

Todd Purdum
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The White House
Office of the Press Secretary

April 29, 1996

NOT FOR RELEASE

Interview by Todd Purdum of the New York Times

HRC: ...to view a marriage where two people are trying their best to help each other fulfill their potential is suspect. And secondly, I guess, it was a clear a signal to me that President Nixon, whom I have always considered quite a shrewd strategist, was scared to death of Bill Clinton. It had far more to do with concerns about Bill's political acumen than it did about me. So I view a lot of the attacks and the criticism that is leveled at me as coming from those two sources that are unrelated, really, to who I am or anything that I've ever done.

Purdum: One to the stereotype and one to the...

HRC: Right. To the fact that any effort to undermine him is going to include an effort to undermine those around him. I mean, when we were in the Acropolis in Greece, a trip that you should have made...

Purdum: I heard it was really...

HRC: ...the archeologist was walking around and he was talking to me about, you know, the Agora, this is where our jury system started, this is, you know, where the senate met, on and on. And then he stopped and looked at me and said, "Mrs. Clinton, go back and read Pericles. You read about Pericles you know that there is a historic tendency to try to undermine the family and associates of successful political leaders." And then he went on talking about something else.

Purdum: Just a little aside.

HRC: Ya, just as a little aside. Now, I'm not in any way excusing any of the mistakes I've personally made, which I have, you know, talked about, and said, that obviously I've learned from. But I don't think it is just about me, and just about my style, and just about my doing healthcare. I think that it is also because the kind of issues that this president took on engender intense opposition. And the opponents, unlike when he took on teacher testing in Arkansas, have seen it as part of their opposition to try to undermine him personally, and everybody who has been associated with him, including me because I stepped out there and worked on behalf of those issues. I think it's complicated. I don't think there's an easy answer and

I don't think that there's a way of saying, you know, "success or failure" really that applies to me. I'm much more concerned about how people view this president and what he's done. And, you know, I think that by any fair measure he's had a rather successful first three years.

Purdum: (inaudible)...Kennedy Center guests are arriving precipitously early.

HRC: But I really didn't want to talk about me. I mean, really, I'd much rather talk about him and what he's done and everything.

Purdum: And I mean you make the point, I think you make the point quite well that, you know, that's what's at stake.

HRC: Ya, and that's what's important.

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