

09/30/93
KING, LARRY
-- WEEKEND

Internal

NN "LARRY KING WEEKEND" INTERVIEW WITH:
HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1993

LARRY KING: What room are we in?

MRS. CLINTON: We're in the Vermeil Room. It's on the ground floor of the White House and, as you can see, we are surrounded by portraits of former First Ladies. It's one of my favorite rooms.

MR. KING: What does "vermeil" mean?

MRS. CLINTON: It means the kind of color and china and feeling that this room has. It's a French word.

MR. KING: Do you get the feel that this is your house?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes.

MR. KING: You do?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes.

MR. KING: So it's not like you're renting here?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, it is public housing, you know, and so we are the tenants, but it is someplace that overwhelms you. Every time you walk in it makes you feel so proud and humble, I guess, but it's also our home, and we've worked very hard to make it that way.

MR. KING: Nancy Reagan said to me the biggest surprise about this whole thing to her was that it wasn't Sacramento the press, the whole thing was just a whole different ballgame, and being the governor's wife was not preparation for it. True?

MRS. CLINTON: True. That's very true. And, you know, you can imagine if Mrs. Reagan didn't think it was preparation being in California, what I must have felt like coming from Arkansas, where we knew everybody and where we could, you know, lead our own lives. I could drive my own car. I could go to work. I could take my daughter shopping, we could go to a movie. And even if you think you have an idea what it's like because you've looked from afar and you've watched the president and his family, until you actually experience it, you don't really understand it.

MR. KING: And what don't you like about it?

MRS. CLINTON: I don't like feeling confined so that my movements are pretty much restricted, that I'm supposed to, you know, be driven places and I'm supposed to, you know, kind of have this protective security around me.

MR. KING: The security. We'll go down here, then we'll turn left, then you'll turn right. This is Mr. Morris.

MRS. CLINTON: Yeah.

MR. KING: Say hello.

MRS. CLINTON: I've tried to really limit that, and both the president and I have worked hard on that, so, you know, we do try to keep in touch with our friends, we try to go out with people. We try to have as normal a life as possible, but there is no denying that it's very different.

MR. KING: The Roosevelt kids, I got to know them all -- said it is a tough place to grow up for kids. This is not a kids' place. How's your daughter handling it?

MRS. CLINTON: She's doing pretty well, but it is not a kids' place, and you have to work very hard to make it a good environment for a child. So she has her friends over and lots of overnights, lots of people and girls, you know, going up and down the hallways and doing the funny things that kids do, and we've tried very hard, as you know, to keep her out of the public eye, to try to give her a chance to have a lifetime with us.

MR. KING: How do you do that, though, I mean, she has friends come over?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, she's had friends come over--lots of friends come over. She goes over to her friend's house.

MR. KING: But there are Secret Service guys outside the house. It ain't a normal pillow party.

MRS. CLINTON: No, it's not normal, but it's as normal as we can make it, and we're going to work very hard to keep it that way.

MR. KING: Now how do you balance -- I mean, look at this week you've had, and we'll talk about that. By the way, thanks for being the first guest on "Larry King Weekend."

MRS. CLINTON: I'm thrilled and honored to be the first guest. Thank you for asking me.

MR. KING: It's wonderful to have you. How do you balance lives? Of course you have different lives: husband, you have a husband, you have a daughter, you have house, you have a mother, you have a brother, you have family, you have First Lady stuff. How do you balance it?

MRS. CLINTON: You know, except for the last part, it's what every woman in America does now to balance all of the different responsibilities and you just have to be as careful as you can to know what you need to spend your time on and what's really important. I've never had any doubts that, you

know, my daughter and my family were the most important parts of my life, and I try to organize my time so that I always have time for her and for my husband, but you add on the First Lady part and it both gives you, in some ways, a little more time than you might if you were back at home like I used to be, because even when my husband was governor, I did a lot of things for myself. I did a lot of shopping, I did a lot of the kind of errand running that every mother does. I don't get to do that very much.

So in some funny way, I have a little more time than I might have had, because I'm kind of restricted from doing what I'd like to do, which is be as normal as possible, but then I have all these additional responsibilities that are on top of everything else that I do.

But I really believe and I've told lots of my friends this that most of the women I know are busy balancing all those different responsibilities.

MR. KING: What did you used to do that you can't do anymore that you miss the most?

MRS. CLINTON: Get in my car with my daughter, go to a store or go to a mall, and spend a couple hours wandering around having a good time, stopping and maybe having a cup of hot chocolate or a cookie and giggling, you know.

MR. KING: The First Lady of Arkansas could do that.

MRS. CLINTON: Yes.

MR. KING: She could go to the mall outside of Little Rock?

MRS. CLINTON: All the time. We went shopping all the time. No problem at all.

MR. KING: When was the last time you drove?

MRS. CLINTON: Mmm, good question. I don't think I have driven since I've been in Washington. I have my car up here, but--

MR. KING: Where is it parked?

MRS. CLINTON: It's parked on the grounds, but I mostly let friends use it who come to visit and need a car and--

MR. KING: But you like sitting behind the wheel of a car, you like driving?

MRS. CLINTON: Sure.

MR. KING: Is it impossible?

MRS. CLINTON: I mean, look, I mean, you get in the car, you turn on the radio -- well, you've been in a car recently. You know what it's like. I haven't. I can't remember it.

MR. KING: I can't drive a car.

MRS. CLINTON: (Laughs)

MR. KING: I drive down the street, it's a story.

MRS. CLINTON: I know the feeling, but can you imagine?

So, no, I just like to get, turn on the radio--I have a terrible voice, but sing along with the radio, listen to you or somebody else, yell at you on the radio, say, "Oh, that's not true," you know. Just be by yourself.

MR. KING: Well, your first car -- we were talking about a first car, mine was a '55--'53 Ford. Yours was a '63 Olds.

MRS. CLINTON: Right.

MR. KING: You were telling me you had to take the battery out?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, anybody listening to this will probably write and say, you know, this just shows you how crazy she is. My car had a personality, my first car, and I was in law school, and my car had a battery that did not like to be left in the car overnight. It would drain out if it were, especially in the New England cold.

MR. KING: So what did you have to do with it?

MRS. CLINTON: So I unhooked it every night and took it to my dorm room and kept it warm and then I put it back in the next morning. (Laughs) It made a very happy battery and a car that worked.

MR. KING: Did it have a name? I think we're losing it here, it's been a long week.

MRS. CLINTON: It did have a name, yes. I called my car Julius.

MR. KING: Julius?

MRS. CLINTON: Julius.

MR. KING: Did the battery have a name?

MRS. CLINTON: No, I did not name the battery. I think it was Eveready or something like that.

MR. KING: What's the car parked downstairs now?

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MRS. CLINTON: It's an Oldsmobile.

MR. KING: You stayed loyal.

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, I did. I stayed loyal.

MR. KING: New one?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, not new, no. It's six or seven years old now.

MR. KING: That's what you miss the most. What is the best part about this job?

MRS. CLINTON: The very best part is being part of doing what my husband's trying to do to help the country and change it. I find that--

MR. KING: You really feel that?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, with my entire being I feel that. You know, I spent a lot of time working on issues that I cared about, whether it was public education or children's health or children's welfare, and I just never understood why we as a country just couldn't get it together and solve some of these problems, because we were letting violence consume our kids, we were letting all kinds of things happen, and now I begin to see people starting to work together. And, of course, I think my husband's had a lot to do with that, kind of telling people, you know, "Take responsibility. Be hopeful, but be practical and let's move forward." And so I'm thrilled by that.

MR. KING: So activism is a part of you.

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, it is.

MR. KING: We'll come back with more of Hillary Clinton on the premiere edition of "Larry King Weekend." Don't go away.

(Announcements.)

We were talking--we mentioned briefly there was a story. I don't like to involve myself in every interview, in any interview, in fact, but I had an accident on a street in Washington. Nothing happened. A fender bender, both cars are done, fixed, it's over. It was front page. You read that story?

MRS. CLINTON: I did read that story, and I read it trying to figure out why is this in the newspaper? I couldn't get it.

MR. KING: And that's happened to you a lot, right? How do you -- all right, I could look back one day, it's kind of funny. How do you deal with it on a daily basis?

MRS. CLINTON: You just have to decide that you're not going to let it bother you, because otherwise you wake up every morning and by 7:00 a.m. you'd be all anxious because people would be writing things and saying things that you knew weren't true and you wouldn't know what to do about it.

MR. KING: So do you not read it?

MRS. CLINTON: I skim it, but I don't read it, and I try to make sure that if there's anything I need to know about, somebody tells me, in case I miss it. But, you know, there's just too much to do in life and there's too many exciting opportunities to worry about what somebody says or didn't say and then try to involve you in it, as you found out with that story. It was a non-story.

MR. KING: It's a non-story, but does the pain ever -- for example when people -- yesterday, I spoke to the AMA in convention, and they were all upset at a front-page story in "The New York Times" implying -- not implying, saying that they were being critical of your health plan, critical of you, and they wanted me -- all of them, the president of the AMA went, "Please assure her, please tell her, please, that story's wrong. We didn't boo Donna Shalala. We didn't -- we don't -- we agree in principle with most of the health plan. Okay, when you read "The New York Times," you didn't know they were going to say that. How did you feel.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I was lucky, because I had other newspapers which reported a very different story--

MR. KING: Of the same occurrence.

MRS. CLINTON: -- of the same occurrence, the same event. And I also have been working with these doctors in the AMA for a number of months now, and they've been very forthright, very helpful. We know where we agree, and we know where we disagree, and we're trying to work through our disagreements, so I thought it was kind of an odd story, but I made some phone calls. I found out exactly what you found out, which is that's not at all what they intended nor what they said, and they were sorry that it had happened.

MR. KING: I'll get back to health care. Back to criticism. Does any of it ever help you? Have you ever read any things and said, you know, there's a good point of view?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes.

You know what I've tried to decide to do and I don't always do it, but here's my motto, which is to try to take criticism seriously but not personally, so that if somebody has a message they're trying to get to you

and it's a different way of looking at the world and a different piece of information, take that seriously, but don't let it eat away at who you are, and undermine your sense of self or maybe even destroy a relationship with somebody because they say somebody said something and you don't go to the trouble to check it out.

So I try to take it seriously, but not personally.

MR. KING: All right. How about Hillary bashing?

MRS. CLINTON: (Laughs)

MR. KING: There are bashers, right?

MRS. CLINTON: I'm sure.

MR. KING: I mean, there are people around the country who daily take Hillary on, usually on the far right. How do you deal with that?

MRS. CLINTON: I ignore them. I really ignore them, because they're usually doing it for some kind of personal or political gain and they're not even attempting to stay within the bounds of truth or accuracy, and I'd much rather listen to people who are acting in good faith but honestly don't agree with something that I'm doing or the president's doing.

MR. KING: You've been a public woman for a long time. Do you ever get the total acceptance that you don't have a private life, excepting that?

MRS. CLINTON: I hope not, because I think without a private life you can't be a very effective public person. I think you turn into a shell.

You know, in a private life, you think about things, you talk with people in an honest and open way. You make mistakes and you learn from your mistakes. I don't see how you can be in public life and make a real contribution if you also don't have some space to be a private person, and I fight very hard for that.

MR. KING: When you assumed this job and took over -- we talked about activism before -- did you say to your husband, "Give me an area of responsibility," did you know it would be health care? Why you and health?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, that's a good question.

MR. KING: But you're healthy.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, thank goodness I am. I mean, you know --

MR. KING: Why health?

MRS. CLINTON: I think because it's an issue that my husband cares a great deal about. And when he was governor, he cared a great deal about

education and he asked me to work on education and we worked together. And then coming into the presidency, he knows that if we don't solve our health care problems, we're not going to be able to deal with a lot of our other problems in this country. And I think he decided that he would ask me to work on this the way he'd asked me to work on education.

Now, after it happened, about a day or two later, Governor Cuomo was here and I love him, and he came up to me and he said, "What'd you do, have a fight with your husband?" And I said, you know, it's not like that, it may be the way some people looked at it. Because it's a huge responsibility, but it was a real honor for me to be asked to work on this and I've really enjoyed it.

MR. KING: Did you know it would become as hard as it is?

MRS. CLINTON: I didn't really know what I was getting into when my husband asked me to do it. I knew it was important and I knew that it was something he cared deeply about, but the amount of time I've spent on it has, you know, really been quite extensive.

MR. KING: You could have fronted it, though, couldn't you. I mean, you could have had all these commissions out and check with you once a week. You didn't have to go to Minneapolis, you didn't have to do that?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, but I --

MR. KING: You could have fronted it. You could have been chairman pro tempore.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, that wouldn't have worked for me, because if we're going to make recommendations about health care, I want to know what I'm talking about and I want to be sure that it's the right thing for my family. I want to be able to answer my mother's questions when she calls me on the telephone and says, "I've heard this, what does this mean?" So that's why I felt very strongly that if I were going to do this, I had to really get into it 100 percent of the way?

MR. KING: How about taking the spotlight, though? There's a CNN poll I think that may have been out today that has you more popular than your husband, that this has been a heck of a week for you. How do you deal with that?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, of course I'm grateful if people think that what I'm trying to do is the right thing and helpful, you know.

MR. KING: The poll didn't say more popular, the poll thought you were smarter than your husband.

MRS. CLINTON: Well --

MR. KING: Every woman would dream of that, c'mon?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, but they don't know my husband, you know. My husband --

MR. KING: That upsets him?

MRS. CLINTON: No, not at all. Doesn't bother him at all. In fact, I think one of the secrets of his success is that he is the smartest person I have ever met and yet he is so friendly and open and such a good guy that people sometimes underestimate him, and that's not always bad in the business he's in, as we've seen in the last several years.

MR. KING: Does he ever close the door and go "mmmmmmhhh!"?

MRS. CLINTON: Sure, sure. You know, sometimes you've just got to let it out, whether it's on the golf course or listening to loud music or whatever it is. Yeah, we do a lot of that together.

MR. KING: A lot of fighting?

MRS. CLINTON: No.

MR. KING: No?

MRS. CLINTON: No.

MR. KING: How does Hillary let it out?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I like to exercise, I like to listen to music and like to listen to it loud and sing along. I really do let a lot out that way. I like to sleep and get caught up so that I maybe am a little better rested than I would be under stressful circumstances. We do a lot of different things, watch a lot of movies. We're big on movies.

MR. KING: Rental movies or --

MRS. CLINTON: Yeah, you know what, we've got a movie theater here in the White House and --

MR. KING: I know. You didn't know that?

MRS. CLINTON: I didn't know it until I got here, and it was a wonderful surprise to find a movie theater, you know.

MR. KING: You can call up the company and get the latest film, right?

MRS. CLINTON: Yeah, they send them to us and we are really lucky because we get to see movies all the time. Apparently every president has enjoyed that.

MR. KING: The last time I was with your husband he had just seen the Clint Eastwood movie and he loved it.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, yes. "Line of Fire" right?

MR. KING: Yeah. You've got one you like?

MRS. CLINTON: I just saw "Age of Innocence." which I loved. I thought it was --

MR. KING: Scorsese.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I loved it. I thought it was a wonderful movie. Beautifully, beautifully shot movie. As well as very contemporary even though set in a time past.

MR. KING: Is it different watching it here than in the theater?

MRS. CLINTON: Yeah, it is, but in the theater, you know, it's better than watching it on the small TV screen. You know it doesn't have the same feel as it does in a theater.

MR. KING: We'll have more with Hillary Clinton on this premiere edition of "Larry King Weekend" on CNN. Don't go away.

(Announcements.)

MR. KING: We're back with Hillary Clinton on this Saturday night premiere edition of "Larry King Weekend." What a week. You've never had a week like this?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes. Never, and I'm glad it's nearly over.

MR. KING: Do you like testifying?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, I did. I mean, I was nervous and anxious to do it as well as I could, but I liked it because I thought everybody was well prepared, they asked good tough questions they needed answers to. I was very impressed with the Congress.

MR. KING: Did that surprise you?

MRS. CLINTON: It didn't surprise me, because I've now spent lots of time up there.

MR. KING: You work the Hill, though?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I do, because there's a lot of good ideas and experience up there, but I think it might have surprised some of the public who have given the Congress a bad rap in, you know, the past few years, and I think seeing the seriousness that they brought to this issue, and the

Questions that they asked, I think should be very reassuring to the American public.

MR. KING: You've worked this issue a long time. Senator Dole has told us that you're a familiar figure on the Hill and you work with Republicans well.

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, I sure do.

MR. KING: Is this a concept you did in Arkansas, too?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, we didn't have many Republicans in Arkansas, but --

MR. KING: Have you ever testified before a House or a Senate committee?

MRS. CLINTON: I did, and I spoke once to the whole House on education. But you know I was raised in a Republican family. My father was a very strong Republican, except he thought my husband was a great American, but I'm very used to working with people from different points of view, because I think that makes a better policy to really listen to each other and not shut each other off.

MR. KING: But do you think now thought that what you've succeeded in doing is framing the issue so that Americans now regard health as a right?

MRS. CLINTON: I hope so. I hope we have framed it so that every American knows that the way they should judge what to do is whether at the end of it, they and their families never have to worry about health care coverage again, they will be secure and they will have a set of benefits they can count on them no matter who they are or where they work. I hope that's the way it's been framed.

MR. KING: Nowhere is it printed that it's a right, right? It's not a God-given right as we have to free speech, assembly. Health is -- and do you think, though, seriously as you look at yourself? You framed this.

MRS. CLINTON: I think it is. It underlies life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It underlies the modern complex society that is spending too much money for the health care that we have and not even taking care of everybody. So although it may not be listed anywhere as a right, it is a right, because without it, everything else this country's stands for and wants to do for and wants to do for itself and what every individual wants to do to be responsible is not possible.

MR. KING: And you're a pretty good student, you got pretty good grades, you read your history pretty good. This has been going on a long time. Harry Truman in 1948 introduced national health insurance. It was called socialist. It never came. Ted Kennedy has had proposals. Republicans have had proposals. Why now?

MRS. CLINTON: Because I think now most people understand that it's an issue that affects them, not somebody else. You know, when you have as many people as we do who are insured losing their insurance very month -- more than 2 million -- maybe they only lose it for a week, but maybe they lose it for a year. Then it's not a problem that happens out there somewhere, it's a problem that happens in every home. Every American knows somebody who has been shut out of the insurance market and denied coverage because of a preexisting condition, has been unable to move jobs because to move means they lose insurance, has been laid off and lost insurance when they thought they'd be employed forever. You can go down the list. So now it's a problem whose time for a solution has finally come.

MR. KING: Dr. Rheinhardt says one of the interesting things about health is -- at Princeton -- when you're vertical, you can say, hey, watch this, cut those costs, but when you're horizontal, give me everything. Right?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes.

MR. KING: So we all want everything. We're not ever going to be able to deliver all that.

MRS. CLINTON: No, but we can do a much better job than we do in providing health care in a less costly way at high quality. Let me just give you a quick example. The state of Pennsylvania's been collecting information about all kinds of operations. Let's take the coronary bypass, something that you know about.

MR. KING: Very well.

MRS. CLINTON: The coronary bypass surgery in Pennsylvania in a hospital can cost either \$21,000 or \$84,000 and everything in between, and when the state of Pennsylvania looked at all these hospitals, they decided, based on all the information they could get, that there's no better or worse quality that correlates with any cost. In fact, the \$21,000 operation had better quality than some of the more expensive surgeries.

MR. KING: So what was the price based on.

MRS. CLINTON: So, the price was based on what you can charge and get reimbursed for instead of what should this operation cost and what's a fair way of charging for it? And if we move toward a system where instead of paying doctors and hospitals by procedures and on individual kinds of diagnoses, we say, "Here's an amount of money to keep this population healthy." Now, go and make those decisions. We will have more coronary bypass operations being done for more people because they will be more affordable than they currently are.

So getting our costs under control goes hand in hand with providing better quality to more people.

MR. KING: Having been involved in the debate -- moderators debate once between Senator Humphrey and the president of the AMA at that time about Medicare, as it turned out, doctors got to like Medicare because it gave more medicine to people and gave more income to them. Do you think 20 years from today some two people will be sitting here saying, they argued about this thing?

MRS. CLINTON: That's exactly what I think will happen, Larry. You're absolutely right. I think that in 20 years we'll look back, and certainly our children will look back, and they'll say, "What was the argument about? How could anybody deny that we've covered everybody, made everybody secure, we have finally gotten a control on the costs, and we've got high quality." And that's what I hope will happen.

MR. KING: All right. What about losing patient-doctor relationships?

MRS. CLINTON: That's what's happening right now. You know, insurance companies are deciding who you can go see.

MR. KING: You get a book.

MRS. CLINTON: You get a book, and if you're not on the list, you don't get to go see that doctor. Doctors are being told what they can prescribe. They're being asked to call 800 numbers to ask permission to do certain procedures. The road we are on now will undermine even more doctor authority and their clinical judgment. What I want is to move more people toward the kind of way of delivering care that you find, for example, at the Mayo Clinic. The Mayo Clinic, multi-specialities -- fine institution, world renowned. Everybody knows it's high quality. They're able to deliver care at less than four percent increase this past year, and they do it by the doctors making a lot of the decisions.

MR. KING: We're going to break and come right back with Hillary Clinton. Don't go away.

(Announcements.)

MR. KING: We're back with Hillary Clinton who was just telling me at Mayo the doctors are on salary.

MRS. CLINTON: That's right.

MR. KING: Good salary --

MRS. CLINTON: Very good.

MR. KING: -- but not \$700,000 a year.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, and not one -- I don't know what their salaries are, but it's not based how many procedures they do, it's based on their providing high-quality care to all the patients who come to their doors.

MR. KING: Are you then saying that most doctors want to provide the best of care and that finance is not their driven force.

MRS. CLINTON: I absolutely believe that most doctors do. But doctors are human beings like the rest of us. If the way that you are going to be paid is having to deal with insurance companies and the Medicare and Medicaid programs and list every little thing you did, have a price attached to it, then you're more likely to worry about how many procedures you do, because that's how you're getting paid, and that's how you're satisfying all these people interfering with you, then what I hope will be the new way of doing medicine which is where doctors make the decisions and they decide how much each will get paid and they set those kinds of rules for the system. I will feel better about that because I will believe that doctors are finally able to do what they were trained to do and not turn themselves into insurance company representatives.

MR. KING: After the experience of this week on the Hill, what do you expect the battle to be like for this bill?

MRS. CLINTON: I think that there will be extremes on all sides. I think there will be people making outrageous claims, and disregarding whatever facts and evidence there are because they have a personal and political stake in doing so.

MR. KING: Left and right?

MRS. CLINTON: Left and right, but, unfortunately, more to the right because in order to keep the status quo, which is, let's be honest, making a lot of money for a lot of different types of folks, they will have to engage in lots of scare tactics to prevent people from getting the changes that they want.

But I really believe that most of what will happen will happen in what I call the reasonable middle in both the Democratic and the Republican parties, with a lot of doctor groups, hospital groups, others who are concerned sitting down and trying to figure out how to get where we all want to go. We now have an excellent proposal from the Senate Republicans that says, "Look, we want to get to universal coverage. Here's how we would do it. Here's what we agree with in terms of the president's plan, here's what we disagree with."

It's a very good place to start sitting down and talking and I think that's where most of the debate will be.

MR. KING: Senator Chafee, who has a bill of his own, says there will be a health bill passed by next June. He says it would take a month. Do you agree?

MRS. CLINTON: Absolutely agree.

MR. KING: It will be?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes.

MR. KING: Will a lot of the Chafee bill be in it?

MRS. CLINTON: A lot of it will be because Senator Chafee and I talked the other day that you know, on about 15 issues, we are very close and we need to clarify what our differences are and make sure that we can't get even closer. And then there are a couple of issues where we have some serious differences, but they are within the same universe. They're all trying to reach universal coverage. They're all trying to control costs. So I'm very confident that what Senator Chafee has said will come to pass.

MR. KING: Senator Dole has said that abortion could wind up out of this. It's in many plans, already, because it could be the drawback to getting the votes you need. Do you see arguing about abortion in the health plan?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I'm sure that some people will argue -- because it's such an emotional issue -- but what we're trying to do is to preserve what is available now. Most insurance plans within pregnancy related services offer abortion if it's medically necessary or appropriate as a decision between the doctor and the patient. We don't want to add or subtract to that basic offering that is available now, but we do want to see something else that we think is very important, and that is that part of the comprehensive benefits package have an increase in access to family planning. Let's try to prevent situations that might lead to an abortion. Let's try and get more women to make good decisions early by getting them to see their obstetrician or gynecologist or their primary care physician of another speciality so that they can perhaps begin to make good decisions that will prevent the situation from having to arise.

MR. KING: Is this more government? Is this a lot more government?

MRS. CLINTON: No.

MR. KING: Not a lot. Can government handle this well?

MRS. CLINTON: I believe so, because what we want government to do is to set up the framework to say what are the guaranteed benefits every American's entitled to, and then get out of the way. We want this to be a state-run program. We want local communities to decide what are the best health plans and for those health plans to compete for your business and mine. There does have to be some government. There's a lot of money that the government will put up -- they already are with Medicaid and Medicare, but we don't want it to be a government-run program, we want it to come out of the private sector. We want to preserve what works in the American health care system and then fix what's wrong.

MR. KING: You accept that kidney can be a disease and heart can be a disease. Do you accept, philosophically and practically that depression is a disease?

MRS. CLINTON: Absolutely.

MR. KING: Therefore, should people be entitled to their Prozac as they are entitled to their antibiotic.

MRS. CLINTON: We make a very, very important start in securing that by putting in mental health benefits in the guaranteed benefit package and by beginning to treat serious mental illnesses in the same way we treat serious physical illness and through a prescription drug benefit to provide for support for medications like Prozac just as you would for insulin or penicillin or some other medication.

MR. KING: So psychiatrists will be a big part of this?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, mental health will be a big part of it. Psychiatrists and psychologists, social workers, others who treat both the most serious clinical diseases and the kind of more mild forms that can interfere with peoples functioning and can have physical consequences.

MR. KING: How about the fringes? How about the chiropractors?

MRS. CLINTON: You know, right now what we want is what is in existence and most health plans, most insurance policies around the country cover chiropractic, cover podiatry, cover optometry, cover the other allied health professionals, and we anticipate that will continue.

MR. KING: Back with more of Hillary Clinton on our premiere edition of "Larry King Weekend."

(Announcements.)

MR. KING: We're back on "Larry King Weekend." See, I haven't said Larry King Live once.

MRS. CLINTON: You've been doing really well.

MR. KING: By the way you're going to come on Larry King Live.

MRS. CLINTON: Someday I am, absolutely. Absolutely.

MR. KING: And you're going to take phone calls.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I --

MR. KING: By the way, I know you're supposed to say Mrs. Clinton, but you did say, "call me Hillary". So I just don't want to offend anyone.

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MRS. CLINTON: No. Go right ahead. (Laughs) Offend somebody.

MR. KING: Thanks. Do you -- one thing on the battle on the hill, you said, okay, the extremists, mostly on the right are going to fight you, but the large center is going to be with you, means you're optimistic?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes.

MR. KING: There's going to be a bill, you're going to -- the extremists are going to be heard? Is it going to be a fight that you're going to be in a day-to-day involvement with? Are you going to be having Senators coming over here, meeting on the Hill, avoiding gridlock, doing all the kinds of things that executives do to get something through?

MRS. CLINTON: I'll do whatever my husband wants me to. I mean this is his plan and he's going to be doing -- supervising the way this goes through making the decisions, calling the shots on it but I hope I can be a part of it. I feel very strongly about that.

MR. KING: What's next? Let's say health care passes. You don't want to be the health care administrator?

MRS. CLINTON: (Laughs) Oh, no!

MR. KING: You've got Donna Shalala. You have others for that.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, very competent.

MR. KING: Let's take it to utopia here. A health care plan is in effect. It's June, it's 1994. Health care is in place. It's rolling. It's beginning to start. What now, asks Hillary?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, how about a slow trip to New Zealand or Australia or somewhere.

MR. KING: Not you.

MRS. CLINTON: I don't know. I think probably --

MR. KING: What interests you?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, children and children's needs interests me. That's what's really drives me on this health care issue. I want to be sure that we get welfare reform done. That's an issue that Secretary Shalala and the president -- well that will probably be out before we finish health care. The president's worked very hard on that with some very good help. I care very deeply about public education, which is something that I worked on for a long time in Arkansas, and I'm really committed to doing something about violence in this society. I just can't stand it anymore. I just cannot bear to pick up another newspaper and read about another baby shot.

MR. KING: What do you make of this?

MRS. CLINTON: I think that it's a sick, sick symptom that we are out of control at so many levels of our society. Adults are not watching out for and taking care of children, teenagers don't have adequate adult supervision and discipline and the right combination of love and attention. We don't have adequate policing on our streets in many of our communities. We have too many guns and too many assault weapons in the hands of irresponsible young people who have no business being anywhere near a gun. You can just go down the list.

And I think that it's going to take a concerted effort to break this cycle of violence and that violence has been bred by dependency, by drugs, by the kind of irresponsibility that we've allowed to go unchecked and also, I would add, by the media. I mean, I think there's a role that the media has played in glorifying violence, in giving too much credence to the kind of overly impulsive and aggressive solving of problems and really too much on TV that our children watch for too many hours that seems to suggest that violence is an answer.

MR. KING: Do you agree then with Senator Simon in his efforts to get the networks to change, he said the other day if they don't change then the government's going to have to do something to make them change?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I hope we don't get to that, but I think parents need to exercise more responsibility, you know? They need to turn off that television set.

And I know it's hard for a lot of parents who work, two-parent families, single-parent families, but we have got to save our children from being awash in violence.

MR. KING: What do you make of this city you now live in?

MRS. CLINTON: It breaks my heart. I mean, anyone who comes to Washington knows what a beautiful city it is. I think it's one of the premier cities in the world. But to think that here at the seat of our government, just blocks from where we sit, children are shot in drive-by shootings, people can't venture out of their houses and live behind 10 deadbolts on their doors. It's an outrage.

I mean, we have undermined the basic freedom and right to liberty of literally millions of people by refusing or failing to deal with the violence that stalks our cities.

MR. KING: From the way you seem and appear on this, it looks like that's going to be next.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I don't --

MR. KING: Hillary Clinton on violence, but this is a really hard.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, but, Larry, this is an issue that I think every mother and father and every citizen feels in their soul. We've just gone too far.

MR. KING: But you're going to have philosophical argument here, too. There's going to be a side that says put them all away and another side that says there's a reason for every crime ever committed and there's a fault somewhere.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, both are right. I mean, some should be put away and never let out. I mean, there is, unfortunately, some segment of our population that, for whatever combination of reasons are anti-social and are not fit to be among us, but there are other things we can do. We've seen some things that work. You know, if you start with young people to give them some sense of direction, you can see results. My husband is a big supporter of boot camp, where we take offenders at a young age and put them into the situation where they have discipline and structure and role models. We need more adults to just take on the responsibility of serving as role models. We need more men to work with the boys in our cities.

MR. KING: Violence also relates to health. How much of health care is Emergency Room Friday night?

MRS. CLINTON: You are absolutely right, and we've been trying to capsule that, and it is in the billions, both in terms of the gunshot wounds that come in and the lingering costs of having to take care of them.

MR. KING: So do you think you might center on something so that in 1995, Hillary Clinton might become identified with attacking violence in America?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, it's something I sure would consider, because I don't see how we can go on at the rate we're going. You know, murder is now the leading cause of death for some of our -- segment of our population young men between certain ages and that is just outrageous, and I don't know how much longer we are we going to live with this without putting our foot down collectively and saying, "Enough is enough"?

MR. KING: Back with more. And it's gone so fast. We're almost out of time, but we've got some more things to talk to Hillary Clinton about and we'll do that right after this.

(Announcements.)

MR. KING: We are in the First Lady's room kind of here. Jackie Kennedy is over there and Lady Byrd.

MRS. CLINTON: Right. We've got Pat Nixon and Eleanor Roosevelt.

MR. KING: Eleanor Roosevelt's over there and you've been most compared to her. First, is that a compliment?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, to me it's an honor. I don't know that I deserve it. I think she's one of the great women in American history.

MR. KING: Read a lot about her. Interviewed her once.

MRS. CLINTON: Did you really?

MR. KING: Yes, I did.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I'm jealous.

MR. KING: I was 23 years old.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, Larry.

MR. KING: Okay, here's what she said. And I'm going to ask you to comment, because I remember it very well. She always felt that Franklin, as she called him, deserved her opinion and had to hear it, whether she carried the day or not, when she disagreed he should hear it? Does Hillary Clinton feel the same?

MRS. CLINTON: I agree with that. I think that there are many things I don't have an opinion about that my husband deals with every day, but there are some things I have a strong opinion about, and if he asks me or if I feel very strongly about it, like most wives that I know, I will share it with him. That doesn't mean he always does what I believe or what my opinion is, but we have a wonderful relationship, going back to our days in law school, where we really like to talk with each other and over the years we've influenced each other so much by trading opinions and saying, "Well, why do you believe this?" and, "How did you get to that point of view?"

MR. KING: Eleanor went so far as to write a column --

MR. KING and MRS. CLINTON: "My Day."

MR. KING: Would Hillary write a column?

MRS. CLINTON: If anybody asked me to, I might. I don't know. I've never considered that. But I have read her columns.

MR. KING: She wrote a weekly column.

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, she did.

MR. KING: Sometimes disagreeing with the administration. Would you do that publicly?

MRS. CLINTON: I don't know. I'd have to think about that.

I think that it's highly unlikely in my case, given what my husband and I believe together that there would an occasion where I would do that. We really have so few disagreements. Now, sometimes we start off at one point and end up somewhere differently, but I would be reluctant to put into print my disagreements because our discussions are evolving and where I was one day may not be where I am the next day, because I learn a lot from him.

MR. KING: But you still might want to write about other things.

MRS. CLINTON: Someday.

MR. KING: What Hillary Clinton thinks. I mean, Eleanor Roosevelt felt that she was part of the structure.

MRS. CLINTON: She absolutely was.

MR. KING: Then we seem to go back into other ways of a First Lady. Do you think you have changed the pattern? Do you think we're going into Eleanorism?

MRS. CLINTON: Larry, I don't think there should be a pattern. I really think each individual ought to be free to do what she thinks is best for herself and her husband and her country. I have a lot of respect for all the men who've been in this position and I think every one of them has made a significant contribution, but they may have done it in a different way, and I don't think that everybody should be like Eleanor Roosevelt or everybody should be like me. Everybody should be permitted to be who they are.

MR. KING: So in other words, because Bess Truman wouldn't have chaired a health program doesn't mean she wasn't very important to Harry Truman and, therefore, important to us?

MRS. CLINTON: You know, if you read that wonderful Truman biography by McCullough or any of the other works about Truman, it is clear that Mrs. Truman had an enormous influence on her husband and, therefore, on the country. I've read that they often would spend most nights going over his work and he'd be asking her opinion, but she did not choose to display that publicly, that the way she felt most comfortable making a contribution was privately with her husband.

MR. KING: But to you that doesn't make her less of a First Lady, just different?

MRS. CLINTON: Absolutely not, and that's my whole point. I mean, it's not just about First Ladies, it's about women in general. We ought to be permitted to make the choices that are right for us.

MR. KING: Back with our remaining moments with Hillary Clinton on this premiere edition of "Larry King Weekend" right after this.

(Announcements.)

MR. KING: When two people have this public a life, and there is no more public an arena, what does it do to or for a marriage?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, it's been really positive for us, maybe because we actually get to spend more time with each other because he works --

MR. KING: Than when he was governor?

MRS. CLINTON: -- he works down the hall and comes home for dinner. I mean, really, when he was governor, he traveled a lot and he was gone a lot.

MR. KING: You work where you live.

MRS. CLINTON: We work where we live. We get to spend time with each other. I've really felt very positive about what it's done for us as a family. Now, maybe in some respects because there's so much public attention, you know, your family becomes even more important, and we value the time we spend together and we try to steal as much of that for ourselves as possible.

MR. KING: What are the Clinton's planning for Christmas?

MRS. CLINTON: We go crazy about Christmas. I mean, we decorate everything that doesn't move and we have a big family gathering and a big family meal and we'll probably spend our first Christmas here in the White House.

MR. KING: Looking forward to turning that light on the tree?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, I am, although I'm told I have to do it from a great big crane, you know a little tiny -- (laughs) --

MR. KING: And you're afraid of heights, right?

MRS. CLINTON: And that there's no heavy wind that day. Yeah, I love Christmas, so I couldn't be happier about turning on the lights.

MR. KING: And we couldn't be happier about our first guest.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you so much, Larry.

MR. KING: Hillary Clinton, First Lady of the United States.

Hope you enjoyed this. Thanks
for joining us. For the whole gang here at CNN, our whole crew, our