

Ready for Hillary?

Alex Klosner
Staff Writer

Now that Hillary Clinton has officially announced her candidacy, Americans must ask themselves an important question: What exactly is so great about Hillary Clinton? The media, Democrats, and college students all have a frightening infatuation with her. Amidst the recent e-mail scandal, much of the liberal media has already gone to extraordinary lengths to protect the presumed Democratic nominee. Despite their pretensions to diversity, liberals have failed to promote a politically or ethnically diversified field of candidates. They've elevated Clinton to celebrity status, but her resume is besmirched by scandal and outright incompetence.

In 1993 Bill Clinton appointed Hillary to lead a task force on national healthcare reform. The Clintons attempted to devise a political strategy to implement universal healthcare. Hillary's 1,342-page health care bill, crafted behind closed doors, would have created a bureaucratic nightmare and cost the American taxpayer over \$331 billion from 1994 to 2000. The Democrat-controlled Congress at the time refused to vote on the plan and Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell killed the bill. Hillary's big

government tendencies as First Lady gave ammo to advocates of limited government and allowed for the 1994 GOP takeover of Congress. In addition to her futile attempts at legislating, Hillary was steeped in the ethically objectionable activity of her husband's administration, including Whitewater, travelgate, and filegate.

After Bill's presidency the Clintons moved to New York, virtually guaranteeing Hillary her two terms in the U.S. Senate. In 2006, the FEC fined Hillary's 2000 Senate campaign \$35,000 for failing to report over \$720,000 in campaign contributions. During her time in the U.S. Senate, Hillary proved to be an ineffective lawmaker and initiated no groundbreaking legislation.

Even liberals are not blind to Hillary's politically mortifying Senate career. During the 2008 Democratic Primary, Obama supporters attacked Hillary's Senate record (or lack thereof), devastating her campaign. "[A]n inability to get legislation passed is just the beginning of Senator Clinton's shallow record," writes Adam Hanft of the *Huffington Post*. "For many of the bills she introduced, she couldn't even get a cosponsor in her own party!" She did, however, vote in favor of the Iraq War.

At the beginning of her tenure as Secretary of State, Hillary infamously stood alongside Russian Foreign

Minister Sergei Lavrov holding a "reset" button to symbolize improved relations between the U.S. and Russia. Five years following this Russian "reset," Russia annexed Crimea and now threatens NATO members with new territorial aspirations.

Conditions in the Middle East have deteriorated with the rise of ISIS, mass bloodshed in Syria, and Iran's determination to acquire a nuclear weapon. Despite the "pivot" to Asia, tensions have escalated in the Asia-Pacific region. China has claimed an extraordinary amount of maritime territory belonging to loyal U.S. allies.

As Secretary of State, Hillary neither strengthened crucial U.S. alliances nor improved America's image around the world. Hillary's unimpressive time as Secretary of State was littered with controversies from Benghazi to her secret email account and hard drive, which she wiped clean in spite of a congressional subpoena.

Hillary's track record should inspire new Democrats to challenge her monopoly over the Democratic base. During the 2008 Democratic Primary, Hillary initially led Obama by fifteen percentage points and still lost the nomination. Any young, articulate, and charismatic Democrat would pose a legitimate threat to Hillary's campaign. She has a lot of baggage and few accomplishments.

Heather Mac Donald on Policing

Mike Adamo | *Senior Editor*

Last week the Alexander Hamilton Institute welcomed Heather Mac Donald, a scholar from the Manhattan Institute, to give a lecture entitled "Are Cops Racist?"

Mac Donald is a highly accomplished journalist whose articles have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and other high-profile publications. Her academic credentials are likewise impressive: she received a B.A. in English from Yale, an M.A. in English from Cambridge, and a J.D. from Stanford University Law School.

The lecture focused on what Mac Donald called the "Black Lives Matter" movement. Mac Donald challenged the pervasive narrative that police racism leads to an epidemic of officers shooting black men. She argued that the racial disparity in the victims of police shootings is explained by crime levels and by policing techniques that have nothing to do with racism. Her lecture was both a defense of those techniques, which have led to significant decreases in violent crime in urban areas, and a refutation of the idea that shootings like that of Michael Brown indicate a crisis of police racism.

Mac Donald has studied policing for many years, and draws her information from a number of sources, including ride-alongs with police, interviews with residents in high-crime areas, and, most importantly, statistics.

The lecture exposed major problems with the Black Lives Matter movement. Academics, politicians, and journalists have irresponsibly used the Michael Brown incident to slander police departments across the country. The movement's great lie, that Michael Brown was shot while his hands were up by a racist police officer, has found favor among college students and members of Congress alike. Let's not forget that dozens of Hamilton students marched across campus championing this lie. The "Hands Up, Don't Shoot" chants have persisted despite the fact that Eric Holder's Justice Department, the most activist Justice Department in recent history, found no evidence of racial prejudice in the shooting, and plenty of evidence that Michael Brown was shot while assaulting Officer Wilson.

The spectacularly irresponsible rush to judgment has perhaps done irreparable damage to the reputation of police officers in America. It's completely unwarranted, considering the progress in policing over the past twenty or so years. New York City in particular saw an enormous decrease in crime in the 1990s, due in large part to a new policing strategy.

The New York City strategy relies on a system called CompStat, which allows police to allocate their resources more efficiently. They compile massive amounts of data on arrests and reports of criminal activity and hold weekly meetings to make officers accountable for crime levels in their precincts. As Mac Donald explained, local precinct commanders need to be familiar with every crime that

occurred in their precinct in the last week, and their superiors grill the commanders about how they intend to prevent further crime. The system makes officers directly responsible for the safety of people in their precincts, whether those residents are black or white.

Another important part of the New York City strategy was so-called “broken-windows” policing, in which police crack down on low-level crime in order to discourage more violent crime. New York City police found that when they paid more attention to things like loitering and public disturbances, higher-level crime also decreased.

Despite its impressive results and its largely positive effects on crime-ridden communities, broken windows policing has fallen out of favor with the left. The fact that more police resources are allocated to areas with high crime, which tend to have larger black populations, means that there is a disparity between the number of black arrests and white arrests.

If the alternative to these crime fighting strategies were to distribute police resources more equally among majority-

black and majority-white areas, the result would be disastrous for the majority-black communities where crime is a much greater threat. The Upper West Side liberals who like to protest policing are so far removed from the threat of crime that they see no problem with taking away police protection for minority communities.

The conclusions of Mac Donald’s lecture are that policing strategies have been increasingly adept at protecting largely black neighborhoods, and that the disparities that some would attribute to racism are actually explained by those strategies. That does not mean the strategies are themselves racist. So long as majority-black neighborhoods face higher crime levels than majority-white neighborhoods, there will be a disparity in the number of black and white arrests. It is a terrible inequality, but it is not the product of racial prejudice. Those who wish to solve it would do better to look elsewhere.

Yes, there are racist cops. But to indict the entire system of policing would not only be an error in reasoning, it would be a great disservice to the minority populations who benefit the most from a strong police force.

Incarceration and Children

Sarah Larson | *Staff Writer*

The problems of America’s prison system are extensive and diverse. Prisons are overcrowded and expensive. The justice system disproportionately locks up black and brown Americans from poor communities. America’s prisons are filled with down-on-their-luck veterans, drug addicts, mental health patients, and repeat offenders incapable of finding work with a criminal record. The bulk of America’s 2.3 million prisoners are locked up for non-violent crimes, and once released from prison more than half return within the next three years. Real rehabilitation programs are few and far between, and prison-to-work programs are even less common.

It is clear that America’s criminal justice system produces too many prisoners. Michelle Alexander’s book *The New Jim Crow* and several think tank reports all offer quantitative and qualitative analyses of the situation. Yet very little research has been done on one of the most tragic aspects of America’s prison problem: the lives of children with incarcerated parents.

In the 1970s there were about 350,000 minors with a parent in prison. Today, there are 2.7 million. Of those 2.7 million kids, many follow in their parents footsteps. According to a paper published by the US Department of Justice in 2010, 79,165 youths were labeled criminals and held in one of Americas 2,259 juvenile detention facilities. Of those 79,165 kids, there were 12,000 whose “most serious offense” was a technical, not criminal, violation of the requirements of their probation or parole. Another 3,000 are behind bars for “status” offenses, which are, as the U.S. Department of Justice explains, “behaviors that are not law violations for adults, such as running away, truancy, and incorrigibility.” The saddest part of this story is that the

childhood jailing is mostly occurring in America’s poorest areas. Children who grow up in Greenwich, Connecticut are far less likely to receive jail time and a criminal record for trying marijuana, driving too fast, or refusing to go to school.

For the 2.7 million children with a parent behind bars, life is immeasurably difficult. Children with incarcerated parents are far more likely than their peers to grow up homeless. Homelessness immediately disadvantages children, making it difficult for them to do well in school, receive adequate health care, make friends, and enjoy their childhood. On top of likely homelessness, the child experiences familial instability and is highly likely to live in poverty.

Probably in good part because of their home situation, a 2011 report by Justice Strategies found that “45% of children with incarcerated parents had failing grades, compared with 20% of a their peers whose parents weren’t in prison.” Teachers are often wholly unaware of their students’ situation. Schools are not aware of a child’s parent’s arrest or incarceration unless the child or someone else lets them know.

There is also a serious stigma of having an incarcerated parent. One report notes that the children of incarcerated parents “often end up in foster care and have difficulties in school forming attachments with their peers.” To make matters worse, children grow up angry at their parent for “leaving them,” and that anger often manifests itself in rebellious teenage behavior. As the authors of the study assert, much more research needs to be done to understand the full breadth of the psychological consequences of parental incarceration.

A review entitled “Making a Better World for Children of Incarcerated Parents” by Professor of Law Myrna S. Raeder outlines how millions of

children are at risk “not only for continuing an intergenerational cycle of crime, but also for entering the pipeline that extends from foster care, to school failure, homelessness, unemployment, poverty, and institutionalization.”

Raeder cites several studies and surveys that correlate parental incarceration with incidents of sexual and physical abuse as well as neglect. Those same children face early exposure to their parent’s mental illness, domestic violence, substance abuse, or other types of parental abuse or neglect within their household. Children are suffering from the “sins” of their fathers and mothers and from the flaws of America’s current mass incarceration system, and their suffering is for the most part invisible to the rest of the public. The invisibility is in part due to the demographics of incarceration. Children with incarcerated parents tend to be surrounded by other children in similar situations, but communities free from the cycle of crime feel little effect. It is shameful that the American public neglects this as an issue. If we are serious about promoting and protecting family values, we can begin by acknowledging that children are bearing the burden of America’s prison problem.

Enquiry Staff

Editor-in-Chief: Joe Simonson

Senior Editor: Mike Adamo

Staff Writers: Taylor Elicegui, Amy Elinski, Alex Klosner, Sarah Larson, Andrew Nachemson, Phil Parkes, Will Swett

The opinions expressed in these articles are the views of their authors and do not represent the views of Enquiry or the Alexander Hamilton Institute.

Enquiry accepts articles of 500 to 800 words at jsimonso@hamilton.edu and madamo@hamilton.edu. Please be aware that we do not accept anonymous submissions.