

REUTERS 04-02-92 10:36 AET
THE REUTER TRANSCRIPT REPORT
NBC'S TODAY SHOW INTERVIEW

Guest: Hillary Clinton, the wife of Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton

April 2, 1992

KATHERINE COURIC: And we're very pleased to have
PRESS RETURN TO CONTINUE OR ENTER ANOTHER REQUEST.

Hillary Clinton here this morning. Good morning Ms. Clinton.

HILLARY CLINTON: Good morning.

COURIC: As we just heard, your husband says he does envision you having a high level role, area of responsibility if he's elected.

What kind of role do you envision for yourself?

HILLARY CLINTON: Well, I'm not interested in any kind of paid position, or cabinet position, or anything formal, or official. What I would like to do is work on the issues that I've been involved in for more than 20 years. Primarily children and families issues, and public education. And the model, I guess I have is what I've tried to do in Arkansas.

My husband asked me to chair two commissions; one on health care access, and one on public education. And I worked with terrific people and we came up with recommendations and drafted legislation. Then I worked on behalf of the passage and then the implementation. That's what I would like to do.

COURIC: He said he would consider you for a cabinet position.

HILLARY CLINTON: Well, I'm proud of him and he's proud of me. And I think that was a very flattering thing to

say, but I don't think that was realistic and you know--

He was trying, I think to convey the level of commitment we both feel to the kind of issues that got us into this campaign and that I'm going to try to work on.

COURIC: Even if you choose to take a role that's a non-paying role--one that you just described to me--do you think the American people are ready for a first lady who is that involved at a policy making level, in the White House?

HILLARY CLINTON: Well, I hope so. Because I think what I represent is generational change. It's not just about me and I think that the kind of opportunities that women are coming into their own in this country are really so broad and deep that we should all be willing to take responsibility and to do what we can to further the causes we believe in.

And what I find, traveling around the country is that there are some people who are concerned because it seems a little bit different from the traditional sense. But what I like about all of the women who have been in the position of being with the president in the White House is that they've all tried to do what was best for themselves, for their families, for the country as they defined it. And that's what I would try to do, and I feel very strongly about these issues and I would feel negligent if I didn't try to make something happen for the better of the people that I think need it.

COURIC: As we just heard, some people say some not so flattering things about you. They say you are the power behind the thrown, overly ambitious. What's your reaction to comments such as those?

HILLARY CLINTON: Well, I regret them because I think they come out of a sense of stereotypes about women's roles. You know, a woman that does have opinions and who expresses them is somehow still off base. I hope that's not the case, because you know, there are many, many women in this country who are doing a terrific job fulfilling all of their various responsibilities and they also think about the issues that effect them and their families.

Any one who knows my husband and knows me, knows that we've been having this conversation about what should be done in this country for more then 20 years. He's the one who's elected. He's the one who has to make the final decision, but I care about what he does and I care about what happens. And I want to participate.

COURIC: Do you think those kinds of reactions, Ms. Clinton are the result of good old fashioned sexism?

HILLARY CLINTON: Oh, I think there's some of that. Because I think it is different. You know, this country is undergoing tremendous change and certainly what is happened in women's lives over the last generation has been a seat change. And all of us, we're trying to find our way.

Those who are full time mothers and homemakers, those who are full time career, and those who are the majority of us, trying to balance both. And I think that we're all trying to come to grips with it.

COURIC: You certainly did, however touch more than a few nerves out on the campaign trail with the now infamous line, "I suppose I could have stayed home and baked cookies and had teas." I know you have since said that was not meant as a slight to homemakers or women who choose to stay home and work. But it did sound like a put down.

HILLARY CLINTON: You know, I'm really sorry about that because the only person I was trying to put down was Jerry Brown. I wasn't trying to put anybody else down.

COURIC: Do you regret having said that?

HILLARY CLINTON: I regret having had it taken out of context and misconstrued. Because what I was trying to say is that in response to some of the charges that he had leveled, there was an underlying message to what he had said. In fact, in response to a question about his father's law firm doing business with the state when he was governor, he said, "Well, I don't control my father." And you know that wasn't very subtle and I was trying to point out that his attitude seemed to be that I should have only confined myself to the ceremonial role of a first lady. And I've enjoyed that role, but I've also enjoyed, very much doing the rest of my life. So I regret that anybody would have thought I was putting any other woman down. Women need to have some sense of solidarity to respect the choices that each of us make and then try to put into effect policies that would support those choices.

COURIC: But you probably wish you hadn't said it in the first place?

HILLARY CLINTON: Well, what I had said before and what I's said after had all been part of the sound bite. But I'm learning that that's not always what you could expect.

COURIC: In fact, in a recent article in The Washington Post, you're quoted as saying, "I'm a little confused about what the rules are." What did you mean by that, exactly?

HILLARY CLINTON: Well, you know we are charting new terrain. And I think that any of us, who is trying to make sense out of our lives has all kinds of different feelings. I mean my friends who are full time in the work world, often regret not having a family. My friends who are full time at home get that tinge of anger when somebody says, "Well what do you do?". And then, many of us who are trying at different stages of our lives to balance both roles are afflicted by guilt, and insecurity, and anxiety about all the things we're trying to do.

And I'm really hoping that because of maybe my being out there--and I'd never have thought of this as really any kind of effect of this campaign--the conversation that needs to go on in this country about what women are trying to do with their lives and how difficult we make it in America for women to make those choices.

You know, we don't respect full time homemakers. We don't give the kind of support. We don't provide the kind of income support families need so that more women could make that

choice if they chose to do so. We don't respect the sacrifices and difficulties of women in the work force. We don't have family leave like many of the countries we compete with. We just need to take a deep breath and say, "Look, women are trying in many respects to hold down two full time jobs. And we're not making it easy for them to do. And they need to have more support and respect for that." So I hope that maybe some of what I'm going through will get that conversation going and get it resolved.

COURIC: You're learning a lot, undoubtedly.

HILLARY CLINTON: Oh, I'm learning a whole lot.

COURIC: Let's talk about your husband for a minute. He is the front runner. Yet at the same time, there remain lingering question in the minds of some Americans about his character and his trustworthiness. Why do you think that's so?

HILLARY CLINTON: Well, I think it's in part because he burst on the national scene. People didn't know him. He's not from a big state with a lot of media attention, so that they could have gotten to have some sense of him over time. The charges and accusations that have been hurled at him have certainly been extraordinary and relentless.

But in the region of the country where he is well known, he's done very well. And certainly in our state, which is a small state, where he's been elected five time, people have had lot's of opportunities to judge his character. And people can disagree with my husband, as they do at home, but until this campaign, no one had ever raised questions about his honesty, or his integrity, or his character.

COURIC: Why do you think that hasn't translated nationally though?

HILLARY CLINTON: Well, I think it is. If you look at what happened on Super Tuesday, if you look at what happened in Michigan and Illinois, as people get to know my husband, as they see what kind of a man he is, as they watch what he believes in and what he's committed to, they do become comfortable. It just is a constant process, because each primary election is a new electorate. You have to reintroduce yourself. You have to get to know them. And the time is so compressed. I mean, we'll only be in New York in an intense way for two weeks.

COURIC: We're almost out of time but in closing, what have the two of you learned about presidential politics?

HILLARY CLINTON: Well, we've learned both positive and negative lessons, I suppose. On the positive side; we've learned a lot about how people in this country want change. And that's what they talk to us about. They give us their suggestions.

The negative side; we've learned how hard it is to talk about what really will matter the day after the election, and instead to avoid getting diverted and have the process kind of twisted around so that at the end of the day, people are still saying, "Oh gosh, what's going to happen to my job?" or "How am I going to educate my children?" or "provide

health care?" The struggle to try to get the country focused on what will make a difference to our long term growth and to provide opportunity and bring this country together again. It is hard to do, but we're intent on trying to do it.

END OF INTERVIEW