

03/18/94
O'BRIEN, PAT
WORKING WOMAN

Interview
book

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Internal Use Only

March 18, 1994

AN INTERVIEW OF THE FIRST LADY
CONDUCTED BY PAT O'BRIEN

Q (Inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, thank you. I feel bad. I mean, most people are being very supportive and kind of bewildered about this whole deal.

Q (Inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I must say that it has been heartbreaking to be thrust into the middle of accusations and attacks that, in some ways, undermine my integrity. It's just been a very painful experience. I've never gone through anything like this before. Don't really understand why this is being done at this time and don't even understand why the attacks are given any credibility, since they are so often groundless.

Q (Inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Right. I mean, it's broken my heart in some ways. I've been very saddened by it.

Q (Inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Mm-hmm.

Q (Inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: No. Well, I think that for whatever combination of reasons got us to this point, I have to look at it from a couple of different perspectives. I still have responsibilities to myself, as a woman, and to my husband, as his wife, and to my daughter, as her mother, and to my family and my friends, and to the people who work for me. So I feel the need to be very positive about all of the things we're doing and take all my other responsibilities seriously.

MORE

Diversified Reporting Services, Inc.

918 16TH STREET, N.W. SUITE 803

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

(202) 296-2929

Q (Inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes. You know, I feel that most women I know have to juggle five or six different things at one time. I mean, women may be having problems at work or problems in a relationship or health problems, but they're still the ones that have to get up and, you know, get people off to school and, you know, listen to their husbands and deal with their aging parents and all of those things.

Q (Inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: That's right. So I think this has certainly reinforced in me what I believe is the fundamental obligations I have.

Q (Inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: No. I just came from a briefing for about 40 reporters from Oklahoma and Nebraska and Kansas, and I have been working every day on health care, and am very encouraged by what I see up on the Hill and out in the country.

But I also think I have to be very careful to make sure that the American public gets the information they want so that they know what happened 16 years ago, what the sequence of events were, that they know that we never borrowed any money from any S&L, that every loan we ever had was paid back to a bank, and that we tried to be, you know, very straightforward in all of this.

So I am going to try to be more effective, I guess, in explaining what happened and in answering people's questions because I don't want anybody to have any reason to believe that either we did anything inappropriate or that we have any reason to fear all of this.

Now, I must confess, I thought that when a special counsel was appointed, and we said immediately we will fully cooperate, we didn't do anything that any other president had ever done in terms of, you know, saying you can't see this or we're not going to give you that document, we have fully cooperated, I really thought that that would be the end of this until the special counsel's report came out.

Q (Inaudible)?

MORE

Diversified Reporting Services, Inc.

918 16TH STREET, N.W. SUITE 803

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

(202) 296-2929

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I think because after demanding a special counsel, the people who demanded it realized that if they really got a special counsel who conducted a fair and honest inquiry into this whole matter, that the report that would be eventually issued would be fully answering of all the questions that were out there and point out clearly that we didn't do anything that anybody should be concerned about.

When they realized that, they thought they might lose their political advantage for that period of time. So they have been, you know, trying to stir up other stories. They've been agitating for hearings in the Congress. Every time they get something to keep pushing the attacks and the sort of rumors forward, I guess, they put us in a position of saying well, wait a minute, we're cooperating with the special counsel which is what you said you wanted.

We don't want to interfere with his investigation. So then they say well, that means you're not going to tell us anything. So they've tried to create a kind of double bind for us. You know, consistent with our obligations to the special counsel, we're going to try to answer people's questions and give them information. But we have to do it consistent with that obligation.

Q (Inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I hope I don't see very many adjustments. I mean, I have to keep my own priorities in order and I have to spend the time on the matters that are most important to me. I have to be involved in what happens in health care. I care deeply about it.

I had two great trips last week or earlier this week that reinforced my commitment to health care and made it very clear to me that's what most Americans want me to be working on. I have to, you know, do whatever it takes to be fully cooperative with the special counsel and to answer, you know, questions the best I can.

Q (Inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I don't know exactly but I'm sure that I could have done something differently, although I'm not exactly sure what. I really believe this is, in part, cyclical and that if you go back and --

MORE

Diversified Reporting Services, Inc.

918 16TH STREET, N.W. SUITE 803

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

(202) 296-2929

Q (Inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, no. You know, I am so grateful for the experience I've had traveling around the country and working on health care. I've said many times in the last couple of weeks that -- you know, I have this movie running through my mind of all the people I've seen and all the stories they've shared with me.

I just feel so totally committed to doing everything I can to make sure that everybody in this country has health insurance they can afford. I want to be able to go back to the places I've been and look the people in the eye who have talked to me and, in a sense, you know, shared their deepest concerns and tell them we're now taking care of those.

I feel very good about all the work I've done this past year and feel very good about the prospects of our having a bill the president will sign this year. So I wouldn't do any of that differently at all.

Q (Inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, you know, I don't think the stories bothered me as much as the fact that they were being used for political purposes, and that the tragic suicide of someone was being used as a political football. I really just was amazed by that and felt so strongly that it was unfair and wrong to his family and his memory.

Q (Inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think that I never understood the furor over this whole failed land investment that we were in, and the kind of conspiracy theories that people have tried to leave have struck me as kind of silly. I have not really paid them much attention.

I never realized that I could see happening before my very eyes the, you know, big lie technique that I'd read about in political science and history books. That if something is said over and over again, then people start wondering. I would have been more attentive earlier. I would have taken this whole inquiry by the press more seriously. I'm going to try to do that now.

MORE

Diversified Reporting Services, Inc.

918 16TH STREET, N.W. SUITE 803

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

(202) 296-2929

But, you know, if you'd go back and look in history, I've just been struck at how most women in my position have been subjected to the same kinds of attacks. You know, go back to Dolly Madison who bought a mirror for \$40 and there was a congressional inquiry into it.

There seems to be something about this role almost no matter who is in it, how they choose to carry it out, that generates criticism. My feeling is that I need to do what is best for me, and every woman in this position needs to do what is best for her.

I have a very strong conviction that my husband was elected to help make the lives of people better, and that I want to do whatever he asks me to do to help him accomplish that. So if I'm going to be criticized for doing what I believe in, I would rather just keep doing what I believe in. That's what I intend to do.

They're waving at me and telling me I have to get on to my new luncheon. I'm so glad to talk to you.

Q (Inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you so much, Pat. Thank you. See you later. Call me Hillary, Pat, okay? Thanks. Bye.

* * * * *

Diversified Reporting Services, Inc.

918 16TH STREET, N.W. SUITE 803

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

(202) 296-2929