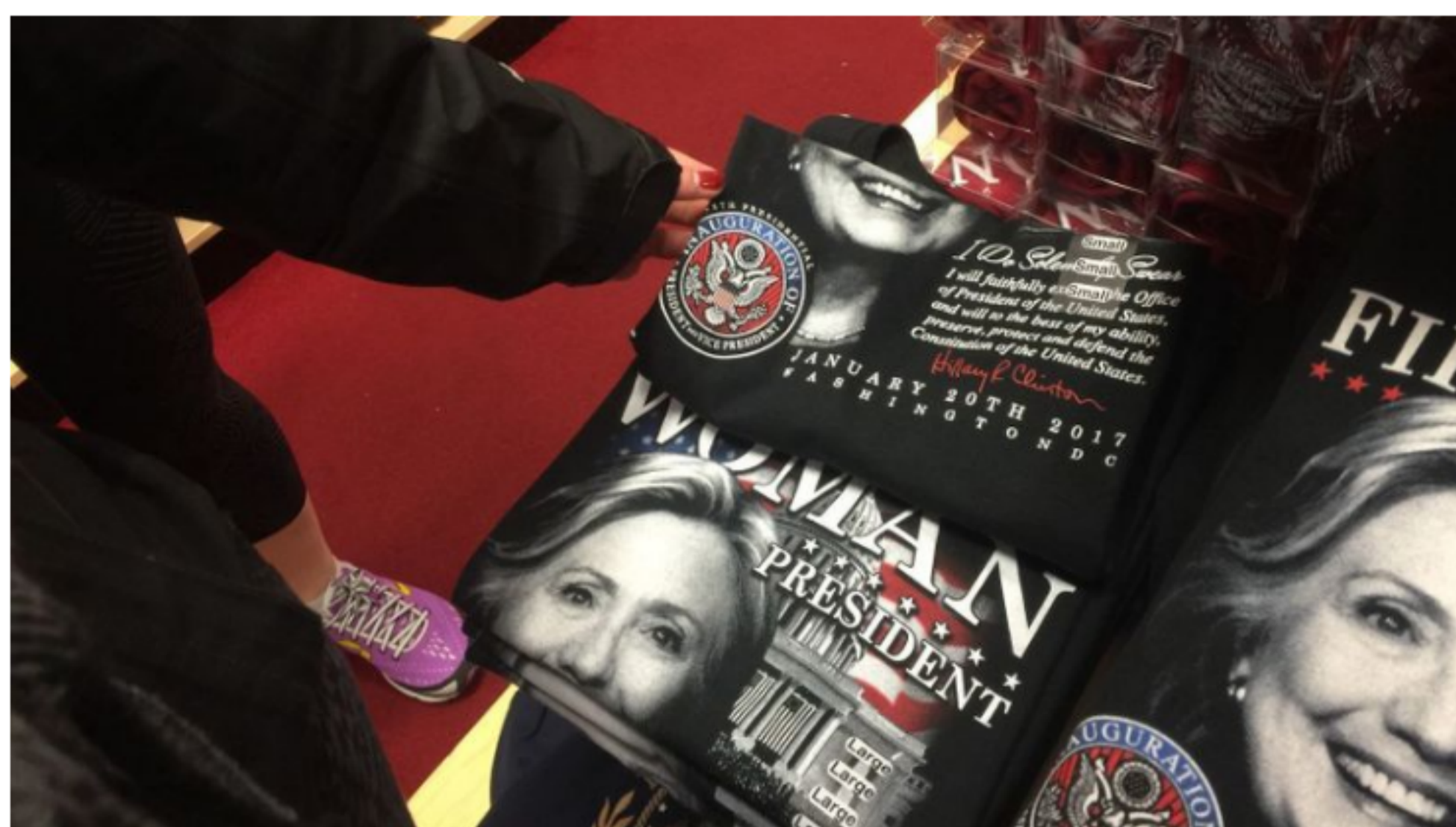


At a gift shop near the White House, Hillary Clinton is still in the race

By NIGEL DUARA DEC 22, 2016 | 1:00 PM | WASHINGTON



People examine Hillary Clinton T-shirts at a gift shop near the White House. (Nigel Duara / Los Angeles Times)

Hillary Clinton's eyes peer over the deep-discount orange sticker declaring 50% off. Her face revolves on a two-sided key chain. On a row of shot glasses, she smiles from inside the circle of a presidential seal.

While the real Hillary was surprising unsuspecting hikers in the woods of New York, her visage was still omnipresent here at White House Gifts, the privately owned store down the street from the White House that, for the next four years, may be as close to the Oval Office as she will get.

Hillary sweats are two for \$24. Hillary tees retail two for \$14.

"ALL OTHER HILLARY ITEMS TAKE AN ADDITIONAL 25% OFF ALREADY REDUCED PRICES" declares a sign at the front of the store.

"Before the election it was selling really well," said store manager Miriam Aquino. "And then, of course, she didn't win."

"She Did It," is stitched in the imprint of an American flag on a red long-sleeve shirt. "First Woman President" features Clinton, beaming, on a black sweater next to a date, January 20, 2017 – her expected inauguration.

As with the Super Bowl, vendors order celebratory presidential memorabilia long in advance – and half of that memorabilia is made in advance for the loser, an unpoped confetti cannon awaiting a celebration that never happens.



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The NFL hands down strict orders to keep the apparel of the losing Super Bowl team off American soil. It gets sent instead to impoverished countries, which is why the Buffalo Bills have four years' worth of championship gear in [Niger](#), [Uganda](#) and [Sierra Leone](#).

Per custom, the store took the Hillary gear off the floor and replaced it with President-elect Donald Trump paraphernalia and generic Washington, D.C., tchotchkes. The same thing happened in 2012, when unsold sweaters and wall clocks bearing the visage of Republican presidential candidate Mitt

Romney were donated off.

But something was different this time.

"We took it off the floor, and the people who came the weekend before, they came back and asked for it," Aquino said. "So we started selling it from the closet."

Before long, Hillary gear was back on the floor and marked down. The sole exception: bobbleheads, a collector's item (or so the shop believes), which several signs indicated were not discounted.

Though there were Trump shirts and Trump hats and Trump sweaters, there were no Trump bobbleheads.

"It would be redundant," grumbled David Garcia of Las Vegas, who was in town to help his company, MGM Grand, open a new casino in the D.C. area.

Garcia perused the Hillary section, said wistfully that he wished he could be buying a shirt under her administration, but didn't leave with anything.

On a Saturday in December, few Trump voters were to be found in the gift shop or the blocks nearby -- liberal downtown D.C. is, after all, the swamp Trump has vowed to drain.

For most election prognosticators, downtown Washington is where Clinton was supposed to triumphantly arrive after months of brutal campaigning, years of angling for the office, decades of pushing back against a male-dominated establishment.

Instead, she made it to this gift shop that, for a while, doubled as a museum to a time that never existed.

On a far wall by the store's rear windows, a purple water wheel featured a picture of the White House. Neither red nor blue, featuring neither candidate, the device, when turned upside down, dripped oil onto the rungs of the wheel.

Weighted by the droplets of oil, the pinwheel spun.

The White House turned and turned.

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