

#BlackLivesMatter: Chat Partners with Hillary

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The best thing that could be said about the #BlackLivesMatter Campaign Zero team is that they are an embarrassment, political tourists in the halls of empire. The truth is, however, much worse. In two meetings with Democratic presidential frontrunner Hillary Clinton, they have offered no demands worthy of the name, choosing instead to imagine that they are “pushing” Clinton and the Democratic Party into some stance advantageous to Black people. In reality, the #BlackLivesMatter clique has dissipated the energy – and threat – of angry Black bodies, hands and missiles in motion in Ferguson and Baltimore. Quickly fading is the specter of a Black movement from down below that struck real fear in the Obama administration and much of the U.S. power structure. Instead, #BlackLivesMatter provides harmless chat partners for Hillary and the other presidential hopefuls. The #BLM operatives claim they “spent months” studying Clinton’s positions on the issues, in preparation for the meeting. Why? To gauge how far they could “move” the war criminal and corporate thief? Move her towards what? Campaign Zero’s “demands” are an eclectic assortment of criminal justice reform ideas and recommendations, many of them straight out of Obama’s presidential task force on policing, and borrowed “best-practice” police procedures (Seattle is their favorite department). When #BLM folks claim they have “lots” of demands, it actually means they have no core demands, at all.

The Democrats scoped them as political assets, early on: that’s why the Democratic National Committee overwhelmingly voted to “[endorse](#) [3]” #BlackLivesMatter back in August. The trio of #BLM founders, Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi, and Alicia Garza, formally [rejected](#) [4] the official DNC embrace, but the #BLM’s chat-and-tweet-squads have continued to make the Democrats look good by pretending to hold them accountable through meaningless, meandering, demand-less meetings. DeRay Mckesson, Brittany Packnett, Johnetta Elzie, Cherno Biko and Samuel Sinyangwe provided Hillary Clinton with [another useful backdrop](#) [5], last week. They appear to believe their mission was to “educate” Clinton (although they would have done far better to have educated themselves on political movement history, practice and theory). “This was an opportunity to get input from black people, who are experts of their own lives, solutions to dismantling anti-black racist institutions and policies,” Johnetta Elzie told reporters. #BLM thinks that relaying the recommendations of an Obama task force to a former Obama Secretary of State equals providing “solutions to dismantling anti-black racist institutions and policies.”

Actually, the #BLM crew’s primary mission was to force Clinton to mentally grapple with white privilege, and to grasp how Black people “feel.” #BLM’s aim is to assure that the next president has a deeper understanding of the workings of racism – presumably, deeper than the current, Black one. In the course of the conversation, Elzie said Clinton

“...would listen and acknowledge that her experience was totally different than any of the black people at this table. It took her awhile to get there, but she got there. So I’m hopeful that she will continue to have this educational conversation with herself to acknowledge her

privilege. You saying that you know that you're white, you know that you have power, and you know that you are wealthy is not the same as seeing it and knowing that the way that police interact with you is completely different than how they will ever interact with us."

The #BLM philosophy is that therapeutic dialogue with members of the power elite is politically more effective than the presentation of core demands. (Certainly, it is better for the future careers of the #BLM interlocutors.)

When it came to actually doing something about the Black condition, Clinton was less forthcoming. "I think she can take a harder stance on how she understands the role of the federal government in protecting the rights of people of color and pushing and modeling for local and state governments," said DeRay Mckesson. "She kind of downplayed the role of the federal government and placed it all on state and local government," said Johnetta Elzie.

Clinton used the meeting to announce her opposition to private prisons – which may have come as a shock to her campaign contributors from Wall Street's corporate incarceration firms.

Elzie offered that Bernie Sanders has a better understanding of Black people's justifiable fears of police. She and McKesson told the press they would wait to see more specifics from Clinton before deciding who to support. Cherno Biko said Clinton "hasn't earned my endorsement yet, but I'm looking forward to her releasing a racial justice platform in the coming weeks." Brittany Packnett emerged from the meeting "still thinking about where I will put my vote and not yet having an answer."

They will all endorse one of the Democrats, sooner rather than later. The #BlackLivesMatter tent has already been folded up inside the Democratic Party, where slick Black "activists" on the make go to catch the express elevator to the executive suites. In less than a year, the #BLM crowd milked the incipient movement for all it was worth, presenting themselves as the interlocutors between the streets and Power. It's been one hell of a journey – a great hustle. They have arrived at where they wanted to be: part of the age-old Black Petit Bourgeois Shuffle, dancing to the Master's tune, while complaining that their pale partners still don't have the right rhythm.

The demand from the streets remains the same as it has been since the imposition of the modern Black mass incarceration regime, two generations ago: Black community control of the police – by any means necessary. The [Black Is Back Coalition for Social Justice](#) [6], Peace and Reparations will rally and march on the White House on [Saturday, November 7](#) [6] – as it has every year since 2009 – under the banner "Black Power Matters."

The demand for Black community control of police is called forth by both the principle of self-determination and the facts of Black existence in the United States. But self-determination does not exist in the practice of #BlackLivesMatter, which has squandered Black people's dignity and the momentum of an emerging movement.

We wish them a swift and complete assimilation into the corridors of Power – which was their mission, all along.

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Notes:

- [1] http://www.blackagendareport.com/black_lives_matter_chat_partners_with_hillary
- [2] <http://www.blackagendareport.com/category/african-america/black-liberation-movement>
- [3] <http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/dnc-passes-resolution-supporting-black-lives-matter>
- [4] http://www.blackagendareport.com/black_lives_matter_hurts_democrats_feelings
- [5] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/black-lives-matter-hillary-clinton_56180c44e4b0e66ad4c7d9fa
- [6] <http://www.blackisbackcoalition.org/>
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