

## FEATURED ARTICLES (/ARCHIVES/FEATURED-ARTICLES/)

### **[The Making of Lina Hidalgo: From Democratic Party Nursery to Omicron Hysteria Queen \(/archives/featured-articles/2022/january/07/the-making-of-lina-hidalgo-from-democratic-party-nursery-to-omicron-hysteria-queen/\)](/archives/featured-articles/2022/january/07/the-making-of-lina-hidalgo-from-democratic-party-nursery-to-omicron-hysteria-queen/)**

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friday january 7, 2022

On the afternoon of December 20, Harris County, Texas's top elected official, Judge Lina Hidalgo held a press conference to [announce \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGL3C6AUvj8\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGL3C6AUvj8) what she claimed was the county's first death from the Omicron variant of COVID-19. It was a moment in the national spotlight for the 30-year-old Democrat, who, since her teenage years, has been rising through elite institutions and forging ties with the national security state. Those connections, and her close ties to a highly-sophisticated billionaire influence operation, revealed in detail in this investigation, would prove to be vital in shaping Hidalgo's formulation of COVID-19 and other policies.

"We just had our first Omicron related death," she announced as groans and gasps erupted from behind masks. Hidalgo then declared she was once again raising Harris County's [COVID Threat Level \(https://covid-harriscounty.hub.arcgis.com/\)](https://covid-harriscounty.hub.arcgis.com/) – a color-coded system borrowed from the Bush-era [Terror Alert Warning System \(https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB1015948221436712080\)](https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB1015948221436712080) – to Orange, the second highest level of alarm. Despite Omicron's mild symptoms, Hidalgo urged the public to get booster shots, portraying them as the only way to prevent a surge of hospitalizations that would break the back of the healthcare system. "We don't know how many of those breakthrough cases will end up turning into hospitalizations. We do know that the vaccine and the booster will keep that number very low, and that is truly our solution," she said.

*(bigger (https://www.mintpressnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Untitled-design.png))*

Hours later, Hidalgo blasted out a tweet claiming that the dead man hadn't merely died with Omicron, but that the recently discovered variant was the cause of his death.

Sad to report the first local fatality from the Omicron variant of COVID-19. A man in his 50's from the eastern portion of Harris County who was not vaccinated. Please - get vaccinated and boosted.

— Lina Hidalgo (@LinaHidalgoTX) December 20, 2021 (https://twitter.com/LinaHidalgoTX/status/1473074869340409856?ref\_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The tweet from one of the Democratic Party's rising stars sparked a frenzy in mainstream news outlets and on social media. With the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention having [announced \(https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/omicron-now-common-coronavirus-variant-us-accounting-quarters-81865051\)](https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/omicron-now-common-coronavirus-variant-us-accounting-quarters-81865051) hours before that Omicron had replaced Delta as the country's most common variant, Hidalgo's statement appeared to confirm rampant speculation that the newly detected and far more contagious variant was at least as deadly as its predecessors. Across the United States, lines for COVID tests wrapped around blocks as worried Americans pondered canceling holiday plans with a long winter of isolation, anxiety, and death lurking around the corner.

However, as this investigation will show, Hidalgo's deceptive claim that Omicron caused the Texas man's death is not only false – it served to generate fear in the general public. It is the latest chapter in the restructuring of Harris County according to the desires of power-hungry billionaires and armies of corporate consultants from New York City and Washington, D.C., with Hidalgo's progressive image as a fig leaf.

#### **'A winter of severe illness and death'**

On December 1, as soon as the first case of Omicron was detected in the US, establishment figures and media outlets began to aggressively ramp up fear mongering. According to them, the coming months would worsen because of the [minority \(https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/latest-data-on-covid-19-vaccinations-by-race-ethnicity/\)](https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/latest-data-on-covid-19-vaccinations-by-race-ethnicity/) of Americans who have not taken the vaccine.

"For the unvaccinated, you're looking at a winter of severe illness and death for yourselves, your families, and the hospitals you may soon overwhelm," White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator Jeff Zients [remarked \(https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/press-briefings/2021/12/17/press-briefing-by-white-house-covid-19-response-team-and-public-health-officials-74/\)](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/press-briefings/2021/12/17/press-briefing-by-white-house-covid-19-response-team-and-public-health-officials-74/) during a December 17 telephone press briefing.

NBC News anchor Lester Holt [asked \(https://twitter.com/NickFondacaro/status/1473456565286019077\)](https://twitter.com/NickFondacaro/status/1473456565286019077) Surgeon General Vivek Murthy if Americans should "self-lockdown, [such] that we begin to change our lifestyle and dial back on all fronts?"

White House Chief Medical Advisor Dr. Anthony Fauci [told \(https://www.axios.com/fauci-record-covid-cases-omicron-f5e01107-bd4a-44c5-a943-f57110e24159.html\)](https://www.axios.com/fauci-record-covid-cases-omicron-f5e01107-bd4a-44c5-a943-f57110e24159.html) CNN that Omicron will drive record COVID cases, hospitalizations and deaths. In an interview with MSNBC, Fauci advised listeners to reject unvaccinated people from family events. "I would say, 'I'm very sorry, but not this time; maybe another time when this is all over,'" he [said \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FC6TT\\_Qeipw\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FC6TT_Qeipw).

The scandal-ridden (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/05/05/exclusive-government-scientist-neil-ferguson-resigns-breaking/>) epidemiologist Neil Ferguson of the U.K. Imperial College, whose March 2020 forecast overestimated (<https://thegrayzone.com/2021/12/03/flattening-curve-global-poor-covid-lockdowns-human-rights-vulnerable/>) the imminent death toll by a factor of at least four and provided the academic basis for crushing lockdowns in the US and U.K., published a widely cited report claiming that there is “no evidence of Omicron having lower severity than Delta.” However, the report is based (<https://twitter.com/dancohen3000/status/1473681950602842113>) on a mere 24 hospitalizations of patients suspected of having the Omicron variant, without a single confirmed case.

According (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2021/12/23/prof-lockdowns-apocalyptic-omicron-claims-undermine-faith-vaccines/>) to the Telegraph, Ferguson and his team “breached a cardinal rule by inferring rates of hospitalization, severe disease, and death from waning antibodies, and by extrapolating from infections that break through the first line of vaccine defense.”

“It is bad science and I think they’re being irresponsible. They have a duty to reflect the true risks, but this is just headline grabbing,” commented Dr. Clive Dix, former chairman of the U.K. Vaccine Task Force.

The U.K. government scientists of Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling, Operational sub-group (SPI-M-O), which reports to the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), gave scenarios that the spread of Omicron could bring between 3,000 and 10,000 hospitalizations and between 600 and 6,000 deaths per day. When Graham Medley, the chair of SAGE, was questioned (<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/my-twitter-conversation-with-the-chairman-of-the-sage-covid-modelling-committee>) about it, he said they are not predictions, only worst case scenarios in case the Omicron variant does turn out to be as deadly as Delta.

Documents revealed (<https://www.rt.com/op-ed/490110-covid19-propaganda-uk-public-opinion/>) that SAGE has been advised by behavioral scientists on how to scare the U.K. public into accepting restrictions. The section on persuasion says that “perceived level of personal threat needs to be increased among those who are complacent, using hard-hitting emotional messaging.” Another document calls for using “media to increase sense of personal threat.” The British government’s communication strategy has also enlisted the 77th Brigade, the branch of the military that conducts information warfare (<https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/formations-divisions-brigades/6th-united-kingdom-division/77-brigade/>).

Despite factual deficiencies and use of military information warfare strategies, these alarmist claims have once again inspired a range (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/dec/18/uk-scientists-curbs-covid-infections-omicron-deaths-restrictions-sage>) of restrictions (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-59747689>) across the Global North, including lockdowns in Canada, Germany, Portugal, Finland, Spain, France and the Netherlands.

While public health officials have clamored for more restrictions, the captains of global capitalism have chimed in too – no matter their lack of medical expertise. Billionaire Bill Gates warned (<https://twitter.com/BillGates/status/1473333996868149248>) that “we could be entering the worst part of the pandemic,” and that “Omicron will hit home for all of us.” The investment bank Credit Suisse said (<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/credit-suisse-sees-considerable-risk-that-u-s-and-much-of-europe-will-likely-need-covid-related-lockdowns-this-winter-11640109681>) that the US and much of Europe will likely have to enact “stringent lockdowns” this winter.

Capitalizing on the heightened climate of fear, American cities including Washington, Boston and Chicago have all announced vaccine passport regimes and mandates, with Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot making the punitive nature of the coercive measures explicit. “If you have been living vaccine-free, your time is up,” she wrote on Twitter.

This order will remain in effect until the City deems that the threat of COVID-19 to public health has diminished significantly.

— Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot (@chicagosmayor) December 21, 2021 ([https://twitter.com/chicagosmayor/status/1473380806773018625?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw](https://twitter.com/chicagosmayor/status/1473380806773018625?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw))

### Omicron optimism in South Africa

The panicked atmosphere in the US was a sharp contrast to the situation in South Africa, where Omicron was first detected, and hospitalizations have since plummeted (<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-12-17/s-africa-says-hospitalizations-in-omicron-wave-much-lower>). The Johannesburg doctor who first reported the new variant called it “very mild (<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/safrican-doctor-says-patients-with-omicron-variant-have-very-mild-symptoms-2021-11-28/>),” creating cautious optimism that the highly contagious Omicron – both highly contagious and extremely mild – would render COVID-19 hardly different from the seasonal coronaviruses that produce colds, effectively ending the pandemic.

A more recent study from South Africa’s National Institute for Communicable Diseases was even more hopeful. “Compellingly, together our data really suggest a positive story of a reduced severity of Omicron compared to other variants,” Professor Cheryl Cohen said (<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/safrica-data-study-suggest-positive-story-omicron-severity-scientist-2021-12-22/>). The national chair of South Africa’s Medical Association, Dr. Angelique Coetzee, one of the first doctors to treat Omicron, told (<https://www.cnn.com/videos/health/2021/12/20/south-african-doctor-omicron-coronavirus-cases-decline-newday-vpx.cnn/video/playlists/coronavirus-intl/>) CNN, “We are over the curve.” “I’m extremely optimistic,” remarked (<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/africa/omicron-s-less-severe-cases-prompt-cautious-optimism-in-south-africa-1.4749027>) Shabir Madhi, professor of vaccinology at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

Studies in other countries have since confirmed their optimism is warranted. A preliminary [study](http://www.med.hku.hk/en/news/press/20211215-omicron-sars-cov-2-infection) (<http://www.med.hku.hk/en/news/press/20211215-omicron-sars-cov-2-infection>) from Hong Kong found that the variant replicates 70 times faster than Delta and appears to have “lower disease severity.”

The positive news from South Africa prompted Russian President Vladimir Putin to [warn](https://tass.com/world/1372047/amp) (<https://tass.com/world/1372047/amp>) against premature fears, citing experts who likened the highly-transmissible variant to “live vaccination.”

### Hidalgo’s claim falls apart

Yet behind the apocalyptic narrative in the US is manipulated information attempting to ramp up fear, encourage vaccination, and create antipathy against those who decline to take the vaccines.

One hour after Hidalgo’s statement, the Harris County Public Health Department published a vaguely-worded [tweet](https://twitter.com/hcphtx/status/1473090152125943808) (<https://twitter.com/hcphtx/status/1473090152125943808>) calling the fatality the “First COVID-19 Omicron Variant-Related Death.” The [press release](https://publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/Portals/27/Documents/HCPH%20Reports%20First%20Omicron%20Related%20Death%20sm.pdf?ver=oK77qT2qjHElryPPhgBoog%3D%3D) (<https://publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/Portals/27/Documents/HCPH%20Reports%20First%20Omicron%20Related%20Death%20sm.pdf?ver=oK77qT2qjHElryPPhgBoog%3D%3D>) published the day before used similarly vague language of a “COVID-19 Omicron-variant-associated death.”

I spoke by telephone with Martha Marquez of the Harris County Public Health Department, who debunked Hidalgo’s Omicron-death claim. “We can’t confirm that the patient died from COVID, but we can say that he was Omicron positive at the time of his death,” she told me.

“So he died with COVID, but you can’t say he died from COVID,” I asked.

“Correct,” she replied. “This information comes from our epidemiologists who are the ones who get the reports,” she added. “They have to do a very meticulous investigation, because, you know, they do take this very much at heart. They are telling me that they cannot say that COVID was the absolute cause of death.”

Public officials and media reported that a man in Texas became the first American to die from the Omicron variant. I checked with the Harris County Public Health Department. Turns out that’s not true.

Here’s audio of my phone call. <pic.twitter.com/fIDZNPzYuj> (<https://t.co/fIDZNPzYuj>)

— Dan Cohen (@dancohen3000) December 22, 2021 ([https://twitter.com/dancohen3000/status/1473480933579923456?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw](https://twitter.com/dancohen3000/status/1473480933579923456?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw))

The Harris County Department of Health’s “Omicron related” label raises more questions than it answers. The qualifiers “related” and “associated” can mean a broad range of different scenarios. For example, with a victim who has tested positive for COVID, it can absurdly be a contributing factor in a suicide, homicide or car accident. Nonetheless, their statement proved that Hidalgo had no evidence to support her claim of the first Omicron death.

Marquez also informed me that the patient had multiple comorbidities, was immunocompromised, and had previously recovered from COVID-19 – details that Hidalgo declined to mention. Much more likely to be determining factors in the patient’s death were that he had multiple comorbidities and was immunocompromised.

According to the CDC ([https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/covid\\_weekly/index.htm#Comorbidities](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/covid_weekly/index.htm#Comorbidities)), 95% of COVID-related deaths are in patients with an average of four comorbidities. A National Institute of Health [study](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34449622/) (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34449622/>) found that “the risk of mortality associated with at least one comorbidity combined was 1113 times higher than that with no comorbidity.”

The Harris County Public Health Department would not tell me what underlying conditions the man had, citing HIPAA regulations.

While both Hidalgo and Marquez heavily emphasized the patient’s lack of vaccination, it is unlikely his body would have produced a robust response had he been vaccinated. According (<https://www.yalemedicine.org/news/what-does-immunocompromised-mean>) to Yale Medicine, “a March study showed only about 56% of immunocompromised people built sufficient levels of protection against COVID-19 after a second mRNA (Pfizer or Moderna) dose.” Another study showed that “only 25% of kidney transplant patients had detectable antibodies ([https://www.kireports.org/article/S2468-0249\(21\)01130-X/fulltext](https://www.kireports.org/article/S2468-0249(21)01130-X/fulltext)) against the SARS-CoV-2’s S protein after full mRNA vaccination.”

In fact, the patient had contracted COVID-19 in the middle of 2020 (I asked for specific dates but Marquez declined to say exactly when), raising the possibility that he may have had antibodies.

In that case, had his body been able to produce a sufficient immune response, he may have had naturally immunity gained from prior infection. Research suggests that those infected with COVID-19 can make antibodies [throughout](https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01442-9) (<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01442-9>) their lifetime, providing them “extraordinarily long-lasting” immunity.

Additionally, the man was 50-60 years old, placing him at significantly higher risk than younger age groups.

While it would have been a simple task for Lina Hidalgo to issue a correction, as any public figure accountable to the

public should seek to do, at the time this article was published, she has so far declined to do so. My repeated attempts to reach Hidalgo's office via Twitter, email and telephone have thus far been ignored.

### Disinformation echo chamber

As soon as Lina Hidalgo fired off her tweet falsely claiming the Texas man died from the Omicron variant, public officials and reckless, credulous media outlets served as a national disinformation echo chamber, stirring panic among the public.

#### The FIRST Omicron DEATH!



Most prominently, when Fox News' Brett Baier asked CDC Director Rochelle Walensky whether the Texas man had indeed died from Omicron, she answered in the affirmative, before saying "We are still learning more about that case."

Here's @CDCDirector ([https://twitter.com/CDCDirector?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw](https://twitter.com/CDCDirector?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)) Rochelle Walensky declining to correct the false claim that the Texas man died from Omicron.

Walensky apparently has no interest in providing accurate information to the public, or else she would've investigated it before appearing on national television. <https://t.co/Lzr11UdiFg> (<https://t.co/Lzr11UdiFg>) [pic.twitter.com/rhbymrDtcv](https://t.co/rhbymrDtcv) (<https://t.co/rhbymrDtcv>)

— Dan Cohen (@dancohen3000) December 23, 2021 ([https://twitter.com/dancohen3000/status/1473808756765036546?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw](https://twitter.com/dancohen3000/status/1473808756765036546?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw))

Like Hidalgo and the Harris County Department of Health, a slew of media outlets relayed the false 'Omicron death claim' and highlighted (<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-covid-omicron-death-texas-b1979890.html>) his lack of vaccination, while barely mentioning (<https://www.thedailybeast.com/omicron-related-death-in-texas-was-unvaccinated-man-in-his-50s>) his comorbidities or immunocompromised status, including [Newsweek](https://www.newsweek.com/first-omicron-death-reinfection-warning-covid-texas-1661503) (<https://www.newsweek.com/first-omicron-death-reinfection-warning-covid-texas-1661503>), [Business Insider](https://www.businessinsider.com/first-american-omicron-variant-death-unvaccinated-covid-19-officials-say-2021-12) (<https://www.businessinsider.com/first-american-omicron-variant-death-unvaccinated-covid-19-officials-say-2021-12>), [Fox News](https://www.foxnews.com/us/houston-reports-first-confirmed-death-in-the-united-states-from-omicron-variant-of-covid-19) (<https://www.foxnews.com/us/houston-reports-first-confirmed-death-in-the-united-states-from-omicron-variant-of-covid-19>), [CNN](https://www.cnn.com/world/live-news/omicron-variant-coronavirus-news-12-20-21-intl/h_5ba9d9bdb51c954a95197932699b4e69) ([https://www.cnn.com/world/live-news/omicron-variant-coronavirus-news-12-20-21-intl/h\\_5ba9d9bdb51c954a95197932699b4e69](https://www.cnn.com/world/live-news/omicron-variant-coronavirus-news-12-20-21-intl/h_5ba9d9bdb51c954a95197932699b4e69)), and even [Truthout](https://truthout.org/articles/first-us-omicron-death-was-reinfection-debunking-gops-natural-immunity-claim/) (<https://truthout.org/articles/first-us-omicron-death-was-reinfection-debunking-gops-natural-immunity-claim/>).

Important note for the unvaccinated who believe in 'natural immunity':

The first Omicron-linked death in the U.S. was recorded in Texas' Harris County on Monday evening. The man was unvaccinated but had previously been infected.

— Kyle Griffin (@kylegriffin1) December 21, 2021 ([https://twitter.com/kylegriffin1/status/1473360120272805892?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw](https://twitter.com/kylegriffin1/status/1473360120272805892?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw))

Popular accounts like Eric Feigl-Ding promoted (<https://twitter.com/DrEricDing/status/1473134296496017413>) the lie, followed (<https://twitter.com/DrEricDing/status/1473134296496017413>) by the evidence-free Imperial College scenario. ([archived here](https://web.archive.org/save/https://twitter.com/DrEricDing/status/1473134296496017413) (<https://web.archive.org/save/https://twitter.com/DrEricDing/status/1473134296496017413>))

**BREAKING: The first death from the Omicron COVID-19 variant is an unvaccinated Texas man in his 50s. RT IF YOU SUPPORT VACCINE MANDATES!**

— Occupy Democrats (@OccupyDemocrats) December 21, 2021 ([https://twitter.com/OccupyDemocrats/status/1473361509388632074?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw](https://twitter.com/OccupyDemocrats/status/1473361509388632074?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw))

### Hidalgo's ties to "The Powers That Be"

Throughout mainstream media, Hidalgo is consistently portrayed in the same formulaic way, suggesting a coordinated PR effort behind her rise. According to NBC, Hidalgo was a reluctant [outsider](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/texas-latina-county-leader-lina-hidalgo-gets-tough-coronavirus-shrugs-n1211486) (<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/texas-latina-county-leader-lina-hidalgo-gets-tough-coronavirus-shrugs-n1211486>) who had never considered entering politics, until the election of Donald Trump compelled her to fight inside the system.

Politico's [profile](https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/09/02/latina-progressive-texas-lina-hidalgo-407001) (<https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/09/02/latina-progressive-texas-lina-hidalgo-407001>) declares that Hidalgo "had never considered politics."

"But then, in 2016, when Donald Trump was elected president, something clicked for Hidalgo. It was a wake-up call." reads a [profile](https://latina.com/lina-hidalgo-cant-be-stopped/) (<https://latina.com/lina-hidalgo-cant-be-stopped/>) in Latina Magazine. "It'd be hard to imagine that it didn't have something to do with Trump's attacks on women, attacks on Hispanics, attacks on immigrants, attacks on policy making writ large," Hidalgo said.

"I have to go do something about this," she told Politico.

With a progressive platform and the promise of genuine change from the status quo of Texas-style good-ol'-boy corruption, the narrative goes, Hidalgo appealed to a young and increasingly diverse voter base. This feel-good story is reminiscent of the rise of Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez – who was sold to the public as a political newcomer who, through dogged determination and people power, shocked the establishment wing of the Democratic Party.

"I'm not tied to the powers that be," Hidalgo boasted (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/08/us/politics/lina-hidalgo-harris-county.html>) at her victory rally.

But a closer examination of Hidalgo's history reveals that, since her teenage years, she had been cultivated to be a political operative, having been trained in elite institutions and CIA cutouts while forging connections to Beltway insiders and powerful billionaires – the very essence of the Democratic Party establishment from which she attempted to distance her public image.

In fact, the similarities between Ocasio-Cortez and Hidalgo's stories are not coincidental.

Born in Colombia to a wealthy family, Hidalgo left the country with her family as the peasant insurgency Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) was threatening to topple the government. Her family lived in Peru and Mexico City, where she attended (<https://www.texasobserver.org/lina-hidalgo-harris-county-judge/>) what she called "fancy international private school" before finally settling outside of Houston in the wealthy suburb of Katy, Texas when she was 14 years old.

Like Ocasio-Cortez, Hidalgo was groomed (<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/politics/texas/article/texas-home-for-alexandria-ocasio-cortez-aoc-tx-15485656.php>) for a future political career in the National Hispanic Institute, the "internationally recognized producer of next-generation Latino leaders," founded and run by Ernesto and Gloria de Leon Nieto.

NHI is funded ([https://www.nationalhispanicinstitute.org/resources/Documents/2021\\_NHI\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](https://www.nationalhispanicinstitute.org/resources/Documents/2021_NHI_Annual_Report.pdf)) by a laundry list of corporations including BP, Wells Fargo, Facebook, AT&T, State Farm, Boston Consulting Group, and BakerHostetler law firm, among many others.

There, she would spend (<https://www.texasobserver.org/lina-hidalgo-harris-county-judge/>) most weekends "learning everything from how to apply to colleges to how to debate as a member of the National Hispanic Institute."

"I joined NHI as a freshman in high school. I was a competitor in extemporaneous speaking and remember learning so much about public speaking," Hidalgo recalled in an NHI promotional video ([https://youtu.be/VfD\\_Zh20NUJ](https://youtu.be/VfD_Zh20NUJ)). "It was an important part of my time in high school."

As an elected official, Hidalgo continues (<https://twitter.com/linahidalgotx/status/1349748254590849025>) to maintain (<https://nhimagazine.com/2021/01/11/nhi-alumna-lina-hidalgo-interview/>) a relationship with NHI. On December 31, 2020, NHI named Lina Hidalgo as Person of the Year, the same distinction Ocasio-Cortez received (<https://nhimagazine.com/2021/02/21/nhi-person-of-the-year-winners-help-texas-through-winter-storms/>) in 2017.

### Hidalgo in the regime-change apparatus

In 2009, Hidalgo enrolled at Stanford University, majoring (<https://www.texasobserver.org/lina-hidalgo-harris-county-judge/>) in political science and studying "oppressive regimes and failed states" through a fellowship at the Center for Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law (CDDRL). She studied under the tutelage of neoliberal scions and ex-State Department officials Larry Diamond and Francis Fukuyama, who famously predicted that the fall of the Soviet Union meant Western capitalism would reign supreme permanently. Fukuyama was also an original signee of the neoconservative Project For A New American Century's letter (<https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2008/1/27/444438/->) to Bill Clinton advocating for war on Iraq.

Hidalgo was also accepted into the Stanford in Government (SIG) program, which grooms (<https://sig.stanford.edu/about-us/>) students as future political leaders. An exemplary student in the program, she was awarded (<https://web.archive.org/save/https://fliphtml5.com/trqb/qpig/basic>) the prestigious Cap and Gown Scholarship. Hidalgo advanced through SIG's Operations Committee, becoming Director of Expansion Planning ([https://web.archive.org/save/https://web.stanford.edu/group/SIG/cgi-bin/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/SIG-Newsletter-Winter-2012\\_draft9.pdf](https://web.archive.org/save/https://web.stanford.edu/group/SIG/cgi-bin/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/SIG-Newsletter-Winter-2012_draft9.pdf)), and was photographed (<https://web.archive.org/save/http://docplayer.net/120706448-Significant-news-sig-hosts-thomas-friedman-aa1-stanford-in-government-spring-2011.html>) with New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman when he gave a guest lecture on the US-backed coup in Egypt, titled "Democracy and Energy: The View from Tahrir Square."

"In the long term, generations of capable students exposed to public policy and politics as undergraduates will have a significant impact on the nation and the world, no matter which sector they choose for a career," Hidalgo wrote (<https://web.archive.org/save/http://docplayer.net/120706448-Significant-news-sig-hosts-thomas-friedman-aa1-stanford-in-government-spring-2011.html>) in a Spring 2011 SIG publication.

During her studies, Hidalgo spent five days in Washington, D.C., shepherded by Fukuyama and Diamond in meetings ([https://cddrl.fsi.stanford.edu/news/honors\\_program\\_inspires\\_research\\_connects\\_students\\_to\\_policy\\_world\\_20121003](https://cddrl.fsi.stanford.edu/news/honors_program_inspires_research_connects_students_to_policy_world_20121003)) at

the hawkish think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies, the World Bank, the US Agency for International Development, and the Millennium Challenge Corp. Among the officials they met were Stephen Hadley, who served as President George W. Bush's national security advisor, and Carl Gershman, then-president of CIA cutout National Endowment for Democracy. They also spoke with former NED official and current Inter-American Dialogue President Michael Shifter.

In a [photo snapped by Fukuyama](https://cddrl.fsi.stanford.edu/file/hceditjpg) (<https://cddrl.fsi.stanford.edu/file/hceditjpg>), Hidalgo is pictured outside the White House during the D.C. visit.

Hidalgo [appears](https://bearofficialsstore.com/company/stanford_university/page39) ([https://bearofficialsstore.com/company/stanford\\_university/page39](https://bearofficialsstore.com/company/stanford_university/page39)) to have spent a summer during college at the secretive McKinsey & Company consulting firm – a detail omitted from all profiles and accounts of her past. While there is no information corroborating, she [appeared](https://www.facebook.com/stanfordflicon/posts/659236131282729) (<https://www.facebook.com/stanfordflicon/posts/659236131282729>) in 2020 at the Stanford FLI Conference alongside former McKinsey consultant Ana McCullough and at the 2020 [Ten Across Water Summit](https://www.10xwatersummit.com/2020-speakers) (<https://www.10xwatersummit.com/2020-speakers>) with McKinsey Global Institute's Mekala Krishnan.

Hidalgo visited Cairo a year after the US-backed color revolution that forced Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak from power, then headed to China. Her honors thesis – titled “Tiananmen or Tahrir? A Comparative Study of Military Intervention Against Popular Protest” – compared the two US-backed color revolution movements.

“I saw this democratic opening and the quick closing and recognizing how fragile that is and how many institutions have to be in place for democracy to be successful. That really stuck with me,” Hidalgo would [later tell](https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/latino-icons/2020/10/02/383132/celebrating-houstons-latino-icons-lina-hidalgo-harris-countys-first-female-county-judge/) (<https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/latino-icons/2020/10/02/383132/celebrating-houstons-latino-icons-lina-hidalgo-harris-countys-first-female-county-judge/>) Houston Public Media.

*Lina Hidalgo (second from right) with Francis Fukuyama, Larry Diamond, and her fellow Stanford's Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law honors undergraduate students. Photo | Alice Kada ([https://cddrl.fsi.stanford.edu/news/cddrl\\_student\\_receives\\_stanford\\_award\\_for\\_top\\_thesis\\_20130614](https://cddrl.fsi.stanford.edu/news/cddrl_student_receives_stanford_award_for_top_thesis_20130614))*

Graduating from the honors program at Stanford's CDDRL in 2013, Hidalgo then received the Omidyar Network Postgraduate Fellowship, funded by the Silicon Valley billionaire and eBay founder Pierre Omidyar.

She relocated to Asia to [work](https://www.texastribune.org/2019/01/08/harris-county-first-latina-county-judge-lina-hidalgo/) (<https://www.texastribune.org/2019/01/08/harris-county-first-latina-county-judge-lina-hidalgo/>) for Internews Network, a US intelligence-linked organization that operates under the guise of promoting “press freedom” and “trains journalists,” spending [time](https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/latino-icons/2020/10/02/383132/celebrating-houstons-latino-icons-lina-hidalgo-harris-countys-first-female-county-judge/) (<https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/latino-icons/2020/10/02/383132/celebrating-houstons-latino-icons-lina-hidalgo-harris-countys-first-female-county-judge/>) in Myanmar, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. Internews Network is [funded](https://internews.org/about/current-donors/#corporations) (<https://internews.org/about/current-donors/#corporations>) by a host of US government agencies including the State Department, USAID, North American Aerospace Defense Command, and the National Endowment for Democracy. It additionally receives funding from numerous corporations and foundations including the CIA-linked (<https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9780691186184-010/pdf>) Ford Foundation and billionaire George Soros's Open Society Foundation. The outfit has run [initiatives](https://www.gatesfoundation.org/ideas/media-center/press-releases/2009/08/new-initiative-to-study-impact-of-media-on-global-development) (<https://www.gatesfoundation.org/ideas/media-center/press-releases/2009/08/new-initiative-to-study-impact-of-media-on-global-development>) for and [received](https://web.archive.org/save/https://www.gatesfoundation.org/about/committed-grants/2005/10/opp39494) (<https://web.archive.org/save/https://www.gatesfoundation.org/about/committed-grants/2005/10/opp39494>) [nearly](https://web.archive.org/save/https://www.gatesfoundation.org/about/committed-grants/2009/07/oppgd1254) (<https://web.archive.org/save/https://www.gatesfoundation.org/about/committed-grants/2009/07/oppgd1254>) \$1 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Google [donated](https://blog.google/supportingnews-india/) (<https://blog.google/supportingnews-india/>) \$1 million to “train journalists, fact checkers, academics, NGOs to fight misinformation and fake news” in India, having since expanded its mission to “combat pandemic-related misinformation with stringent fact-checking.”

As The Grayzone [revealed](https://thegrayzone.com/2021/10/19/health-wealth-digital-passports-surveillance-capitalism/) (<https://thegrayzone.com/2021/10/19/health-wealth-digital-passports-surveillance-capitalism/>), both Gates and Omidyar are “heavily involved in the push for digital IDs and vaccine passports.”

Susan Rice, now Biden's Secretary of State For African Affairs, [led](https://web.archive.org/web/20150411024751/https://internews.org/our-stories/project-updates/obama-names-former-internews-board-member-susan-rice-be-national-security) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20150411024751/https://internews.org/our-stories/project-updates/obama-names-former-internews-board-member-susan-rice-be-national-security>) Internews Network until she was appointed as the Obama administration's National Security Advisor, where she lobbied for a NATO-led regime-change war on Libya.

After a stint in what Politico describes as “working with journalists in Myanmar,” (presumably with Internews Network), Hidalgo returned to her home state, where she joined the Texas Civil Rights Network, a foundation funded by numerous liberal billionaires. In 2020, Susan Sandler's Sandler Foundation, which also funds Human Rights Watch and the Center For American Progress, [injected](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/14/us/politics/Susan-Sandler-donation-racial-justice.html) (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/14/us/politics/Susan-Sandler-donation-racial-justice.html>) \$200 million into liberal NGOs in battleground states.

In the fall of 2015, Hidalgo enrolled in a joint program at Harvard University and New York University, seeking both public policy and law degrees. She was advised by Harvard professor and [longtime](https://www.rollcall.com/2005/01/21/talent-primary-heats-up/) (<https://www.rollcall.com/2005/01/21/talent-primary-heats-up/>) political guru Steve Jarding, who, [since](https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/hillary-clintons-political-strategist-steve-jarding-to-design-samajwadi-partys-up-election-campaign/381571/?doing_wp_cron=1640279466.7913239002227783203125) ([https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/hillary-clintons-political-strategist-steve-jarding-to-design-samajwadi-partys-up-election-campaign/381571/?doing\\_wp\\_cron=1640279466.7913239002227783203125](https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/hillary-clintons-political-strategist-steve-jarding-to-design-samajwadi-partys-up-election-campaign/381571/?doing_wp_cron=1640279466.7913239002227783203125)) 1980, had [advised](https://www.rollcall.com/2005/01/21/talent-primary-heats-up/) (<https://www.rollcall.com/2005/01/21/talent-primary-heats-up/>) Democratic candidates from John Kerry to Hillary Clinton and politicians around the world

like former right-wing Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, who implemented massive privatization schemes in healthcare and education and sent Spanish troops to Iraq.

At Harvard, "Jarding teaches students how to become politicians," a 2016 [profile](https://ipolitics.ca/2016/05/13/political-guru-steve-jarding-on-government-as-our-last-best-hope/) (<https://ipolitics.ca/2016/05/13/political-guru-steve-jarding-on-government-as-our-last-best-hope/>) boasts. "Nine of them have been prime ministerial or presidential candidates around the world and countless have been elected to Parliament, Congress, or have become governors or senators."

Acting under Jarding's guidance, Hidalgo set her sights on Harris County's county judge position, where Republican Ed Emmett had long run unopposed.

Forging connections with Ginny Goldman, Beto O'Rourke's Senate campaign advisor, Hidalgo was then plugged into Texas Democratic Party infrastructure and lavished with cash. She gained endorsements of Run For Something and Arena, NGOs founded by Obama administration officials, and 2016 Clinton campaign alumni. At one Arena [fundraiser](https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Hidalgo-immigrant-and-first-time-candidate-13303719.php) (<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Hidalgo-immigrant-and-first-time-candidate-13303719.php>) at the Los Angeles home of comedian Chelsea Handler, celebrity actresses Reese Witherspoon, Charlize Theron, and Jennifer Garner donated money.

While Hidalgo pledged to refuse donations from businesses that operate in Harris County, a move that earned her widespread [media attention](https://apnews.com/article/business-campaigns-archive-courts-d8cb43dcd88e4d4e8e0733c907ed35af) (<https://apnews.com/article/business-campaigns-archive-courts-d8cb43dcd88e4d4e8e0733c907ed35af>), financial [disclosures](https://cclerk.hctx.net/applications/websearch/ViewECDocs.aspx?ID=d4DwJQ+u968Uk9T+X5JH1ewSgpbXiNQ8cip3TvL6KDIXaVrIgeJEhE0kBzHZFsvHRpwsBnBND0loQXghBvVPE6b6sseu7ElzbM) (<https://cclerk.hctx.net/applications/websearch/ViewECDocs.aspx?ID=d4DwJQ+u968Uk9T+X5JH1ewSgpbXiNQ8cip3TvL6KDIXaVrIgeJEhE0kBzHZFsvHRpwsBnBND0loQXghBvVPE6b6sseu7ElzbM>) her campaign was generously funded by elite figures in Harris County, including \$10,000 from Arnold & Itkin LLC, the top personal injury [law firm](https://www.arnolditkin.com/) (<https://www.arnolditkin.com/>) in Houston. Kurt Arnold has [funded](https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/individual-contributions/?contributor_name=kurt+arnold) ([https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/individual-contributions/?contributor\\_name=kurt+arnold](https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/individual-contributions/?contributor_name=kurt+arnold)) Democratic Party figures around the country, including Claire McAskill and Sherrod Brown, and the Democratic National Committee itself. Construction mogul Julian F Boddy, whose company has had contracts with Houston government bodies, contributed \$5,000 to Hidalgo's campaign. Gilbert Garcia, a top Houston [lawyer](https://garciahamiltonassociates.com/about-us/people/gilbert-a-garcia/) (<https://garciahamiltonassociates.com/about-us/people/gilbert-a-garcia/>) and Securities and Exchange Commission advisor, also contributed \$5,000.

Hidalgo also took \$465,391 in fundraising from [ActBlue Texas](https://www.transparencyusa.org/tx/payee/lina-hidalgo-campaign) (<https://www.transparencyusa.org/tx/payee/lina-hidalgo-campaign>), followed by \$107,387.62 in June 2021 (<https://www.transparencyusa.org/tx/expenditure/104474037>). Among ActBlue, Texas's top [donors](https://www.transparencyusa.org/tx/pac/actblue-texas-59791-gpac/donors) (<https://www.transparencyusa.org/tx/pac/actblue-texas-59791-gpac/donors>) are several prominent Houston business moguls.

Hidalgo's campaign paid at least \$62,500 to Do Big Things, a California company that [crafted](https://dobigthings.today/post-election-2018-trends-takeaways/) (<https://dobigthings.today/post-election-2018-trends-takeaways/>) her social media strategy, as well as the campaign of [CIA agent-turned-politician](https://slotkin.house.gov/about) (<https://slotkin.house.gov/about>) Ellisa Slotkin.

With Texas [using](https://www.texastribune.org/2018/11/16/straight-ticket-voting-ed-emmett-harris-county-texas/) (<https://www.texastribune.org/2018/11/16/straight-ticket-voting-ed-emmett-harris-county-texas/>) straight-ticket voting, which enables voters to choose one party's candidates for all positions, Hidalgo rode the celebrity of Robert "Beto" O'Rourke. While O'Rourke narrowly lost to Senator Ted Cruz, Democrats were [victorious](https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Emmett-threatened-by-Democratic-rout-in-Harris-13369367.php) (<https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Emmett-threatened-by-Democratic-rout-in-Harris-13369367.php>) otherwise, giving Democrats all elected posts throughout the county.

### "I'm not going to sit here and come up with the best ideas by myself"

On November 6, 2018, Hidalgo [defeated](https://ballotpedia.org/Lina_Hidalgo) ([https://ballotpedia.org/Lina\\_Hidalgo](https://ballotpedia.org/Lina_Hidalgo)) the incumbent Republican Ed Emmet with 49.8% of the vote to Emmet's 48.2% and assumed office as county judge in Harris County (greater Houston).

Though Hidalgo's careful self-portrayal was as a grassroots candidate opposed to corruption, an image parroted by the liberal establishment, upon taking office she immediately [hired](https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Lina-Hidalgo-eager-to-improve-Harris-County-13572017.php) (<https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Lina-Hidalgo-eager-to-improve-Harris-County-13572017.php>) the expensive Washington consulting firm HR&A Advisors to determine her staffing. And she quickly followed their advice, [onboarding](https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Hidalgo-announces-three-senior-hires-for-county-13575262.php) (<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Hidalgo-announces-three-senior-hires-for-county-13575262.php>) figures including a former media specialist for the petrochemical corporation Shell International Ltd.

Despite it being her first time in any political office, Hidalgo managed to hire longtime Beltway insider Rafael Lemaitre as her communications director. Since 1998, Lemaitre has served in three presidential administrations as a White House spokesman. According to his [website](https://www.rafaellemaitre.com/) (<https://www.rafaellemaitre.com/>), he has "advised Cabinet-level presidential advisors, senior White House and Administration staff, and celebrities on media outreach activities executed across the United States and internationally."

He also worked in the Office of National Drug Control Policy and was appointed by the Obama Administration as Senior Advisor for Media and Communications for U.S Customs and Border Protection at the Department of Homeland Security.

Lemaitre's website also boasts of "strong relationships with influential reporters, thought leaders, editors and producers at major print, broadcast, radio, television and web-based outlets" and having conducted official propaganda efforts – termed "Administration initiatives" – in coordination with "USA Today, The Washington Post, The New York Times, national and international wire services and outlets, regional and local media across the United States, and Internet news outlets."

Lemaitre's connections paid off, as Hidalgo was featured twice in Time magazine – first (<https://time.com/5107499/record-number-of-women-are-running-for-office/>) on the cover page in January 2018 and again (<https://time.com/collection/time100-next-2021/5937694/lina-hidalgo/>) in its February 2021 “100 Next” issue, receiving praise for “doing an incredible job as judge, as evidenced by her efforts to quickly respond to COVID-19.”

Hidalgo made Fortune’s “40 under 40” issue in 2020, praised for taking on a “huge responsibility considering Houston’s 4.5 million population is almost that of the entire state of Colorado.”

Hidalgo “is creating a model for how progressives can govern effectively,” the New Yorker [raved](https://www.newyorker.com/news/us-journal/lina-hidalgos-political-rise) (<https://www.newyorker.com/news/us-journal/lina-hidalgos-political-rise>).

“Lina Hidalgo puts principle above politics at her own peril,” a columnist in the Houston Chronicle [wrote](https://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/outlook/article/Essay-Lina-Hidalgo-puts-principle-over-politics-15910959.php) (<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/outlook/article/Essay-Lina-Hidalgo-puts-principle-over-politics-15910959.php>).

“She ended up a candidate for such a powerful position precisely because no established Democrat thought a long-shot campaign was worth the trouble,” [wrote](https://www.texasmonthly.com/news-politics/lina-hidalgo-year-living-dangerously/) (<https://www.texasmonthly.com/news-politics/lina-hidalgo-year-living-dangerously/>) a Texas Monthly columnist.

In April 2021, Lemaitre’s portfolio was [elevated](https://news.ntvhouston.com/2021/04/harris-county-judge-lina-hidalgo-announces-personnel-updates/) (<https://news.ntvhouston.com/2021/04/harris-county-judge-lina-hidalgo-announces-personnel-updates/>) to include senior advisor as well as communications director.

Having won a powerful position in the fifth largest metropolitan area in the United States, Hidalgo was in control of a more than \$7 billion [budget](https://sisense.hctx.net/app/main#/dashboards/5fe0d1ca1fe486408409a2e2?h=false&t=false&l=false&r=false&volatile=true) (<https://sisense.hctx.net/app/main#/dashboards/5fe0d1ca1fe486408409a2e2?h=false&t=false&l=false&r=false&volatile=true>). With the pandemic’s emergency measures, her position granted her more power as Harris County’s Director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Immediately, Hidalgo turned to HR&A Advisors, paying four consultants as much as \$420 per hour to craft a “community engagement plan,” ultimately spending as much as \$115,000 in just two months.

“I’m not going to sit here and come up with the best ideas by myself,” Hidalgo said. “And the folks that have been here 10, 20, 30 years aren’t going to either.”

“If she feels she needs to spend that kind of money importing people into town, it seems she needs that kind of help,” Precinct 3 Commissioner Steve Radack commented.

Taking advice from a powerful billionaire couple and doling out expensive contracts to a seemingly endless roster of corporate consultants, Hidalgo would soon enact lockdowns to break the back of Houston’s working class and oversee legislation to consolidate her power while embroiling herself in a legal scandal that could land her in prison.

*Reprinted with permission from MintPressNews (<https://www.mintpressnews.com/making-lina-hidalgo-democratic-party-nursery-to-omicron-hysteria/279385/>).*