



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on January 28, 2020

How Bernie Sanders — and His Family — Got Rich Via Government

Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) is a self-described “democratic socialist” and scourge of the rich. However, writes Fox News’ [Peter Schweizer](#), “while Sanders may talk about the common good, his public service has made him and his family quite wealthy.”



Indeed, just last year, [Forbes](#) estimated Sanders’ net worth to be at least \$2.5 million. Some of that fortune was amassed through sales of Sanders’ books. Some of it consists of his real-estate holdings, particularly his three houses. A significant portion of it comes from taxpayer-funded pensions.

Sanders hasn’t enriched himself alone. According to Schweizer, his wife, Jane, has been a big beneficiary of his political career, starting with his election as mayor of Burlington, Vermont. He appointed Jane, then just his girlfriend, to head the mayor’s Youth Office and eventually made it a paid position “over objections of the city council” and without advertising it “so that others could apply.” After they got married, he not only kept Jane on the payroll but gave her a significant raise.

When Sanders went to Washington, Jane became one of his “top aides, serving at various times as his chief of staff, press secretary and political analyst,” says Schweizer. Taxpayers, of course, paid her salary in these positions.

In 2000, the Sanders family created a for-profit consulting company going by three different names. “The fact that this entity and its aliases were formed just weeks before the 2000 election is significant,” observes Schweizer. “The Sanderses ran these out of their home on Killarney Drive in Burlington. These entities served as financial conduits to run cash to the Sanders family.”

Jane served as “media buyer” for Bernie’s campaign despite having no apparent experience in the field. Since media buyers typically earn a commission of roughly 15 percent on all media purchases, Jane could have netted a tidy sum from her position. It’s impossible to know exactly how much either she or Bernie earned from these arrangements because they were merely required to report that they had earned “more than \$1,000” from their businesses, but critics charged that Jane and her daughter raked in over \$150,000 between 2000 and 2004.

Sanders’ 2016 presidential campaign paid nearly \$83 million to Old Towne Media LLC, which Schweizer describes as “a mysterious limited liability company with no website, no phone number, and no office space” that “was registered to a private home on a cul-de-sac in suburban Virginia.” Two people connected with the company also worked with Jane as media buyers for Bernie’s 2006 senatorial campaign. The company may have earned \$12 million on these ad buys, assuming they held to the industry standard.



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Did Jane — who once more reported only that she'd earned more than \$1,000 from professional work — get a cut of this? She isn't saying. "When a highly respected Vermont reporter named Jasper Craven, working for the nonprofit VTDigger.com, asked Jane about Old Towne Media during a phone interview, she replied, 'I have no idea what Old Towne Media is,'" recounts Schweizer. "Then she hung up the phone."

Jane was hired as president of Burlington College, a very small private school that nevertheless received millions of dollars in federal money, in 2004. "One of the board members of the college admitted that Jane's marriage to Bernie played a big role in her hiring because they thought that it would help with fundraising," notes Schweizer.

In 2009, the college established a carpentry program, making a backroom deal with the two-year-old, for-profit Vermont Woodworking School. Vermont Woodworking School would ultimately wind up with more than \$500,000 of the college's cash, not to mention at least one grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, whose finances were overseen by the Senate Budget Committee, on which Sanders sat. Oh, yes. The school's owner just happened to be Jane's daughter Carina.

Throughout this period, Burlington College struggled to make ends meet, but Jane's salary kept growing. "By 2009," pens Schweizer, "she was making \$160,000, including benefits." Two years later, she was asked to resign — with \$200,000 in severance pay. Five years after that, the school closed.

If Bernie Sanders thinks this is the way every rich person gets to the top, it's no wonder he wants to punish them all.

Image of Bernie Sanders: [Screenshot of berniesanders.com](#)

Michael Tennant is a freelance writer and regular contributor to The New American.



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