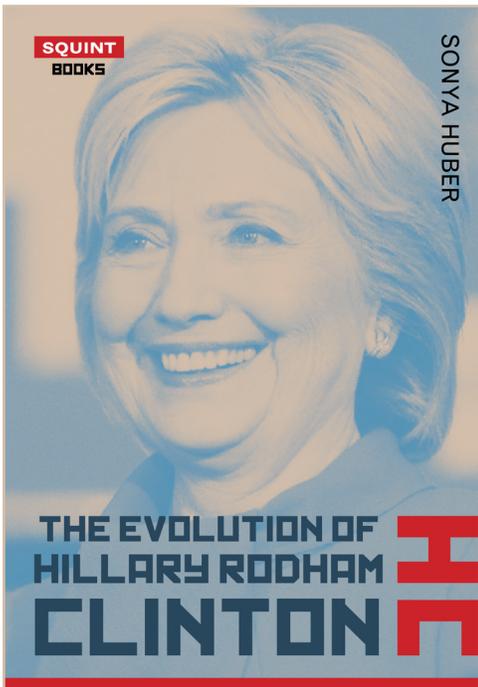


THE EVOLUTION OF HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

nonfiction by Sonya Huber



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Who is Hillary Clinton, beyond the right-wing smear campaign and the reputation of her husband? Sonya Huber's short, accessible book takes a balanced look at Hillary, delving into the evolution of her image, her detractors and their attacks, and her policy decisions, offering an overview of the forces that have shaped her. From her role as Secretary of State to her commitment to women's rights, her changing positions and charges of unreliability on issues of trade and the environment, Hillary Rodham Clinton's political agenda has changed over time. Do these changes make her a reptilian "shape-shifter" or just a politician? Will she be responsive to a changing Democratic Party in America, and how will she govern as President of the United States?

“Sonya Huber has achieved the near-impossible: she's managed to contextualize Hillary Clinton's long political career with **precision, clarity, and wit**. Examined herein are Hillary's complicated relationships with her husband, the American public, Wall Street, feminism, Mother Theresa, and even the author herself... you'll find **no better primer** on this fascinating, polarizing woman.”

—Shannon Drury, author of *The Radical Housewife: Redefining Family Values for the 21st Century*

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A CONVERSATION WITH SONYA HUBER

Q: This book is about Hillary Clinton's evolution as a politician, but in some ways, it's also about your evolving view of Clinton. Were you surprised to find your own attitudes about Clinton changing as you researched and wrote this book?

A: This was definitely a surprise for me. I didn't have hard and fast views about her, but I had a vaguely negative "sense," and reading smart commentary made me realize the degree to which that negative impression had been created partially by growing up within whirlwind of Republican attacks on her from every possible angle.

Q: You make no secret of the fact that you're a Sanders supporter. Why should Sanders' primary voters throw their weight behind Clinton in the general election?

A: There are so many reasons. First, Donald Trump's rhetoric is racist, sexist, and xenophobic. If you choose him, you are signing onto those views—no matter what convoluted theory of rebellion you might hold. Second, the presidential election is not the end of political involvement. It's the very beginning. If this election has a person frustrated that they don't have a voice, that person needs to become involved in social movements on the issues they care about. Third, if you were a voter during the Nader candidacy, you might think back to the debates around Nader's positions versus Gore's, which were all fascinating. Now, if you were a Nader supporter, think about Gore: did you have a visceral hatred of him as a beast from the depths of hell? No? Well, then I'd wager that somehow gender is playing into your hatred of Clinton and personalizing it in a way that Gore did not have to endure. Fourth: her positions on many key issues are good. Others are bad. But compared to Trump, there is no contest.

Q: What would a Clinton presidency look like for the US and for the world?

A: A positive is that she likes a qualified team around her and is a good listener; she wants the best feedback. So we might see a widely varied approach depending on whom she chooses for her cabinet. Unlike any male candidate in the nation's history, she would take office amid an unprecedented backlash against the idea of a female leader of the country. I'm sort of hopeful it would flush a lot of sexist bullshit into the open. She hasn't run her campaign on a main plank that she's going to launch into as soon as she takes office, but she will have a horde of Sanders supporters who will want to push for major reform to the tuition model of the public higher education system, as one example.

Q: If there were one thing you want voters to know about Clinton and this race, what would it be?

A: History is important. Clinton is guarded and "triangulating" because of the era in which she came of age. The New Democrat semi-Machiavellian theory of "triangulation" came about as a reaction to a horrible era of conservative "Focus on the Family" far-right organizing. We have to continue to hold Republicans in this country accountable for the ways in which they have polarized the national debates by using far-right agendas to cobble together their voting base after the Cold War was no longer a viable fear-based way to ensure voters' support.



Sonya Huber is the author of two other books of creative nonfiction, *Opa Nobody* and *Cover Me: A Health Insurance Memoir*, and a textbook, *The Backwards Research Guide for Writers*. Her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Creative Nonfiction*, *Brevity*, *Fourth Genre*, and other journals. She teaches at Fairfield University and directs Fairfield's Low-Residency MFA Program.