

Sirotablog

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The Politics of Hopelessness

"You were a corporate lawyer sitting on the board at Wal-Mart." - Barack Obama to Hillary Clinton, 1/22/08

The [exchange](#) lasted about 3 seconds - if you flipped the channel for a moment, you might have missed it. That was the amount of time the two leading candidates for the Democratic nomination for president spent talking about the corporate takeover of our government - the issue that almost singularly drives American politics and that is at the core of our country's most fundamental problems.

Clinton, of course, declined to address this part of her past - the part where she helped direct Wal-Mart, arguably the most efficiently rapacious, environmentally destructive, and anti-worker creation in all of human history. She cynically parried by mentioning a campaign contributor of Obama's who has been in some legal trouble - as if we are expected to forget the name [Norman Hsu](#), much less Clinton's status as the [top recipient of health industry cash in the entire Congress](#) - Republican or Democrat. And thanks to moderator Wolf Blitzer, the debate was quickly shifted to topics less uncomfortable for the corporate media like, say, how Barack Obama voted "present" in one half of one percent of his votes as a state legislator in Illinois. The horror.

Later in the debate, when John Edwards gave perhaps the most eloquent answer of all on a question about poverty, Clinton tried to one-up everyone by saying "when I graduated from law school, I didn't go to work for a law firm. I went to work for Marian Wright Edelman at the Children's Defense Fund." Yes, folks - forget about her time at Arkansas most powerful corporate law firm. Forget that she ignored potential conflicts-of-interest to serve at that corporate law firm even as her husband was governor of the state. Forget her role helping build Wal-Mart into the monster it is today. Forget even her sitting by and cheering as her husband's administration - which she now overtly asks voters to re-embrace with her candidacy - rammed NAFTA and welfare reform through Congress, throwing millions of people into poverty. Yes, just remember that for a few moments right out of college, she worked at a non-profit.

This is truly the politics of hopelessness - a politics mastered by a Clinton machine deft in all the dark arts of corruption and demagoguery.

It is a machine fueled by tens of millions of dollars of corporate cash from moneyed interests looking for the kind of [candidate who appears on the cover of Fortune magazine](#) and [laughs at workers](#) who were crushed by Clinton administration policies.

It is a machine that is all too happy to champion a former president who, according to today's Wall Street Journal, is happy to personally pocket [\\$20 million windfall from a well-connected crony](#).

It is a machine headed by a candidate who pushed the country into war, yet a candidate happy to attack an opponent for not opposing the same war more strenuously.

It is a machine only too thrilled to use innuendo to [play the race card](#).

It is a machine, in short, that is ready to once again prioritize the ugliest impulses of two dynasty-seeking egomaniacs using vapid soundbites ("[I'm a hand's on leader](#)") and intelligence-insulting slogans ("[Delivering Real Change](#)") to run "[over the dead bodies](#)" of Americans hoping for something different.

Posted by David Sirota