

# *Michael Moore in TrumpLand* grovels in praise of Hillary Clinton

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*Michael Moore in TrumpLand* is a bare-bones documentary, essentially the recording of a one-man show presented by the American filmmaker in Wilmington, Ohio earlier this month and released just days later, three weeks before the presidential election.

Moore, who previously backed Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders and then became a reluctant supporter of Hillary Clinton after she won the Democratic presidential nomination, has now gone all-out to portray the former First Lady and Secretary of State as “our Pope Francis,” a positive standard bearer for the “left.” The man who occasionally used satire and a comic flair to scandalize the corporate and political establishment (*Roger and Me*, *Bowling for Columbine*) has come forward as the defender of the favored candidate of that establishment.

With the message that Hillary Clinton will be the second coming of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Moore has made a movie whose laugh lines fall flat and whose peroration in praise of the voice of Wall Street and the Pentagon is both politically appalling and pathetic.

The premise of *TrumpLand* is that Mr. Moore, the fearless stand-up comic, has ventured into the lion’s den. Wilmington, a town of some 12,500 in southwestern Ohio, is typical of cities and towns throughout the US where the fascistic candidate of the Republican Party has won support by appealing to the anger and frustration of working class voters who have seen their jobs and living standards decimated in the years since the 2008 financial crash and the decades of deindustrialization leading up to it.

Showing somewhat more flexibility than Clinton exhibited with her notorious comment about Trump voters as a “basket of deplorables,” Moore welcomes both Trump and Clinton supporters, as well as those planning to vote for third-party candidates, to

Wilmington’s Murphy Theater. After some lame and reactionary gibes at Trump partisans—referring to “angry white guys” whose “days are numbered”—Moore declares his sympathy with the “legitimate concerns” of the Trump backers.

He warns, however, that while a vote for Trump will be a “human Molotov cocktail,” “the biggest ‘Fuck you!’ ever recorded in human history,” it will “only feel good for possibly a month.” Comparing the US election to the Brexit vote in Britain, he warns that “using the ballot as an anger management tool” will leave working people even worse off than before.

“Can’t we start saying something nice about her?” says Moore. He proceeds to poke fun at right-wing critics on such issues as the 2012 Benghazi attack in Libya, but says nothing about Clinton’s actual record as US Senator and Secretary of State: her notorious gloating about the murder of Muammar Gaddafi, the WikiLeaks revelations of her Wall Street speeches, her appeals for the prosecution of Edward Snowden, and her calls for aggressive military preparations or actual escalation of US intervention in Iran, Syria, China and Russia.

Advocating a vote for Clinton, Moore goes much further in *TrumpLand* than the bankrupt lesser-evil argument advanced in some quarters. He rhapsodizes about a first 100 days of a Hillary Clinton administration, filled with executive orders that will usher in a new era of social reform. Clinton will stop the deportation of immigrants, rescue the residents of lead-poisoned Flint, release all non-violent offenders from prison and prosecute all police who shoot unarmed black men. Clinton will supposedly “kick ass in Congress”—never mind her constant appeals for Republican support and promises to seek “compromise.”

Qualifying his praise slightly, Moore goes on to explain that his dream of Clinton as a reformer isn't going to happen "without a revolution behind her." Repeating the argument of Sanders, who shifted quickly from denouncing Clinton as the candidate of Wall Street to boosting her as a progressive champion, Moore calls for mobilizing support to "get behind" Clinton and "hold her" to the promises of the Democratic Party platform.

"If for some reason" Clinton does not deliver, Moore promises, tongue planted firmly in cheek, to run for president himself in 2020.

Moore goes beyond attempting, *à la* Sanders, to sell Clinton as a progressive alternative. The climax of the filmmaker's plea on behalf of Clinton in *TrumpLand* is entirely within the deplorable framework of identity politics.

Running through Moore's 70-minute show is the theme of Clinton as the first woman US president, and the supposedly earthshaking significance of gender. "Hillary is genuinely the first feminist of the modern era," he proclaims, after screening a clip of her graduation speech from Wellesley College. Like the current Pope, Moore says, Clinton has "bided her time." She endured all the attacks as First Lady, the failure of her attempts, supposedly, to secure universal healthcare. Now, however, "the majority gender has the chance to run this world."

There are millions of young women and men, of course, firmly committed to equal rights, but unimpressed with Clinton or the claims that a woman president will reverse inequality or change the nature of the capitalist system.

Moore does not mention Margaret Thatcher, one of the most significant figures in the social counterrevolution that has been waged by global capitalism for the past 40 years. Nor does he allude to the current or recent female prime ministers or heads of state in Britain, Germany, Finland, Norway, Brazil, Chile, Australia, Argentina and elsewhere.

It is not an accident that the prominence of female leaders coincides with this period of reaction. The politics of identity, based on gender, race and sexual orientation, has been used to cultivate an upper middle class constituency that directly benefits from austerity and inequality, while the vast majority of the population, of all races and genders, suffers the

consequences.

Moore is now the proud spokesperson for this brand of politics. His right-wing trajectory is one that has been followed by many others. There is some continuity, however, between his current love affair with Clinton and his earlier middle class radical posture. Even at his best, Moore depicted the working class as victims. Today his assigned task is to convince angry millennial voters who are justifiably disgusted with the two-party system to give Clinton a mandate, not for social reform, but for austerity and war.



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