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DATE	January 19, 1996	ACCOUNT NUMBER	N/A
TIME	7:00-9:00 AM	NIELSEN AUDIENCE	3,201,440
NETWORK	CBS		
PROGRAM	CBS This Morning		

PAULA ZAHN, co-host:

Not since Eleanor Roosevelt has the wife of a president made as much news as the current residence of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

HARRY SMITH, co-host:

Hillary Rodham Clinton is a wife, a lawyer, a mother and now a published author. The American public continues to watch her with great interest and they know the story is far from over.

The newly elected president was proud to say it, "Two for the price of one." In fact, Hillary Rodham Clinton would take on one of the grandest of the Clinton campaign promises: health-care reform.

President BILL CLINTON: (From January 25, 1993) Today I am announcing the formation of the president's task force on national health reform. This task force will be chaired by the first lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton.

SMITH: Health-care reform failed and the blame for it was laid squarely at Mrs. Clinton's feet. Her bold and unprecedented role as a policymaker kept the focus on other already-existing controversies: profits from a 1976 commodities deal; her role in a failed Arkansas savings and loan; the White House travel office firings; and events following the death of White House counsel and longtime friend Vincent Foster.

In what became known as "the pink press conference," Mrs. Clinton answered all questions. This was a new breed of first lady, but one that was still learning.

Mrs. HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON: (From April 22, 1994) I'm trying to find my way through it and trying to figure out how best to be true to myself and how to fulfill my responsibilities to my husband and my daughter and—and the country.

SMITH: Hillary Clinton is not the first first lady the country has found fault with.

Mr. CARL S. ANTHONY (Historian): Mrs. Bush was criticized for not giving us her opinion on—on abortion and other public issues. Betty Ford was criticized for giving us too much information on her public opinion. Rosalynn Carter was criticized for being too overtly politically powerful. Nancy Reagan criticized for being too covertly politically powerful. So there's always something to find wrong with these women.

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Nielsen Audience Source: Nielsen Media Research, Oct/Dec 1994, Persons 2+, NIT Quarterly Averages
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SMITH: Ironically, after the politically charged health-care debate, the woman who had participated in Cabinet meetings was now concentrating on subjects traditionally associated with the role of first lady: women's and children's issues. Tipper Gore has traveled the small-town roads with Hillary Clinton that led them both to the nation's capital. She knows from experience how important the first lady will be when it comes to keeping the Clinton-Gore team in Washington next year.

Mrs. TIPPER GORE (Wife of Vice President): She's probably got to get around the country to as many places as she can. People are very excited to meet her, to touch her for two reasons: because she's the first lady and then, of course, because there's a campaign. But she has that--that aura of--and that mantle of responsibility because she is the first lady.

SMITH: Hillary Rodham Clinton describes herself as a private person in a public life. Her role continues to evolve and so does the job description of the first lady. What remains constant is Mrs. Clinton's relationship to the president. No one is closer.

Please welcome the first lady of the United States, Hillary Rodham Clinton.

ZAHN: Good to see you again.

Mrs. CLINTON: Glad to see you, also.

ZAHN: Thanks.

Mrs. CLINTON: How are you?

SMITH: Good morning. Thanks for coming in.

Mrs. CLINTON: Oh, thanks for having me again.

SMITH: You have some friends here this morning.

Mrs. CLINTON: I'm glad to be back, and I'm glad to see both of you again.

ZAHN: Thank you.

SMITH: You--it looks like you could use a couple this week. We got a lot of stuff to talk about. Carolyn Huber...

Mrs. CLINTON: Yes.

SMITH: ...your old friend...

Mrs. CLINTON: Right.

SMITH: ...old office manager from the Rose Law Firm, now works for you in the residence...

Mrs. CLINTON: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

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SMITH: ...testified in front of the Whitewater Committee yesterday. And she said back in August, in a room right next to your office, she found this bundle of documents.

Mrs. CLINTON: Mm-hmm.

SMITH: How on earth did these subpoenaed records end up there?

Mrs. CLINTON: I don't know. And I wish that they'd come out in August. I didn't know that she'd found them. And I'm not sure she knew what she found, based on what she said yesterday. This has been, for me, kind of a difficult time because I can't answer these questions. I don't know where they've been. I wished they'd come out sooner.

SMITH: This is a room, though, that has limited access. This isn't a place...

Mrs. CLINTON: Mmm.

SMITH: ...that's trafficked by a bunch of people. Some--whoever put them there knew what they were.

Mrs. CLINTON: I don't know that we know that, Harry. I don't know how they got there. All I do know is that that room is on the third floor of the residence, and there are numbers of people--I can't tell you how many--who have access to it. But the important thing is those papers were found and eventually were turned over, and they support what I've been saying. There would be no reason for anyone I know, including myself, not to have wanted them to come out years ago. So I can't explain where they've been, but I'm glad that they're out there.

ZAHN: Did you put those records there?

Mrs. CLINTON: Of course not.

ZAHN: Did your husband put them there?

Mrs. CLINTON: Of course not.

ZAHN: Who had access to those records who also might have had access to this--this highly secured area of the White House?

Mrs. CLINTON: Oh, it--let's--you know, let's not characterize this, because I think it's important for the investigation that is going on about who had access and where they might have been and all that, that will come to its own conclusion. I don't want to enter into that right now because I want it to be conducted as fully as it can; I want everybody asked about it. And I am absolutely confident that this is one of those other dry holes that will be dug.

ZAHN: That's...

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Mrs. CLINTON: Nobody will be able to say, with all of the boxes and the files and the papers that flow through that area, where they might have been, where they were. We don't know the answer to that. There...

SMITH: Here's--here's what looks so bad.

Mrs. CLINTON: Yeah.

SMITH: These are records that have Vince Foster's notes all over them, and a lot of people are saying that means they came right out of Vince Foster's office.

Mrs. CLINTON: I can't help what people say. People have been saying things about this for four years, which have been proven, time and again, to be untrue. There is nobody who wishes those documents had been found earlier than I. We've had literally thousands and thousands of boxes in Arkansas and in Washington searched for now more than two years, looking for everything that might be relevant. The law firm did not have copies of those documents. The savings and loan did not have copies of those documents. I don't know where they've been. I don't know who's had them. I don't know what has got to happen to make them appear.

But let's back up a minute because I guess I have to say that we will get to the bottom of this. That's what the special counsel is for. They will ask everybody. There was construction going on up there. People were moving things. They were getting into crawl spaces. They were pounding on the walls. And guys had to, you know, clear rooms out and move stuff around. We'll figure all that out.

At the end of the day, I'm not sure anybody's going to be able to say what box that was in, where it came from. I guess I would ask, though--those documents help me. They support what I have been saying. Why on earth would I not want them out? I would have published them in the paper if I'd known. You remember, a month ago people were saying, "Those documents--they must have been destroyed." Well, I've been saying the same thing about them for four years.

ZAHN: But now you have Senator Faircloth saying this could be a very serious case of obstruction of justice.

Mrs. CLINTON: Well...

ZAHN: Is that a possibility, based on what you know?

Mrs. CLINTON: Absolutely not. But don't forget, there have been so many accusations made against us, it's hard to keep track of them. I mean, I've been accused of, I guess, nearly everything, although I'm sure there'll be some new accusations. So we will continue to cooperate. We will do everything we can.

But let's remember, again, where this started. We were originally accused of

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having had a sweetheart land deal. We said we lost money. We couldn't prove it because we didn't have all the documents. It was not something we had planned. In retrospect, if we could have been as farsighted to have imagined all of this, maybe we could have done something differently. But when the questions arose in 1992, we said, "We lost money. We were passive investors."

Four years later, after spending \$4 million, an independent study says, "They were telling the truth." Then the accusations shifted. "Well, if we can't get them on that, maybe they took money from this savings and loan. Maybe it was secretly channeled to the president's campaigns." We said, "Absolutely did not happen." People said, "Prove it." We said, "Well, how do we prove a negative? How do we prove to you we did not take money?" Four years later, after subpoena power and being able to look at records, again, what we said was true. And this will be the same way.

SMITH: The question people ask, though, j--if we want to go all the way to the rub of the Whitewater issue--is, McDougal comes to you, says, "We got a great land deal. We can make some money. It doesn't cost you a dime. You don't have to put any money down; don't even have to offer up any collateral." Somebody comes to you--you're--you're the first lady of Arkansas. The governor is sit--sitting in--in the governor's mansion. If you can make money with no risk, which most Americans never really get a chance to do, didn't some radar go off, didn't some--something go off in you that said, "This is too good to be true?" And, "What might I owe this guy if it pays off?"

Mrs. CLINTON: Well, Harry, let me tell you what happened instead of what you've characterized as having happened. This happened before the president was governor. This was a land deal that we had 100 percent risk on...

SMITH: Mm.

Mrs. CLINTON: ...because we signed the loan papers. So we were 100 percent liable--we and our partners; they as a couple, we as a couple couple but also we as individuals. We kept putting up money every time we were asked. That's how we ended up losing more than \$40,000. So it was not a sweetheart deal. We were on the papers. The bank looked to us to make good if there was any default. We had to, over the years, put in money every time our partners asked, even though we were passive investors. And at the end of the day, we lost money.

Now--so it's something that I know has been characterized differently than that, but those are not the facts. And the facts are as I have just said them and as an independent study--not what partisan people charge when they're trying to make these accusations, but an independent study led by a former Republican US attorney has said, "Look, they were passive investors and they lost money." And we paid--we have paid every debt we've ever had. And so I take debts very seriously. I would have felt totally responsible for that if it had not been paid off.

ZAHN: Can we talk about the conclusions drawn from this independent \$3.6 million study that was done? Representative Jim Leach says that's not the conclusion that can be drawn by this report; that it doesn't exonerate you and

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the president; and it is clear that this—this investigation was done before they had access to all these legal records that are surfacing now. How can the two of you come up with such different interpretations of—of what this study says?

Mrs. CLINTON: Well, he is the Republican head of another one of the committees that has made many charges against us over the years, including the charge that we took money, which was absolutely untrue, from the savings and loan. It's—this is why this is a political issue. It is not a legal issue. And it doesn't have, in my view, a lot to do with the way it's being portrayed. It is, at bottom, a partisan issue. It started during the presidential campaign in '92; it will continue through the presidential campaign in '96.

And all I can say is that I don't think most Americans have had a chance to even look at that report because the Republicans sat on it for so long. The president had to publicly call on them to release it. The way it is explained to me, the way it seems to be read, is that what we said was true; we were passive investors. We lost money and we did not take money from the savings and loan. The only new thing are these billing records, which has very little, if anything, to do with these other sets of charges.

SMITH: We have to take a break. It's 17 minutes after the hour. Stay with us. We have lots more ahead with Hillary Rodham Clinton. Stay right there.

(Commercial break)

SMITH: It's an education revolution. See what makes some schools work. Monday on CBS THIS MORNING.

ZAHN: And we're back at just about 20 minutes after the hour. And we are just getting started in our special hour with first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. Welcome back.

Mrs. CLINTON: Thank you.

ZAHN: I wanted to move on to the controversy surrounding Travelgate.

Mrs. CLINTON: Mm-hmm.

ZAHN: You had a White House aide, David Watkins, testifying under oath that while he did the firing, he did so under pressure from you directed through Vince Foster and Harry Thomason. Did he perjure himself?

Mrs. CLINTON: Oh, of course not. I mean, the way that I understood his testimony is that I expressed concern, which I have said many times, about reports of financial mismanagement in the travel office.

ZAHN: Who did you get those reports from first? Was it from Harry Thomason? Was he the first person...

Mrs. CLINTON: No.

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ZAHN: ...to mention them to you?

Mrs. CLINTON: No. I think it was from Vince Foster. I believe that's how that happened. And I said, 'My goodness, what's going on?' And they said, 'Well, we're going to investigate.' So they started an investigation. My whole involvement in this consisted of a couple of conversations with Vince Foster and Mack McLarty and one conversation with David Watkins. And I did express concern, and I was very concerned that anybody would think there was financial mismanagement connected with the White House, even though it predated the president being inaugurated.

ZAHN: There was no tax money involved. There were very, very few complaints involved in this. People had the FBI sicced on them—Billy Dale. And it cost him a—\$500,000 to—to defend himself.

Mrs. CLINTON: Now, Harry, there's no doubt there was financial mismanagement. There is...

SMITH: Well, it—there—some say it was bad book—bookkeeping.

Mrs. CLINTON: There is no doubt there was financial irregularities. That was proven by an accounting firm...

SMITH: Mm-hmm, Pear Marwick.

Mrs. CLINTON: ...independent of the White House.

SMITH: Right.

Mrs. CLINTON: There were—there was petty cash left lying around. Cash ended up in the personal account of one of the workers. Now that may not seem like something to people who spend lots of money, but coming from Arkansas, that sounded serious. And so from my perspective, it was something worthy of being concerned about. Even if it was just the press' money, that money belongs to people and it should be handled appropriately if it is in any way connected with the White House.

So I was concerned, but as I have said from the very beginning, it was not my decision; I did not say or do anything that indicated what should be done. And I believe people acted as they thought best once they had the information. So it's—you know, it's one of these situations where I find it a little bit surprising that...

SMITH: In 10 seconds.

Mrs. CLINTON: ...proven financial mismanagement is something that other people would not be concerned about. And I just don't share that view.

ZAHN: It's 23 minutes after the hour. We're going to shake—take a short break here and continue in our next hour with Hillary Rodham Clinton.

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(Commercial break)

SMITH: So we're spending the second hour of the broadcast with Hillary Rodham Clinton this morning. And, Mrs. Clinton, you know—you've done this before. Some places of the country this is covered by local news. Some really lucky people get to see this part. It's a little less—little less formal. I said the question I was going to ask you today that everybody wants to know the answer to is: What do you think inner-league play? But I'll let you—I'll let you...

Mrs. CLINTON: I've got to—what is inner-league play?

ZAHN: You don't have to answer it. Don't worry. Don't worry.

SMITH: That's the—that's the National League...

Mrs. CLINTON: That's the only thing...

SMITH: That's the National League playing American League teams in baseball. So as a Chicagoan...

Mrs. CLINTON: Oh, inter-league play. Oh.

SMITH: Yeah. So as a Chicagoan, you would get to see the Cubs and the White Sox play.

Mrs. CLINTON: Good. OK.

SMITH: We have one person right here, real, real quick...

Mrs. CLINTON: Oh, OK.

SMITH: ...who just wants to say something.

Unidentified Woman #1: I just want to tell you I think you're a great role model for women, and I wish you a lot of success. I think your job is tough enough. And I support you tremendously...

Mrs. CLINTON: Thank you.

Woman #1: ...in your work.

Mrs. CLINTON: Thanks.

ZAHN: You should—you should clone her and take her on the road with you. Got another question for you here.

Unidentified Woman #2: I'd also like to say, first, that as a law student, you are an inspiration to see you in—in that sort of position. But what I'm wondering is if you think that the intense scrutiny that you're being subjected to right now—is it at all indicative of the fact that Washington is still uncomfortable with a woman holding such a visible and influential role

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in the White House?

Mrs. CLINTON: Oh, I don't know. That may be some of it. But I think this has more to do with politics and the way our politics has become so personal and partisan. And clearly, the fact that I got out front on health care and--and advocated trying to do something about our insurance system did cause some controversy. But I really think that what's going now is--is mostly because of the political season we happen to be in.

ZAHN: Well, I'll tell you, earlier this morning Bob Beckel accused sexism for--for inflicting all this pain on you. And he actually said at one point that you threatened Fred Barnes' manhood, and that's why the Republicans were reacting the way they were to all of these controversies.

SMITH: Let me--let me ask you a question with regard to that.

Mrs. CLINTON: Amazing.

SMITH: If you had health care to do over again...

Mrs. CLINTON: Mm-hmm.

SMITH: ...would you have done it differently?

Mrs. CLINTON: Oh, you know, I think about that all the time, Harry, because I'm giving the proceeds from this book to children's hospitals, because I just can't bear the--the way some children don't get the health care they need. But I think there are many things I could have done differently and many things that perhaps would have been presented better. But I also believe that it is the most controversial subject in our political life. You know, if you look at Harry Truman, it just was very hard for him and it's hard for anybody who tries to approach it. So, yes, I know I made mistakes and I know there are better ways I could have done things. And if I were to do it over again, I would try to present it better. I don't know if we'd have a different outcome, but I certainly would try.

ZAHN: All right. Got another question for you.

Unidentified Man: Do you think with Elizabeth Dole as another professional woman, that the upcoming election--assuming that the opponent is Mr. Dole--will help this country understand that women have a much more varied and much more choice-filled position?

Mrs. CLINTON: I think it could, and I would welcome that because, you know, most women I know lead a life of many different parts. You know, just by being a woman, a--a wife, a mother, a worker, maybe a daughter taking care of older parents, maybe a volunteer who cares about her community--you--you just look at the range that women's lives are today. And I'd like all of us to recognize that.

SMITH: Twenty-nine minutes after the hour. Half-hour to go with Hillary Rodham Clinton. We'll be right back.

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HARRY SMITH, co-host:

We know Hillary Rodham Clinton as the first lady, a mom, a powerful political ally in her husband's campaign and the center of her share of controversies.

PAULA ZAHN, co-host:

Now we know her as an author. Her first book for children, "It Takes a Village," is in bookstores now. And we want to welcome back first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Mrs. HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON: Thank you. Thank you.

ZAHN: Before we get to the book, can I just ask you one more Travelgate question?

Mrs. CLINTON: Sure.

ZAHN: At the time that all of this was going on and you were made aware of financial irregularities i—in the travel office, it was quite clear that—that your good buddy, Harry Thomason, a Hollywood producer, was interested in getting a chunk of federal aviation business. Did he make his intent clear to you? Do you—did you have discussions about exactly what he was after and whether there was a quid pro quo for doing all this work at—during the convention and—and during the election for you?

Mrs. CLINTON: No. I—I don't know at all what these allegations are based on. And I've asked people, and they've told me that that was not what was going on. It was nothing that I knew about at the time or was involved in at the time. You know, I spent most of the last of March and beginning of April with my father, who was dying in Little Rock, and then he died. And when I got back to Washington after the funeral in about the second week of April, I was very far behind on health-care work, because we were supposed to have been done by May 1st. And so just between dealing with my own personal feelings about what I had been through and my family, that's what was on my mind. And I—I—literally, as I've told you, I had a few conversations about this I think about m—sometime in mid-May, and that was—that was it. That's what I knew about it and that's what I know about it today, except for what I've read.

ZAHN: So Harry—so Harry never sat down and said, "This is what I'm after. Can you help me do this?"

Mrs. CLINTON: Absolutely not. Absolutely not.

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ZAHN: All right. We got a question for you now about your book. Please stand up. Oh, sorry. We didn't mean to trip you there with all those bags.

Unidentified Woman #1: Well, I'm interested in your book, the research process and what your conclusions and recommendations are for the children of this country.

Mrs. CLINTON: Thank you for asking that. I really appreciate it. I will go on answering questions about other matters, but I r—I can only hope that the Whitewater questions don't totally overwhelm what I think we ought to be talking about concerning our children. And the idea behind this book is that each of us has more responsibility for our children and their being raised than I think we're exercising now, and that starts with parents, but it does not end there. There are things each of us can do, whether it is mentoring or tutoring a child, or trying to shield children from what I consider to be the destructive impact of the media or from employers being more sensitive to the needs of working parents, especially single working parents.

There is a role for the government, but it is not the most important role in the raising of our children. If you look at, as I try to do in this book, every other institution, starting with the family but including religious institutions, our schools, our day-care centers, our businesses, everything, I believe we need to say, "What is best for our children?" I don't think we spend enough time with our children. I don't think we give them the love and the attention and the discipline they need. And then we have particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged children who we are neglecting and will pay dearly because of what they will grow up being able to do to us. So I have a number of recommendations that any one of us could do, starting today, to try to do more for our own children.

SMITH: Let's talk about those disadvantaged children for a couple of seconds, because we live in an age now where there's these huge trends to take government out of a lot of different kinds of businesses. Distill your basic philosophy for me, for a second, about what government role you think should be played, especially in the—in the lives of disa—disadvantaged kids.

Mrs. CLINTON: I think government has to remain a social safety net for the poor, and the vulnerable, those who do need help taking care of themselves or need some temporary help, being able to get over a rough spot. I believe that government should be a partner with other institutions in trying to create better atmospheres for children. I think it's wholly appropriate, for example, for the government to require broadcasters to do something about the broadcasting of children's programming. I think it's entirely appropriate for the government to support public broadcasting for children. And there are many instances, but the role of government has become the whipping boy, and it takes the rest of us off the hook. More families will be affected by downsizing of American corporations that is going on right now and the insecurity that breeds in families than many government programs. So I think that we need to say, "Each one of us has a responsibility." And the government is the helper of last resort, but it starts with us.

SMITH: Twenty-two minutes before the hour. We'll be right back with Hillary

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Rodham Clinton and questions from our audience, so stay right there.

(Commercial break)

ZAHN: And we are back at 20 minutes before the hour. And we have much more to discuss with Hillary Rodham Clinton and our audience. Fire away.

Unidentified Woman #2: I was just wondering how you were handling this intense criticism--scrutiny--personally and as far as Chelsea's concerned.

Mrs. CLINTON: Thanks for being concerned about that, particularly Chelsea. You know, I--I write in the book in a chapter called The Best Tool You Can Give Your Child is a Shovel about how I think trying to prepare our children for what life does is one of the biggest responsibilities parents have. And I got the title because my father used to look at me and say, 'Well, how are you going to dig yourself out of this one?' And so I carried around, like, these little mental shovels, and now, you know, it's backhoes and bulldozers and lots bigger equipment.

But, you know, when Chelsea was about six--and I tell this story--Bill and I really thought that she would start to be able to read and--and hear things about his being in political life and that we had to prepare her that denial is not always the right thing to do, because children have antenna that, I think, stick up and pick up nearly everything. So starting around the dinner table, we would say, 'Chelsea, your daddy's running for re-election, and in politics, sometimes people say mean things about each other.' And I remember her eyes just getting really wide, like, 'Why would they do that?' And I said, 'Well, that's just part of what happens.'

So we actually did little mock debates where she pretended to be her daddy and I'd say, 'Well, OK. Mr. Clinton, why should you be re-elected?' And she'd say, 'I'd try to help people,' and, you know, sit down back in her chair. And then her father would pretend to be an opponent and say terrible things like, 'Bill Clinton's mean,' and all that.

So over the years--the last 10 years, we've tried to keep her involved in this. And up until this week, you know, we'd talk to her. And, you know, usually it's me going in and saying, you know, 'Well, do you have any questions about what they're saying about your dad?' And now it's my husband going in and saying, 'Do you have any questions about what they're saying about your mom?' Yeah.

ZAHN: What i--what is your sense of reality? Because--do you read all this stuff that's written about you?

Mrs. CLINTON: No.

ZAHN: Do you read the op-ed pieces? Does someone clip them out and...

Mrs. CLINTON: No.

ZAHN: ...force-feed them to you so you can have a really bad day?

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Mrs. CLINTON: No, I—you know, that's another great lesson my mother taught me, which I'd put in that chapter as well. I don't know how old I was, but she said, you know, 'You have a choice in your life. You can be an actor on your own behalf and make your own life what you want it to be as best as possible, or you could constantly react to what other people think of you and other people say.' Now I have tried to follow that advice. Some days are better than other days. But I cannot possibly keep up with all the stuff people say about me. And frankly, a lot of it strikes me as being a—about a fictional Hillary, because some of what's said is too good to be true and some of it is just so terrible that it's also equally unbelievable. And so I just have to keep my own moorings and try to do what I believe is right. And I have a lot of faith in myself and my husband, and particularly in the American people, that it'll all come out OK, but...

SMITH: A lot of people with a lot of questions. Go ahead.

Mrs. CLINTON: Yeah.

Unidentified Woman #3: I was—I admire you very much. And I was just wondering if you would consider the presidency in another, oh, you know, several years.

Mrs. CLINTON: In another lifetime.

SMITH: Go ahead.

Unidentified Man #1: Mrs. Clinton, as the father of five children, including four daughters, I—I think you're an excellent role model. But there's been a lot of criticism of the press and the Senate a—about being so mean to you. But don't you think, as two for one, and you being so out front, do you—what is your opinion of the criticism?

Mrs. CLINTON: I think that's fair. I think that—I—I know that earlier there was an expert on the role of first ladies who was talking about what happens. I think that every person in this position does get criticized for something, at least that's been the experience. But many of the women who've been here before, with the exception of a few, have really been behind the scenes. I think history has shown that they were very interested and cared about a lot of things, but they did it behind the scenes.

I came to the White House with a very different experience. You know, I was used to being in meetings with people who were my peers and colleagues. And if I were to say, 'I'm concerned about something,' have it taken as that, not magnified into something bigger than that. So it has taken me some time to get used to the role and its expectations. And I do think that I bear some of the responsibility for maybe not quite understanding, you know, how I would be perceived and doing better—not to change myself but to communicate better.

SMITH: Hillary Rodham Clinton. Sixteen before the hour. We'll be right back.

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(Commercial break)

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ZAHN: Boy, he sounds great. Thirteen minutes before the hour. That gives us just a few more minutes with the first lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, so let's quickly get a question for her.

Unidentified Man #2: In spite of the recent controversy, do you think you'll change your role as first lady when President Clinton gets re-elected?

Mrs. CLINTON: Well...

ZAHN: Whoa! Making some assumptions here this morning.

Mrs. CLINTON: Well, I hope that's what happens. And I'm going to continue doing what I've tried to do. I think much of what I've tried to do, whether it's health care or working on adoption and foster care or education issues or writing this book about ideas that I've seen work around the country to help our children, is all part of what I said I wanted to do when my husband ran. I said I wanted to be a voice for children. I don't think children's issues are soft issues. I think they're the hardest issues we face, and that's what I'm going to keep working on and, hopefully, can make a contribution.

SMITH: Here we go.

Unidentified Woman #4: Good morning, Mrs. Clinton.

Mrs. CLINTON: Good morning.

Woman #4: It's pretty clear from some of your comments that the health-care debate is near and dear to your heart. If the president is re-elected again in November, will you be--will you be revitalizing that debate? What are your plans?

Mrs. CLINTON: Well, I think the president has said that he would like to try to make at least some of the changes he tried last time, like insurance coverage. He really believes that insurance should be portable, people should not be written out of insurance if they have a precondition--a pre-existing condition. And so those kinds of things I think we ought to try to move on. Now my dream is I would like to see every American have insurance, and I hope someday we'll see that, because right now, we're seeing more and more without.

ZAHN: OK.

Unidentified Woman #5: Mrs. Clinton, as an artist and musician myself, I'm very concerned about all the cutbacks in the arts. And I'm wondering: If we have another four years of Clinton administration, how will the arts be addressed?

Mrs. CLINTON: Well, we will continue to do everything we can to promote the

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arts. I've tried to do that with a sculpture garden at the White House and the crafts collection for the White House, which is on exhibit here in New York. And—and we will also support the National Endowment for the Arts, because I think it's very important. The arts speak to us; they tell us who we are. And I think that, as a nation, we need that today because we're going through such a changing time.

SMITH: Question.

Unidentified Woman #6: Mrs. Clinton, we represent the Shriners Hospitals for Children, and we wanted to say thank you for your support and applaud you for what you're doing. I—if the health care is something that you're going to be looking at in the future, we offer our assistance in any way that we can and w—and welcome any questions that you might have and we can help you.

Mrs. CLINTON: You know, I'm so grateful to the Shriners because I've been to the hospitals in several parts of the country. You take every child and you don't take any pay. And it just really makes me feel so good because of your dedication. And the proceeds from this book are all going to children's hospitals, because I wish that every child could get the care that they get when they go to one of your hospitals; and that's what I'm going to try to work for.

ZAHN: We're going to try to squeeze in a couple more questions here.

Unidentified Woman #7: Living in the public spotlight like you do, I was just wondering how many times you thought of packing it all up and moving to a remote island.

Mrs. CLINTON: Well, you know, I said the other day maybe the South Pole was looking more and more attractive. That does cross my mind from time to time, but it doesn't stay long, because I really—I really think what my husband's doing is important. And right now, this budget battle that he's engaged in tells us very clearly what the priorities of the other side is and what they would do if they were totally in control, as compared to what my husband believes we ought to be doing as a nation to support our community and take care of each other. So I—I feel like the hits that we take are minor compared to what goes on in so many people's lives today. And I think there are so many people who need to know that they have a president who understands that it's not easy out there. And so when I think about that, then I don't think about packing my bags.

SMITH: The name of the book is "It Takes a Village." As always, we thank you so much for coming here.

Mrs. CLINTON: Thank you. It's gone by too fast. Thank you very much.

ZAHN: Well, it was a lot of fun.

SMITH: All right. We hope you'll come back again sometime. Thank you very, very much.

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Mrs. CLINTON: Thank you.

SMITH: Hillary Rodham Clinton.

ZAHN: Thank you for your time.

Mrs. CLINTON: Thank you. Thank you very much.