rhetoric, but is that not near all politicians?

The book has a lot of tales and anecdotes from every aspect of American political theater and helps to give a somewhat decent portrayal of the more recent history for the Clinton machine. The book helps to illustrate the narcissism of Bill, the surprising charm of Hillary and the calculating snobbery of Chelsea all the while allowing the reader to appreciate that despite the many flaws in these people, they are still human beings. A quality that the aforementioned Hitchens avoided in doing when ever he indulges in a one sided attack piece.

I think that if you are a shallow Democrat or a fan of the Clinton family then this book may harm the illusions of a sacred entity, if you however are objective in your loyalties then maybe you will enjoy it. For the stereotypical Republicans and critics of the Family, the book perhaps does not go full 'Hitchens' in its condemnations and may not be for you.

I found this book to be a quick and interesting read and while I am no way any more sympathetic or charmed by the Clinton machine. I am however in admiration of their tenacity and fluid ability to navigate and seduce the many players of American political life. Will Hillary win 2016 ? Who knows but her running despite the many obstacles she has encountered as far as being considered a candidate does illustrate her long term determination to become Mrs POTUS. The reality of it all is simply this, she would be no better or no worse than the last two 'leaders of the 'free' world' but alas the political theater of two party politics defies this truth.

But never forget that through all of the portrayals of any political animal, they are flawed human beings, except that the consequence of their inadequacies and savagery is far reaching and destroys more lives than can ever be calculated. This is not merely a trait of the Clinton's but can also be reserved for other sacred families in American nepotistic political culture from Kennedy to Bush.

A good and easy read.

75 %

Laura says

I picked up Weekly Standard reporter's tome on the rebuilding of the Clintons' (both Bill's and Hillary's) political images over the past 15 years because the topic interests me - I was not expecting unbiased reporting or the articulation of a position favorable to the subjects of the book. I was, however, expecting something better than a collection of unsubstantiated screed, written at the evidentiary and content level of grocery store tabloids and a grammatical level that should have required heavy copy editing. Most of the "reporting" is repetition of unattributed rumor - it seems like everyone with something nasty to say insists on being anonymous or "on background." This is topped off with the occasional sketchy sarcastic aside by Mr. Halper, again without any kind of factual confirmable back-up (e.g, as Secretary Clinton reads her testimony during Senate hearings on Benghazi, "her face"wrinkled and her skin sagged even lower than usual," he notes she "choked back prepared tears." The references to appearance are gratuitously mean, and he has no way to know if the tears were real are not. The meanness is not appropriate or effective, and in fact weakens the argument he is making.) It could all be true -- but you can't prove it if you can't check it, and if no one can check you can say anything. I'd argue you should print the unattributed stuff if you can't substantiate with someone or something on the record. This one's right there with the worst stuff on conservative talk radio.

Grazyna Nawrocka says

The reason I reached for this book, was that I wanted to sort my ideas about Hillary. On the surface everything was perfect, still I was against her winning. How did it happen that she didn't get the job? As the author explained it, many people had "a visceral feeling" about her candidacy. The book itself is made up in big part of speculations. I didn't like "Chasing Hillary" chapter. The author discovered mode of operation, which seems true for the whole Clinton's family. After finishing to read, two ideas crossed my mind: I can't imagine Bill Clinton as a "First Mate," and now I know who was an engine behind bad media cover of Donald Trump candidacy.

Robert Melnyk says

Excellent and interesting book on the political careers of Bill and Hillary Clinton. While the book is certainly not a rah rah book for the Clintons, it is also not entirely negative on them either. It is a blunt, factual look at how they operate. How they are able to "win friends and influence people", how they manage to successfully destroy their enemies, manipulate the press to their benefit, and continually rebuild their images in the wake of scandal and catastrophe. They are shrewd politicians with both good and bad qualities, who have been very successful in the world of American politics.

Bob says

Too many anonymous "off the record" sources but nevertheless a look at a political machine and how it works.

Jerry says

I'm in the acknowledgements. What's not to like? Besides the terrible language used by so many people in politics...

Kathleen says

Poisonously written. Poisonously narrated. The author is shocked, shocked I tell you, that the Clintons are blatantly politically ambitious. Every interviewee who claims to have fond feelings about either Bill or Hillary is suspected of lying. Every interviewee who has dirt to dish has requested anonymity. I'm listening to this as I drive and I almost went off the road while listening to the interview with Newt Gingrich discussing the Clinton marriage.

And yet, I cannot stop listening. I have only myself to blame.

Steve says

It never ceases to amaze me the number of political tell-all books that are released just prior to every presidential election cycle. Daniel Halper's 2014 release, "Clinton, Inc." may be slightly ahead of the 2016 campaign, but nevertheless is no exception to the rule. Whether these political exposes actually make a difference in the outcome of who wins the White House would make an interesting book in itself. It's hard to judge here if Halper meant to help or hurt Hillary Rodham Clinton's expected second race to the Oval Office.

Halper seems to uncover some new ground here. Or, he at least puts into print what we may have thought to be true or false when it comes to the Clinton political machine. For one example, Halper suggests that "Hillary Clinton has built a virtual dossier of praise and support from Republican colleagues who might publicly denounce her for political purposes but in private seem to downright like her." That pretty much sums up everything you need to know about the next presidential vote. It's a reoccurring theme in this 285-page Clinton family profile. In short, the Republicans' "love affair with Hillary," (at least Republicans who were Senator Clinton's biggest opponents during her time as First Lady), "demonstrates the difficulty her likely 2016 Republican challengers will face in trying to build a coalition against her."

Halper does a pretty thorough job here of unmasking the Clinton mystique. He takes us inside the personalities of Bill, Hillary and their only child, Chelsea, warts and all. Halper finds the former president to be "self-indulgent, shameless, brilliant, capable, scandalous and . . . a consummate charmer." The author also digs into Bill Clinton's "now-famous bond with the Bush family---and the larger BushWorld in general." Halper suggests that "was a key element in the rebuilding of the Clinton brand." Newt Gingrich for one thinks that odd alliance isn't healthy. The former Speaker of the House told Halper, "The most single damaging thing the Bush family has done to politics was to resuscitate Bill and Hillary Clinton and give them a bipartisan veneer."

An online editor for the Weekly Standard, Daniel Halper covers a lot of political ground here. He reviews the

numerous Clinton scandals, both legal and sexual. He probes into the Clinton's rumored "enemies list." He speculates on a rumored deal between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. This so-called "alliance of necessity," Halper seems to suggest will all but guarantee the former Secretary of State a place in history as the first female President of the United States.

If there's any weakness to this well-researched and documented Clinton bio it's this: Time and time again, Halper is forced to identify his source as someone "who requested anonymity to speak more freely." It's admirable that Halper got so many people to reportedly dish the dirt on the Clinton's, (as long as they were not identified.) But, so many un-named sources could also suggest that it's all smoke and mirrors. You could argue, do these anonymous people really exist? If so, what are they afraid of? Why won't they talk on the record? Or, Dorothy, should we just not pay attention to the man, (or woman), behind the curtain?
