

AN EXCERPT FROM

Letters
to Hillary

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Hillary won the popular vote and with the narrowest of margins, she lost the electoral vote. Like me, you probably sat in front of your television throughout the evening of the election with anxiety and disbelief especially since the exit polls compared to the final results were so disparate in a few states.

I was sad, devastated, and inconsolable. I stayed up all night overtaken by the curse of the results yet still watching the television hoping that somehow the results would change. I could not go to work the next day—it was like a holy day of obligation that I had to fully focus on every detail of the outcome; it was a day of sadness, anger, and prayer for this country.

Letters to Hillary is the outcome of my personal angst. I asked many to write about their personal emotional journey and experiences since the election in a letter to Hillary. I humbly believe that this book of letters is not only an offering of our admiration to Hillary but also it is an important testament to our continued belief in our American values and our strength as women. Hillary said it most eloquently,

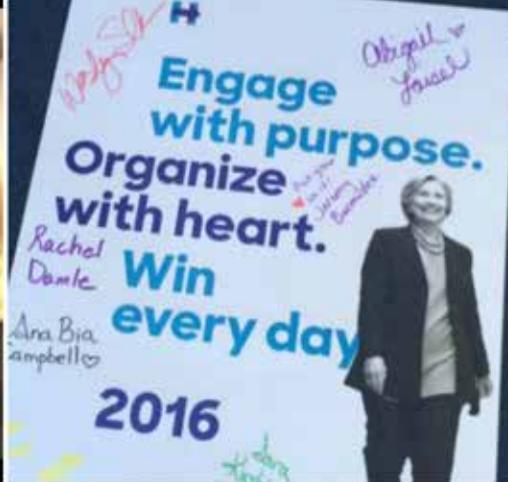
My mother, Dorothy, was abandoned by her parents as a young girl and ended up on her own at fourteen working as a housemaid. She was saved by the kindness of others. The lesson she passed on to me stuck with me: No one gets through life alone. Do all you can for all the people you can, in all the ways you can, as long as ever you can.

My job titles only tell you what I've done. They don't tell you what my mother taught me that everybody needs a chance and a champion. I still hear her voice urging me to keep working, to keep fighting for right, no matter what. (November 6, 2016)

Hillary indeed is right. We are stronger together with liberty and justice for all....diversity is our strength....out of many we are one.



Lynda De La Viña, Ph.D.



IF NOT YOU, THEN WHO?

LILIAN ADAMS



Through a shaky voice, I spoke to the inspirational woman next to me: “I decided I was going to take a gap year and work for you before you had even announced you were running.” Hillary smiled warmly and sincerely thanked me. After that night, I was quick to fulfill the pledge I had made to Hillary by joining her campaign once I graduated from high school.

During this “gap year,” I traveled to New York, Colorado, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire to work for her. I slept on countless couches, blow-up mattresses, and guest bedrooms of hospitable strangers. I knocked on thousands of doors, called thousands of voters, and asked thousands of people if they’d like to register to vote. I worked harder than I ever had in my life, but in the back of my mind, I had a feeling we were going to win.



On the night of the election, I received dozens of calls from friends and family offering their condolences. I remember lying on the floor of my office, crying not only out of fear for what was to come but also from an overwhelming feeling of disappointment that Hillary wasn’t going to be our president. The next morning, I woke up in complete denial. I thought any moment now I was going shake out of it and find out it had all been a bad dream.

Over the next few months as reality sunk in, I felt absolutely defeated. I began to develop a distaste for the politics; once bitten, twice shy, I suppose. I told everyone I knew that I was going to take a break from politics and work in a coffee shop or a bakery. Somewhere warm, somewhere safe. I probably would have done it, too, if I hadn't gotten the call from my godmother that she was planning on running for the chair of the Democratic National Committee.

I threw myself into that election and, despite not winning, I realized that I never got into politics to win. It is definitely nice to win, but that's not what drives me to do this work. Instead, it's this voice I have in the back of my head that constantly asks, "If not you, then who?" If we all had given up on fighting for what is right after this past election, we would have accepted that false notion that hate is stronger than love.

Hillary Clinton once said, "Probably my worst quality is that I get very passionate about what I think is right." This has been one of my favorite quotes by her because it reminds me of myself. I will never give up on what I believe is right. Despite not knowing Hillary personally, I feel like she is such a large part of the woman I've grown to be in the past few years. Thank you, Hillary. It was an honor to work for you.

THERE IS NOTHING I CAN'T DO

JASMIN

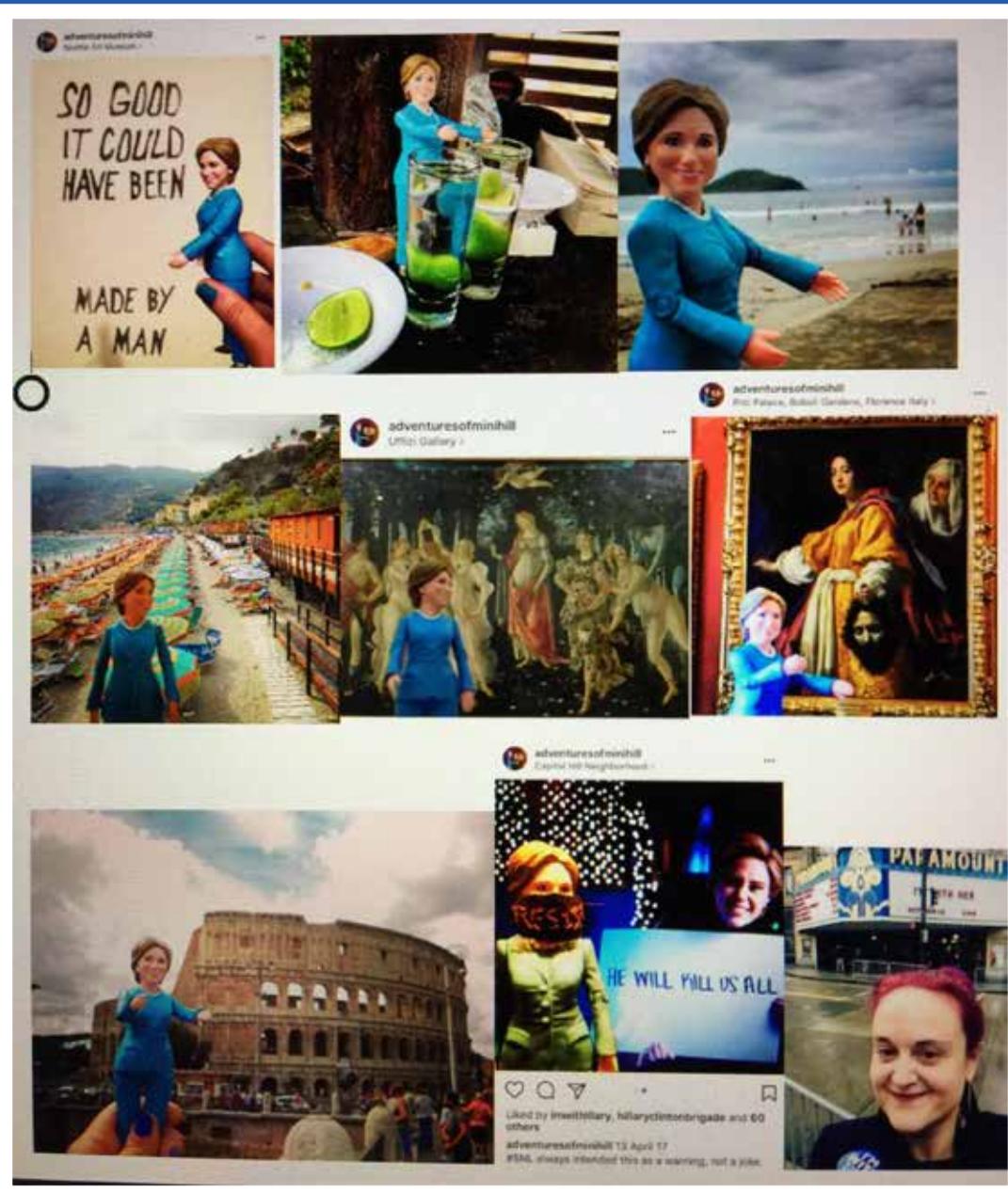
"Never stop believing that fighting for what's right is worth it."

I remember it so clearly. It was November 8 and I was getting ready to go to bed. I live in Denmark and we're six hours before U.S. time, so my parents wouldn't let me stay up. I did, though. I remember lying in my bed, following the polls on my iPad and drinking lots of coffee to stay awake. I felt confident that everything would turn out fine, that you would win and I would never have to care about Donald Trump ever again. Then it started to look bad.

Fast forward to the morning. I got up and got to school. The result still wasn't official, but everyone knew how it would end. My first class that day was English, so we watched his victory speech. I felt so gutted. I couldn't believe what was happening. No one could.

It took me a long time to see anything positive about what happened. But now, as I look back, maybe this was best. Not for the U.S. or the world, but it has triggered a wave of women running for office and standing up for what they believe. We might have lost the battle, but we're winning the war. I can't say it enough, we can't say it enough, but thank you.

Thank you for leading the way. Thank you for inspiring millions of people around the world. Thank you for standing up for what you believe. You have inspired me to stand up for what I believe, no matter how hard it is.



FROM AWKWARD WITH LOVE

CARISSA LEESON

When considering how to approach this letter, I first asked myself a simple question: What would I say if I just ran into you, unexpectedly? This turned out to be not at all useful, as the answer involves me falling apart, dissolving almost immediately into a gibbering heap of tears and admiration. There would be many strange and disconcerting noises (and so much ugly crying) but very little intelligible English. It would inevitably be awkward.

When it comes to communicating with you, evidence suggests that I should not be left to my own devices. I turned to my beloved mother, Elizabeth, for some sane advice—sane being a relative, and possibly inaccurate term. In the interest of full disclosure, when I described waiting outside the Paramount Theater last October after hearing you speak for ninety totally-worth-it minutes, I expected Mom to laugh at my dedication. Instead, she told me about waiting around outside a hotel in downtown Seattle for hours back in the nineties just to get a glimpse of Bill. We are very dedicated Clinton supporters! And...still awkward.

Mom was insistent that I share my tiny contribution to the HRC campaign. While you were working your fingers to the bone fending off attacks from every side, your action figure alter ego, Mini-Hill, was spreading #imwithher love across three countries, captured and shared with the world via Instagram. Mini-Hill enjoyed shots of mescal on the beach in Zihuatanejo, visited the

TO MY ROLE MODEL

NINA

Botticelli room at the Uffizi in Florence, ate gelato in the Cinque Terre, explored the back streets of Rome, and ogled gondoliers in Venice. Yes, Mom made me promise to include photos.

My reason for waiting around was to be a part of the group whose enthusiasm for your campaign was so great that we would stand around for ninety minutes to show how profoundly we were rooting for you. And we still are. In this time of “What is he tweeting now?” and “What country has its bombs pointed at us today?”, despair is easy. Despair is understandable. Yet there you are, back at it, as brilliant, sharp, and hilarious as ever. By God, if you can get back out to fight the good fight, then so can we. That is what you give us. You inspire me every day.

I believe you quoted R.H. Sin recently: “Some women fear the fire/Some women simply become it.” You are fire—we are all ready to become flame.

Even though my story and what you mean to me is not nearly as important as the stories others are telling, I still wanted to put my feelings into words. Over the last year a lot has changed for me. While little more than a year ago I would have described myself as a typical disillusioned sixteen-year-old German girl who was fed up with politics and didn’t believe in anything, I am now a strong believer in political action, and I have faith in the future of humanity and what we can accomplish. The catalyst for that was you.

I became aware of many issues we still face today, such as sexism and xenophobia. At the same time, I started believing in our ability to change things. Your constant determination, focus, and strong will to change things for the better are an inspiration to me. I started working harder at school and voicing my political opinion even though my family is very conservative. I finally owned up to being gay and became proud of it. The last year marked a point of transformation in my life, and while it didn’t end the way I so desperately wanted it to, I am so glad that you became my role model.

I hope that you know that you and your message were and are an incredible inspiration to many. What you accomplished changed your country and the world for the better. I will forever be thankful for everything you have done.



WE ARE WITH HER TONIGHT, TOMORROW, AND FOREVER

KATHLEEN LOHMAR EXEL

This is what I wrote on Election Day to the world (and posted on Facebook with the picture included here): “Thank you, Hillary, for giving us a reason to celebrate, to laugh, to cry, and to come together. To remember all the women that have come before us. I’ve shared so many stories of powerful women with my girlies over these last months, you’ve shown them that we are #strongertogether, their voices matter and #lovetrumpshate. #Wearewithher tonight AND tomorrow!”

Here is what I wrote the day after the election: “I spent the last days of this election simultaneously lifted up by three million women and allies wearing pantsuits who believe, in the words of Senator Wellstone, ‘We all do better, when we all do better,’ but I also spent time reassuring my sweet M this morning that I had lived through a Bush presidency and that political miracles had happened since then (with a lot of hard work), like Minnesota being the first state to stop the tide of anti-gay marriage constitutional amendments. Promising her that she is valued and loved and Mommy has special training to help people become citizens and that I can also go to deportation court to help her friends at school should it come to that.”

To my people, I love you: my daughters, my husband, my girlfriends, my Black Lives Matter people and my people of color, my immigrant (former) clients, my LGBT friends and relatives, my

people that NEED Obamacare, my people that need mental health services. All of you, I love you. You are me and I am you and we will hold each other up.

There must be a quote from *To Kill A Mockingbird* for today, but my eyes are too puffy to look for it. So here is one, from a pantsuit-wearing sister that sums up how I'm going to try to move forward today:

Frodo: I can't do this, Sam.

Sam: I know. It's all wrong. By rights we shouldn't even be here. But we are. It's like in the great stories, Mr. Frodo. The ones that really mattered. Full of darkness and danger they were. And sometimes you didn't want to know the end. Because how could the end be happy. How could the world go back to the way it was when so much bad had happened.

But in the end, it's only a passing thing, this shadow. Even darkness must pass. A new day will come. And when the sun shines it will shine out the clearer. Those were the stories that stayed with you. That meant something. Even if you were too small to understand why. But I think, Mr. Frodo, I do understand. I know now. Folk in those stories had lots of chances of turning back only they didn't. Because they were holding on to something.

Frodo: What are we holding on to, Sam?

Sam: That there's some good in this world, Mr. Frodo. And it's worth fighting for.

My pearls are on, my resolve to stand up and keep fighting is stronger than ever, even if I openly weep today in public."

Fast forward to February 19. By now, we've marched in Minnesota, we've sent postcards, we've made so many phone calls that I've got my senators on speed-dial and I'm openly contemplating running for office. Our little town (you've likely heard of it—St. Anthony, MN, is notorious for being home to the police officer who killed Philando Castile), and it's fairly fractured. A number of us had been holding a weekly rally at City Hall/Police HQ holding up "All Are Welcome Here" signs in rebuke of the "Muslim Ban," and also in rebuke of our police department/city council that seems unable to admit they need more training or that things need to change. And here is what I posted on Facebook:

"The prior Sunday, we thought we were going to gather with neighbors (on a moderately busy street) and show the world that we love immigrants and love trumps hate (just as we had done the previous two Sundays). The only problem: We weren't very organized and people didn't show (and/or we were late and everyone had gone home). M, my spunky-leader at under ten years of age, wanted to get out of the car, regardless, and hold up our sign. I hesitated because I felt vulnerable being the only people out there and I wanted to shield her from the people we've seen out there before; the ones that flip us off or roll down their windows and yell, 'Trump, Trump, Trump,' or much, much, much worse. When there is a big group, she holds up a sign for a bit, but then she hangs with her friends, not paying much attention to the cars going by. Eventually, I convinced her that we'd run a few errands and then drive by and see if anyone was there. No one was there, so I drove on by to go home. She was mad that I wasn't going to stand up!

"On February 19, we showed up again and no one was there (yet). She said, 'Mom, we are getting out and holding up our sign, even if we are the only ones out there. You said we have to stand up for those that need protecting and I've been worried about my classmates that need protecting.' So out of the car we go and this child, my child, stands on the side of the road holding up our sign.

Eventually, others showed up. The icky people were there, but I was reminded that now is the time for courage and it shall be the children that lead us.”

Hillary (you will always be Madam President to me), you showed both of my daughters and me that we need to keep standing up. Thank you. We are with still with you, today, tonight, and tomorrow.

FIGHTING FOR WHAT IS RIGHT

CHIARA FEDDECK

I don't even know where to start this letter. So many things to say but not enough words to actually put my feelings into words.

First of all, thank you. Thank you for being an inspiration—to me, and to girls and women (but also to boys and men, I'm sure) everywhere. Thank you for your grit, determination, heart, and spirit. Thank you for caring, caring about issues that matter and are most important in this world. Issues that involve human rights in every form possible because, yes, human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights; and gay rights are human rights and human rights are gay rights. Thank you for making actual lives better in this world; the fact that there are people, especially women, in this world who have better lives because of you warms my heart to the core. Thank you for strengthening my belief that optimism is important because there's always hope. Thank you for showing that we should never give up. Thank you for underlining what I already try to live by: “Do all the good you can, for all the people you can, in all the ways you can, as long as you can.” I could continue this list, but I think my point is clear.

I've been a feminist even before I knew of the existence of the word or the concept, and I've been lucky to have strong women in my life while growing up. Nobody made me feel like I was worth less because I was a girl. I'm completely aware that this is not the case for most girls and women in the world. I hate that this is still the world we have to live in now, a world in which the most qualified woman running for president ever was still not able to break the highest glass

ceiling, and many other countries, including my own, have yet to experience female leadership. I still can't wrap my head around it.

As Samantha Bee put it during your introduction at the Women in the World Summit: "It should have been you." I will never stop believing this and it will never not hurt that the outcome of this election was not what we all hoped for. I was with you in 2008 but it wasn't to be, so I rallied behind President Obama, excited to see him elected. Then a little over a year ago, you announced your 2016 run and I was elated. I was sure this was going to be your time, I knew it, I felt it in my bones. You were going to win this. I was glued to your campaign and followed your run closely, and while I liked you before, I became really fascinated by you this time around. Your work, your passions, your ideals, your ideas — I realized what kind of an inspiration you are and how much good you have done in this world.

You are an example and an inspiration. Even if you didn't break that glass ceiling, I know that you have inspired so many women and girls around the globe to be their best selves, to do all the good, to be stronger together, to never lose hope and give up. I know you are an example and inspiration to me and you'll continue to be. So again, from the bottom of my heart, thank you. I'm still with you and will always be with you. Let's all keep fighting together for what is right and resist, always.

“Human rights are women’s rights and women’s rights are human rights.”

—HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

WHO IS WITH ME?

SHARISSE TRACEY

My military family's been reeling these past six months, consumed by the effects of President Obama's second term, a president I supported, the president I voted for. But after almost eighteen years of dedicated service and sacrifice, my career-officer husband was recently notified of his involuntary separation from the United States Army. He's been stationed overseas and relocated ten times, serving as a logistician officer, training soldiers for deployment at the National Training Center, taking company command twice of two brigades with over 200 soldiers and their family members, and teaching chemistry and biology to our future Army leaders. That led to his being appointed course director and associate professor of chemistry at the United States Military Academy at West Point before and after deployment to Afghanistan, where he served in a combat zone known as Kunar Province. Involuntary separation is military lingo for "you're fired."

This news came weeks before a previously approved spinal surgery when my partner was in agonizing pain from one of the injuries sustained during his ten-month tour in Afghanistan. The decision to cut our military defense budget and reduce the size of our armed forces was made by the Obama administration and supported by a GOP-led Congress.

Know this: I hold our president in the highest regard. Tears dampened the top of my blouse as I witnessed our first African-American president taking the oath of office. Visible goose bumps

protruded from my arm as I listened to the 2010 commencement speech at West Point, a place I've called home for seven years. I'm awed by the grace, intelligence, compassion, and wisdom our commander in chief has demonstrated in these turbulent eight years. And I love First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden for their fierce commitment to military families. That's why, as a military spouse, I feel baffled and betrayed by the decision announced in 2014 to reduce the military to 450,000 by 2018—numbers we have not seen since the end of World War II.

On this Election Day, we are likely to have about 479,000 active-duty soldiers serving. According to Representative Chris Gibson, a New York Republican who introduced legislation that would halt the Obama administration's 2017 budget request to reduce Army troops by 460,000 by the end of 2017, "We had over 480,000 Army troops alone in an active component the day before September 11, 2001."

Yet if things continue our military is in danger of not fulfilling its mission. This "rightsizing" of our armed forces has downsized my combat-veteran husband out of a career and sent our military family into our own private war. More importantly, it's a "grave mistake," said Lt. Gen. Clarence E. McKnight Jr. "These are highly-trained, experienced professionals who have been intensely drilled to work together and support each other in adverse conditions."

This issue is bigger than a catchy campaign slogan about whom I am with or who will make America great again. It has left me wondering, because I feel nauseated after the sacrifices our families have made—to Iraq, Afghanistan, and wars on terror over the past fifteen years—in contrast to the lack of job security, continuity, and pensions. Military families, including spouses and children, serve, too.

As the wife of a military officer, I gave up my career in education to travel around this country in support of my spouse and our country. I hadn't meant to. Now I need to know who will be my best

ally in our new fight as a transitioning military family of six that includes a wounded warrior and an autistic child. So I need to know: Who will be with me, Hillary Rodham Clinton or Donald J. Trump?

Growing up in the 1980s, my familiarity with Trump was through the tabloids, via his affair with Marla Maples, and then later, through *The Celebrity Apprentice* when I tuned in to see Tionne Watkins, known as “T Boz” to all of us TLC fans, appear to raise money for The Sickle Cell Foundation—a cause near to me as all of my children and I have the sickle cell trait. My father died from complications of the disease. I returned for the next season to watch Holly Robinson Pete raise awareness for autism—another cause close to home, as our youngest son is on the spectrum. That is as close to philanthropic work as I’ve ever seen him do. I said to my mother, “Donald Trump is the accident you can’t look away from but you’re conscious about backing up traffic.”

Hillary Rodham Clinton is someone whose work I’ve known for over twenty-five years, since I was a first-time voter, helping to elect her husband in 1992. Yes, I was young, naïve and easily swayed by a white dude playing the saxophone on *The Arsenio Hall Show*. At that time I was a divorced, single mother of two working and attending school to earn my first degree as a high-school dropout. Her husband’s harsh crime bill—which resulted in the mass incarceration of so many black men which she supported in her role as first lady—as well as her comment about “superpredators” were unknown to me in those years. What I did know was that Hillary stood at her husband’s side—and I respected that. She had her own agenda as an attorney, advocate, politician, and mother. The world soon saw Mrs. Clinton as the independent, whip smart, unbreakable, and determined woman she is when she ran for the Senate and then became secretary of state.

During the primaries and the Republican National Convention in July, my television stayed on CNN. Watching Trump was like being stuck in a twenty-four-hour reality show that I couldn’t turn off. My partner once told me that the military typically does better when Republicans are in

office. Perhaps that has been his experience; I imagined that a Trump administration would be a hot mess.

As an African-American rape survivor who suffers from an invisible disability while raising my autistic child in our military family, I’m used to being doubted and questioned. Are you sure it was rape? Why are you parked here if you can walk? Your son looks normal to me.

It’s difficult enough fighting an illness people understand, are familiar with, and can sometimes see. Invisible disabilities can add to the challenge. We have seen how Mr. Trump responds to things he doesn’t understand—he goes on the attack. And so the thought of a misogynistic bully running our country more than frightens me. It enrages me. I need an advocate not an opponent. And I imagine that the words Donald Trump says aren’t anywhere near as dangerous as what he must think. If elected he will be our country’s collective mind, and we have long known who he is. We didn’t just learn about Donald Trump through the Billy Bush tapes or even these past eighteen months on the campaign trail. He has been revealing the truth of who he is for decades.

And so I fear what a Trump presidency would look like for our family. He’s a man who admires dictators past and present, and has been endorsed by some. He doesn’t believe pain or disabilities are real and worthy of respect. Is my husband any less of a soldier and veteran while he awaits the surgery and rehabilitation that’s due him? Is he not strong already for the things he’s experienced, fought for and survived in combat? How do my neighbors, veterans, and the current cadets preparing to serve our nation as first lieutenants in the Army unite under an administration that bullies and gaslights its citizens and believes we are a disaster? Privatization of the Veterans Administration is no more of an answer than the ridiculous notion of building a wall is for immigration reform. I’m living the effects of privatization of military housing, lodging and, in some cases, security. Imagine our police force being run by security guards or mall cops for that matter. The Veterans Administration needs a swift overhaul with 100 percent accountability, but

the Veterans Administration should be run by those who have served, not by people who look to veterans as an endless source of easy revenue.

All of my political life I've known Hillary Clinton. The term "career politician" doesn't have to be a dirty word when that career has been marked with hard work, positive results, and a politically sound mind. Clinton started her career serving children with disabilities and has spent her lifetime serving the American people. Hillary's the only candidate who has discussed autism and children on the spectrum with civility and compassion. More than just talking about it, she's developed a comprehensive plan for the more than 3.5 million of us who are affected by this disorder. She supports legislation to repeal the defense cutbacks, end sequestration and not privatize the VA. Hillary doesn't have my vote because she's a woman; she has earned my respect as our next commander in chief. The future of my family is on the line, and that's why I'm with Hillary—because she's with me.

1977 TO 2017: I WILL NOT GO SILENT INTO THAT DARK NIGHT.

DR. LYNDA Y. DE LA VIÑA

In 1977, I was a young college student who volunteered at the first International Women's Year conference in Houston. I was thrilled to handle the stage curtain as Gloria Steinem, Bella Abzug, and other luminaries of the women's movement walked onto the stage. My dream of equal rights and of a woman president were crystallized that amazing night. I felt the same way the night you were the first woman nominated for president from a major party. My friends gathered to toast and celebrate that night as a milestone not only in your illustrious career but in our lives.

The day of the election I worked all day at the polls, giving out your information and talking to voters. Although it was a rainy/misty day we (my precinct chair, her grandson, and me) were there until the polls closed at seven p.m. Rather than going to the larger parties, I hurried to a gathering of the same friends who celebrated your nomination.

The exuberance of November 8 gave way to a tortuous night. I will remember it as emotionally as I remember my night in 1977. I was incredulous and devastated that the best prepared candidate ever to run was denied becoming the first woman president of the United States. I kept thinking, "WHY? Both developed and developing nations have elected women as top leaders. There was Margaret Thatcher in England, Angela Merkel in Germany, Dilma Rousseff in Brazil, Gloria Arroyo of the Philippines, Indira Gandhi in India, Golda Meir in Israel..."

A list of names swirled in my head while I kept asking myself why. Why? Why? I could not bear to watch the news anymore, yet I could not pull away, just in case there was a change or the predictions were wrong. How could this have happened?

I am still sad and questioning the election, as are so many people. I am not sure I can be over it. I want a recount. I want to be sure of the integrity of the process. I want to know why the media never provided the in-depth reporting of all of Trump's conflicts of interest, trials, lawsuits. Why? Are there only "talking heads" with surface opinions and some inside knowledge? Is the diversity and civility in our country only a patina, with what lies beneath easily exploited by someone like Trump, selling his brand of snake oil to cure all ills? Please know we are still here and continue to support the ideals of your campaign: an America of justice for all; equality and diversity ; environmental consciousness; and empathy for the least of us, especially the innocent children. In essence, to treat our neighbors and our Earth as we would treat ourselves.

Hillary, we are saddened and angry. We owe so much to your heroic service to our nation. I will not go silent into the dark night.





RECEIVED DEATH THREATS AND THOUGHT OF YOU

STEPHANIE LAND

I woke up on December 5 to an email from my editor at *The Washington Post* with a link to my article that had just gone live. As a freelancer, this is normal. What followed was not.

By late afternoon, tweets of hate from Trump's supporters came in fast. I'd expected this. My article revolved around feeling hopeless, jarred, and scared after seeing the election results, and that I'd ended a very new relationship with someone because I needed to focus on my two little girls and the friendships I had. I needed to rebuild, batten down hatches, and regroup.

But the next evening, after two days of constant hate-filled tweets and comments on my public Facebook page—most calling me ugly and some telling me to kill myself—Bill O'Reilly decided to talk about it on his show. This was when I started to get scared.

I posted about it the next day in the secret Facebook group Pantsuit Nation:

"A few friends of mine have encouraged me to post here. I'm in need of some good vibes and general support. I'm a single mom to two girls and work full-time as a writer.

On Monday, a piece I wrote about feeling so hopeless after the election I'd decided to stop dating was published in *The Washington Post* and quickly went viral throughout Trump's supporters.

Joe Walsh tweeted about it, then *The Blaze*. Then, last night, it was talked about on *The O'Reilly Factor*.

I expected to get a lot of negative tweets from the article. The amount of hatred being spewed at me through my website's contact form and all of my social media accounts is a volume I cannot keep up with. For my public Facebook page, I made a friend of mine an admin so she could moderate comments for me. If you look at the article, the comments there have been moderated. The worst ones that are considered a personal threat or attack to me have been removed. I've not only been told I am fat, ugly, etc., but people are suggesting I commit suicide over and over.

Part of this is to be expected. It's my job. I deal with trolls all the time. But after a few days of my phone blowing up I'm growing weary and despondent.

I have a small army of friends who are standing up to the trolls on my public Facebook page and through Twitter. Every time I see that one of them has commented or tweeted in my defense, I feel so loved and supported.

Tonight I did an interview for a local news station, and I fumbled over my words so much I could barely answer some of the questions. I was scared to speak. Everything I thought of saying, I could see quoted in tweets full of hatred towards me. As a writer, this is a scary place to be in. I'm currently writing my memoir on a deadline about my experiences working as a maid and living in poverty, and I am thinking about it from a place of fear instead of knowing it will start a movement.

So. I could use a boost. It's been a rough few days. Thank you."

Last I checked, that post has over 50,000 likes and almost 20,000 comments. The outpouring of support I received was overwhelming. I still get a dozen messages daily.

The trolls were relentless for two weeks. I lost count of how many times Trump supporters wrote about it. It made Breitbart. They had a thread about me on 4Chan, featuring photos of my children. For a very long couple of days, I feared Trump might choose to tweet about me.

That was about a month ago now, and looking back, you were my pillar of strength. I can't imagine what hatred you must have gone through, and continue to experience. I often thought about your grace at debates, and that, even in candid shots where people bumped into you walking your dog, you smiled. Sincerely.

My life is on a trajectory of propelling myself further into the realm of being a public figure who often speaks on issues surrounding people in poverty, and who are dying from a debilitating disease called chronic fatigue syndrome. I've embraced activism, and continuously look for ways (besides writing) to stand up for those who can't.

Though I am not one for resolutions, I make goals. For 2016, my goal was to be able to afford my own groceries and get off food stamps. Life brought in so much more than that. I got a book deal for my memoir *MAID*, and traveled half a dozen times to advocate. (Like, people bought me plane tickets and paid for my hotel and everything!)

For 2017, my goal is to stand in front of lawmakers to give my testimony, to share my story of how government assistance helped my family survive, then thrive. I was honored to have the chance to do this recently at the Center for American Progress, and I hope to do it many more times. I feel like I know what I'm up against now. I've seen and felt the hate personally. They don't scare me. They can't stop me.

Thank you for being a role model for that.

CONTRIBUTORS

LETTERS AND PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY:

LILIAN ADAMS	JOSEPH ROBICHAUD	DEBORAH SLAGER
JASMIN	JANICE BRANDON	SOFIA
CARISSA LEESON	NANCY THOMAS DONALDSON	RACHEL ROMEO
NINA	JUDY WAMSLEY	ROSEMARY ROWLANDS
KATHLEEN LOHMAR EXEL	ORALIA YZAGUIRRE	CHRIS
CHIARA FEDDECK	OLIVIA WILSON	NORA T.
COLLEEN KIVLEY	IRIE CRENSHAW	BRENDA BOUCHARD
GABRIELLA CRESPO	SHELBIE	NANCY GLENN
BEKA MCKAY	CHRISTINA YOUNG	NICOLE MAGUIRE
CHRISTOPHER FARRELL	KRISTEN G.	CHRISTIAN L NELSON
LARA HOMAN	JUDY WAMSLEY	REV. ILENE BRENNER DUNN
GINGER	ZOE BRACEGIRDLE	SANDRA GOODWIN
ASHLEY	BARBARA MCDOWELL WHITT	SHARISSE TRACEY
MICHAELA-SIMONE MERTENS	THERESE NORDÉN	STEPHANIE LAND
BRANDON PHENIX	ELAYNE ROBERTS	SHEILA DENNIS
ALEKSANDRA	DIANE STUDZINSKI	MICHELLE WILBY
KATY REED	JULIA WELCH	FRIESENHAHN
AINHOA	LUKE	DR. LYNDA Y. DE LA VIÑA
LUIS ANGEL ROSA	EVELYN ADAMS	JOAN BLACK
EMILY RINE	CHIARA	CHELSE BENHAM
VICKI BERLOFFE	LAUREN SAUNDERS	
CORNELIA NAUTA	AUSTIN	
