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In this April 6, 2017, file photo, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaks during the Women in the World Summit in New York.

In book, Clinton admits mistakes, casts blame for 2016 loss

By JONATHAN LEMIRE
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NEW YORK — In a candid and pointed new book, Hillary Clinton relives her stunning defeat to Donald Trump, admitting to personal mistakes and defending campaign strategy even as her return to the stage refocuses attention on a race Democrats still can't believe they lost.

Clinton is unsparing in her criticism of Trump and also lays out some of the factors she believes contributed to her loss: interference from Russian hackers, accusations leveled at her by former FBI Director James Comey, a divisive primary battle with Bernie Sanders, even her gender. She also addresses common criticisms of her campaign, including the idea that she didn't have a compelling narrative for seeking the presidency and that she ignored Midwestern turf where Trump picked up enough white working-class voters to win several battleground states.

"Some critics have said that everything hinged on me not campaigning enough in the Midwest," Clinton writes in the book "What Happened." "And I suppose it is possible that a few more trips to Saginaw or a few more ads on the air in Waukesha could have tipped a couple of thousand voters here or there."

"But let's set the record straight: we always knew that the industrial Midwest was crucial to our success, just as it had been for Democrats for decades, and contrary to the popular narrative, we didn't ignore those states," she wrote.

Clinton already is taking some criticism — complete with mockery from late-night television hosts — for planning book-tour stops in the Great Lakes and Midwestern states that ultimately cost her the election. But she writes that her campaign had more staff and spent more on advertising in both Michigan and Pennsylvania, two states she lost, than President Barack Obama did when he won them in 2012.

She acknowledges that "if there's one place where we were caught by surprise, it was Wisconsin," saying that polls showed her ahead until the end.

But while she did not visit the state in the fall, she noted that her surrogates blanketed the state.

In Wisconsin, Democratic pollster Paul Maslin called it a "bitter irony" that Clinton is now trying to reach voters — or consumers — in states he believes her campaign mostly ignored.

But he said it's ultimately a side show from a has-been.

"Let her do whatever she's going to do for whatever reason she's doing it, but it doesn't matter. There's just so much else happening every day with Trump," Maslin said. He said he hopes Clinton understands that "most Democrats are beyond" blaming her for November. "For her sake, I hope she can sell enough books, but if she thinks she's affecting the debate in any way, I think she's more delusional than anyone thought."

Aaron Sorkin on directing: 'I had the time of my life'

By JAKE COYLE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

TORONTO — Aaron Sorkin was sitting in a restaurant with producers Amy Pascal and Mark Gordon, ticking off the names of top Hollywood directors who might be a good fit for the script Sorkin had just finished: "Molly's Game," a drama about the so-called "poker princess" Molly Bloom.

"When we got to the end, Mark and Amy said, 'But we think you should direct it,'" Sorkin recalled in an interview. "And I grabbed at the chance."

"Molly's Game" premiered Friday night at the Toronto International Film Festival where it was immediately greeted with rave reviews, awards forecasts for star Jessica Chastain and a general reaction of: Sorkin, director, is a rip-roaring success.

He had come close before.

"I was going to direct 'The Social Network.' Amy Pascal, Scott Rudin and I said, 'You know what, let's just give it to David Fincher and once he's passes, I'll direct it,'" said Sorkin. "I've never been so lucky to not direct something in my life."

Fate intervened, Sorkin and Fincher created one of the most celebrated films of the decade, and Sorkin's chance to take the director's chair had to wait. Danny Boyle took the reins of Sorkin's next script, the Apple co-founder biopic "Steve Jobs."

But the cards came up different for Sorkin on "Molly's Game," which STX Entertainment will release Nov. 22. The story is a rich one — full of Sorkin's whip-smart dialogue — that Sorkin



CHRIS PIZZELLO/ASSOCIATED PRESS
Director Aaron Sorkin attends a premiere for "Molly's Game" on day 2 of the Toronto International Film Festival at the Elgin Theatre on Friday, Sept. 8, 2017, in Toronto.

says he became obsessed with telling. "At some point, you have to fall in love," he said. "With this, it was right away."

The film is partly based on Bloom's memoir about running a high-stakes poker game in Los Angeles where bold-faced names like Leonardo DiCaprio, Tobey Maguire and Ben Affleck were regulars. Bloom was herself a former elite freestyle skier whose Olympic chances were dramatically derailed by an injury. She was later arrested as part of a larger mafia investigation.