

Trumpism

Trumpism:

The Politics of Gender in a Post-Propitious America

Edited by

Laura Finley and Matthew Johnson

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



Trumpism: The Politics of Gender in a Post-Propitious America

Series: Peace Studies: Edges and Innovations

Edited by Laura Finley and Matthew Johnson

This book first published 2018

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2018 by Laura Finley, Matthew Johnson and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-5275-0831-5

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-0831-6

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements and Dedication	vii
Series Introduction.....	ix
Laura Finley and Michael Minch	
Foreword	xi
Tom H. Hastings	
Introduction	xiv
Matthew Johnson	
Chapter One.....	1
Trump and the 2016 Election	
D’Nisa A. Joseph	
Chapter Two	7
The Awakening of an Old Beginning	
Patricia Courtney	
Chapter Three.....	12
Trump’s Election and Fear	
Pierre R. Berastain	
Chapter Four.....	24
A Voice from the Depth of a Shaken Core	
Genevieve M. Sabala	
Chapter Five	35
The Impact of Populist Presidents on Public Discourse	
Jorgen Johansen	
Chapter Six.....	56
Make America Manly Again: Trump As the Savior of White American Masculinity	
Luigi Esposito and Victor Romano	

Chapter Seven.....	77
Sexism, Militarism, and Foreign Policy in the 2016 Campaign Stephen Zunes	
Chapter Eight.....	96
Recovering Allies: Women in Science, Cuba, and Trump’s Proposed Research Budget Shannon Murray	
Chapter Nine.....	106
Reclaiming My Power: What Surviving Domestic Abuse Taught Me about Surviving Trumpism Janice Carello	
Chapter Ten	120
The Candidacy, Election, and Presidency of Donald J. Trump: Betrayal, Trauma, and Sexual Violence Survivorship Katherine W. Bogen and Lindsay M. Orchowski	
Chapter Eleven	140
Commander in Brief: Trump Tweets and Sexual Violence in the Military April Coan	
Chapter Twelve	149
Reflection on the Campaign, Election, and Presidency of Donald J. Trump from Survivors of Sexual Violence Katherine W. Bogen, Jennifer M. Demers, Carly M. Goldstein, Fiona Hogan, Lindsay M. Orchowski, and Morgan C. Shields	
Chapter Thirteen.....	169
Discussing Trump with Our Children Laura Finley	
Chapter Fourteen	182
Teaching Trump Laura Finley	
Conclusion.....	194
Laura Finley	
Appendix A: Additional Resources.....	197
About the Editors and Authors	204

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND DEDICATION

Laura Finley

First, I wish to thank Matthew Johnson for coming up with the idea for this book and for allowing me to help. Our co-editing endeavor has gone quite smoothly, owing to our friendship and the fact that we had amazing contributors who I also want to acknowledge. I very much appreciate that everyone submitted their chapters in a timely fashion, were open to suggestions, made revisions quickly, and produced important and timely work. Gratitude also to my friend Tom Hastings, who lost a night of sleep reading this manuscript and preparing his remarks in the Foreword. Thanks as well to my students who contributed their ideas in the teaching and parenting chapters I authored. Finally, my deepest appreciation for my daughter, Anya, and my husband, Peter, for continuing to tolerate me through super busy times.

I dedicate this book to all the activists, advocates, and educators who are seeking to create a more just and peaceful world.

Matthew Johnson

I am deeply grateful to Dr. Laura Finley for her mentorship and support over the last five years since I took her online course through the National Peace Academy as a fledgling Master's degree student. The adage that the trouble with a good idea is that it often degenerates into hard work holds very true in the case of this book. I did not possess the necessary time or experience to pull this book project off myself, and Dr. Finley was more than capable of filling the void. Moreover, the writers of this book — my mother and some dear friends included — generously provided their material in a polished and timely fashion. I have no words to express my satisfaction in helping to place this book into the hands of those who, like me, were devastated by the Trump election and what it has meant for this country.

I dedicate this book to all those who cried out in pain, fear, sorrow, or bewilderment on November 8, 2016. I also dedicate it to Danielle, along with the following poem:

*Peace is a woman,
Soft and sweet,
Hair, cheeks, lips,
Arms around me,
I can't say enough.*

*The world could end,
Tomorrow.
It wouldn't matter.
So long as she's here,
Tonight.*

SERIES INTRODUCTION

PEACE STUDIES: EDGES AND INNOVATIONS

LAURA FINLEY AND MICHAEL MINCH
ON BEHALF OF THE PEACE AND JUSTICE
STUDIES ASSOCIATION (PJSA)

Peace Studies: Edges and Innovations is a book series edited by PJSA Board Members Michael Minch and Laura Finley. The intent of the series is to fill in gaps in the conflict, peace, justice and reconciliation literature while presenting texts that are on the cutting edge of the discipline. The series includes both edited and solo-authored books that combine academic rigor and accessible prose, making them appealing to scholars, classrooms, activists, practitioners, and policymakers.

Books in the series focus on re-conceptualizing and expanding peace education, looking to and drawing from communities that have been marginalized, overlooked, or forgotten; identify new understandings of the role that gender, multiculturalism, and diversity play in the creation of a sustained peace; promoting innovative peacebuilding strategies and movements related to positive peace and justice; exploring the relationship between peace studies and other contemporary problematics, such as climate change and the rights of indigenous peoples; addressing the overlap, interpenetration and symbiosis between peace and conflict studies and other disciplinary areas; and analyzing current issues in criminal justice, with an emphasis on restorative alternatives. Due to the breadth of the topic matter, the series is appropriate for readers of all disciplinary traditions.

In sum, the series aims to promote the most interesting and exciting trends or movements in the field of peace and conflict studies. It is also intended to render more visible the unique contributions of peacemakers and to promote the mission and goals of the PJSA.

The Peace and Justice Studies Association is a binational non-profit organization with the mission of creating a just and peaceful world through research, education and action. PJSA is dedicated to bringing together academics, K-12 teachers, and grassroots activists to explore alternatives to violence and share visions and strategies for peacebuilding, social justice, and social change. The organization serves as a professional association for scholars in the field of peace and conflict studies and is the North American affiliate of the International Peace Research Association. Additional information about PJSA can be found at www.peacejusticestudies.org.

Books in the series

- Gordon, Nickesia, and Finley, Laura (Eds.). *Reflections on Gender from a Communication Point of View: Genderspectives* (2017).
- Amster, Randall, Finley, Laura, McKutcheon, Richard and Pries, Edmund (Eds.) *Peace Studies Traditions and Innovations* (2015).
- Standish, Katerina. *Cultural Violence in the Classroom: Peace, Conflict and Education in Israel*. (2015).
- Finley, Laura and Concannon, Kelly. (Eds.) *Peace and Social Justice Education on Campus: Faculty and Student Perspectives* (2015).

FOREWORD

TOM H. HASTINGS

Laura Finley and Matthew Johnson have gathered an informative array of analyses from a diversity of scholars in our field of Peace and Conflict Studies to ponder, question, analyze, research, illuminate and ruminate about the startling ascendancy of Trumpism. Why did this happen? How were Americans prepared to vote a blatantly rude demagogue into the White House? Who is being affected, and who is being impacted disproportionately? What led to this? Can we ever manage to walk this back, to reassert decency and diversity, inclusion and civility? What do we do with an autocrat in a democracy, with someone in the highest office in our land who befriends and speaks admiringly of fellow autocrats from Putin to Duterte to Erdoğan and repeatedly insults and demeans Merkel?

Approaching this with a gendered lens is the focus here, and the other lenses—race, religion, national origin—are alongside a gendered analysis throughout the recurrent themes offered in the essays set before you. And while an intellectual pity party is the wide and well trampled road, given the outrageous daily occurrences under Trump’s squatting dominance, we see the beginnings herein of a path forward, the start of a line of sight toward the healing that will need to begin even before Trump is out of office.

The multiplicity of specialties of the contributing authors make this a profoundly pluralistic and wide-ranging study. The opposite of Trumpism, for example, is hardly Hillaryism, as the Stephen Zunes chapter attests with rich evidence. Trumpism as felt by a targeted person—immigrant woman of color D’Nisa A. Joseph—gets sharply personal. Indeed, retraumatization scholar Janice Carello frames the trauma of Trump’s election eve well: “I fall asleep feeling cold, powerless, betrayed,” before helping us understand the individual and social psychology that can restore the resilience we require. Katherine W. Bogen and Lindsay M. Orchowski broaden that exploration as they trace misogyny at the highest levels to sexual violence at the street level, connecting them convincingly. Bogen and Orchowski are joined by four other scholars in a review of the striking

effects of Trump's election on survivors of sexual violence. The central overwhelming sense of disbelief and betrayal emanates from the excerpts of transcribed interviews from survivors of the sort of violence that Trump will clearly ignore—and as we see with the Roy Moore case, so will most Republicans. We continue to wonder, “Do these people have no depth to which they will not stoop as they consolidate power over others?”

Indeed, we live in a time of “I never imagined I'd see this,” which can only annoy and confound us for a short period if we hope to help change the course our culture has veered toward. Please understand that the latent power of the people is still with us, that we can choose to end this tyranny of dystopic wreckage whenever we wish, and some of these chapters help us think about that.

It will take sacrifice, and that may block the movement growth we need, but we see some stepping up already. The Standing Rock Sioux and other tribes are showing indigenous leadership. I've been privileged to be qualified in courts to testify on behalf of climate chaos resisters from the western US, resisters willingly facing 10, 20 or more years of incarceration for their nonviolent actions, and of course a gendered lens here is that Trumpism assaults Mother Earth, and does so in a buck-naked mockery of the nurturing feminism that compels many to step up to take those risks. We need to balance reconciliation with the task of protection of all life, all humans, all genders, all species. We are not called to destroy people but the core ideas driving Trump's base—that US hetero white males are the only stakeholders who matter and that what happens to all else is simply in their service—absolutely must be crushed. No child should ever be taught such travesties again. Hence chapters on both parenting and teaching in the time of Trump. Polarizing toward open declaration of rejection of violence, misogyny, racism, jingoism, xenophobia, and greed should not be averted or avoided; herein we are given the research and resources to achieve all that while respecting the personhood of everyone, from Donald Trump to Dylann Roof. We simply must learn how to relieve them of their capacity to commit so much harm.

Years ago, I helped organize a series of rallies and walks in my town, Portland, Oregon, against the drive to invade Iraq. We were serious, and we did our work well, meeting the metrics required for victory as the Stephan and Chenoweth research found, that is: we exceeded the sustained participation of 3.5 percent of the population (in this case, of Portland) in support of our cause. Sadly, the rest of the US did not keep up and Shock and Awe was perpetrated just days after our fourth very large rally, three

of which shattered all-time records for political demonstrations in the history of Oregon. Indeed, the final one, addressed by Civil Rights icon John Lewis, was attended by nearly ten percent of the town, but the issue was not a local governance issue.

Then came the Women's March of 2017. I was not involved in helping organize that, but the day of I wandered for hours with a silly smile on my face amongst numbers that were nearly triple our biggest antiwar rally of the 2002-2003 period. Portland was only one of many and the potential for mass unity and action never seemed so apparent to this observer. As that march went from a call by white women to other white women in the beginning, and quickly evolved to a truly inclusive movement, we witnessed a brief display of our potential.

Our field is founded upon some core values and insights. That everyone needs respect is our heart, as well as nonviolence. The authors in this compilation help remind us that nonviolence is both hard to maintain and key to positive change. As I write this, powerful men are being brought down due to their predation and disrespect of women. While it has not quickly toppled the Groper-in-Chief, we are seeing the strong beginnings of the end for the sort of abuse tolerated far too long. Armed with both good norms and the organizational skills we teach and practice in our field, I cling to hope. These chapters help us in that hope.

This volume is an effort to extend that potential into our national fabric, from our relational upkeep to our education to our intellectual pursuits to our inclusive coalitional work so needed to prevent the ongoing hegemony of patriarchal predatory plunder. Co-editor Laura Finley writes in the conclusion, "we hope that this book is a springboard for thoughtful reflection and strategic action." It is. Sign me up.

INTRODUCTION

MATTHEW JOHNSON

This book is an in-depth look at the political ascendancy of Donald J. Trump from a gendered lens. This is certainly not the only lens from which to view the presidential campaign of 2016 and the first year of the Trump presidency, but it is an essential one. Women comprise at least half the population, and Trump's candidacy and administration represent perhaps the largest assault on women's rights and dignity in modern American history.

Unlike Trump's other political targets, such as people of color and immigrants, more than half of white women voted for whom Jane Fonda has referred to as the "Predator in Chief" (Golshan 2017; Zilber 2017). While it can be assumed due to Trump's policies and his words (and tweets) that women are under attack, not every woman sees it this way.

As a canvasser during the lead-up to the election, I spoke with hundreds of mostly Democratic or undecided voters — along with a few avowed Trump supporters. I heard from women terrified of Trump and others that saw Hillary Clinton as too weak or too corrupt. One former school bus driver said she would not vote for Clinton because her running mate, Tim Kaine, was too much of a "wimp." Regardless of how one feels about the two-party system or the personalities and perceived motives of the major candidates, it is highly likely that women (perhaps apart from the super-rich) would have been better off under a Clinton presidency.

Some readers may be upset by this line of reasoning, particularly those who supported Bernie Sanders, even after he conceded to Clinton. As much as Sanders represented the true progressive, social democratic alternative, it is foolhardy to pretend as if the present political situation would be the same, or even similar, if Clinton were president. If the last year has taught us anything, it is that Trump not only stands in opposition to what Clinton and Sanders represent but also to democracy and civilized governance itself.

At the same time, it is wrongheaded to continue relying on the same strategies and tactics that failed to defeat Trump in 2016. His rise signaled a new era in U.S. politics and, in many ways, marked the defeat of political correctness as a viable political tool for the Left. When Trump said in January 2016 that he could shoot someone in public and not lose voters, he was likely correct (Diamond 2016). Despite the numerous scandals involving racism, sexism, and many other forms of prejudice directed at marginalized groups through his campaign, Trump cruised to victory in the Republican primary and was elected president. His first several months in office resulted in almost no major victories and multiple extraordinary setbacks — most notably the launch of an FBI probe into his ties to Russia — yet he remains popular to his base.

Moreover, his most diehard supporters have taken to the streets with deadly weapons and intent — as seen in Charlottesville, Va., where a young woman was killed by a white supremacist (Sayers 2017) — and many Trump opponents have responded with force of their own. Some have gone so far as to state publicly that violence against white supremacists and Neo-Nazis is acceptable. Indeed, this country's foundational principles are being called into question from many sides. The way forward, not only for the determined opposition but also for American governance in general, is unclear as this book goes to press.

Regardless of political persuasion, there is wide recognition that these are extraordinary times in the United States. While hardly an extraordinary measure, this book is an unadulterated attempt to understand and contextualize the ascendancy of Trump, and, with luck, facilitate his downfall.

In this book you will read contributions from scholars representing various gender, racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. The common thread is not Trump-bashing but a no-holds-barred assessment of American politics and society beginning with the onset of the 2016 presidential elections. Some authors (Berastain, Carello, Courtney, Joseph, Sabala) rely on personal stories while others (Coan, Esposito, Johansen, Romano, Zunes) favor impartial analysis. Still others give voice to those most vulnerable to Trump's words and actions (Finley, Bogen, Orchowski). These voices, while timely and forceful, represent only a tiny fraction of the millions in the United States and billions worldwide who screamed, sighed, bellowed, or wept in response to Trump's rise from eccentric business mogul to most powerful man in the world. This book is for them.

References

- Diamond, Jeremy. "Donald Trump could 'shoot somebody and not lose voters' – CNNPolitics," *CNN*, January 24, 2016, accessed October 15, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/01/23/politics/donald-trump-shoot-somebody-support/index.html>.
- Golshan, Tara. "The women who helped Donald Trump win," *Vox*. January 20, 2017, accessed October 15, 2017, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/1/20/14061660/women-march-washington-vote-trump>.
- Sayers, Devon M. "Virginia governor to white nationalists: 'Go home ... shame on you'." *CNN*. August 13, 2017. accessed October 15, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/08/12/us/charlottesville-white-nationalists-rally/index.html>.
- Zilber, Ariel. "Jane Fonda Blasts Trump as 'Predator-in-Chief' during New York Protest against Executive Order to Resume Controversial Pipeline Projects," *Daily Mail Online*, Associated Newspapers, January 25, 2017, accessed October 15, 2017, www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4154802/Jane-Fonda-blasts-predator-chief-Trump-protest.html.

CHAPTER ONE

TRUMP AND THE 2016 ELECTION

D’NISA A. JOSEPH

It started off as a wonderful evening in New York City: I met my friends at Carmine’s in Times Square, played in some makeup at Sephora, checked out Vanilla Sky for some cute clothes, then grabbed burgers at Kobeyaki. After spending a full day at work and then an evening out, we finally made our way to the train by Bryant Park. Tired and stuffed, we were happy to see the train quickly approaching with seats available. A young black man, unassuming in looks and probably not past 35 in age, and our threesome got on the train at the same stop and from the time we sat on the train, the foolishness started.

We sat diagonally from him on the bench while he stood in front of the train doors, mumbling to himself about Africans and Caribbean people being ugly before the doors even closed. My friend, seated next to me, noticed that he was looking at us while he was going on about Caribbean and African people not being “his race” and how they are ugly. I told her she was reading into it too much. I gave him the benefit of the doubt because I’ve seen “aspiring” rappers on trains rehearsing before; I assumed those were the disses he’d prepped. Shortly thereafter, he puts his headphones in and does in fact begin to start rapping along to whatever he is listening to. Problem solved, right? In my Donald Trump voice: “WRONG.”

It couldn’t have been but two stops later when he started looking at us again. This time, not merely looking, but posturing and becoming more animated. The vitriol becomes ever more targeted even though by looks it cannot be assumed we are Caribbean. I’m paraphrasing but this man called Caribbean and African women ugly, animals, essentially stated we are disgusting and that we are not his people because we haven’t been here “for 400 years,” and that he hates locks and all that “African shit.” He

made sure to voice his disdain for the Labor Day Carnival- a Caribbean American hallmark- stating its garbage and he doesn't want to be around "those people." Mind you, the whole time he is ranting he is staring right at us, making hand movements, and taking steps back and forth.

Next, he sets his eyes on the quiet Caucasian girl across from us on the bench. She had been patiently minding her business, reading her book. Since he wasn't getting a reaction out of us, he decided to let her know that Europeans are also disgusting and that he performed at a concert with his (imaginary rap) group where "her kind" wouldn't be allowed. Then he called her out specifically by bringing up her book and calling her dirty.

I understand that mental illness is real. I understand that in a city like New York it won't take much to break the resolve of the average person. However, his bigotry was not only racial but ethnic. I got up and I hit the telecom to speak with a conductor because now that he was specifically targeting people on the train, I knew he was only going to escalate from there.

I informed the Conductor at the next stop that there was a man on the train harassing passengers and as soon as I did, he starts barking at me "yeah, call the Conductor." For the next three minutes he skips back and forth from the platform to the train whenever he thinks the train doors are going to close and I repeatedly had to call her to let her know he was back in the train car. We eventually got into a shouting match because he decided to threaten me with a water bottle and, according to my friends, he spit in my direction.

I do not advise engaging someone like this on the train. In fact, the more New York thing to do would be to put your headphones in, sunglasses on, and pretend you're napping. But, I wasn't up for the shenanigans that day. He finally started walking away once a New York City Police Department officer appeared on the platform, and I was able to tell the Conductor that the issue was resolved.

What did I take away from that experience? I realized that this climate of ethnocentric xenophobia doesn't have any boundaries. If you think that any given minority group will escape the pervasive hate this election uncovered or unscathed, you are lying to yourself. Whether you are Asian, Black, Hispanic, or Non- "American" White people (ethnic Irish, Italian, Eastern European, Jew, etc.) you are a target for reproach. If you have an accent, you're a target. If you are from another country directly or have

lineage from another country, then you are a target. People are actually sitting around thinking of new ways to hate YOU.

I didn't report what happened to us to the New York Police Department, but every immigrant or child of an immigrant and Caucasian bookworm was the victim of a hate crime on that train. It wasn't isolated either. A man got punched in the face on a Brooklyn bound train after being told "go back to your country." As far as the United States has come, the campaign, election, and presidency of Donald J Trump have revealed the dangerous underbelly of this country. Unprovoked xenophobic attacks are increasing and racists and ethnicists alike are emboldened to take physical action along with their verbal vitriol.

If I were to be honest with myself, Obama's election was the kindling that started this fire. His election and his representing the tangible embodiment of the progress so many Americans want to see struck serious fear into those who are frightened by anyone other than a Caucasian. There are people who look at the Founding Fathers as Gods and if the person running for office, or living next door, or walking down the street, does not look as porcelain as those men in the paintings they adore, then it is a zero-sum game.

As a person of color, it was clear that many people were not empathetic to the plight of black Americans before Donald J Trump was elected, but I never assumed that the bigots were a majority. The 2016 election cycle was one of my biggest wake-up calls and the rhetoric therein let me know that to a large swath of Americans, my personhood, my striving for the American Dream, my attempt to pull myself up by my bootstraps is null because of my race and ethnicity. "Make America Great Again" is not only regressive but it aims to negate the strides made to grant people, such as myself, the opportunity to equally pursue goals formerly attainable only by the privileged. Watching Fox News and watching the caricature of the "Mexican coming to steal jobs" while millions of fruit spoils in Georgia isn't something to consider passively as a person of color. The xenophobic eye is currently aimed at a "Mexicans" but their nationality is not the problem because to the illiterate the label "Mexican" applies to anyone of Hispanic descent. Only five decades ago, policies were still in place to systemically cripple any progress black people made in this country – housing wise, economically, and educationally. Whether it is "stealing jobs" or a multi-faceted media-based stereotyping of a whole race, for Trump supporters and those who may not like him but are united in bigotry with his base, the fabric of America is

woven by and for white people. I am a woman of color, of Caribbean descent, and to me the election proved not only troubling, but scary.

One of the saddest parts of the election cycle was seeing that many of the girls I went to high school with supported Trump. I went to a small all-girls Catholic school in Brooklyn full of Italian, Irish, and Caribbean girls – most of us no more than third generation and all fully imbedded in the cultures of our parents. To see women, with children, whose parents and/or grandparents were once considered dirty, thieves, prone to violence and treated with the same xenophobia they are now willing to subject others was and remains enraging and disheartening. To see an Italian gym teacher that I was so fond of have comments under his *Fox News* posts with his peers using bigoted language subtly implying that Black Lives Matter is an assembly of degenerates was nauseating. These are the people who will look at a video of a man being choked to death and still side with the killer. These women had the benefit of an integrated culturally diverse school and are still at their core bigots. I sat in class with these women. I broke bread with them and laughed. We went through milestones together, but in 2016 the veil lifted.

During the Obama presidency, and specifically during the height of the Black Lives Demonstrations for Eric Garner, it was clear that my former classmates of Irish and Italian descent held opposing views. The New York Police Department is largely Italian and Irish and for many of these girls, these jobs hold high esteem; the men of the NYPD are the defenders of the weak, these are their actual brothers, husbands, and fathers. The humanity they see in a Daniel Pantaleo isn't afforded to an Eric Garner. The same was true for Trayvon Martin and during the Baltimore riots. Slowly but surely, sporadic and racist Facebook messages got posted and I began to see that the bonds of sorority are not stronger than race and that our interactions and experiences together amounted to nothing.

As a woman, the election cycle showed that there is a moral blind spot that is reserved for men, and especially white men alone. Though I am not a fan of Hillary Rodham Clinton - in fact, I am an avowed independent- it wasn't lost on me that the Republicans used her comfortable relationship with Wall Street as a negative when their candidate has probably figuratively laid in bed with most of the companies she is associated with. It wasn't lost on me that the Clinton Foundation was accused of being a front for foreign bribery when the Trump Foundation has also shared its own rumors of underhandedness. It was interesting to see what was unacceptable from a Republican perspective; it revealed the inherent

cognitive dissonance. My issues with Clinton's candidacy and the fraudulent way the Democratic primary was conducted aside, she was unfairly targeted during the election. The glass ceiling for her may have been higher than for others, but on what she assumed would be her quick ascent to the Presidency she nearly broke her neck against it.

As an immigrant, I know that many Americans already think that a person is handicapped before you prove yourself. For me, it was present from the time I entered the American public-school system. People I know who also had to go through the public-school system all speak of being treated as though they were retarded at worse and illiterate at best – mind you, we all speak English. From the time you set foot in this country you are assumed to be less than. It was hard enough for me as an English-speaking immigrant to acclimate, I can only imagine what it is like to not know the language.

When living in Maryland, I met Cameroonians who were lawyers and engineers in their country but emigrated for a better life. In the United States, these intelligent young men and women became babysitters, car washers, burger-flippers. Even with an astounding reservoir of potential – as most are fluently bilingual, they had to start small. They had to learn our legal system, culture, and food. These are people who may need help reaching their goals in the United States but are able to fully contribute if given an opportunity.

A “strange” name and an accent create its own unique glass ceiling in the United States. Though I have a Master's Degree and had devoted myself to public sector work since I graduated from Loyola University in Maryland, I hit a ceiling as well. I didn't know it at first because it was hidden behind Liberal smiles, lies, and condescension. But it became clear when I wouldn't be invited to the team meeting and my whole unit was. It became clear when I was relegated to secretary work though I was hired as a policy analyst. It became clear when I realized that though I had way more experience and a Master's that my Caucasian coworkers fresh from graduate school were making ten thousand dollars more than me. It became clear when I was demoted without cause supposedly because my initial position was misclassified. The reclassification especially burned because I know how to read, and there was no misclassification. I was demoted and not given the decency of a proper explanation why, and then lied to in my face as though I didn't read the position description I applied for. I was not an outlier. It seemed the Department I was in had a tendency of overworking and then overlooking minorities.

I faced those things during the Presidency of Barack Obama. I couldn't imagine what it would be like now. There are no holds barred now. There is no safe space. Eight years of social progress –albeit small- can be undone in a matter of four capricious years, and touches a nerve that still makes me shiver. Racism and discrimination is psycho-social asphyxiation and I've already braced myself for the squeeze.

CHAPTER TWO

THE AWAKENING OF AN OLD BEGINNING

PATRICIA COURTNEY

The morning of November 9th felt like a page torn from *Rip Van Winkle*, that long-ago story about the apathetic character spun on the loom of Washington Irving's imagination, but we didn't wake up feeling out-of-place to a newly won American, we woke up feeling out-done by the newly lost America. I started feeling unsettled on the evening of November 8th—as the numbers were being tallied, yet so unlike Rip Van Winkle, who idly slept while the world turned in favor of eliminating British control to the American colonists, so many of us wandered through eight years of democratic gains only to plummet into the current trap of rogue behavior, political conservatism, and humanitarian failure—not from an outside, dominating force, but from within the ranks of our own citizenry. From our contemporary standpoint, we have traveled backwards in time, while too many of us dozed off, yet what was lost on Election Day, could signify the awakening of an old beginning.

In 1964, the county in Maryland, Anne Arundel, the one in which I reside, voted democratic. It was quite expected to cast the democratic vote forward considering the political and social climate of that time. The country suddenly lost John F. Kennedy to an assassin's bullet and Lyndon B. Johnson, then the Vice President, was next in line to shoulder our loss and dismay. How many voters had the stomach and heart to swing any other way? Barry Goldwater, his Republican rival, was not very popular and as a result, won only 6 states. Nationwide, Johnson won the popular vote by 61.1%, the greatest percentage since 1820. Maryland joined hands with 43 other states and the District of Columbia to elect a democratic incumbent back into the White House. Twenty-one out of 23 counties in Maryland voted democratic in the fall of '64, yet it took another 52 years for Anne Arundel County to vote that way again. Even though, historically, Maryland has been primarily a democratic state since 1860, Anne Arundel County has voted Republican for the past 69 years, except

for Kennedy (1960), Johnson (1964), and Clinton (2016), who now belongs to that short list of elite democratic candidates that took the county in the 1960s. Since the early 80s, the county had been slowly trending away from republican presidential votes, but it took Hillary Clinton to push those numbers over to the democratic side; she won by a little over six thousand votes. Her consistent rise through the ranks of political power, only to topple under the weight of Trump's win to the White House, has energized women in our county—and beyond—to further their outspoken resolve in the American political arena.

The Democratic Women's Club of Anne Arundel County has been experiencing an awakening from its languid state since this past September's debates, as reported in the *Capital Gazette*. What started out as support for Hillary Clinton gained traction despite her defeat. "Nearly 150 women and nine men crowded into the meeting hall at St. Philips Episcopal Church in Annapolis to learn how to use the emotional energy generated by the election to achieve positive results. A succession of office-holders from the city, county, state and Congress addressed the crowd including John Astle, a Maryland state senator, Susan O'Brien, a veteran fundraiser for Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot, and Delegate Pam Beidle. Those three, and a few more concerned members, commented on how surprised they were on the great turnout, that many new faces were in the crowd, and that many women are now planning to run for office at all levels in the county and state" (Winters 2017). During the Annapolis, 'A Day Without a Woman' demonstration, resident Eve Hurwitz is recorded as saying that 'the results of the 2016 election acted as a catalyst for her to run as a state senator.' "She plans to run against state Sen. Edward Reilly, R-Anne Arundel, in the District 33 senate race" (Newman 2017). Ms. Hurwitz continued on to say 'there's no better way to celebrate International Women's Day [which fell on the same day as the demonstration, coincidentally] than to meet with local politicians about how women can be better represented in government. For me, it's all about unity' (Newman 2017). In addition to the Democratic Women's Club and the 'A Day Without Women' demonstration, a *Washington Post* article spotlighting Emerge Maryland, a local branch of Emerge America that trains Democratic women to run for political office, reported that current interest levels in women running for office have increased since Trump's victory over Clinton. 'Twice as many women applied to participate in the program than last year,' said Diane Penkova Fink, executive director of Emerge Maryland' (Wiggins 2017). What was only expected to be 75 people attending their annual fundraiser turned out to nearly number 250. 'You'll get more women [in office] when you get more women to run,'

said [Kathleen] Matthews, “who plans another political campaign but has not made a decision on which office she will pursue” (Wiggins 2017). While local women and male supporters of change in Anne Arundel County and the state of Maryland are positively energized to take on the current negative affairs of the White House in Washington, there is no doubt that response is evident nationally as well.

In New Jersey, a *USA Today* article highlights the Ready to Run program which is designed to teach “women how to run for public office. In over 18 states, the course offers fundamentals on running a campaign, fundraising, media training, and the mobilization of voters” (Gaudiano 2016). After the 2016 election, their enrollment numbers and interest levels have increased in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Iowa. Rabiya Kader, an enrollee at Princeton and patent attorney, mentions that not only did Clinton’s victory in the primary fuel women’s resolve to get more involved in politics, but her loss to the White House and Trump’s win is fanning the flames yet again (Gaudiano 2016). Another voice, Amelia Lobo, program director at a community economic developing agency, “is considering running for local office,” according to the *Washington Post*, a goal she may never have considered if not for her vehement concern that the country will ‘take a step back in time on human and women’s rights, the environment, the economy and minimum wage’ (Wiggins 2017). Lastly, *CNN Politics* reports a story featuring Alyson Leahy from a small town in Wisconsin, who attended the Women’s March on Washington, she is planning to get politically involved every day to combat unqualified victory over a very qualified loss—Hillary Clinton. She adds that, ‘I can’t afford to sit around...avoiding real work’ (Lah, Becker & Mallory 2017). What started out as gentle motivation over Clinton’s victory in the primary for a few has transformed into an awakening of real passion and commitment for many more, especially women—including me! I have deeply delved into the process of organizing a meet-up group in my neighborhood and the community in which I work (where many and diverse peoples make their homes in rental properties) to not only hear and document the disappointing cries of critical concern for our country, but to help empower women and minorities to further extend their political power as well.

For the first time in my fifty-four years of life, I not only voted in the 2016 election, I worked as a line judge as well during the primary in the county in which I reside. I will never forget how my associates clapped as I cast my ballot forward, yet I was torn. For the first time in American history, a woman won the chance to become the next president of the

United States, and that made me feel obligated to vote for her, but then I heard a quiet voice of wisdom telling me to vote my conscience. I did! I voted for Bernie Sanders in the primary mainly because of his stance on single-payer healthcare. When he lost, the only logical choice in my mind was of course, Hillary Clinton. When she lost, it was the first-time politics mattered to me in such a profound way. I was emotionally moved by grief that our country was headed back in time, back to the time before the American Revolution, back to Irvin's example of Rip Van Winkle's lassitude about everything important from family to legitimate governing but unlike Winkle, who never cast a vote, I finally did and so did many others. Clinton won the popular vote! Trump won the Electoral College. All our societal and political gains achieved under former President Obama and all the hopes we cast upon Hillary Clinton for the future dissolved in a useless structure that failed to protect us from itself. Yet holding fast to my positive outlook on the need for honest government, I realize a step backwards politically does not necessarily mean the end of former strides and the ruination of an old awakening—finishing what a band of men started in 1765—because now if women everywhere become more politically emboldened to change Trump's brand of rogue behavior, political conservatism and humanitarian failure—as voices harmonize in a chorus of unity—then none of us lost the election of 2016.

References

- “Anne Arundel County Board of Elections,” accessed July 1, 2017, <http://www.aacounty.org/boards-andcommissions/board-of-elections/election/results>.
- Gaudiano, Nicole. “Women disappointed in 2016 election results get ‘Ready to Run,’” *USA Today*, November 20, 2016, accessed July 6, 2017, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2016/11/20/women-disappointed-2016>.
- Irving, Washington. *Rip Van Winkle*, accessed July 1, 2017, <http://www.bartleby.com/310/2/1.html>.
- Lah, Kyung, Stephanie Becker and Simon Mallory. “These women marched against Donald Trump. Now they are running for office,” *CNN Politics*, March 7, 2017, accessed July 6, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/07/politics/women-march-now-running-for-office/index.html>.
- “Maryland State Board of Elections,” accessed July 1, 2017, http://www.elections.maryland.gov/county_state_page_root.html.

- Newman, Meredith. "On 'A Day Without a Woman,' local women learn inner-workings of Maryland politics," *Capital Gazette*, March 8, 2017, accessed July 6, 2017, <http://www.capitalgazette.com/multimed/photos/bs-cgt-ac-cn-womens-caucus-shadow-day-039-p1-20>.
- Wiggins, Ovetta. "Clinton's Loss Sparks Surge of Interest in Women Running for Office," *Washington Post*, January 5, 2017, accessed July 6, 2017, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/md-politics/cli>.
- Winters, Wendy. "Democratic Women's Club revived in Anne Arundel County," *Capital Gazette*, March 19, 2017, accessed July 6, 2017, <http://www.capitalgazette.com/news/government/ph-ac-cn-future-aaco-women-0321-20170319-sto>.

CHAPTER THREE

TRUMP'S ELECTION AND FEAR

PIERRE R. BERASTAIN

The election of Donald Trump unsettled me, not because I am an alarmist or a fatalist, but because as a child, my family conditioned me to remain alert of my surroundings and trust my instincts. As I write those words, I realize how cliché they must sound. In Peru, trusting one's instincts could mean the difference between seeing the face of God or waking up to another day of news about terrorist attacks. For some incomprehensible reason, one learns to prefer the latter.

I grew up during the 90s in Lima, Peru, a country that by then had already experienced ten years of armed conflict. By the end of the 80s, the violence had migrated from the countryside to the capital, as if intentionally chasing those who had already suffered enough and moved to the city in hopes of a more peaceful reality. During my childhood, my Mom tried to shield me from the news and endless conversations about the car bombs a few blocks down our home, the kidnappings, the burglaries, and the ever-present possibility of death. "Turn off the television. Don't listen to so and so. Pierre, go play with your toys."

Mom knew, though, that asking me not to look at the images or leave the room was futile. It isn't sustainable to tell a child to ignore the riots and gas on television when he asks what to do if that were to happen. When I was six, Mom put a towel and a bottle of water in my backpack, right next to my pencils and notebooks. "In case of a gas attack or anything similar, you douse the towel with water and put it on your face. Make sure you breathe through the towel. And run. Run as far as you can from the gas." She made me practice a couple of times: douse the towel; breathe through it. Run. On another occasion, she gave me a pen. "Hold this pen on your hand when you walk to school. If someone tries to take you, you stab him in the eye or right here," she said as she pressed her finger on the soft spot right above the clavicle.

Dad also prepared me for the violence, though he took a very different approach from Mom's realism and pragmatism. It was only years after we had moved to the United States that Dad told me how once, he came in close contact with an abduction and potential murder. It was during one of his taxi drives. He picked up a couple: one sat in front, the other in the back. All I know is that they were friendly and asked him to drive somewhere away from the normal places. At one of the intersections, the man in the front suddenly, and very forcefully, asked my Dad to stop driving. "Stop, stop, stop. Here is fine. Here is fine." Two police cars drove by with their sirens. The details are a little unclear, but my dad said that once the couple left, and he cleaned out his car, he found a syringe. He showed me the size by separating his hands to demonstrate approximately 10 inches in length. "I think it was some form of tranquilizer," he said. "Back then, there were so many stories of organ trafficking. People would disappear for two or three days and later were found on the side of a street, with some side or back pain. When they went to the doctor, they would learn they had a missing kidney." My dad believes had it not been for luck or those police officers who passed by, he would have been found on the street and a stolen kidney. I cannot say for certainty that my dad's interpretation of what he saw and experienced is fully accurate. That doesn't matter. What is important is that *he* believes it to be true, and I know belief is more powerful than any reality.

I cannot pinpoint the day when my Dad experienced the incident in the taxi. Any time my Dad felt distress, he would come home, smile, and play with me for some time. That was the way he dealt with stress: by telling jokes and acting goofy. The goofier he acted, the more stress he felt. I only learned that about my father when I became an adult. It's the way he copes, or rather, the way he tries to ignore difficult situations, or perhaps it's the way he shows the middle finger to that which he cannot change. "Do whatever you want to me, but I will have the last laugh." I think that is the reason my Dad loves the World War II movie, *Life is Beautiful*, a film about a father who uses jokes, laughter, and make-believe to distract his young son from the brutal realities of the concentration camp. The father dies smiling, ensuring his son never sees him sad or in pain. At the end of the film, American forces arrive and take the boy to safety. I've always wondered, does my father engage in fantasy to shield himself or to protect my sister and me? Perhaps, he does it for both, but what I wish he realized is that *he* is the American forces at the end of the movie, that *he* had the strength to both laugh and take us out of Peru so that I would not have to stab someone in the eye or fear a kidnapping.

But Dad's jokes and insertion of levity into everything serious was his way of coping with distress. Anthropologist Ivana Maček, writing about the conflict in Sarajevo, analyzes the role that comedy plays in the lives of people. The tragedy and the comedy, she argues, cannot be detangled. One depends on the other, or in the words of my Divinity School professor, Michael D. Jackson, "it is the tragedy that led people to the comedic, and it is the comedic that brought people back to the tragedy to digest it." Maček explains:

"Jokes were a typical way of commenting upon situations of destruction and humiliation. For example, the joke that runs: "How does a smart Bosnian call a stupid one?—From a phone abroad!" was basically one expressing one of the most acute dilemmas during the war—to leave or not to leave. By sharing the joke, people were letting each other know that they shared the same problem" (Maček 2006: 61).

I know today that I got my laughter in the face of adversity from my father and my obsessive planning and trust in my instincts from my mother. Most people don't seem to understand how the two are possible. The best way I can explain it is that you laugh when a friend falls, but you still check on him and extend a helping hand so that he can get up. Or in the case of Trump, you laugh at the absurdity of his claims that global warming is a hoax the Chinese concocted or that he "knows more about ISIS than the generals do," but you maintain a sense of urgency or concern because deep down, you know people *believe* his explanations. The alternative would be for them to understand the complexities of global warming or global terrorism, and that is far too difficult. Easy explanations are always more palatable. And so, for months before the election, I insisted that Trump would win. My work colleagues said I was wrong and crazy. My friends insisted Americans would never elect someone like Donald Trump.

At first, I laughed at much of what Trump tweeted or said on television. Then, I grew worried and started obsessing about hypothetical scenarios. I saved more money for the lawyers my family and I would need when immigration enforcement officers took us to detention facilities. I began making lists of people I knew who could contact the media and allies to "make noise." I considered applying to other graduate programs, perhaps as a safe heaven: maybe a Trump administration would not deport undocumented students. Long before the election, I began losing sleep. When I tried to reach out to friends, coworkers, and family to help me brainstorm solutions, their advice felt isolating: "Nothing will