



PBS' "To The Contrary"

Hillary Accepts Nomination and Role of Family in the Race

Host: Bonnie Erbe

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Panelists: Debra Carnahan, Amber Smith, Jenifer Rajkumar, Jennifer Higgins

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Bonnie Erbe: This week on To The Contrary...First, the campaign begins as history is made. Hillary Clinton is the first woman to win major party presidential nomination. Now, can she win? Will democrats unite around her? Then, And families and politics. Did the democrats overdo the emphasis on family in Philadelphia? And the battle of the daughters: Chelsea takes on Ivanka.

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Erbe: Hello I'm Bonnie Erbe. Welcome to To The Contrary, a discussion of news and social trends from diverse perspectives. Up first, the race is on. Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton is on a bus tour through battleground states courting white working class voters but not before taking her place in history.

Hillary Clinton: "Tonight we've reached a milestone in our nation's march toward a more perfect Union. The first time that a major party has nominated A woman for president.

[Cheering]

Standing here as my mother's daughter and my daughter's mother, I am so happy this day has come. I'm happy for grandmothers and little girls and everyone in between. I'm happy for boys and men because when any barrier falls in America, it clears the way for everyone.

Erbe: Chelsea Clinton introduced her mother noting the significance of the moment.

Chelsea Clinton: People ask me all the time how does she do it? How does she keep going amid the sound and the fury of politics? Here's how... Because she never, ever, forgets who she's fighting for.

[♪♪♪]

Sen. Patty Murray: I have spent my career and my--being a mom and a grandmother telling young girls you can be whoever you want to be. And now we really can see that that is true. It is really historical.

Erbe: From former president Bill Clinton, president Barack Obama, VP Joe Biden and the women of the House and Senate and Bernie Sanders as well as stars of stage and screen all showed up to say 'I'm with her.' But divisions were evident.

Brooklyn Ramos: Bernie Sanders was the most progressive candidate. I will not speak for all the millennial females, but that is what I wanted to see in the candidate for the president of the United States and I would love to have a female president, but Hillary just does not fit the bill.

Murray: I think one of the things that Hillary is good at is being gracious and bringing people in. And when you have a divided political anything whether it's an issue or whether it's a race, she knows how to listen to what the other side needs and tell them she needs them, too. I think she is doing that now. And as we move forward I think that is what will continue to bring us together so we can defeat Donald Trump.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro: Donald Trump, while there may be economic upset, he is not addressing them in any way. Hillary Clinton has. And she has a program and a plan to create jobs and to increase their wages. That is what they care about. All Donald Trump has talked about is building a wall, creating hateful divisions and blaming-- having people blame other folks for their economic circumstances. Hillary Clinton does have a vision for the future. That is what is going to attract everyone including white males.

Rep. Loretta Sanchez: Hispanics need to come out and vote. If we come out and vote in my own California, if Latinos voted, they would be about 35% of all of the vote. Latinos are also important to vote in some of the swing states. Even at 3 or 4%. Latino vote, if they vote our way, if they vote for Hillary for example, we'll determine the next president.

Erbe: Some Clinton supporters fear sexism remains a major concern for Secretary Clinton.

Rep. Debbie Stabenow: Most of us as women hear dog whistles in terms of the different ways that folks look at Hillary. But she is up to it. She is tough and strong and feisty. And a wonderful, wonderful woman and I love she is not only a fighter but a caring mom and caring grandma. And is the right person to be in the white house.

Rep. Judy Chau: People are holding Hillary Clinton to a higher standard because she is a woman. And you know they are talking about how she laughs and they're talking about how she speaks. And I think that she should be held to the same standard as Trump. Certainly when you do that, she is far and above more qualified than Trump is for this position.

Erbe: So Debra, which convention did more to elevate its candidate?

Debra Carnahan: No doubt about it, the Democrats.

Amber Smith: I thought the G.O.P. convention did an incredible job at dealing with the reality that faces our nation today especially with national security and the economy.

Jenifer Rajkumar: The Republican party was not even trying to elevate its candidate. That was not it's strategy. The strategy was to tear down the other candidate through fear, exclusion and a celebration of demagoguery.

Jennifer Higgins: We had two conventions that were fear-filled conventions. One being the fear of Donald Trump and the other fear of changes and the threats to America. It probably was a tie at some point.

Erbe: Wait a second. You think that the Democrats were fear-filled? I have not heard anybody say that.

Higgins: I think the context which Hillary Clinton gave her speech spent time focusing on Donald Trump and the fact that we should be scared of him being president, so that's fear in my mind.

Erbe: Yeah, but don't you think-- I mean, most of the the speeches were, at least fully the first two nights, were all about family and children and even she talked about, you know, that we're better united and we can do anything united. And it was much closer to Ronald Reagan's 'Morning in America', than as she called Trump's 'Midnight in America.'

Higgins: In my mind it was reactive to the Republican convention in terms of responding by showing, at least in her speech, showing people that Donald trump is not the person that should be president and she should be.

Erbe: Can she win?

Carnahan: Okay, yeah, she can win and I totally disagree with you. That is not what I heard last night. I heard a lot of positive. I think she--

Erbe: Well, last night we should explain that we're taping--

Carnahan: I was at the convention for four days. And very late last night but that is not what I heard on the floor listening to her. I heard about working class people. I heard about jobs. I heard about coming together. I heard her address Bernie Sanders and his supporters and being inclusive. Sure, she took some jabs at Donald Trump. She would be nuts not to do that, right? Versus what I believe is that in the Republican convention all I heard from everybody was 'Hillary, Hillary, Hillary, lock up Hillary, Hillary, Hillary'. And fear. So I heard a lot of positives last night. But she is right to point out differences. You've got to point out differences between yourself and your opponent."

Erbe: All right in her acceptance speech she did not talk too much about being a woman but the last couple of weeks about the campaign she talked about appealing to female voters way more for example, than Barack Obama in 2008 reached out to Black voters. Why is that? And is it going to work for her?

Rajkumar: I think it will absolutely work. As a millennial woman who is currently running for office --

Erbe: In New York for the state legislature.

Rajkumar: Yes. I can say that the historical nature of Hillary's candidacy is not lost on me or my contemporaries. In my home state of New York for example, only 25% of the state legislature is women. New York has never had a woman governor. New York City has never had a woman mayor. This nomination is an incredible moment for us and bringing to the floor--

Erbe: But why does she feel it's safer for her to reach out to women and say, you know, 'I am a woman's woman' than he felt saying you know, 'I am—I hope to be an African-American president' whereas he tried to kind of vanilla-ize everything when it came to race. He didn't wanna split the vote like that.

Higgins: I got the sense of president Obama being the first African-American president made it clear in his campaign that he was not focusing on being the first African-American president and in this case we are seeing something different, which is again, the first woman president is historically significant and it cannot be diminished but honestly that bar is high to clear whether equal pay and paid leave. And we heard a lot of talk about that last night. But I still don't know how you pay for a national paid leave program. I still don't know how you pay for childcare in a way that makes sense for the budget and the deficit. We didn't hear about entitlements. We didn't hear about a lot of things. The woman angle is important. I don't know that it plays that she gets votes from the that. You heard Pelosi say that in a context for voting for her because she is a woman.

Smith: Yeah, I think its overkill at this point. She's definitely--

Erbe: Did she get republican votes? Do you think this convention helped her get Republican female votes in particular?

Smith: Absolutely not. I do not think it helped her with anyone on the republican side whatsoever. It just think it was more of the same with the people who are already going to vote for Hillary Clinton.

Erbe: Tim Kaine her Vice-Presidential candidate said for those of you, the real party of Lincoln there is a home for you in the Democratic party just like his father-in-law who is the Republican governor of Virginia.

Smith: They are going to try to get some of those Bill Crystal style votes in terms of saying 'oh, you know, you're so anti-your candidate why don't you come and vote for us?' Which I think is going to hurt A lot of Republicans who cannot come on board with the candidate. And it's only going to, you know, at this point in the game, either Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump is going to be the president of the United States. And Republicans need to come on board regardless of the differences they have and realize they need to put their own petty differences aside and move along with their party.

Erbe: Will she get the Bernie Sanders voters? I mean, we know she'll get some, but what percentage will she get? She liked to talk about the fact that I think after she conceded to Barack Obama, that she worked really hard and got about 80% of her voters voted for him in the general election. So will she be able to do the same with Bernie Sanders voters?

Carnahan: I don't know if she will get as high as he did. One difference would be she capitulated a lot earlier when she saw she was not going to be the nominee and got on board and did more unification prior to the convention. So there's more time there for her to do that. But I will tell you being in the hall last night that there were a lot of Bernie people there who were saying Hillary. And feeling comfortable.

Erbe: And one guy who would not shut up through the whole speech.

Carnahan: You are always going to get one of those.

Higgins: I thought it was interesting how she spent a lot of time focusing, with the speeches even last night, on the Republicans, and independents and a little less so on the Bernie Sanders folk who is a question for her as to whether she will pull in millennials this election.

Erbe: And she is reaching out to white men? Does she really need them? Can you get them? When you have made such outreach to diverse groups and to women, obviously she is getting white college educated men. She's even-- there was a Rasmussen poll out on Friday which normally leans extremely republican, she is ahead of him by a point—43%-- for the first time in that poll. 43%-42%. Can she get white men? Can she get typical white Republican men while also reaching out to everybody but them?

Higgins: I think it is a tough sell. She is working it and doing what she can. National security still remains a primary issue for a lot of voters whether educated white men or less educated white men.

Erbe: More than jobs?

Higgins: I think so, yeah.

Smith: Look, Hillary Clinton has said that she wants to end the coal industry in the United States. And you know —

Erbe: She recanted that.

Smith: Who works there? Men. And they care about providing for their families and I think that they are not going to have a short memory when it comes to that when you make that statement regardless if you recant it or not, in a leadership position who makes that statement that says I want to hurt this group of Americans and put you out of work? So you do not have an income for your families anymore. And Hillary Clinton said that when she wanted to get rid of that industry. And they are not going to forget that when it comes to which candidate has their best interest and someone like Hillary Clinton who made that statement, I think it's going to serve in their memory for quite sometime.

Rajkumar: This is the woman for diversity and inclusion and that includes everybody and it's worth noting that moderate Republicans, several of them, John McCain's top advisers, for example, and former members of the W. Bush administration have all jumped on board with Hillary. And that is going to really going to make an impact. Because people are looking for right now is somebody who has the qualifications and the smarts to get the job done. To make real policy changes that can make actual difference in the lives of people. And that is going to resonate with every body.

Erbe: How well does a remake work? Is she a mom and a grandma first? Or is she an ambitious woman who's has been angling for this for the last 25 years?

Carnahan: If a man wants to get to a certain point in life, then oh, you're smart and your methodical and wow, you are just very disciplined. If a woman aspires to something she is ambitious. Ok. That aside. I do not think there is a lot of wiggle room for remake. I don't. Because she has been in public life so long and she has been on that high wire so long. But as she said last night she is not comfortable with the public as much as the private and getting things done. I think it helped for Chelsea to come out and talk. And I think it helped to hear some of these stories. The millennials think they know her, but they don't. They just know bits and pieces of stories they've heard or incidents. So I thought that was good to give a background where she has come from and who she is inside.

Erbe: Do you think she did a good job of remaking herself? Did the convention do a good job?

Smith: Absolutely not. Hillary Clinton is a career politician and represents the status quo and eight years of a failed status quo. If people are looking for more of the same in terms of economy that is hurting, people out of work, and a failed national security and foreign policy, you know, the largest terrorist attack on U.S. soil since 9/11, if you want to continue with that style of status quo, then Hillary Clinton is your candidate. If you are looking for change someone who is going to come in and shake things up and is going to put America back to work and make America safe, that is Donald trump.

Erbe: Let me throw out unemployment is be low 5%. It's the lowest –

Smith: But how many of those people stopped looking for work. The numbers are skewed.

Erbe: Donald trump is promising to revive the coal industry, among other things, when the world is turning away from coal and the fact is that you know, in the last 20 years, solar energy, wind energy all the replaceable sustainable energy are overtaking coal. Why revive an industry that has been dying on its own anyway.

Smith: Well, it's -- there is a need for it.

Erbe: There is? Gas prices, I bought gas for \$1.99 a gallon this week.

Smith: You always have to be moving forward and looking for what is next in terms of technology and energy. And I think that Donald trump is all about that. But I do not think you are going to be able to just wipe an entire industry off the map.

Erbe: Alright, last word you guys. We have not yet elected, obviously, our first female president. And yet, you know going back to the 60s and Indira Gandhi and more recently, Britain for the second time, Theresa May and Margaret Thatcher and list goes on-- and Costa Rica and Brazil and Argentina. They have all had female country leaders. Should we be ashamed of ourselves?

Carnahan: Yes.

Rajkumar: No, I don't think we should be ashamed because we are here. The moment has come and we 're ready for it, but to get swaths of people for a candidate, to get a lot of people to love you and trust you, how are you going to do that? We will see that happen this election cycle and we are ready.

Erbe: Let us know what you think. Follow me on Twitter @bonnieerbe. Now, families and politics.

Erbe: Although republican nominee Donald trump made a big point of showing off his family at his party's convention, Democrats talked more about family issues at theirs. From first lady Michelle Obama describing her daughters playing with their dogs on the White House lawn, a house built by slave labor, to Bill Clinton's description of his life with Hillary and Chelsea when Chelsea was a baby, family politics and issues were front and center. There was also a bit of a family war launched when Chelsea Clinton, speaking at a Glamour and Facebook conversation at the DNC, was asked about Ivanka's Trump's claim. Ivanka said her father would fight for pay equity for women and access to quality childcare last week but Chelsea asked --

Chelsea Clinton: How would your father do that? Given it's not something that he has spoken about. There are no policies on any of those fronts that you just mentioned on his website, not last week or this week. So I think the 'how' question is super important in politics as it is in life. It matters to me that my mom in this election consistently has told you how she is going to do everything whether on gun control, or protecting a woman's right to choose or the things we've talked about, she told you how she is going to pay for it.

Erbe: So Amber, first, Ivanka then Bill. What to do with Bill. Ivanka why did she say that? Why did she say that when he has never talked about it and we talked about this last week on the show, and he has no track record and has not put anything out there about the women's issues she mentioned.

Smith: Look, I think Ivanka did an incredible job. She had an amazing speech and I think she spoke from the heart about what is important to her father. And --

Erbe: But she said he was going to help women with pay equity and access to quality childcare. There's no evidence of that. Is she lying?

Smith: Absolutely not. I think she is saying that what matters is what Donald Trump has done as a businessman when he has hired numerous amounts of women in leadership positions and he's helped them when it comes to maternity leave and taking care of them. And in terms of equal pay.

Erbe: But she is not talking about his family and the way he treats people in his companies. She is talking about in the general election how what he will do for voters.

Smith: No, but you were saying, what is the background. And I was saying, that is the background. I think the controversy here, especially when Chelsea Clinton went on the Glamour and Facebook interview, was that she failed to mention that Hillary Clinton when she was U.S. Senator paid women 72 cents on the dollar to the men in the staff. That is where the controversy lies. Why are you not saying that your own mother, running on these pro-women issues, actually failed to pay women equally on her own staff?

Carnahan I would like to say there is a clip of Donald Trump in an interview a few years back talking about pregnancy. And that pregnancy is wonderful for women. And it can be wonderful for men. But it's very, very bad for business. Very bad for business. So you know, you brought up Hillary and said one time and apologized on the coal thing. I'm so tired of Donald Trump having said things over the years that indicate who he is and it's like, oh that doesn't matter. That's an indication of what he feels like. It's great to have your daughter go out and talk about maternity leave and what is it? 12 weeks? 8 weeks? Where is the plan? But he is on record saying it's bad for business. So I'm not going to trust somebody that thinks my pregnancy is bad for business.

Higgins: I think the Trump campaign, to be honest with you, has a relatively narrow and weak policy platform. I do not think we have seen the policies that they want to put forward. I think Ivanka got ahead of her dad in that respect. And he has talked about pregnancy being inconvenient, and you are absolutely right in that regard. Public statements despite the fact --

Erbe: I mean, she made it sound like he had a plan for what he was going to do for women in terms of childcare.

Higgins: And the data shows there was a petition effort going on in Ohio at the time amongst groups trying to encourage Republicans to add paid leave and equal pay to the platform at the RNC and that did not occur but the data shows 60% of people across the country are looking at candidates or evaluating these types of issues. So I think Ivanka was eager to say something whether or not it was tied to the agenda for the Trump campaign, but it puts pressure on her father to have to move an agenda in this area.

Rajkumar: Ivanka said that because Trump is 14 points down with women and they know that--

Erbe: And actually, she is ahead with married white women which is the first time since the Reagan election of 1980 that a Democrat has led with that demographic which is republican demographic.

Rajkumar: Exactly. And if you look at the bigger picture here you see two young women, who are both articulate and intelligent, introducing their parents running for president and that shows that women's issues are really at the forefront of the national debate right now. And I think Ivanka knew that and wanted to leap ahead and address it but Chelsea Clinton's criticism 'how', how are you going to create equality is a valid one.

Erbe: What to do with bill? Is he an asset to her at this point or not anymore?

Carnahan: I still think he is an asset. He is the big dog. And Bill's going to say things that, you know, her camp is going to go 'gosh I cannot believe he said that.' He is very beloved and still is, as she said last night, the Explainer in Chief. President Obama has said that, too. I definitely think that he is an asset. President Obama has said that too. I definitely think he's an asset. I found it interesting Last night and it did make me smile to see senator Kaine and secretary Clinton walking hand in hand together across the stage and then the two spouses were behind them and the first time we have seen a male spouse walking behind. And I think wow that is incredible.

Erbe: And yet the cynic in me, I have to say, the whole time he was giving that love speech to her, the political cynic in me saw Republican ads contrasting that with him saying I did not have sex with that woman. Are we going to see those ads?

Smith: Well, I mean like what we saw at the convention was the a different bill than what we have seen in the past. And actions speak louder than words and we saw how he treated his wife and seen how he treated women in the past. And I think that--

Erbe: And how much of a deal is trump going to make of that in the coming months?

Smith: We'll have to wait and see. But I think that aside from millennials, the rest of the population remembers the Bill Clinton-Monica Lewinsky scandal and how the Clintons' treated Monica Lewinsky when all of that went down as well.

Higgins: I think that at the end of the day, Bill Clinton as the first man wants to be called Adam, I mean he probably won't be called Adam, but the first man will be someone who is an active adviser for Hillary Clinton and that gives people pause but we have to see what happens.

Rajkumar: I think it's progress. The first gentleman. I think yes, it is' uncharted territory but it is a good thing.

Erbe: It will be interesting to watch. Follow me on Twitter. And visit our website, [pbs.org/tothecontrary](http://pbs.org/tothecontrary). And whether you agree or think to the contrary, see you next week.

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