

Amy Klobuchar, endorsed by *New York Times*, denounced for railroading black teenager to prison for life

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Amy Klobuchar is the senior US senator from Minnesota and a candidate for the Democratic Party presidential nomination, having received the endorsement in January of the *New York Times* (along with Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts).

The *Times* praised Klobuchar as someone “with an empathy that connects to voters’ lived experiences, especially in the middle of the country.” The newspaper has relentlessly promoted identity politics, an obvious factor in its endorsement of the two female candidates.

In fact, like Hillary Clinton, Kamala Harris and, for that matter, Warren herself, Klobuchar personifies the manner in which gender and racial politics provides a phony “progressive” veneer to the malicious ambitions of middle class reactionaries of all colors, ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations.

Various polls currently place Klobuchar fifth behind Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders, Pete Buttigieg, and Warren in the Democratic primary race, but she has enjoyed a certain “surge” recently, the product of considerable promotion by the US media. As a result, some surveys put her in third place in Iowa on the eve of that state’s Democratic Party caucuses on Monday.

Now, a well-researched Associated Press (AP) story suggests that Klobuchar used the railroading of a black teenager, Myon Burrell, to prison for life as a springboard for her political career. Klobuchar was then the prosecutor in Hennepin County, which includes Minneapolis.

Various organizations, including the Minneapolis NAACP, the Racial Justice Network, Black Lives Matter Twin Cities, and Communities United Against Police Brutality, have called for Klobuchar to suspend her campaign for president.

In themselves, the allegations concerning Klobuchar are not astonishing. The Democratic Party teems with former prosecutors, CIA agents and military officers, enemies of the working class and the oppressed at home and abroad.

But there is something special and appropriate about the

exposure and possible downfall of the wretched Klobuchar, recently described by the *Times*, in its inimical pompous jargon of deceit and dishonesty, as “the very definition of Midwestern charisma, grit and sticktoitiveness.”

Klobuchar has made the death of Tyesha Edwards, an 11-year-old girl killed by a stray bullet in 2002, and the subsequent conviction of Burrell, central to her campaign, proving supposedly both her toughness on crime and her sensitivity to the African American community and the problem of gun violence.

In regard to the Edwards-Burrell case, the AP explains that it went through more than 1,000 pages of police records, court transcripts and other documents, and interviewed dozens of inmates, witnesses, and family members.

Summing up, the AP notes that the case relied heavily “on a teen rival of Burrell’s who gave conflicting accounts when identifying the shooter, who was largely obscured behind a wall 120 feet away.” With no other eyewitnesses, the story continues, “police turned to multiple jailhouse snitches. Some have since recanted, saying they were coached or coerced. Others were given reduced time, raising questions about their credibility. And the lead homicide detective offered ‘major dollars’ for names, even if it was hearsay.”

The AP goes on: “There was no gun, fingerprints, or DNA. Alibis were never seriously pursued. Key evidence has gone missing or was never obtained, including a convenience store surveillance tape that Burrell and others say would have cleared him.” Burrell, now 33, has rejected all plea deals and insisted on his innocence.

A co-defendant, Ike Tyson, insists he was the triggerman: “I already shot an innocent girl,” said Tyson, serving a 45-year sentence. “Now an innocent guy—at the time he was a kid—is locked up for something he didn’t do. So, it’s like I’m carrying two burdens.”

To be blunt, the conviction and jailing of Burrell was a scandalous state frame-up, organized by the police and the prosecutors, including, centrally, Klobuchar.

Adding insult to injury, Klobuchar has since attempted to reap political gain out of the destruction of Burrell and his family. At the Democratic Party candidates' debate in Houston in September, Klobuchar bragged about finding and putting in jail "the killer of a little girl named Tyesha Edwards who was doing her homework at her kitchen table and was shot through the window." Zak Cheney-Rice in *New York* magazine suggested that Klobuchar in advertising Burrell's case "as a special victory for black safety in Minneapolis ... plumbs new depths."

Both Burrell's father, Michael Toussaint, and Tyesha Edwards' stepfather, Leonard Winborn, see through Myon Burrell's railroading. Toussaint expressed sympathy for Tyesha: "She didn't deserve to die ... This is a child, studying at her table." But he also wanted justice for his son, "a young man, just 16 years old ... convicted of a case that he didn't do."

Explaining why he and others were demanding that Klobuchar suspend her presidential effort, Toussaint argued that "Amy used my son's case" in her campaign. Toussaint said Klobuchar wanted a political advantage.

Winborn told the *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder*: "If that man [Burrell] hasn't done nothing, then he doesn't need to be in there at all ... Whatever happens, I would never want to see somebody do some time for somebody else's wrongdoing."

Perceptively, Winborn also pointed to prosecutor Klobuchar's political ambitions at the time: "Looking at it right now, it was an elevation thing ... I know all the players. I think my family got hoodwinked."

One publication notes that Klobuchar "is the most unapologetic hawk of the senators in the [Democratic Party] race." It adds: "She has voted for all but one, or 95 percent, of the military spending bills since 2013... Klobuchar supported the US-NATO-led regime change war in Libya in 2011, and her public statements suggest that her main condition for the US use of military force anywhere is that US allies also take part, as in Libya ... Klobuchar received \$17,704 in 'defense' industry contributions for her 2018 reelection campaign."

The Minnesota senator is a slavish supporter of Israeli violence against the Palestinians and an eager participant in the McCarthyite anti-Russia campaign, being one of six Democratic senators who introduced legislation in 2017 that would have created an independent counsel with the ability to probe potential Russian cyber attacks on political systems and investigate efforts by Russians to "interfere" in American elections.

The *New York Times* did not endorse her *despite* this reactionary record, but *because* of it. This "standard bearer for the Democratic center," lyricized the *Times*, whose

"vision goes beyond the incremental," had "the best chance to enact many progressive plans."

Given the most recent turn of events, the *Times*' observation that Klobuchar's "more recent legislative accomplishments are narrower but meaningful to those affected, especially the legislation aimed at helping crime victims," which "is not surprising given her background as the chief prosecutor in Minnesota's most populous county," is especially cynical.

The notion that Klobuchar must represent something progressive because of her gender should be an insult to the public intelligence by now. In April 2019, the *New Republic*, one of the unpleasant voices of self-satisfied, upper-middle class public opinion in the US, described the then-group of Democratic female presidential candidates, including Klobuchar—who were "already making history" and who represented "a profound shift in the political landscape"—as "Women of Substance."

In fact, Klobuchar is something well known and horribly *insubstantial* — an unscrupulous big business politician, who, like Clinton and the rest of the Democratic Party hierarchy, would think nothing of climbing over *heaps of bodies* to make her career.

Hypocritical, conventional and cruel, Klobuchar might well step out of the pages of *Main Street*, *Babbitt*, *It Can't Happen Here* or another of the novels of Sinclair Lewis, the Minnesota-born American author and social critic.

But in her role as ruthless and striving prosecutor, she may most closely resemble Orville W. Mason, the district attorney in Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, who anticipates a murder trial in the light of the "prominence and publicity with which his own activities in connection with this were very likely to be laden!"

Dreiser continues: "At once he got up, energetically stirred. If he could only catch such a reptilian criminal, and that in the face of all the sentiment that such a brutal murder was likely to inspire! The August convention and nominations. The fall election."

This is the Democratic Party. This is contemporary American politics, including its utterly fraudulent "identity politics" wing, which has nothing remotely progressive about it.



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