

The Clinton Touch

Rodrigo Praino (August 28, 2008)



Hillary and Bill turned Barack's Convention into their own.



While the media keep talking about Hillary Clinton's motion to "suspend the rules of the Convention" and nominate Sen. Obama by acclamation, and countless private citizens are thrilled by "how selfless she was", and "how united the party actually is", aren't we missing the main point of this Democratic Convention? So far, this wasn't indeed Barack's Convention, it was the Clintons'.

Changing the complicated and colorful rules of the Convention in order to create a more exciting show is more common than most would think, especially since party Conventions became a TV prime-time live show. The most common changes happened with state delegations refusing to vote, in order to make bigger states vote first and lock the nomination much faster, or when the home state of the nominee was allowed to cast the decisive vote. This year the change has been selecting Obama by acclamation in order to avoid dissidents in Hillary's camp to show up. But this made her the real hero of the Democratic party: she spared Obama and the party the embarrassment of a divided convention, and the choreography of the gesture – broadcast live on TV – will linger for quite a long time.

But the big thing this year wasn't indeed the change of the rules, it was the fact that over and over again the Clintons placed themselves in the spotlight. After Hillary made possible Obama's dramatized selection by acclamation, Bill gave a wonderful speech which was however about his presidency more than anything else, with the major addition of comparing Obama to himself. And so he stole Joe Biden's stage, who spoke shortly after him.

It almost looks as if the Clintons were there in the quality of "owners" of the Democratic party, some sort of gatekeepers giving their blessing to the young newcomer.

All we can do now is wait and see what happens next. In the case of a Republican victory, Hillary will probably be back on track right away and stronger than ever. In case of an Obama administration, will she choose "for the sake of the party and of the country" to play some active role, maybe related to healthcare reform?

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