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INTERVIEW OF THE FIRST LADY
BY
DOREEN CARVAJAL, THE NEW YORK TIMES

Q (Inaudible)

MRS. CLINTON: I have worked on children's issues for more than 25 years. And certainly since I've been here in the White House I've tried to be a voice for children -- on health care, foster care, education, the issues that I've been involved in for a long time. But it's become increasingly clear to me that much of what we are learning about how children develop is not being used to the extent it could, both in individual homes, and when children's policies are made, whether it's at a school or a workplace (inaudible) government.

And Simon and Schuster had done the wonderful book about my mother-in-law, and they came to me, I think, around the first of the year, as I recall, and asked if I would have any interest in doing a book. And I thought about it, and I thought, you know, that might be just what I need to do -- to try to put into words why I care about these issues and why I don't think that they are just soft women's issues to worry about children, but that they are the real core of what everybody should be concerned about.

So I kind of took a deep breath and said, yes, I do; I want to write a book about children. And that's where it started.

Q I read the Post story today about the book. Did you read that Post story --

MRS. CLINTON: Um-huh, Um-huh.

Q -- so I wonder if we could just address that. I mean, what are the questions that you're raising; who actually wrote the book?

MRS. CLINTON: I actually wrote the book.

Q And I think I've seen references to -- you wrote a longer --

MRS. CLINTON: Yes. I would like to tell you that I am computer literate, because I thought I was. I had been able to work on much simpler word processing computers in the past. But I've never been really good at it. So when I undertook this endeavor, I ended up doing it in longhand, and then having it typed, and then editing it, and going back and forth with it. But I had a lot of help. I had both the help of the people Simon and Schuster hired, plus friends and others who were willing to take their time to come and criticize the drafts.

Q (inaudible) -- at some of the other publishing houses is there was a ghost writer who was eventually let go. Can you address that issue? Was there a ghost writer?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, we put out a press release about that --

Q Yes, I --

MRS. CLINTON: -- which we should get for you, because I'm not familiar with all of the details, and the press release was done in conjunction with Simon and Schuster. But they hired someone.

Q This was Barbara --

MRS. CLINTON: Barbara Fineman (ph.) -- who did help me in the beginning to get organized, to do research. She conducted interviews with me that were transcribed that she was able to organize for me. She drafted some connecting paragraphs to connect what was in the transcripts. And what I concluded was that I needed a lot of help to know how to write a book, but that I had to write my own book, because I want to stand by every word. I wanted the process, too, of having to think through these things. You know, I've worked on these issues for so long, but to put into words what I feel about them, what I think is important, nobody could do that for me. They could critique what I had written, but they could not speak for me.

So I had the help of Barbara. I had another researcher who was hired. I had a typist. I had a terrific editor, Becky Salitan (ph.). And I had some friends who were willing to help out. But I wrote the book, and I take all responsibility for it.

Q So she wasn't let go or anything like that.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, no. Her contract is with Simon and Schuster. And I acknowledge in the press

release my appreciation for the help and hard work she gave me and am very grateful to everybody who helped.

You know, then the issue was raised, well, what about the acknowledgements, because I didn't mention anybody by name --

Q -- saw that.

MRS. CLINTON: And there were two problems. I was trying to keep a running list while I was writing this book about everybody I needed to thank. And it just grew to be enormous, because I felt a debt of gratitude. I was working upstairs on the third floor of the White House, and I'd worked from very early in the morning to very late at night on most days when I was here.

Q At what time would you be working? Early in the morning --

MRS. CLINTON: Well, many days I would start at six or seven, and I would -- you know, I would have my breakfast brought up there and eat it off a tray. I'd be up very late at night -- sometimes I'd -- you know, if my husband and daughter weren't home, because during a lot of the early writing of it, Chelsea was at camp. And so I had -- I had a lot of help from people who wouldn't ordinarily be acknowledged in a book. Everybody kind of chipped in and helped out. When we went on vacation to Wyoming, Barbara came with me, because we really trying hard to get it done if we could by its original deadline.

Q And that was October --

MRS. CLINTON: Well, the original deadline was Labor Day.

Q Oh, Okay.

MRS. CLINTON: But I had never written a book before. I didn't know what my own personal standards would be for the writing of the book. But I know that I missed a lot of good times with my family because I was inside the house while they were out hiking and having fun. And I even took my legal pad for the chapter I was writing with me when we went to camp out that night. So it was a constant presence in my life.

And I concluded that it was just going to take me more time and told Simon and Schuster that. And they were very understanding. And they kept putting back the deadline, trying to -- and still get it into the stores by Christmas. But, you know, I really wanted it to be what I wanted it to be. And so for me it wasn't a question of when it came out so much as that it said what I wanted it to say.

The other thing about the acknowledgement, I was going to tell you -- so I went on and on about everybody I wanted to acknowledge, and I just -- I had this horror of leaving anybody out. And I knew that the people who had helped me would know they helped me. And I also learned something about publishing, which my editor explained to me, that, you know, books come in certain prescribed lengths. And I was push -- if you look at the book --

Q You were over or under?

MRS. CLINTON: I was over.

Q By how much over?

MRS. CLINTON: I was up at the edge. Well, if you look at the book, you can see that it's unusual that you've got the dedication and the aphorism to start the book on the -- you know, right across from there. And then the acknowledgements are right here, which is also kind of odd. Because what I was told is that if I tried to list everybody and do it the way that I would feel comfortable with, you could not get it on one page. And what would happen, as I was explaining -- you probably know more about; I found it interesting.

Q No footnotes either, too.

MRS. CLINTON: No -- well, and I -- and an index. I just didn't have time to do an index. Is that you don't publish books the way that I would do a term paper. This sounds naive to people who know about all this. You don't just add another page. You go from something like 320 to 336. So then you'd have all these blank pages and it would be more expensive to produce and it would be fatter and bigger.

Q Did you like writing? I mean, do you feel like you would want to write another book or was it more --

MRS. CLINTON: I thought it was the hardest work I've ever undertaken alone. But I really am glad I did it, and I would look forward to writing another book, because I learned so much about what I already cared about. You know, I laughingly said to a friend the other day that it's one of the most important things I've ever done in my life.

Q Why do you consider it one of the most important things?

MRS. CLINTON: Because it was a labor of love. I care deeply about these issues. And I have tried the best I knew how to talk about them and work on them for

all these years. And now in one place I have a lot of the information and questions that I think are important to me about children.

My big problem was cutting it down. There was so much that I wished I could say, so much that had to be edited out because I kept wanting to add yet one more example. And I'm -- and I'm hoping that the book will help people think about the children in their own lives, as well as all of our children, in some different ways.

So it was a -- I mean, at the time it was really hard work. And there were moments that I despaired about being able ever to get it done. I suffered writer's remorse every time I signed off on a chapter when the editor would say, we will never get this done unless you let go of this today; no more changes. I'd let it go and then I'd immediately get a pain in the pit of my stomach. And the people I've talked to who are experienced in this told me that that's pretty much par for the course.

So I just went through all of that hard work and anguish that goes with kind of taking things you care about and putting them down on the page.

Q In your book there are lots of anecdotes about your own family life. It was really interesting for me to read. And one of the things you mentioned were things that your parents taught you about negotiating sharp edges. So I guess this is a good time to ask you about this.

You noted that your father would often say to you, Hillary, how are you dig yourself out of this one? So given some of the headlines recently about the Whitewater documents, Safire's column about the "congenital liar," the President's defense of you, is this book in a way becoming your shovel through the 1996 campaign?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, it might be one of the small shovels. But I think the big shovels have to do with continuing to answer questions, provide information, be as cooperative as I can, point out as often as I can that what I have said for more than four years is continually validated by outside evidence. And that eventually we will get through this.

So if my father were around, he would probably say, well, you know, just keep going; don't get discouraged; do what you think is right, and it will all work out in the end. And I happen to believe that.

Q A new poll by the New York Times and CBS shows that your favorability ratings have dropped 12 percent -- or 12 points -- in the last couple weeks. And

when they try to figure out why people are having more unfavorable views, it's tied to Whitewater (inaudible). Given that, why is it that in the last year, you just haven't been more open about Whitewater, just to dispel the whole issue?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I regret that people that form their opinions based on charges and allegations. But we have tried to be as open and responsive as possible to the proper authorities, which is what we thought our primary obligation was, so that we have turned over, you know, I think it's now 50,000 pages of documents. We've answered every question from the FDIC, the RTC, the Special Counsel, the Senate Committee, the House Committee. Everyone who has a legal role in this inquiry, we have been as eager as they are to get this thing over with. And we'll continue to do so.

Q You know, I asked my mother about how she viewed you, just to get a sense of what, you know, just regular people are thinking reading the newspapers. (inaudible) to her was this whole instance of the documents being found, you know, months and months after searching somewhere in the White House. And that sort of symbolism resonated with her like why did it take so long to find (inaudible); why did these suddenly show up? And the White --

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I can understand that. And I wish I knew the answer to those questions. The only explanation that's been given to me is that people who have been searching for documents over the last three years have done the best they can under very pressing conditions because they're doing it for so many different groups that are asking for them.

And I would say to your mother, as I would say to anyone, we have cooperated fully. We have turned over every document that comes to our attention. But there are literally millions of pages in this White House. People have had to go through them over and over again.

Q But you can understand how then people can get a perception that something's -- people are holding back?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, you see, that's the problem is that as soon as that was discovered, it was turned over. Nobody is holding back anything. Do I wish it had been discovered earlier? Of course, because you'll remember that a few months ago your mother would have been reading that I had probably destroyed a document or we had concealed a document, which I was very concerned about, because it's absolutely not true. So for this document to come forward now, I don't know where it's been. It does not surprise me that with all the boxes and files of documents that something might be discovered later than

the time it had been asked for. But to me the important thing is, it was immediately turned over, and it supports what I have been saying for four years. So it would be in my interest to have gotten that document out two years ago.

I mean, every time everything gets out, we are better off. I mean, we said four years ago Whitewater was a failed real estate transaction that we got into. Four years later, an independent law firm, on behalf of the RTC, spends \$4 million -- has access to every document, things we've never seen, and concludes -- you know what? The Clintons were telling the truth.

So the next line of inquiry is, well, yes, they were in business with a man who later bought an S&L, so they probably got money funneled to them. We said absolutely not true. We weren't investors or borrowers. We didn't have a savings account there. Now, four years later, what we said then is found to be true.

Now, our problem is that people who tune in and out of this, they can't possibly keep up with this. When the RTC report comes out that verifies what we have been saying, nobody holds a press conference and waves it in front of the television so that people can see it. They don't even release it publicly.

So, you see, the problem we have is that everything we've said has eventually been verified. And all of it eventually will. But trying to get it all pieced together so that the American public can make sense out of it is a big job.

Q But would it help if you testified publicly before Congress and then just did away with the issue that way?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I have said I will cooperate in any way that I'm asked to.

Q And that includes testifying before Congress?

MRS. CLINTON: I will do whatever is required of me. Nobody wants this over with more than I do.

Q But would testifying get rid of it quickly? I mean, what's the best way to deal with it?

MRS. CLINTON: I wish I knew, because if the ground didn't keep shifting and the questions didn't keep changing, I might be able to answer you. But I'm now being attacked by some for answering questions I was asked instead of questions I should have anticipated. I don't know how to be more forthcoming than we have in an

environment in which there are some who unfortunately are running investigations in search of a scandal.

Q But if Congress asks you to testify, you will testify --

MRS. CLINTON: I will cooperate.

Q And that means --

MRS. CLINTON: I will cooperate.

Q And that means --

MRS. CLINTON: I will cooperate.

Q Is that the same thing?

MRS. CLINTON: I want to say that what I've said for four years -- I will cooperate.

Q In your book, you also offer suggestions about raising children. And some of them were very basic and common sense, like just spending more time with your children. So as I was reading the book and was wondering how you did it. I mean, you were writing a book; you were traveling the world; you were an adviser to your husband -- how did you spend more time with your daughter? And were there every times that she said to you, Mom, I want to spend more time with you?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, that's such a rare question from a teenager --

Q (Laughter) -- sorry.

MRS. CLINTON: It did not happen. But we've always had a lot of time together. One thing that did happen during the course of writing the book is that I wasn't out and around very much. I was not as publicly visible because I was so intent upon writing the book. But our private time together, although I might have missed some times, like I could have used a few more hikes in Wyoming, for example, we were able to keep that going. I'm just grateful whenever my daughter and her friends want to spend any time with me.

So we always make it if that what she wants. Oftentimes I'd be up in this little third floor room where I was writing, and she'd come bursting in the door after school to tell me about something; and she'd sit and we'd talk, and then we'd go our separate ways and get together for dinner. And that's pretty much --

MRS. CLINTON: I think you mentioned that in your book, too -- dinnertime is the time when you actually get together.

MRS. CLINTON: We try to. Now, that doesn't happen every day, but one of the reasons that I moved in a little table into what was basically a butler's pantry was so that we could have time together as a family and not be just eating dinner at the formal table and feeling like we were on eggshells with each other. So that's where we do spend time together.

And, you know, we're very lucky that we enjoy that time. And so -- I think, though, the seeds of it were planted years ago. It's not something we just started doing. And that, I supposed is one of my hopes is that families will follow the example of so many of the families that I followed who built in time with their children as part of their routines going back to the time they were --

Q But I would think you would have the most difficult time of all with all the things that you're doing. I mean, you've had so many roles.

MRS. CLINTON: But you know what? Any time you set priorities, you have to give up some things. And when I given up, and I've said this before, I've given up time with friends; I've given up social time. You know, I don't get out much in Washington to go to dinner parties. And there are a lot of interesting people here I would like to know better. But if it's a choice between spending time with my daughter and my husband and not, then at least until she goes to college, I'm going to choose to spend that time with her.

Q You also mentioned in your book that you don't like to use the term juggle anymore because you can drop something. And you use the word "quilt" for a metaphor of how to put things together. You know, what sort of lessons would offer to people about how to put that quilt together of your life so that you are able to manage all these various roles.

MRS. CLINTON: That's an idea that I got from Mary Katherine Bates* in this book, "Composing A Life." And I once in her presence -- she's a friend of mine -- used a phrase "juggling," and he just looked at me and said, "You know, that's a very unfortunate choice of words that women use because what our real challenge is how to integrate all of our different roles and responsibilities."

And for me, I think once you have a child, that is your most important obligation. And that everything you do has to be seen through the prism of that child's needs. And I've tried to remember that. Now, have I always practiced what I preached? No. And I've had to pull myself up short.

But my husband and I have tried, for example, to avoid being gone at the same time so that one of us was there. When she was little and I would go on business trips, I would leave a video for her, I would leave a story, I would leave a puzzle for her to solve where I'd hide little presents for her so that she would always know I was there for her.

And when I'm home, I try to be home. I really try to avoid having my time as a mother interrupted by social and public events. And I also try as hard as I can to schedule my time in advance.

Q Give me an example of what you mean.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I try to sit down with her calendar from school and anything else that is important -- we have a talk about that -- so that when I'm sitting with the people who schedule -- this is in the White House, not earlier -- I will be able to be there for the Parent-Teacher Night, I will be able to be there for the ballet rehearsal, I will be there for those things that are important to her. In fact, for the book tour, I'd originally been scheduled to go somewhere in early February, and I learned that it was going to be the first meeting of the Junior Class about college admissions. And I immediately called and said, "You know, I have to be there." That is really important to her, and I want to be part of that with her.

So, you know, that's not always worked. I mean, one time, when she was really little, I was trying a lawsuit in north Arkansas, and it was supposed to be for just a day. And I got up there and it went on and on, and I eventually had to borrow clothes from people because I was going to be there three nights instead of one. And I missed a ballet recital. And that just killed me because I thought I had my life scheduled so that I wouldn't. But she knew that I had made every other effort to be there for everything. Even things that were little and insignificant by anybody's objective measure. So although she wasn't happy, it worked out.

But children have to know, as I say in my book, that somebody is crazy about them, that there is somebody in the world, and, hopefully, at least two somebodies, who will put them first. And that's what I've tried to do and what my husband has certainly tried to do.

Q You talk about hopefully two somebodies. That's another issue that you raised in your book about the importance of staying married. And you point out that your mother-in-law had gone through divorce and she was in an abusive relationship. But do you really expect people to stay in a marriage even if they're miserable for the sake of a child?

MRS. CLINTON: I expect there are instances in which marriages are irrevocably broken because of abuse, because of other behaviors that are unacceptable. But most marriages go out with a whimper, not a bang. And there are many ways that people can work to strengthen their marriages if they believe it is important. But if the adults only look to their own interests -- whether they're not feeling happy, or they think there's greener grass somewhere else -- they may not work very hard.

But if we look honestly at the evidence that has accumulated about the effects of divorce on children, that should cause all of us to pause and work harder at overcoming the inevitable disappointments that occur in any marriage. I mean, it is not easy to be married. I don't think it ever has been. But I would like to see us erring on the side of encouraging people to take that extra step to work out their problems than to throw their hands up and say they'll be happier despite what it meant due to their children.

Q To the point of having -- or making it more difficult to get a divorce institutionally?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think we have to look at that.

Q And what would be an example --

MRS. CLINTON: I refer in the book to what I call "breaking mechanisms." I don't think divorce should be prohibited for people with children or turned into a sham where people have to accuse each other of things in order to get a divorce. That's what I'm advocating.

But I do think when people consider divorce when children are involved, it should take longer, there should be some required education and counseling. And people should have to face starkly the potential consequences to their children of their decision to divorce.

If they go forward with the divorce, then I would like to see, again, education and counseling so that adults do everything they can to stifle their own feelings of either relief at getting out of a relationship that was not satisfying to them, or anger at being left so that they can cooperate for the best interests of their children.

And there are techniques that people can learn, they can be taught. There are mediation techniques that people could utilize instead of running back and forth to court, instead of using the children as pawns because of visitation or support which I just think is dreadful in

what it does to a child's sense of worth.

Q I want to shift the focus a little bit. Over the years, the one theme in your life has been -- at least from a difference, watching from the outside -- that you are constantly shifting roles. I mean, -- (inaudible) -- occupations. What sort of sacrifices have you had to make because you've been constantly changing these roles? I mean, for instance, shifting from being a lawyer to becoming like a political advisor to your husband here. What are the sacrifices that you've had to make?

MRS. CLINTON: You know, I think that all of us play a lot of different roles in the course of a day, let alone a lifetime. So there are trade-offs all the time. Roads not taken, adventures on roads taken that you could never have predicted. And that's how I feel about my life.

I have really enjoyed everything I've done because it has fulfilled some interest of my own. And the continuing theme of concern about children, women's issues has kind of pervaded my various roles, no matter where I've been or what I've done.

But I'm sure that had I never married Bill Clinton, had he never gotten into politics, had I never left Children's Defense Fund to go to teach law, or left that to practice law different choices would have been presented. And I cannot even imagine where that would have led. Because the way I think about my life is to make the best possible decision I can make at the time and then live that out. And so, for me, I'm just grateful I've had so many opportunities.'

Q Wasn't there a time, though, when you were living in Arkansas where you even had to give up certain things, like when you were working at the law firm in Arkansas and you had to give up a share of money related to state contracts with the law firm. I mean, were there other sacrifices like that?

MRS. CLINTON: But I thought that was the right thing to do. So I didn't -- I mean, it was a financial sacrifice, certainly. But I didn't see it as a personal sacrifice, I guess. But I just think that's part of living. I don't know anybody who gets 100 percent of what they think they want and sometimes when they get even 90, they wonder why they wanted it.

So I look back and I think, you know, I'm sure there are things that I didn't do that I could have done had the sequence of decisions in my life been differently. But this is the life I am living. And part of the way I was raised, as I talk about in the book, was to be grateful for what I had and to make the most out of every day and to try to deal with whatever problem would be

thrown in my way. And so that's how I see what I do today.

Q In your book you also talked about how you, in times of trial, you would think about what you were grateful for or count your blessings. Is this time right now with all the headlines a time of trial for you? And if so, what gives you comfort?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, of course it's a time of challenge because it's not pleasant to see yourself caricaturized and called names on a daily basis by people. But I guess I've gotten a little bit accustomed to that because it apparently goes with the political territory these years.

Q -- Safire called you a liar. What was your reaction to it? I mean, we've all heard what the President thought about that. What was your reaction to it and what was your reaction to the President's comments about it?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, he said it with a smile. I thought it was very well done. I guess I don't take Mr. Safire seriously. You know, I was on the staff of the committee that impeached Richard Nixon. Mr. Safire worked for Mr. Nixon. And the best I can tell, he still is working for Mr. Nixon. I do believe that the person who was most offended was my mother because calling someone congenital anything suggests that my mother and my late father were somehow at fault.

Q Well, what did your mother say?

MRS. CLINTON: It's not printable. So that kind of -- I don't expect any different. What I do hope is that enough of what is true will eventually get sifted out by the American people who are fundamentally fair, and they will see all this for what it is, and we will be able to work on issues like children's health or education or the environment that will make a difference, not tomorrow, but next year and the year after next.

Q What do you think the image of you is with the American public as opposed to what you personally feel your image is? In particular when you see these comments -- (inaudible) -- Safire saying it. I've also noticed -- several people have mentioned this -- that women tend to hold you in a different view than men do, that people react to you differently based on gender.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think if I were out there looking at all this, I would be confused. I wouldn't know what to believe. And I think that's part of the purpose of it. You know, if you blow enough smoke, people are going to think there's some fire there. And I

think that's part of what's going on.

Also, I mean, I'd be the first to admit that I was not very knowledgeable about the ways of Washington or the expectations regarding this role. And I'm sure that if I were transported back in time I would make a different assessment of some of this and try to avoid some of the self-inflicted problems that have occurred. So I take responsibility for some of the confusion that is out there.

But I also believe that no matter how much we clear up the confusion, whether it's the RTC report or the billing records which support what I've been saying, there is an agenda for such confusion, especially in a presidential election year. So my hope is that the smoke will clear and enough people will see this and see us for what we are and what we are trying to do.

Q So what would you say, how would you define yourself, your image, who is Hillary Clinton as opposed to the public perception right now?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, you know, I would probably say that I'm not that different from a lot of women who are my contemporaries as well as those older and younger, that we all play different roles, we have different obligations during our day, that if someone were to take a snapshot of my life at 8:00 in the morning and at noon and at 4:00 p.m. and at 8:00 p.m. over the course of a month, they would have many different pictures.

And I know that it is difficult for the press, who has a hard job conveying the complexity of anybody's life. And I think it's made a little more difficult when it comes to women because there still is such a tendency to stereotype women. And I write about that in the book about the either/or.

Q Do you think you have been stereotyped?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I think that all of us who are American women at the end of the 20th century who are trying to make the decisions that are best for our own lives, who don't fall into neat categories, who are trying to compose a life, have not yet been adequately described to ourselves, let alone to each other. And many of the stereotypes about what is or isn't appropriate women's behavior, you know, is this constant overlay about who we are.

I know that when I do things that I personally enjoy doing, like getting ready for and hosting a state dinner, some people who have only seen me testifying before Congress say, wait a minute, she can't do both. That doesn't fit the stereotype. She's got to be either a hostess who likes to dress up and get her hair done

differently or she's got to be a woman who's out there advocating on behalf of health care.

But I say, those are both who I am. Just as most of my friends who get their children up to get breakfast and go to school, and then leave the house to go to work, and then may go to a committee meeting on behalf of a public issue they care about, and then may host a dinner for their friends are also living as integrated a life as they possibly can.

Q But how does that perception of yourself being just like most other women -- (inaudible) -- how you think the public perceives you right now? How are you perceived right now? And how do you -- do you want to change the perception?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I don't know because I think a lot of who I am and what I care about has been distorted. And it is difficult for people to get a fair picture. I read things written about myself and don't recognize who I am, and say, you know, I wouldn't like her either, based on what was just said.

So I understand that when people get their information about a public figure and when it's been as confusing, ranging from the most extreme negative criticism to the most adulatory positive acclaim that it has to leave people a little bewildered about who is this person and how do I understand her.

Q That's why I'm asking how you tell someone who you are. How do you get that across?

MRS. CLINTON: I say I am a woman in this era of American history. I am a wife and mother and daughter. I am a friend. I am a Christian. I am an advocate on behalf of causes I care deeply about. I am a lawyer by training. I have been a teacher. I am someone who likes to have fun with her friends and --

Q Is it true you say artichoke --

MRS. CLINTON: Okey-dokey artichoke. Yes. That's one of --

Q You really do?

MRS. CLINTON: That's one of the secrets we've tried to keep from you.

Q All right. It's out. Headlines tomorrow.

MRS. CLINTON: You know, I'm a mediocre athlete who wishes I were better.

Q Apparently a bad singer from --

MRS. CLINTON: I am a terrible singer who want to sing anyway. I am a devotee of old movies and good books. You know, all these things.

Q Your favorite movie?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, it's such a cliché, but "Casablanca."

Q Oh, that's mine, too.

MRS. CLINTON: I must have seen that, you know, dozens of times. And the other night was so funny, we were -- gosh, I don't remember, Tuesday or Wednesday of this week -- and the President was just worn out. He'd been working really hard on the budget. And we had dinner, and he said, let's just play some games, do something different to get our minds vacated. So we played these games and then we had a big disagreement because Chelsea and I wanted to watch "Casablanca" again because she's never seen it all the way through, and he wanted to watch basketball. So we compromised with the basketball on, but the sound off.

Q Wait, where was "Casablanca" in this?

MRS. CLINTON: "Casablanca" didn't get into this. That's my point. We acceded to the wishes of our president.

So, you know, I'm all these things. And I guess that's part of what I find bewildering about this because some people have a very controlled image. They let you see what they want, and it works for them. I congratulate them. I'm all over the map because I have a life that is filled with different experiences and challenges all the time -- many of them just private and personal, and some of them, because of politics or public policy issues --

Q Well, it must be hard for you because you even get questioned about the way you look from day to day. I mean, the way your hair changes or whatever.

MRS. CLINTON: You know, as challenging as this week was, the biggest surprise of the whole week, and one for which I am amazingly grateful, was being named to Mr. Blackwell's Best Dressed List. (Laughter.)

Q That gave you comfort? That was one of the blessings that you --

MRS. CLINTON: No. It was just -- you know, in the midst of all this other stuff, it just came like a bolt out of the blue. I just could not get over it. I

had such fun with that.

Q One last question since I know you're trying to --you want me to wrap up. How does the book fit into this getting across to the American public who you are, you know, a less stereotyped view? You know, how does that fit into that?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, you know, along with all the challenges and obstacles that come to any woman in this position, there's also this great opportunity to talk about matters that are of interest to me. An the book will give me the opportunity to travel around the country, talking with groups of people who share my conviction that the real conversation that we ought to be having in this country is what is best for our children and how do we get beyond partisan politics and ideology to do what we all can do, starting in our families, to make America a better environment for raising children.

Q But at the same time, doesn't that also help you with the campaign going into '96? I mean, surely it would help.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, for those people who agree with me it might. But there will be many, as there are on anything, that will disagree with what I've said in the book.

Q What effect did this have on the '96 campaign that you're out on the road promoting a book about children, you know, an issue that obviously a lot of people will -- who's going to oppose it?

MRS. CLINTON: I've already been opposed by people who disagree with things that I've said. I've even already had criticism

(changed tapes)

I hope make their decisions about the '96 campaign on the basis of what my husband has done and what he stands for. And this is my book, and I hope people on many matters, including the book, can separate out my husband and me and judge him and me as the individuals we are.

Q Thank you.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much.

END