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INTERVIEW OF HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
BY WALTER SHAPIRO

Q This is for the fantasy piece I've wanted to do for a long time -- (laughter) -- going back over to our happy days when we were either desperately vamping to save the Gary Wills project. (Laughter.)

MRS. CLINTON: Desperately vamping Walter. There's a movie in there someplace. (Laughter.)

Q Actually, my editors had only one question they wanted me to ask you. So, you said the word, movie, so I'll ask you. If in the wonderful world of movie docudramas the First Lady, the Hillary Rodham Clinton story were being cast at this moment, who would you want to play you?

MRS. CLINTON: Meryl Streep.

Q Any particular reason?

MRS. CLINTON: I think she is a great actress, of a range and versatility that is in a class by herself. I'm a big fan ever since the Deer Hunter. I remember the first time I saw her in a film was the Deer Hunter.

Q One of the earliest things she did was -- my friend, Wendy Wasserstein, and her first play was Uncommon Women, which was about women at Mount Holyoke about the time you were at Wellesley. And they did a PBS version of it. They taped it in 1977, and she's one of the people in it.

MRS. CLINTON: I want to see that.

Q I can arrange for you to get a copy.

MRS. CLINTON: I would love that movie.

Q I know Wendy would love --

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MRS. CLINTON: I'm also a big fan of hers. She's brilliant. I hope I can get to New York some time next month.

Q The Sisters Rosensweig is definitely worth seeing.

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, that's what everybody tells me.

Q In fact, I'm doing this out of sequence. About a week ago I had a dinner with her, and one of the things that we were talking about were what should I ask you. Wendy and I started playing around with this theory, and we'd throw it out for reaction, and that is to some extent very much the idea of what you are and what you represent is so affected by the times that you were at Wellesley and Yale; very early feminism.

And I found myself saying to Wendy and my wife over dinner something like, had she been four years earlier the ambitions would not have been the same. Had she been about four or five years younger, she would have been the one saying to Bill Clinton why should I go back to Arkansas; why don't you go to Chicago? But that there was a sense of early feminism and sort of 1970-'71 just the sense that it was not a totally coherent ideology without contradictions, whether it's having tremendous ambitions to serve and also having a sense that the wife is the one who moves. Since we're coming at this backwards, I was just wondering if that makes any sense to you because in all -- in all the biographicals, the profiles that I've read, it's something I don't think anyone has played around with.

MRS. CLINTON: I think that's very interesting, because I've often thought of myself and my friends as being transition figures. Maybe more sure of where we're coming from than where we were going to. And I've had friends of mine describe our coming of age as being on the cusp of changes in society that were fundamentally redefining the roles of women, the relationships between men and women that were unprecedented in human history, let alone American history on such a scale.

Q And it's just that whole sense that, whether it's the Wellesley speech of '69, that it's very hard to totally escape those times.

MRS. CLINTON: I think that's right. And it's probably hard to escape whatever time you're a part of. I mean, we're all products of our own experience and the context in which we come to age. For some people, the place that they grow up in is terribly significant; to others the kind of family definition is at the root of their identity. I think for many people of my age, the changes in

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America, both politically and culturally, were profoundly effective in shaping who we were.

We, though, had the advantage that perhaps others in times of great changes did not have, and that was a relatively stable base off of which to make changes. The 1950s and post-World War II family structure --

Q I know that world. I grew up on a dead-end street.

MRS. CLINTON: You know, it gave a sense of stability and structure to one's life that adds the changes of the 1960s, beginning with President Kennedy's election and accelerating with his assassination and moving through all the events of that tumultuous time, permitted a lot of openness and thinking about who you were. But it also was rooted in a sense of where we came from. And I feel very lucky for that.

Q You mentioned a sense of place. My original idea was to start the interview by asking you, what was your 30-word essay to the -- (inaudible) -- Society? (Laughter.)

MRS. CLINTON: That's probably a state secret. I'd be glad to share it with you word for word. Remind me, I will pull that for Walter. But it had something to do with the core meaning of what it is to be a Cubs fan. There's a hopefulness -- (laughter) -- that I certainly have called upon many times. The theology according to the Chicago Cubs is a much unexplored subject. (Laughter.)

Q Who was your favorite Cub growing up?

MRS. CLINTON: Ernie Banks. Mr. Cubs. I used to go to Wrigley Field and in those days it was like going to a minor league park is now. It was fun and usually the stands weren't filled and you could wander around, and the bleacher bums. Your parents always said, now, don't go down there, those men are drinking. But you always would sneak down and watch them you know and they'd be sitting there bare-chested and usually they were guys who had snuck off from work, you know, and going to take the afternoon at the ballpark. And it often gets cold in Wrigley Field so you would move around the park catching the sun because that was where you could stay the warmest.

And Ernie Banks was not only a great player, but was an unfailingly positive presence. You know, that wasn't just sort of hype, he was.

Q Liked to play, too.

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MRS. CLINTON: Yes, yes. I was so excited when I thought I would be able to go throw out the first ball this year because he was going to catch. And I've never met him in person before. I've leaned over the wall and yelled at him as a little kid, and waved at him and stuff like that, but never had a chance to actually meet him. So it was something I was really looking forward to. And I hope I get a chance to do it again.

Q As Lisa can testify, one of the things that I've been discussing was the hope of going along.

MRS. CLINTON: I may still do it. Even sometime this year we talked about just catching a game, so I'll let you know. We went to the great San Diego-Cubs playoff game. I took my father because we got a bunch of tickets and a group of us from Little Rock came up and we took my father and my mother. And I think of all the things I ever did with my father that was probably the best. That was just heavenly, you know. We sat in the stands and watched the Cubs play. I would really love to go back. I think it would be great fun.

Q -- was telling me there were moments when you still had hopes to going to opening day. When your father was in the hospital, you and your brothers would be throwing a ball around and --

MRS. CLINTON: And having arguments. I mean, incredible arguments. We spent hours in the hospital waiting room arguing over the perfect Cub line-up of all time. And I have very opinionated brothers who actually were --

Q I met Hugh when the campaign went to Homestead.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, you did. Okay, well -- I mean, they are real fans of anything they follow and they have very strong opinions and they don't agree always on the merits of certain players. We spent hours arguing about Ron Santos. It really was so funny.

Q In 1960 he joined the Cubs.

MRS. CLINTON: That long ago?

Q Yes.

MRS. CLINTON: Is that right?

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Q One of the many things I did to research this interview, in addition to reading all commencement addresses, all articles --

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, gosh.

Q -- was go through all Cub line-ups of the 1950s.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, we're going to have to trade opinions on the perfect Cub line-up. I actually liked a lot of the players of the '80s and the players of the play-off teams. I mean, I loved Andre Dawson. I thought he was a great sight out in that beautiful field. My daughter I don't think will ever forgive them for not having him any longer.

Of course, I loved Fergeson Jenkins. I thought he was a great pitcher. He's always underappreciated, you know. They don't really -- they don't give him the credit --

Q If you're not in the World Series --

MRS. CLINTON: That's right.

Q And he went from the Cubs to Texas, as I recall, another team that has not made it to the World Series.

MRS. CLINTON: It's been a great fanship. (Laughter.)

Q Just other things that I was thinking about, which is today is the one-year anniversary of the California primary.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, my goodness.

Q A low point --

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, my goodness.

Q -- by many of the Bill Clinton presidential campaign. The moment when, yes, you'll win the Democratic nomination, but it isn't going to be worth anything if Ross Perot is winning the exit polls.

MRS. CLINTON: That's right, that's right. And have a victory in California basically dismissed was hard to believe at the time.

Q And given, without going over ancient history, your role and others in sort of restructuring the campaign following California in June of last year, which led you to the war room and a

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certain political triumph last November -- that said, do you see some of the similarities between this period and the period leading up to that?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, there's a learning curve associated with any effort of this magnitude. I remember when Bill really decided that he was going to run in September or so of '91, a very wise, experienced political figure said to both of us, well, you know, it can't hurt anything because nobody ever wins the first time out and you need to get into the political arena on the national scale because there's a lot of lessons which you can't learn any other way. But don't be disappointed because there's no way you can win. I mean, I always believed Bill could win, but I thought that was pretty fair advice. There is so much to learn when you step from a governorship, or even the Congress, into the presidential arena. And there's even more to learn when you go from a campaign that wins into governing and the White House.

And I think that there is some similarities because Bill had never done either of those before. He cared deeply about what he's doing and he tries very hard. But it's inevitable there are going to be some adjustments as you try to learn what this new challenge is. And I think the same thing happened in the campaign. And just as in the campaign I think his fundamental strengths as a person and as a leader and his belief about what the country needs to do is going to sustain him as this whole presidency kinds of settles in and takes hold and moves forward. You know, I think that that's all part of the process.

Q That's I think one of the big secrets that I'm waiting for the memoirs to find out. It's pretty much what went on in the room in Little Rock where you, the President, Al Gore, Warren Christopher, and a few others basically made the decision that led to the staffing of the administration.

Now that you're in sort of repair mode, were there mistakes ever made in that room and things that you as the group collectively would --

MRS. CLINTON: Well, those -- focused almost exclusively on the campaign and I believe that the Cabinet that Bill choose is one of the strongest that we had in a very long time. The quality of people, their commitment to public service, and their different kind of experience makes a strong team. There wasn't as much time spent on some of the other staffing issues because Bill really believed in a Cabinet government, he really believes in empowering people to make decisions in the agencies to carry out the general theme of the administration. And he would probably say that in our time that was spent there was very much worth it but there also needs to be some

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thinking done about the transition into the White House itself that was kind of aggravated because of the amount of time spent on the Cabinet.

I'm not sure exactly the decisions would have been made differently, if indeed they would have been, but it's absolutely fair to say that there was nothing like the amount of time, effort, thought given to the White House operations as there was to the Cabinet.

Q What I'm trying to get at and -- this morning and all of the profiles that have been written about you have sort of revered from one -- from the First Lady aspects is also a policy person to the Michael Kelly -- one of my rules is I decided that I would not say -- I would not ask you about the -- Yes, trust me, I could ask questions about -- I can do that, but I thought that -- but there is an aspect that I don't think has been focused on you as much which is forgetting that there's a First Lady, forgetting -- and just sort of applying to what you did, sort of the same standards that one would apply to any top-ranking official in this administration were it Mack McLarty, Ira Magaziner who's not confirmed by the -- you know, who's not in a Senate confirmation -- and that is in terms of both how you spend your day, in terms of policy, in terms of direction, and one of the aspects, you know, I realize that a lot of details about health care may be out by the time my article appears, and a lot of details about health care may not be out by the time my article appears. But trying, and I've talked to some people about this, trying to get a sense of you as a policy person -- I just wanted to ask about some of the issues in health care that may not -- will probably not be affected by the deliberations on how do we pay for this and exactly what is -- benefit package. And -- get at the issue of, despite, you know, the notion of you as the liberal person since George McGovern. I have a clipping here from Representative Dick Armey -- have you seen it?

MRS. CLINTON: I saw it. Someone showed that to me.

Q Yes, that's -- that you --

MRS. CLINTON: Amazing.

Q Yes.

MRS. CLINTON: Truly amazing.

Q But the same point -- you know other people have told me who were in the campaign and in the administration that in all the meetings they've seen him in, they've often seen you more

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conservative than the consensus of the room. And -- time when you'd be more liberal than the consensus in the room.

MRS. CLINTON: That's probably true.

Q And a perfect example that sort of developing as a litmus test issue in health care, is how do you feel on the question of should abortion be covered by any health care plan that emerges?

MRS. CLINTON: I think that what we are trying to do in this health care plan overall is very similar to what I think should be done with that specific issue.

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We do not want to take away any benefits or rights that people now have. And with respect to abortion, it is available to many people through their insurance plan today. And what we want to do is to make that available to people where it is already available and then suggest that it be available in general as any issue arising out of hospitalization care currently is covered under most insurance policies without any specific mention of abortion.

I anticipate what will happen is that that will be our recommendation, and there will be a very vigorous battle in the Congress by those who wish to mandate its inclusion specifically and those who wish to exclude it specifically. I don't think that is an issue that should be permitted to undermine the larger purpose of providing adequate health care to every American. It's an important issue. It is one that people feel very strongly about. And I have told representatives of both opposing positions that the President's commitment to pro-choice makes him feel that he cannot deny this service as part of a health plan to people who are eligible for them and would otherwise be covered by them, but that knowing the politics of it, he imagines that the Congress will do its will, whatever that is, and at the very least we need to sustain its availability, where it is, under the circumstances it is. And I supposed that's probably where it will come out.

Q Let me come at it from another sort of related issue. And that is should illegal aliens or undocumented workers be included under the provisions?

MRS. CLINTON: I feel they should not. This is an issue that holds the potential of being extremely emotional as well. But I do not believe that the United States has an obligation to provide the same comprehensive health benefits to persons who are undocumented workers and illegal aliens that we do to our own citizens and other legal residents.

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And what we have done in the past is to provide emergency care where it is appropriate and to take necessary public health measures in order to protect both undocumented workers and the general population. But I am personally opposed to providing the comprehensive benefit package that we want to make available to every American citizen to those who are not. And I have already been criticized for that. Many people are very concerned about that position. Again, I imagine it would be one that will be hotly debated in the Congress. But given where we are in this country with our resources and with our inability to provide even the basic necessities of health care for many of the people who have lived here for generations, I think that's our first obligation.

Q The basic question about health care, and I realize -- I don't think I've seen this anywhere. I was asking Ira Magaziner about it, and he was recalling that in his discussions with you and the President of late November, early December about him taking over and playing a key role in the task force -- at one point I think he said to you and the President-elect, well, I'm not sure I'd be the right one to chair it given all the complications of an interagency task force. Perhaps you or Hillary should do that. And according to Ira, you said something like, well, I could do that. And it was clear to him that you and the President had already discussed this in advance as sort of your role or a major role. How did that come about, and what was the thinking there?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I don't recall that particular conversation, but sometime, I think it was more likely December or January than November or December, and I'm not great at remembering that. I know we were still in Little Rock.

Q I'm not sure Ira exactly had a desk calendar out when he told the story.

MRS. CLINTON: I'm pretty sure it was probably the second week of January. It was pretty close to the time that we were going to be moving. The President in a number of meetings with his economic advisers said what he has said on many occasions, which is that we're never going to get economic problems under control without dealing with health care, and that he wanted health care to have the same visibility and importance in the administration that was automatically accorded to the budget because of the kind of process that he would be inheriting, that they had to present a budget by a certain date and all that.

And I remember several of his economic advisors who were in Little Rock on numerous occasions saying something like, well, it's going to be very hard to do that. I mean, nobody has ever adequately dealt with health care and there's a reason for that --

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because of its complexity and it's a political mine field. And I remember the President saying, well, I just want everybody to understand I really believe we have to do this. If I had to do it myself, we are going to confront this health care issue which has been ignored for too long.

And then later he said to me something like, you know, I may need you to help work on this because I want it very clear to everybody that I am serious about this, and yet I can't see how I can do everything that needs to be done to prepare the budget, plus oversee everything that needs to be done to prepare the health care at the same time. And I think that's when he said, you know, I we ought to have a separate process working on health care, just like we've got an economic process that is working with our economic advisers.

And I think he talked to some people -- because I could remember a conversation with Bob Rubin and Carol Rasco or some people who were there, and they said, well, who can we get to do this? And I said, well, the President's talked to me about doing it, but obviously, I can't do it. We need somebody to do every day. I can help try to get it organized. And so then Ira and Carol Rasco worked very hard with Ira getting all of that set up. But it was a kind of ongoing discussion, if you will. But I think it arose from the President's absolute rock-bottom belief that he wanted to elevate this, that he's willing to take the risk of elevating it, that it needed always to be seen as part of a package. The economic program and health care and putting me in the middle of it made it likely that would happen.

Q Was it a hard choice for you to take on something that would occupy by the estimates of your staff 75 percent to 80 percent of your time in the early going, as opposed to spreading your efforts in four or five areas?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I like focusing my efforts -- I like working in education, for example, in Arkansas, and really getting immersed in that and feeling that it was something that I could stay involved with as it began to be implemented. I would have liked perhaps a little more time to get acclimated, find my way around, get settled in. It has been an extraordinary effort to do this in the time frame that we've been given. I share the President's urgency about it. I think he's actually right. But personally, it's been very challenging for me to do everything I needed to do to get my family settled and figure out where I was and what I was going to be doing on a day-to-day basis and take on this big responsibility.

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Q Just listening to you right now, have you figured out those sentences when you instinctively say "Bill" and those sentences when you instinctively say "the President"?

MRS. CLINTON: No, but I --

Q Because you switch from one to the other.

MRS. CLINTON: It's funny, because it's the same thing I did when he was Governor. You know, it's almost schizophrenic, the way -- when I talk about it in kind of an official capacity, maybe I unconsciously call him the President. You know, it's funny. I hadn't thought about that.

Q But the other thing -- I have a father who's 84; my mother is in her late '70s. The are, knock on wood, in good health. But you have my deepest sympathy for what happened to your father. But talking to some friends of yours, I do get the sense that given the relentless pace of the public role that you're in, you haven't been given basically the opportunity to mourn.

MRS. CLINTON: I think that that's something that I'm aware of, not having any private space to be alone, to decompress, to take long walks. It's hard in this position, no matter what, but in the kind of difficult period with my dad, it's even more important. In a way, I was very grateful that I got to go to Little Rock because that at least provided some insulation from the spotlight here and it was where so many of my friends and support system still are. So that made it much less traumatic than it would have been otherwise.

I've talked to other people in public life who have lost a parent, a spouse, a child, and if it happens suddenly and if it happens in a way that you don't get any time to deal with it because you're in the Governor's Mansion or in the Congress or the White House and it just happens to you, I think that's much more difficult than what I was able to do, which was to remove myself from here and to be with my family. We all went through the process together. And so, although I don't feel like I've gotten enough time or space, I feel like I've gotten a lot more than I would have thought given my present circumstances. But I could use some more.

Q I cannot imagine as hard as I try what the bubble feels like. Could you imagine, thinking about this either during the campaign or between the election and January 20th, exactly how constrained you were going to be?

MRS. CLINTON: I don't think you can, to tell you the truth. I think you can imagine it, but until you experience it, it's just hard to believe how isolating it can be and how you have to

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protect yourself against that isolation, even fight against it, to maintain relationships, friendships, ordinary day-to-dayness that gives you a feeling that you're part of the world and not something that is set aside from it.

Q Have there been unreported sneaking out of the bubble?

MRS. CLINTON: There have been for me.

Q Yes, that's what I meant.

MRS. CLINTON: And very important for me.

Q The reason that occurred to me is as I was waiting to come up here, Helen Thomas was giving an interview in the press room and I just heard one sentence just wafting toward me -- and if Mrs. Clinton were walking out there in the street, down the street, all of us would be out of here following her.

MRS. CLINTON: But, luckily, they don't always know.
(Laughter.)

Q Getting back to just the difficulty of this current period, to some extent are there moments -- one of the things Ira was talking about was you giving him a long lecture about just how absolutely unbelievably tough health care is going to be, and that for all he went through in Long Island, all he saw through the campaign, nothing is going to be like the pressure on all of you once this thing goes public. Are there times when you naturally just give way to the kind of despair that you're counseling him against?

MRS. CLINTON: No. No, I really don't. I get frustrated. I get bewildered at some of what I see around me. But I don't ever despair. I don't ever get down about what we're engaged in because I really believe in it. I don't believe I have unrealistic expectations about what is achievable in the short-term. I think I'm realistic about that. But I also believe that history is on the side of change and that if we do our work right and give the President the best possible information, analysis that he can make good decisions on, that's what we were asked to do and that's our contribution to try to improve the country.

And every day I always feel there's something you could do to advance that, there's some big or small thing that you can try to accomplish that will make a difference in the way somebody sees this health care issue. And since I believe there's always something to be done, I don't ever despair about it.

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Q Does the word "earnest" against that backdrop bother you as a description of you?

MRS. CLINTON: No. I mean, it's one of many descriptions that I have heard. And I think it's fair to some extent, but I think it is also a little off the mark because my seriousness about issues I think is very balanced by my appreciation for the difficulty of accomplishing what we are engaged in and the need for humor and for balance in how we go about it. But I also think that in today's world one of the great untapped sources of strength for people in public life is a sense of conviction -- or earnestness, if you will. Because there's so much confusion out there about works. There's so much cynicism about the political process where you see people making deals and arrangements with each other and not taking issues seriously because that's secondary to their own personal agendas; that when you've got a message that is rooted in a set of beliefs about what should be done it's one of the more likely ways that you can break through to people so that they actually begin to listen because it rings true to them.

So I view that as part of my task, which is to convey the seriousness about what it is we're engaged in, but to do it in a way that links it to real people's lives.

Q Without making -- (inaudible) -- Abraham Lincoln was very serious about preserving the union, but he also gave way to moments of deep, dark despair. And sort of what I'm trying to get at is what keeps you, given the difficult start the administration has gotten off on, given even the best, but 80 percent of the popularity polls, health care would be a daunting task. So what gives you the resources that you're comforting others instead of quietly saying, oh, my God, what have we wrought here?

MRS. CLINTON: I just have a very positive sense about what is at stake in this time in our history. And I see myself and the others who are working on health care or anything else in this administration as really trying to do what they think is right. Much more so than is politically expedient or popular. And I don't think it's worth being in public service or in political life if you don't believe in issues that are important to you and that you want to advance on the national agenda, and if you don't think that change is possible and that progress is still, despite the 20th century, within our grasp if we do some things differently.

And I have a combination of religious faith and personal belief and a history of competitive sports and a range of experiences that sustain me when times get tough.

Q But isn't life a little more like the Cubs?

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MRS. CLINTON: Yes. Yes, life is more like the Cubs. But, you know, life is also never knowing what's going to happen and getting up every day, suiting up, and going out to play. That's how I view it. I have a -- I was thinking about this the other day because a friend of mine and I were talking about one the experiences that most women my age never had was competitive sports. And there's a lot of psychological work that's been done now about how sports in some ways, even if it's as a fan as opposed to a participant, how to prepare young men for the kind of give-and-take of life. You know you're not going to win them all. One out of three is a batting championship.

And many women haven't had that experience, so they do take everything very personally and oftentimes end up feeling quite emotional about loss because they personalize it. And I grew up getting knocked around a lot. I mean, I was a tomboy, I played hard, I believed in playing as hard as I could to win, and I knew that at the end of the game, my best friend who was on the other team, we'd still be friends because that's what you did.

But I also carry with that kind of experience about suiting up every day and doing your best a public service ethos that I was raised with and that I came of age with that, for me, it's a kind of comparable feeling. That getting out there and trying every day is part of who I am, so I don't get discouraged. I may get thrown off course, or I may not quite figure out the playing field or the rules yet, but I figure with enough time I can try to get it in my own mind where the field is and where the fences are.

Q I brought along one -

MRS. CLINTON: Is it in your briefcase?

Q Yes. I brought along one visual aid.

MRS. CLINTON: Do you have an easel? (Laughter.) Is this the Rohrschark test? People have told me I'm a Rohrschark test. (Laughter.)

Q This is my visual aid. And I'm not doing -- my editors just insisted that I ask these kinds of questions about your personal life. And it makes me feel awful that I have to do this, but journalism is a tough game.

MRS. CLINTON: I know it. I know it. (Laughter.)

Q Is this true?

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MRS. CLINTON: Oh, my God, you've found me out.
(Laughter.) I was talking to Tipper Gore about this.

Q You'd seen this?

MRS. CLINTON: She's quite jealous that I made the cover. Don't you think that's a man's hand? (Laughter.) I mean, look at how long the fingers are and everything. I was looking at that -- we were looking at it, and she said it looked as though somebody had cut out a picture of me, and then from behind had reached around the picture and held this alien baby.

Q By the way, it's not a badly written story inside. They say that you're going to raise the child much like you've raised Chelsea, to understand the importance of public service. (Laughter.)

MRS. CLINTON: Whatever planet -- no, Tipper and Al and I entertained each other for mile after mile on the bus trips reading aloud from the tabloids -- because somebody, as a joke, bought a supply of them and put them on the first bus trip, and, so, we'd be driving through the countryside and Al would be saying, "Oh, listen to this one." (Laughter.) Oh, that is -- a "highly-placed administration insider" -- boy, am I getting used to hearing that. Sole survivor of a starship crash in Arkansas -- somebody told me -- this is a little off the subject, but --

Q So would this little interlude, but --

MRS. CLINTON: No, I love it. Somebody said there is literally an office in Boca Raton, Florida, where the owners of these, many of whom are British or Canadian, rotate in staff. They get a vacation in Boca Raton for a month or two, and they churn these things out.

Q The National Enquirer is in Lantana, Florida, and I think some of the competitors were started up with ex-National Enquirer staff from all around. It is -- we're talking about the Brit tabloids.

MRS. CLINTON: They all come out of there?

Q They all come out of there. I once knew someone who worked there 15 years ago. They were paying, in the late '70s, \$50,000 for starting "journalists." And basically, you were just supposed to spin out story ideas, and it's like boot camp. One out of every 10 had the right, shall we say, sensibility. It's a wonderful profession. (Laughter.)

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I also wanted to make a serious request, which is going back to the notion of seeing you in a public policy role, much like the Mark Miller Newsweek arrangement. Is it possible in the next day or two that I might sit in on one or two meetings, under any ground rules you want, including ones that I could work out with Lisa where anything I write about the meeting would be vetted through her? Because what I'm interested in is conveying the aspect of you in that sort of -- as a White House staffer, if you will, which is an aspect I don't think has been written about.

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, I don't know. We'd have to think about that and look at the schedule for the next couple of days. Yes, we'll consider that.

Q Because in so many ways, and so many of the things I do want to ask about policy -- it would be the same request if I were doing a profile on Mack McLarty, I would ask Mack.

MRS. CLINTON: You know what's interesting to me, Walter, and this is something a little off the subject, but I think that many of the women who have been in this position before actually had enormous influence on policy in both informal and formal ways. Nobody was ever up front about it as I have been for obvious reasons -- I mean, it's a very difficult role to play.

But, for example, in one of the best descriptions of life in the White House called, "Upstairs at the White House," which I think it's out of print now, there's a description about how the President and Mrs. Truman retired to his study every evening after dinner at 8:00 p.m. She read all of his speeches, all of his internal memoranda, she provided counsel to him. They would work together for three hours every night. And yet, there was never anything that would be publicly acknowledged.

It's sort of interesting because does it make a difference what we think about Truman that his wife was such a close and constant advisor, whose influence we really don't know because it melded into her husband?

Q If I remember from reading the biography that she was someone who, when it was pointed out to her that Mrs. Roosevelt had met with the press, she just blanched and stopped that totally, and I don't think she gave an interview.

MRS. CLINTON: She didn't, I don't think. I don't think she gave one interview. Yet, when I look at the role that first ladies play, if -- I mean, I have no reason to doubt what the description of their daily routine was, she had to have been enormously influential. And, of course, in his letters home and his

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own diary, he talks often about going to her for advice and getting advice and all that. And I've met Margaret Truman-Daniel, who is a wonderful, lively person of great intellect and obvious strong opinions, so I can imagine what her mother must have been like in private -- even though, obviously, I never got to meet her.

This whole role about the spouse in these public positions is fascinating to me. I don't think anybody's adequately connected up what I view as my role not being so much different in kind as in degree from what came before. And I don't mean that to, in any way, downsize what I'm attempting to do, but as a way of pointing out the contributions and the relationship that came with others.

Q And here you're almost focusing the internal counselor role as opposed to Betty Ford's educating a generation of women on breast cancer.

MRS. CLINTON: That's right -- and speaking her mind in a very forthright way. And Rosalyn Carter's work on mental health -- I mean, the mental health working group and the task force looked closely at what she had done 15 years ago, but never quite got put into play. So it's all very interesting to me.

Q A friend said, Hillary is a missionary. It's up to you to find out her mission. What's your mission? (Laughter.)

MRS. CLINTON: My mission is to enjoy my life and the opportunities I have, and to make a contribution to my country. I mean, that's really how I view what I do every day. I want to have some fun and I want to do some good along the way.

Q I appreciate it.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you.

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