

'Poontronage': When Kamala Met Willie

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She is brilliant and she is dedicated and she is tough," said the president of the United States in 2013. "She also happens to be, by far, the best looking attorney general in the country."

That would be former California Attorney General Kamala Harris, daughter of Indian and Jamaican immigrants, and now the state's junior U.S. senator. As it happens, Barack Obama was not the first prominent Democrat to be dazzled by the UC Berkeley beauty.

As speaker of the California State Assembly from 1980 to 1995, Willie Brown was by far the Golden State's most powerful shot-caller. In 1994 Brown, 60, met Kamala Harris, a full 30 years his junior, and she became "the Speaker's new steady," Brown's "girlfriend" and "frequent companion." The two-year relationship worked out well for Harris.

Willie Brown appointed Harris to the state Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board, which paid \$97,088 a year. She served six months and Brown then appointed her to the California Medical Assistance Commission, which met only once a month but paid Harris \$72,000. Call it "poontronage," a politician's appointment of his steady girlfriend, frequent companion, and main squeeze to a lucrative government position requiring little work.

Brown also raised money for Harris in her run for San Francisco district attorney in 2003. She defeated her former boss Terence Hallinan but promised never to seek the death penalty. She kept that promise the next year when gang member David Hill used an AK-47 to gun down San Francisco police officer Isaac Espinoza. Even Dianne Feinstein took Harris to task, as she alienated police across the state.

In her 2009 *Smart on Crime: A Career Prosecutor's Plan to Make us Safer,* written with ghostwriter Joan O'C. Hamilton, Harris found the number of nonviolent offenders "truly staggering" and put them at the top of her "crime pyramid." The next year, Harris ran for state attorney general and the *Sacramento Bee* endorsed her Republican rival Steve Cooley. Harris won by less than one percentage point, but as the *Bee* saw it, "she could be more aggressive on public corruption cases, though her handlers might worry that would cause friction with fellow Democratic politicians."

The new span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge—10 years late, \$5 billion over budget and riddled with safety issues—had whistleblowers calling for a criminal investigation. Duly apprised of the fathomless corruption, Harris failed to launch any criminal probe. With voter

fraud and violent crime she simply looked the other way.

California's attorney general stayed quiet in 2014 when racist Mexican national Luis Bracamontes gunned down police officers Danny Oliver and Michael Davis. In 2015, repeatedly deported felon Jose Inez Garcia Zarate, another Mexican national, shot and killed Kate Steinle on a San Francisco pier. Attorney General Harris defended the city's sanctuary policy and failed even to decry "gun violence" in the case.

That same year Syed Farook and Tashfeen Malik killed 14 unarmed innocents and wounded 22 at an office party in San Bernardino. A year later Harris issued a statement on the "devastating and tragic terrorist attack," but failed to name the Islamic terrorists and their motive for the mass murder.

As Democrats vied for the Senate seat vacated by Barbara Boxer, Willie Brown, now in his 80s, suggested that former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa should stay out of the race in favor of Kamala Harris. He did, and the candidacy was essentially a walk-on for Harris, now a leading advocate for the DACA crowd.

For his first address to Congress in 2017, President Trump invited Danny Oliver's wife Susan, an African-American, and the wife of slain deputy Michael Davis. Kamala Harris brought along DACA "Dreamer" Yuriana Aguilar, a Salvadoran national. Senator Harris was the first Democrat to announce that she would vote against any spending deal that did not include a fix for DACA illegals.

As Democrats plot to retake Congress, impeach Trump, and capture the White House, Willie Brown is talking up his former steady girlfriend. "I remember back when she was first elected D.A., here in San Francisco," Brown wrote last June. "We had been very close."

Say what you will about poontronage, it sure has plenty of staying power. On the other hand, Brown is hardly Harris's only booster.

Last August, *Brides* magazine cited "7 Reasons Sen. Kamala Harris's Husband Douglas Emhoff Would Make a Great First Man." The high-profile attorney Emhoff is willing to compromise and cares about children but most important, he's married to Kamala Harris. So "If he's First Whatever, this means in 2020, we'd elect our first female president. This reason's a no-brainer, right?" *Right*.