


1997

Saint or Sinner: The construction of the Hillary Rodham Clinton myth, 1992-1996

Susanna Montezemolo
Colby College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/seniorscholars>

 Part of the [American Politics Commons](#), [Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication Commons](#), [Mass Communication Commons](#), and the [Social Influence and Political Communication Commons](#)

Colby College theses are protected by copyright. They may be viewed or downloaded from this site for the purposes of research and scholarship. Reproduction or distribution for commercial purposes is prohibited without written permission of the author.

Recommended Citation

Montezemolo, Susanna, "Saint or Sinner: The construction of the Hillary Rodham Clinton myth, 1992-1996" (1997). *Senior Scholar Papers*. Paper 554.
<https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/seniorscholars/554>

This Senior Scholars Paper (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research at Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Scholar Papers by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Colby.

APPROVED:

Uz-L T. McAll.

TUTOR

Anthony Conado

READER ONE

[Signature]

READER TWO

Hanna Roisman

CHAIR, INDEPENDENT STUDIES COMMITTEE

SAINT OR SINNER

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON MYTH,
1992-1996

By

SUSANNA MONTEZEMOLO

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Senior Scholars' Program

COLBY COLLEGE
1997

**SAINT OR SINNER: THE CONSTRUCTION OF
THE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON MYTH, 1992-1996**
BY SUSANNA MONTEZEMOLO

In 1992, Hillary Rodham Clinton entered the political landscape as her husband's equal. The Clinton duo openly marketed itself as a partnership; both Clintons repeatedly stated that they were "two-for-the-price-of-one." At first, they were popular, and Mrs. Clinton was revered by feminists, liberals, and other Democratic base voters because she took on a powerful role in her marriage and the white house. However, a year into Bill Clinton's presidency, the political partnership that Bill and Hillary Clinton had so proudly promoted during the campaign became marred by controversy. Specifically, Mrs. Clinton was criticized for her supposedly over-powerful role in the White House and for formulating the failed health-care initiative that formed the foundation of her husband's first year in office. Mrs. Clinton also was assailed for her role in the Whitewater affair, the disastrous land deal that she and her husband had entered in the 1970s. Although Mrs. Clinton retained a loyal following, she also was hated by many who maintained that she had usurped her power.

The Hillary Rodham Clinton myth emerged from these animadversions and approbations. "Saint or Sinner?" asked *Newsweek's* cover on 15 January 1996. This title captures the mood of the country perfectly. Americans are divided in their opinion of their first lady. About half believe that Mrs. Clinton is like a saint, the modern American woman who tries to balance a powerful career with having a family. Others think of her as a sinner. They despise her and claim that she has misused her power and has become a co-president.

This paper examines the "saint or sinner" Hillary Rodham Clinton myth and its implications. I am not concerned with ascertaining the "truth" about Mrs. Clinton in the way that the truth is conventionally defined. In fact, such would be impossible, since very few Americans know HRC personally, and the media only provide an interpretation of the "truth." Rather, this paper is concerned with examining the meaning of the saint/sinner dichotomy in American society. It examines the development of the myth in the 1992 campaign, the failed health-care initiative, the Whitewater affair and other "Clinton scandals," and in the Clintons' marriage. It then turns to the Clinton campaign's failed attempt to break down that myth in the 1996 presidential campaign. Finally, it concludes by explaining the implications of the myth for American society.

My argument is that Mrs. Clinton has been vilified and revered not because of who she is personally, but because of the kind of woman she *represents*. Liberals believe that the first lady is like a saint not because she is perfect, but rather because she struggles to succeed in a world of power traditionally dominated by men. Similarly, conservatives do not think of HRC as a sinner because she is inherently evil; instead, they look to her as a woman who threatens the status quo of society and therefore threatens their place in America today. In short, Mrs. Clinton serves as a cultural battleground over which conservatives and liberals fight about the proper role for a woman in contemporary American society.



**THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE
HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON MYTH,
1992-1996**

SUSANNA MONTEZEMOLO
COLBY COLLEGE
12 MAY 1997

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	2
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	6
CHAPTER ONE.....	10
A HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE HRC MYTH	
The Hillary Rodham Clinton Myth	
The Myth in Historical Context: Eleanor Roosevelt and Barbara Bush	
Conclusion	
CHAPTER TWO.....	20
THE 1992 ELECTION	
HRC's Strategic Role in the Campaign	
HRC and the "Bimbo Eruptions"	
Conservative Attacks Against HRC	
CHAPTER THREE.....	35
HEALTH-CARE REFORM	
The Health-Care Reform Task Force	
The Sinner Side: Blaming the First Lady	
The Saint Side: A Victim of the Vicious Insurance Industry	
CHAPTER FOUR.....	47
THE CLINTON SCANDALS	
A Brief Explanation of the Clinton Scandals	
The Conservative Interpretation of Whitewater	
The Liberal Interpretation of Whitewater	
Conclusion	
CHAPTER FIVE.....	71
PARTNERS ONLY IN POWER? GENDER	
TRANSGRESSIONS IN THE CLINTONS' MARRIAGE	
The Conservative Interpretation of HRC's Role in the Marriage	
HRC's Transgression of Gender Roles	
The Liberal Response	
CHAPTER SIX.....	100
AN ATTEMPT TO DECONSTRUCT THE MYTH:	
"THE HILLARY PROBLEM" IN THE 1996 CAMPAIGN	
HRC's Image Makeover in the Pre-Campaign Season	
The 1996 Environment and the Threat of Elizabeth Dole	
The Hillary Problem Defined	
HRC's Campaign Schedule	

CHAPTER SEVEN.....	137
THE MEANING OF THE MYTH	
HRC as a Star	
The Significance of the HRC Myth	
APPENDIX.....	147
EXAMPLES OF POPULAR CULTURE PORTRAYALS	
OF HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON	
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	172

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people helped me out immensely in the production of this thesis. First and foremost, I would like to thank my Senior Scholar's tutor, Margaret McFadden, with whom I had the pleasure of working all year. This was Margaret's first year teaching at Colby, and she certainly did not have to take on any additional work. She was the best thesis advisor I could ever hope to work with. Our weekly lunch outings to Bobs helped me put together my thesis in a way that I would never have done without her help. She has changed how I see the world. I would also like to thank my readers, Charlie Bassett and Tony Corrado. Charlie has been a source of support throughout all four years at Colby; he is my only professor who has known me since my first day here. This year, he has consoled me when I thought I could write no more; and once I had written everything down on paper, he helped me edit it down to its current length. Tony too has been extremely supportive over my past three years at Colby. He has assiduously clipped every article he found in a newspaper (or, at times, in the tabloids!) for me, and he even taped the *Rosie O'Donnell* show for me when Hillary Rodham Clinton appeared on it (sacrificing a much more substantive viewing of *Inside Politics* on that day). Tony was extremely helpful when I wrote the section on the 1996 campaign, and he provided valuable input on my thesis from a discipline outside of American studies.

I would also like to thank my family, friends, and professors who helped me through the past thirteen months. My family was constantly supportive of me, particularly Christine Eisenhower and Gianni and Joan Montezemolo, who helped me gather information from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Susan and Eric Holzapfel provided me with some popular culture material of Mrs. Clinton from Cincinnati. Kylie Taphorn, Linc Farr, Kathleen Mulcahy, Marc Milhous Fairbrother, and Cary Gibson are only a few of the students here at Colby who helped me find some of the popular culture paraphernalia of HRC. Kylie's favorite contribution was the post card of HRC in leather and chains in the appendix. Every now and then, I would walk into my study carrel and Linc would have pinned up a new comic strip featuring our first lady. I would also like to thank Dan Noyes for making many stupid bets with me and wearing pins of HRC and the Clinton campaign when he lost—that alone made this project worth all the hard work. In addition, all of my professors were extremely supportive of my thesis. In particular, Cedric Bryant, Cal Mackenzie, and Guilain Denoeux spoke with me in the most difficult moments of writing my thesis. Guilain also clipped out numerous comic parodies of her (and, of course, he helped me pinpoint the conservative interpretation of Mrs. Clinton!)

Without a doubt, this project has been the best part of my senior year. I have enjoyed working on it immensely, and I feel a sense of accomplishment in the final product. I never quite understood what American studies entailed until I finished this thesis (that's probably not the best thing for an American studies major to admit, but it is true). This project has made me examine the United States in a completely new way, especially in terms of my view on feminism and the women's rights movement. I could not have completed it without the support of everyone here at Colby.

FOR
GRANDMA AND GRANDPA
AND
NONNA AND NONNO

While the most dangerous weapons of this century are thought to be nuclear bombs and warheads, the power of radio and television runs a close second.

—Del Weaver, "Shaman of the Airwaves," *Channel One*¹

¹As quoted in E.J. Gorman, *The First Lady: A Novel* (New York: Forge Books, 1995), 1.

CHAPTER ONE

A HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE HRC MYTH

The Hillary Rodham Clinton Myth

In 1992, Hillary Rodham Clinton (HRC), wife of Democratic presidential nominee Bill Clinton and future first lady of the United States, entered the political landscape as her husband's equal. The Clinton duo openly marketed itself as a partnership; both Clintons repeatedly stated that they were "two for the price of one." At first, the two were popular; Bill Clinton, a young alternative to the drab George Bush, would bring much-needed change to the country, and HRC received approval ratings that were at times higher than her husband's. Mrs. Clinton was revered by feminists, liberals, and other Democratic base voters because she took on a powerful role in her marriage. However, a year into Bill Clinton's presidency, the political partnership that Bill and Hillary Clinton had so proudly promoted during the campaign became marred by controversy. Specifically, Mrs. Clinton was criticized for her supposedly over-powerful

role in the White House and for formulating the failed health-care initiative that formed the foundation of her husband's first year in office. Mrs. Clinton also was assailed for her role in the Whitewater affair, the disastrous land deal that she and her husband had entered in the 1970s. Although Mrs. Clinton retained a loyal following, she also was hated by many who maintained that she had usurped her power.

The Hillary Rodham Clinton myth emerged from these animadversions and approbations. "Saint or Sinner?" asked *Newsweek's* cover on 15 January 1996. This title captures the mood of the country perfectly. Americans are divided in their opinion of their first lady. About half believe that Mrs. Clinton is like a saint, the modern American woman who tries to balance a powerful career with having a family. The others think of her as a sinner. They despise her and claim that she had misused her newly-achieved power and has become a co-president. As the subtitle of one book states, she "tells the president what to do."² This saint/sinner dichotomy is a widespread cultural myth because very few Americans know the first lady personally, and they therefore rely on the media to construct her for them. Before we move on to the development of the myth in the 1990s, we must first look back to the historical precedents set by previous first ladies, since Americans' expectations of HRC have been in part shaped by these historical precedents.

The Myth in Historical Context: Eleanor Roosevelt and Barbara Bush

Throughout history, Americans have looked to the first lady as a symbol of the modern American woman. Traditionally, the first lady spends her days in the East Wing

²Texe Marrs, *Big Sister Is Watching You: Hillary Clinton and the White House Feminists Who Now Rule America—And Tell the President What to Do* (Austin, Texas: Living Truth Publishers, 1993).

of the White House, the residential area, away from the policymaking center in the West Wing of the building. She is the first *lady*, and she is expected to act in a lady-like manner and stay far away from the male-dominated policymaking world. Clearly, Mrs. Clinton, who helped formulate policy in 1993 and is generally considered an integral player in her husband's administration, does not fit this traditional role. This section will analyze two extremely different first ladies who have affected the perception of HRC: Eleanor Roosevelt (ER), who took on a powerful role in the administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) and was Mrs. Clinton's role model; and Barbara Bush, Mrs. Clinton's immediate predecessor who assumed a more traditional role.

The Eleanor Roosevelt Legacy

In 1992, HRC tried to define her own role by pointing to Eleanor Roosevelt, who Mrs. Clinton claimed had set a historical precedent for powerful first ladies. In fact, ER had been a controversial figure in the 1930s and 1940s. Mrs. Roosevelt, like Mrs. Clinton, was a partner with her husband. After she found out that FDR had carried on an affair with Lucy Mercer, ER's former secretary, Mrs. Roosevelt offered to divorce him. He talked her out of it, and what followed was what one biographer called a "formal union": "The union became a formal one, the distance between the two partners rather formally defined and rigidly observed. She frequently referred to him in the manner of a trusted employee discussing a superior."³

³Betty Boyd Caroli, *First Ladies: An Intimate Look at How 38 Women Handled What May Be the Most Demanding, Unpaid, Unelected Job in America*, expanded edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 188.

Mrs. Roosevelt took on a much more powerful role than her predecessors. ER lobbied her husband on domestic issues and at times directly influenced New Deal legislation. In fact, FDR appointed his wife to head the Office of Civilian Defense in May 1941, a post that she later resigned owing to controversies that stemmed from charges of political nepotism. Nevertheless, Mrs. Roosevelt continued to lobby for issues that were important to her, especially civil rights for blacks and equal rights for women. Her days were filled with meetings, press briefings, radio broadcasts, and writing her daily newspaper column called "My Day." She was often called the president's "political confidante" and his "eyes and ears"⁴—a reference to her position in the White House, as well as her work helping her paralyzed husband, who as an invalid did not have the constant ability to assert control in the White House.

Despite ER's power, she was constantly aware of the controversial position she had assumed. One author commented that "despite her doddering facade, she understood that first ladies were to be seen at social galas and by their husbands' sides."⁵ She issued disclaimers intended to neutralize her power, frequently making comments such as: "Although I might present the situation to him, I never urged on him a specific course of action, no matter how strongly I felt."⁶ On one occasion, the first lady said that "there is such a concerted effort being made to make it appear that I dictate to FDR that I don't want people who should know the truth to have any misunderstanding about it. I wouldn't dream of doing more than passing along requests or suggestions that come to me."⁷

⁴Caroli, 198-9.

⁵Gil Troy, *Affairs of State: The Rise and Rejection of the Presidential Couple Since World War II* (New York: The Free Press, 1997), 7.

⁶Eleanor Roosevelt, as quoted in Troy, 7.

⁷As quoted in Caroli, 91.

Mrs. Roosevelt received mixed reviews with respect to her role. While she did have a strong group of core followers, especially those who aligned themselves with the feminist movement, she was hardly universally praised. Her detractors included powerful right-wingers. They abominated the first lady and vilified her for usurping her power and for her controversial political stances on race and gender relations, such as opposition to lynchings and her stance against the Daughters of the American Revolution, which would not allow African American Marian Anderson to perform in Constitution Hall. Mrs. Roosevelt was so controversial that between 1942 and 1943, her hate mail peaked; and in that time, the FBI reported that many southerners considered ER "the most dangerous individual in the United States today."⁸ In 1940, campaign buttons stated: "And we don't want Eleanor either."⁹ As one author has said, "most Americans remained uncomfortable with real power delving toward the presidential spouse."¹⁰

But the reality that Mrs. Roosevelt faced in the 1930s and 1940s does not matter to Americans in the 1990s; what matters is the legacy that ER has left. ER is seen as a powerful woman who lobbied for important issues and who was as popular in her time own as she is in the more liberal 1990s. A myth surrounds Eleanor Roosevelt: that she was able to take on a powerful role in her husband's administration—lobbying for important issues in favor of African Americans, minorities, and women—and at the same time remain popular in the eyes of most Americans. Most Americans in the 1990s love Eleanor Roosevelt and are unaware of criticism of her in the 1930s and 1940s. No matter what ER's role and reputation was in the 1930s, she has left a legacy that in the 1990s

⁸As quoted in Caroli, 10.

⁹Caroli, 194.

¹⁰Troy, 11.

puts pressure on HRC. The expectations today are extremely high for HRC—like the image of ER, Mrs. Clinton is expected to take on a powerful role while she remains free from controversy.

Barbara Bush and the Traditional First Lady Role

The other first lady who has greatly influenced the perception of HRC is Barbara Bush. Mrs. Bush immediately preceded Mrs. Clinton, and the two are complete opposites. Unlike Mrs. Clinton, who graduated at the top of her class from Wellesley College and Yale Law School, Mrs. Bush dropped out of Smith College to marry George Bush when she was 19 years old. She took on a stereotypical woman's role, staying at home and taking care of her children while her husband, the World War II hero, made millions in the oil industry. When he decided to run for office, she made a conscious decision to keep her opinions to herself, saying that "I do not speak out on issues because I am not the elected official."¹¹ On one occasion, she refused to tell a reporter how she felt about a particular issue. "I am not running," she declared. "I don't agree with George Bush on every issue, and I don't expect him to agree with me on every issue, and we don't agree with the Reagans on every issue, but we are in agreement on most of the important things."¹² She was concerned with, in her own words, "running the house, listening to my children's problems, [and] passing them onto George if they're important."¹³ She said that she would never interfere with her husband's policymaking. When it was revealed

¹¹Troy, 312.

¹²As quoted in Troy, 321.

¹³Troy, 313.

that she sat in on some of her husband's campaign meetings, she said that she "did my needlepoint and listened . . . so I can learn, not so that I can have influence."¹⁴

As first lady, she was a matronly figure whose style pleased the country. As the front page of the *New York Post* screamed: "GOODBYE FIRST FASHION-PLATE—HELLO FIRST GRANDMOTHER!"¹⁵ Barbara and George Bush hardly promoted themselves as a political partnership as Hillary and Bill Clinton would later do. Mrs. Bush made it clear that she had no official or unofficial role in formulating policy. She hardly ever took controversial policy stances because, as she said, "I don't want to diffuse my work for food kitchens for the hungry, for the illiterate, for the sick, by getting involved in controversial things."¹⁶ She did discuss the Persian Gulf War once, but she did so in the least-controversial way possible, saying: "That darn Hussein, he is putting all those children at risk. . . . [It was] the darndest war."¹⁷

Barbara Bush did not believe that the first lady had a duty to discuss policy positions, since she had not been elected. Rather, Mrs. Bush saw that her job as first lady was to "help the most people possible, but not cost the government more money and not be controversial."¹⁸ As her project, Mrs. Bush fought illiteracy, a "soft," non-controversial issue that nobody opposed. She never testified before congress and never tried to help draft legislation. Rather, she promoted existing literacy programs. When she was not fighting illiteracy, Mrs. Bush could be found praising her husband as the ideal "family man." She once said that "I'm the luckiest woman in the world. I'm Barbara Bush

¹⁴As quoted in Troy, 328.

¹⁵Troy, 313.

¹⁶Carl Sferrazza Anthony, *First Ladies: The Saga of the Presidents' Wives and Their Power, 1961-1990*, volume II (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1991), 428.

¹⁷As quoted in Troy, 337.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 320.

married to George Bush."¹⁹ Mrs. Bush did write a book, but not surprisingly, it addressed few controversial issues. It was entitled *Millie's Book as Dictated to Barbara Bush* and chronicled her dog's days in the White House.

Americans loved Mrs. Bush. She was among the most popular personalities in the country. In the first hundred days of her husband's administration, she had higher approval ratings than either the president or the vice president.²⁰ In October 1989, she received a 71 percent approval rating.²¹ Enthusiasts even formed the Barbara Bush fan club, and Mrs. Bush received over 3,000 pieces of mail each week from her supporters.²² Not only was Mrs. Bush well-liked, but also Americans approved of her role in the White House and of her marriage to George Bush. The Gallup organization consistently ranked the Bushes as one of the most popular couples in the nation.²³

Mrs. Bush's popularity puts pressure on HRC. Mrs. Bush was admired because of the kind of role she public image shaped for herself—her husband's staunchest defender, the grandmother who presided over the nation. She did not interfere in policymaking. She happily discussed literacy programs and her husband's wonderful nature from the East Wing of the White House. This blandness made it difficult for Mrs. Clinton to enter the political landscape, because HRC would take on a much more hands-on and controversial role as first lady right after Mrs. Bush finished her popular rule as "first grandmother."

Of all first ladies, Eleanor Roosevelt and Barbara Bush have had the greatest impact on the construction of the Hillary Rodham Clinton myth. The two exemplify two

¹⁹As quoted in Troy, 324.

²⁰Anthony, 422.

²¹Troy, 332.

²²Anthony, 422.

²³Caroli, 287.

kinds of first ladies—ER was powerful, an equal partner with her husband. Mrs. Bush was passive; she let her husband do the governing while she sat with her needlepoint in the East Wing. Americans today find both of these contradictory images popular. ER is beloved for forcing her husband to fight for minorities, blacks, and women; these groups might otherwise have been ignored. Five decades after ER moved out of the White House, Americans revere her and see her as a first lady who managed to stay out of controversy while she retained much power and popularity. Whatever the reality in the 1930s, in the 1990s ER is seen as the ideal powerful first lady. Americans also love Barbara Bush, but for the opposite reasons that they like Mrs. Roosevelt. They see Mrs. Bush as the ideal traditional first lady who stayed away from controversy.

Americans in the 1990s use Mrs. Roosevelt and Mrs. Bush to help them understand Hillary Rodham Clinton. Since Mrs. Clinton has said that she models herself after ER, her hero, and ER also assumed a publicly powerful role, Americans naturally compare the two. And since Mrs. Bush, immensely popular, immediately preceded HRC, Americans compare Mrs. Clinton with Mrs. Bush. These comparisons puts Mrs. Clinton in a difficult bind, for she is being held to standards of power set by ER, who was vilified by many in her day but is now revered; and Barbara Bush, who is starkly different from Mrs. Clinton. In order to become a successful political partner with her husband, HRC would have to assume a prominent role but remain out of controversy, a feat extremely difficult for her to achieve, especially since many Americans love Mrs. Bush and have come to expect a passive and traditional first lady. In this context, Mrs. Clinton divides the country, and the two sides of the myth have flourished.

Conclusion

This paper will examine the saint or sinner Hillary Rodham Clinton myth and its implications. About half of Americans look to Mrs. Clinton as a saint, a woman who like all women is struggling to make it in a powerful and public world dominated by men. Other Americans believe in the sinner side of the myth and deride the first lady because of her power in her marriage and the workforce. I am not concerned with ascertaining the "truth" about Mrs. Clinton in the way that the truth is conventionally defined. In fact, such would be impossible, since very few Americans know HRC personally, and the media only provide an interpretation of the "truth." Rather, this paper is concerned with examining the meaning of the saint/sinner dichotomy in American society.

My argument is that Mrs. Clinton has been vilified and revered not because of who she is personally, but rather for the kind of woman she *represents*. Liberals believe that the first lady is like a saint not because she is perfect, but rather because she struggles to succeed in a world of power traditionally dominated by men. Similarly, conservatives do not think of HRC as a sinner because she is inherently evil; rather, they look to her as a woman who threatens the status quo of society and therefore threatens their place in America today. In short, Mrs. Clinton serves as a cultural battleground over which conservatives and liberals fight about the proper role for a woman in contemporary American society. In the remaining chapters, I will examine the development of the myth in the 1992 campaign, the failed health-care initiative, the Whitewater affair and other "scandals," and in the Clintons' marriage. I will then turn to the Clinton campaign's failed attempt to break down that myth in 1996. Finally, I will conclude by explaining the implications of the Hillary Rodham Clinton myth for American society.

CHAPTER TWO

THE 1992 ELECTION

Let me tell you something, Jerry. I don't care what you say about me, . . . but you ought to be ashamed of yourself for jumping on my wife. You're not worth being on the same platform as my wife.²⁴

—Bill Clinton to Jerry Brown, in a 1992 debate among the candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination

Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign against President George Bush was filled with controversies, from the so-called bimbo eruptions that plagued the campaign, to the draft-dodging scandal, to the first stirrings of the media's fixation on the Whitewater affair. The Clinton campaign at times seemed more like a soap opera than a credible presidential campaign, and voters were exposed to some of the most revealing details of the future president's life, which included the media's seemingly incessant fixation on his marital problems.

²⁴Bill Clinton, as quoted in Peter Goldman, Thomas M. DeFrank, Mark Miller, Andrew Murr, and Tom Mathews, with Patrick Rogers and Melanie Cooper, *Quest For the Presidency 1992* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1994), 194.

It was in this context that Hillary Rodham Clinton was introduced to the American people. Mrs. Clinton played a prominent and essential role in her husband's first presidential campaign, taking on many functions. At times, she was his closest strategic advisor, approving his every move; one reporter jokingly called her "James Carville in a skirt." On other occasions, she was her husband's staunchest defender, talking about his policies and defending his role in their marriage. At still other times she was an independent force, a working woman who would rather "fulfill my profession" than "sit at home and bake cookies and have teas."²⁵

In all these roles, Mrs. Clinton publicly remained unapologetically influential and powerful. She and her husband repeatedly declared that they were offering a two-for-the-price-of-one deal to the American people. In the words of the candidate himself: "Our life is very much a partnership. Our public endeavors, we do in common. And I always said that our slogan might be: 'Buy one, get one free.'"²⁶ While most other candidates' wives campaigned submissively with their mates, Mrs. Clinton remained startlingly independent, discussing the issues that mattered most to her.

HRC's unprecedented public role challenged the image of the traditional wife of the candidate and in so doing began to shape what would become the two dominant images of her in the American mind. The first was that of a saint, which praised her role as a strong, intelligent woman who wielded much power in her husband's career and in her marriage. The second was that of a sinner, someone who had usurped her authority, an unelected official who used her husband to increase her own power. As the caption under

²⁵Goldman, et. al., 196.

²⁶Norman King, *The Woman in the White House: The Remarkable Story of Hillary Rodham Clinton* (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1996), 152.

a picture of HRC in the Bush campaign headquarters stated, "I'll get you my pretty, and your little dog, Toto, too!"²⁷ Like the Wicked Witch of the West in *The Wizard of Oz*, Mrs. Clinton was seen by her detractors as too openly powerful, a woman who had to be stopped. Indeed, those who thought of HRC as a "sinner" effectively equated her with a witch—perhaps the Wicked Witch of the Midwest.

HRC's Strategic Role in the Clinton Campaign

Mrs. Clinton served a variety of purposes in her husband's first campaign. First, she was a strategist and an advisor. She served as a quasi-chief of staff; every decision Bill Clinton made was first approved by his wife.²⁸ According to one source, HRC "was the only person around who could make [Bill Clinton] do something he didn't really feel like doing."²⁹ Mrs. Clinton was the one who made the final decision to make James Carville the chief strategist,³⁰ and she lobbied for Al Gore as her husband's running mate because of his commitment to environmental issues.³¹

Most day-to-day decisions were approved by HRC rather than her husband. For example, when Carville came up with the idea for the infamous "War Room," the strategic rapid-response headquarters for the campaign, he did not ask the candidate to approve. He went straight to Mrs. Clinton.³² In a similar vein, when aides could not convince Bill Clinton to go on the *Arsenio Hall Show*, they took their case to Mrs. Clinton, who

²⁷Mary Matalin and James Carville, *All's Fair: Love, War, and Running for President* (New York: Random House, 1994), 194.

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹*Ibid.*, 291.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 273.

³¹*Ibid.*, 283.

³²Margaret Carlson, "The Dynamic Duo; How the Clintons Turned their Marriage Into a Political Powerhouse," in *Time* [online], 4 Jan. 1993, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS [22 Feb. 1996].

convinced her husband to do the interview.³³ And HRC decided to change the theme of the national convention from the economy to a positive message about the future.³⁴

In addition, HRC helped formulate the day-to-day strategy of the campaign. She was present at the strategic war room sessions and served as one of her husband's most valued strategists. She helped write his speeches and prepare him for his debates. For example, at the beginning of the primary season, Mrs. Clinton suggested the strategy that her husband would eventually use in a debate with the Democratic frontrunner, Paul Tsongas: "*My strategy with Paul is to say, 'You know, Paul, you've got the story half right. We *do* have to level with the people. But we've also got to understand the pain they're in.' What you do is praise Tsongas as a big contributor to the big picture, but say he's just not getting it.*"³⁵ When Tsongas won the New Hampshire primary, Bill Clinton wanted to call to congratulate him. His wife would not let him: "*No! *We're* the ones declaring victory,*" she stated.³⁶ Bill Clinton declared victory in New Hampshire and was labeled "the comeback kid," a strategy that helped lead the way to the Democratic nomination. After Clinton won that nomination, his wife helped write his acceptance speech for the Democratic National Convention, adding the final line: "*In the end, I still believe in a place called Hope.*"³⁷

Americans carefully noted Mrs. Clinton's role in the crucial strategic decisions of the campaign. What emerged was an image of Hillary Rodham Clinton as her husband's equal and full partner. Far from the traditional political spouse, Mrs. Clinton was seen as

³³Margaret Carlson, "The Dynamic Duo; How the Clintons Turned their Marriage Into a Political Powerhouse," in *Time* [online], 4 Jan. 1993, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS [22 Feb. 1996].

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵As quoted in Goldman, et. al., 128.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 147.

³⁷Goldman, et. al., 291.

having a personal stake in the outcome of the election; it was as though she were a candidate along with her husband. As Stan Greenberg, the Clinton campaign's pollster, said: "More than Nancy Reagan, she [Mrs. Clinton] is seen as 'running the show.'"³⁸

This perception was not comforting to many Americans. According to one group of journalists, Americans had never

experienced anybody quite like Hillary Rodham Clinton before—not, certainly, in a presidential campaign. She didn't fit the old stereotype of the political wife, the helpmate whose public duty it was to hang adoringly on her husband's words and, if he got elected president, go find something unarguably good to go do as her "project." . . .

Hillary was different. She was not just wife, mother, lawyer, public advocate, and principal breadwinner in the Clinton family; she was openly and unabashedly a partner in her husband's success. Intellectually, she was his peer; in politics and government, his last-word adviser; on the trail or in the legislature, his star salesperson, excepting only himself.³⁹

The picture that emerged from the campaign of Mrs. Clinton as a key player in her husband's campaign disturbed many Americans. Clearly, by challenging the traditional model of the political wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton also challenged the traditional notions of a woman's place in marriage and the workforce. Throughout the campaign, HRC became a symbol of a powerful woman who refused to follow the stereotypical gender role assigned to women. Her supporters encouraged her to take on a powerful strategic role in the campaign, while her detractors criticized her for that very role.

HRC and the "Bimbo Eruptions"

Mrs. Clinton not only played a key strategic and advisory role in her husband's campaign, but also she was an integral player as a campaign surrogate on the trail. She

³⁸As quoted in Goldman, et. al., 251.

³⁹Goldman, et. al., 191.

spent a great deal of her time campaigning with her husband, but her most essential function was to counterbalance the myriad accusations of marital infidelity that Bill Clinton faced. These accusations were fueled by a series of "bimbo eruptions,"⁴⁰ the most prominent of which came from Gennifer Flowers, the former nightclub singer who alleged that she and the candidate had carried on a twelve-year affair.

Allegations that Bill Clinton had been unfaithful to his wife were hardly new; they had surfaced during each of his gubernatorial reelection campaigns in Arkansas. Most of the allegations stemmed from a lawsuit filed by Larry Nichols, a former Arkansas state employee who had been fired because of calls he made with state funds to the Nicaraguan Contras in the 1980s. Nichols protested his firing, stating that the governor of Arkansas himself had used state funds to pursue romantic liaisons with five women. One of those women was Gennifer Flowers. For years, she had denied the accusations.

However, in January 1992, just a few weeks before the crucial nominating contest in New Hampshire, the first primary in the nation, Flowers was offered an estimated \$100,000-\$150,000 by the *Star*, a sensationalist tabloid newspaper, for her story.⁴¹ She described her twelve-year love affair with Bill Clinton in a cover story entitled "They Made Love All Over Her Apartment."⁴² She claimed that for over a decade, in the words of journalists Jules Witcover and Jack Germond, "Clinton had often jogged from the state capitol to her apartment and turned it into a veritable playground of sexual athletics."⁴³ Flowers said that she had taped a dozen of the phone conversations between her and the

⁴⁰This term has been used by many authors, ranging from Bush campaign strategist Mary Matalin to Harvard University professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

⁴¹Jack W. Germond and Jules Witcover, *Mad as Hell: Revolt at the Ballot Box, 1992* (New York: Warner Books, 1993), 176.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³*Ibid.*

governor. Although these tapes had twenty-four cuts in them, they included what was undeniably Bill Clinton's voice stating: "If they ever hit you with it, just say no and go on. There's nothing they can do. I expected them to look into it and come to you. But if everyone is on the record denying it, no problem."⁴⁴

The Clinton Campaign's Response

The Clinton camp adamantly denied Flowers's charges, claiming that while Bill Clinton had known Gennifer Flowers as a friend, the two never had engaged in sexual activities. Nevertheless, the media quickly played up the story in what political scientist Larry Sabato has dubbed a "feeding frenzy," defined as "the press coverage attending any political event or circumstance where a critical mass of journalists leap to cover the same embarrassing or scandalous subject and pursue it intensely, often excessively, and sometimes uncontrollably."⁴⁵ The Flowers story quickly spread from a cheap tabloid to the traditional national press. According to one account,

the story squirted from the bottom-feeding *Star* onto Fox Television's nightly newscasts that night and from there to the raunchier big-city tabloid dailies the next day. Their interest in turn attracted the attention of the respectable media, and their loud headlines—WILD BILL, shrieked the *New York Post*—made useful visuals for even the more sober-sided television newscasts; they could hardly be blamed for showing how badly the penny press was behaving. The story of the story had *become* the story, a way for fastidious editors and producers to publish all the juicy details without dirtying their own hands. It had a certain legitimizing effect.⁴⁶

Indeed it did. Soon every news show and publication was discussing the Flowers allegations. Obviously, the campaign had to respond. It began by sending Mandy

⁴⁴As quoted in Germond and Witcover, 176.

⁴⁵Larry Sabato, *Feeding Frenzy: How Attack Journalism Has Transformed American Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 6.

⁴⁶Goldman, et. al., 89-90.

Grunwald, one of Clinton's media advisors, to appear on *Nightline* to speak with Ted Koppel and Larry Sabato about the media's treatment of the allegations. Grunwald did an excellent job of criticizing the media and defending her client, but her performance alone could not stop the feeding frenzy. Bill Clinton's poll numbers continued to drop in New Hampshire, and former Massachusetts senator Paul Tsongas began to pull ahead. The campaign felt that it needed to do something drastic to bring an end to the attacks. Clinton's advisors decided to give *60 Minutes*, the most popular news show in the United States, an exclusive interview with both Bill and Hillary Clinton immediately following the Superbowl.⁴⁷ The potential audience was one hundred million.⁴⁸ (The actual viewing audience was later estimated at forty million).⁴⁹

The 60 Minutes Appearance

The Clinton campaign carefully prepared both the candidate and his wife for the interview so that the two would be able to refute the infidelity charges not only verbally but also physically, touching each other and presenting themselves as a loving couple. According to Clinton campaign strategist James Carville, "we wanted them together, sitting next to each other in the studio. They had to be able to touch each other, if this was a real couple they wouldn't be fighting accusations of infidelity separated by the entire eastern seaboard; they couldn't be separated in any way, it would have sent the completely wrong message."⁵⁰ Both Clintons were told to act and sound in love, but

⁴⁷Gernond and Witcover, 184.

⁴⁸Michael Kramer, "Moment of Truth; Insisting that Flowers' Charges Are 'False,' Bill Clinton Faces the Biggest Test of His Political Career," In *Time* [online], 3 Feb. 1992, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS [19 Feb. 1997].

⁴⁹"Clinton: '60 Minutes' Reviews; Southern Swing," In *Hotline* [online], 28 Jan. 1992, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS [19 Feb. 1997].

⁵⁰James Carville, in Matalin and Carville, 103.

Hillary Rodham Clinton played the most important role. In a memorandum to Bill Clinton, Carville and his partner, Paul Begala, said that HRC "holds the ultimate trump card. . . . [She's] the best thing you have going for you."⁵¹ The message was clear: it was up to Mrs. Clinton to save her husband's foundering campaign.

The show, which was taped for ninety minutes but edited down to only eleven, went smoothly. Both Clintons defended their right to privacy but admitted to "problems" in their marriage, problems that any married couple goes through. Despite considerable prodding by interviewer Steve Kroft, the two refused to elaborate on the specific problems in their marriage. HRC did claim that "if you're married for more than ten minutes, you're going to have to forgive somebody for something,"⁵² but she declined to say for what she had forgiven her husband. The candidate went further, stating that "I have acknowledged wrongdoing. I have acknowledged causing pain in my marriage. I have said things to you tonight and to the American people that no American politician ever has."⁵³

Kroft tried to push Bill Clinton into confessing adultery, but the candidate refused. Rather, he claimed that he and his wife had a right to a certain amount of privacy. Giving up on the adultery angle, Kroft focused on the Clintons' marriage, calling it "some sort of understanding and arrangement."⁵⁴ The two had already spoken of the "two-for-one" deal they were offering Americans, a phrase often associated with a partnership. However, in the *60 Minutes* interview, both Clintons denied that they had

⁵¹James Carville, in Matalin and Carville, 103.

⁵²As quoted in Marci McDonald, "His Best Defense; Hillary Clinton Battles to Save Her Husband's Foundering Campaign for the White House," *Maclean's*, 24 Feb. 1992, 22.

⁵³As quoted in David Lauter and Ron Brownstein, "Clinton's Say Sex Rumors Are Irrelevant; Politics: In TV Interview, Candidate Says He Will Not Deny Having Committed Adultery. He and His Wife Again Attack Tabloid's Accusations," *Los Angeles Times*, 27 Jan. 1992, A1.

⁵⁴As quoted in "'I Have Absolutely Leveled' With Voters," *Washington Post*, 27 Jan. 1992, A6.

established a political partnership, for it implied that they had married for purely political purposes. Bill Clinton said that "you're looking at two people who love each other. This is not an arrangement or an understanding. This is a marriage. That's a very different thing."⁵⁵ To this comment, HRC offered a reply that would be repeated myriad times in the following days:

You know, I'm not sitting here—some little woman standing by my man like Tammy Wynette. I'm sitting here because I love him, and I respect him, and I honor what he's been through and what we've been through together. And you know, if that's not enough for people, then heck, don't vote for him.⁵⁶

The media grabbed onto the first part of the quotation, replaying it over and over as a soundbite. For years, HRC would regret ever saying "I'm not sitting here—some little woman standing by my man like Tammy Wynette." The comment would help conservatives portray her as a militaristic feminist, one who was against women who "stood by their men" and conformed to stereotypical gender roles in marriage and the workforce.

Reaction to the Interview

In many respects, HRC was lauded for her performance in the interview. Columnist Peter Gelzini, writing for the conservative *Boston Herald*, said that "Hillary Clinton's got my vote. . . . She makes Meryl Streep look like Phyllis Diller."⁵⁷ And the *Chicago Sun-Times* declared that Mrs. Clinton "was much more effective than her husband."⁵⁸ Reporters generally agreed that Mrs. Clinton was responsible for the surge

⁵⁵As quoted in "'I Have Absolutely Leveled' With Voters," *Washington Post*, 27 Jan. 1992, A6.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

⁵⁷As quoted in *Holline* [online], 28 Jan. 1992, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS [19 Feb. 1997].

⁵⁸*Ibid.*

in her husband's polling numbers after the *60 Minutes* interview; in fact, many began to think that Bill Clinton would never have survived in politics without his wife. According to consultant Paul Begala, "without Hillary, [Bill] Clinton would have wound up merely the most popular law professor at the University of Arkansas."⁵⁹ For some, the sight of a strong woman being responsible for her husband's success was comforting; for others, it was highly disturbing.

Although most people agreed that HRC was instrumental in her husband's resurgence after the Flowers incident, some criticized her performance in the interview. The "Tammy Wynette" soundbite provided ample ammunition for conservative critics, who portrayed Mrs. Clinton as an ultra-feminist who rejected a traditional woman's role. This problem was compounded by another gaffe that Mrs. Clinton made in Chicago at a campaign stop at the Busy Bee restaurant, where a reporter challenged her past as a lawyer. Mrs. Clinton stated that "I suppose I could have stayed at home and baked cookies and had teas. But what I decided to do was to fulfill my profession, which I entered before my husband was in public life."⁶⁰ The comment was designed to silence a menacing reporter, but a feeding frenzy quickly ensued, with the media repeating only the first half of the quotation. The soundbite implied that HRC was against traditional housewives. This comment and the "Tammy Wynette" soundbite, along with Mrs. Clinton's public role as an advisor and key player in her husband's campaign, helped conservatives frame HRC as a power-hungry woman who was against what they deemed to be traditional "family values."

⁵⁹Bob Woodward, *The Agenda: Inside the Clinton White House* (New York: Pocket Books, 1994), 117.

⁶⁰Hillary Rodham Clinton, as quoted in Goldman, et. al., 196.

Conservative Attacks Against HRC

Conservatives railed against Hillary Rodham Clinton by portraying her as anti-tradition, anti-family, and anti-woman. They pointed to a good deal of evidence to sustain these attacks, including HRC's alleged views on marriage and the family and her role in the campaign. At the Republican National Convention, conservative commentator Pat Buchanan rebuked the future first lady, saying "there is a religious war going on in this country. This war is for the soul of America, and in that struggle for the soul of America, Clinton and Clinton are on the other side. . . . Hillary has compared marriage and the family as institutions to slavery and life on an Indian reservation. Well, speak for yourself, Hillary."⁶¹ This attack equated HRC with her husband, implying that as first lady, Mrs. Clinton would wield just as much power as the president; the most powerful position in the world would be shared by both Clintons.

Another prominent Republican, Rich Bond, then the chair of the Republican National Committee, thundered: "Of course, advising Bill Clinton on every move is that champion of the family, Hillary Clinton, who believes kids should be able to sue their parents, rather than helping with the chores as they were asked to do."⁶² Bond's attack specifically addressed HRC's transgression of stereotypical gender roles—she was a public advisor to her husband, not a cookie baker; she was the lawyer who believed in children suing their parents, not the homemaker who took care of her children. Both Bond and Buchanan's attacks at the Republican National Convention took place in front

⁶¹As quoted in "GOP Attacks on Hillary Clinton," [television transcript], in *ABC News: Nightline* [online], available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNEWS [19 Feb. 1997].

⁶²*Ibid.*

of the throngs of conservative Republicans who served as delegates to that convention. These attacks scared these conservatives, who saw HRC's power as a symbolic rejection of the status quo for women in American society.

Attacks on Mrs. Clinton's stands on issues were supplemented by other attacks on her role as a feminist. Phyllis Schlafly, who led the fight in the 1980s against the Equal Rights Amendment, claimed that "there's a difference between the feminists and the other kind of women, and Hillary can't complain about Buchanan criticizing her [at the convention], because she injected herself into the campaign. . . . I think attacking her is very much like attacking George Bush's campaign manager."⁶³ In this quotation, Schlafly distinguishes between "the feminists" and the "other kind of women," as if Mrs. Clinton, a feminist, should be treated differently because of her beliefs. In essence, Schlafly implies that feminists in general (and HRC specifically) deserve to be attacked in ways that non-feminists do not because their advocacy of independent women's roles is so threatening.

In 1992, it was not only vengeful Republicans who attacked Mrs. Clinton; even benevolent first lady Barbara Bush helped legitimize the attacks by stating that "I've never taken on any opponents of George's nor their wives."⁶⁴ It's a little bit different this time, in that both the governor and Mrs. Clinton have said they're going to be co-partners. So I guess that's a little bit different."⁶⁵ This comment implies that a powerful woman equal to her husband can be ruthlessly attacked and scrutinized in a way that more

⁶³As quoted in "GOP Attacks on Hillary Clinton," [television transcript], in *ABC News: Nightline* [online], available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS [19 Feb. 1997].

⁶⁴This statement is not true; in 1984, Mrs. Bush criticized Democratic vice presidential nominee Geraldine Ferraro. She said that Mrs. Ferraro was a "word that rhymes with 'rich.'" (Troy, *Affairs of State*, 322).

⁶⁵As quoted in "GOP Attacks on Hillary Clinton," [television transcript], in *ABC News: Nightline* [online], available: LEXIS-NEXIS library: NEWS file: ARCNWS [19 Feb. 1997].

traditional women cannot, since these powerful women wander into the male sphere of power that more traditional women avoid. It also suggests that Mrs. Clinton does not deserve to be treated like other women because she does not fulfill a traditional woman's role in society. Thus, both Mrs. Bush and Schlafly advocate a double standard for traditional and powerful women.

These attacks, along with the "cookie baking" and "Tammy Wynette" soundbites, and the prominent and powerful role Mrs. Clinton publicly assumed throughout the 1992 campaign, helped contribute to the two basic images of Hillary Rodham Clinton as a saint or as a sinner. As one source put it:

People accustomed to the older archetypes . . . weren't quite sure how to take the New Woman on the block. Was she the wife as victim, waiting up nights for a philandering husband to come home? Or the yuppie American princess with a headband, a power suit, a career curve, and a feminist attitude? Or the *real* boss of the House of Clinton, the puppeteer who would run her husband's presidency? Or was she, as a new round of stories would suggest between the lines, the ultimate inside player—a lawyer capitalizing on her connection with her husband the governor? Any or all of the above seemed possible, given how little anybody outside her own network of friends and admirers actually knew about her. The signals were scrambled, and Hillary didn't always make it easy to sort them out.⁶⁶

Despite these two images of HRC—some admired her power, importance, and intelligence, while these very same qualities caused others to loathe her—Bill Clinton managed to win the presidency with 43 percent in a three-way race with George Bush and independent H. Ross Perot. During the transition, Mrs. Clinton continued to play an important public role in her husband's career. She attended 80 percent of the transition team's meetings⁶⁷ and was a key player in the appointment process. However, her principal public role came in her husband's first year in office, when she took charge of

⁶⁶Goldman, et. al., 192.

⁶⁷Drew, 21.

the committee that drafted the president's health-care reform proposal, which was the crucial issue of Bill Clinton's first year in office. As we shall see in the next chapter, the first lady's role as the chair of this committee helped further develop both the saint and sinner sides of the myth.

CHAPTER THREE

HEALTH-CARE REFORM

Call my dad. My mom's too busy.⁶⁸
 —Chelsea Clinton, to the school nurse,
 when she was sick in high school

After playing a prominent role in the 1992 campaign and, by some accounts, saving her husband's election campaign, Hillary Rodham Clinton took on what one journalist called "the most important and influential role ever explicitly assigned to a first lady."⁶⁹ While her recent predecessors had been found in the East Wing of the White House discussing education and decorating the executive mansion, HRC moved into the West Wing with a staff larger than the vice president's. She personally selected Janet Reno as Attorney General⁷⁰ and convinced her husband to appoint several of her former

⁶⁸As quoted in Elizabeth Drew, *On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 104.

⁶⁹Woodward, 109.

⁷⁰Drew, 24.

colleagues from the Rose Law Firm to the Justice Department, including Vince Foster, Bill Kennedy, and Webb Hubbell.⁷¹ Some very prominent Washingtonians were under her direction; for example, Donna Shalala, the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, reported directly to HRC.⁷²

Not only did Mrs. Clinton influence her husband's administration as an unofficial advisor, but also she took on an official role within the White House. At first, she wanted the title "senior domestic policy advisor," but aides worried about charges of nepotism.⁷³ Instead, she was appointed chair of the president's Task Force on Health Care, which formulated the White House policy for the issue that formed the crux of President Clinton's first year in office. According to one journalist, this position "basically put [HRC] in charge of domestic policy for the administration."⁷⁴ Although Mrs. Clinton's official job focused on one issue, news reports indicated that she had a much larger role. According to one source, HRC regularly attended cabinet meetings,⁷⁵ where almost every high official was afraid of confronting her;⁷⁶ one aide said that "she's the only person around here people are afraid of."⁷⁷

As the head of the task force on health care reform, HRC often let her determined, hard-hitting personality come out; aides openly reported to newspapers that she had tremendous power. The media portrayed Mrs. Clinton as a key player in her husband's administration. Both liberals and conservatives agreed that HRC wielded a great deal of power publicly, certainly more than her most recent predecessors. However, the two

⁷¹Drew, 24.

⁷²Ibid., 22.

⁷³Woodward, 108-9.

⁷⁴Drew, 22.

⁷⁵Ibid., 240.

⁷⁶Ibid., 306-7.

⁷⁷Ibid., 97.

sides interpreted HRC's power quite differently. Conservatives portrayed her as someone who had formulated the policy that her husband would later hope to enact. They used this as evidence that Mrs. Clinton was the *real* center of power in the White House: she decided on the policy, and her husband then simply signed it into law. Conservatives called the first lady an unelected co-president. They attacked her as a power-monger who was against traditional women's role and "family values." Liberals, on the other hand, admired the first lady's role and her power. They said that HRC had earned that power through her education and her experience. They claimed that she represented a new kind of woman who was unrestrained by traditional gender roles in the workforce. They also noted that conservative attacks on the first lady were based on her gender, not on legitimate grievances against HRC. Both these liberal and conservative views helped further shape the saint/sinner dichotomy in the perceptions of HRC.

The Health-Care Reform Task Force

The Monday after his inauguration, President Bill Clinton announced that his wife would head a committee to prepare health-care legislation, in what Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* called "the most powerful post ever assigned to a first lady."⁷⁸ The task force was made up of five hundred leading experts in the field of health care. Although Ira Magaziner was co-chair, the media portrayed the task force as "Hillary's project." The meetings were held in secret, a decision Mrs. Clinton made because of her experience with the media throughout the campaign; she did not want to risk any feeding

⁷⁸As quoted in King, 193.

frenzies while she formulated health-care policy.⁷⁹ According to Bob Woodward, "she had learned to detest the media during the campaign, and knew all too well that journalists were drawn to stories about controversy or failure."⁸⁰ In retrospect, the decision to keep the meetings secret may not have been wise. HRC was heavily criticized by the conservative press (and, at times, the mainstream press) for this secrecy. She was portrayed as a stealth operative, a powerful woman who was afraid to level with the American people. This characterization helped fuel conservative attacks against HRC, who claimed that she was wholly unaccountable.

Before Mrs. Clinton and the 500-member task force began their private meetings, HRC traveled throughout the United States to promote her husband's vision for universal health care. She told people that they must "face up to the costs in this system, and we have to have the courage to talk about that openly."⁸¹ After trying to drum up public support for health-care reform, Mrs. Clinton began a year-long process of formulating the proposal with the task force. In a 1,342-page legislative document, the task force recommended a managed competition plan that would regulate the health-care industry, which comprised one-seventh of the U.S. economy at the time.⁸² According to one

⁷⁹A conservative group brought suit against this secrecy, pointing to a 1973 law that required groups of non-government employees to hold public meetings. The court ruled that Mrs. Clinton was a de facto government employee and therefore that the meetings could be closed. The majority of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled that "we do not think the presidency can be so easily divided between its substantive political and ceremonial functions." (Drew, 195 and Troy, 2-3). The ruling implied that Mrs. Clinton, unlike other first ladies, was no longer merely a symbolic figure. Her role as first lady was substantive, and as a result it was similar to that of an official government employee.

⁸⁰Woodward, 164.

⁸¹As quoted in Robert Wright, "The Technology Time Bomb: Hillary Rodham Clinton's Real Enemy; Health Care Reform; Cover Story," in *New Republic* [online], 29 March 1993, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS [25 Feb. 1997].

⁸²Joe Klein, "Scenes from a Marriage," *Newsweek*, 4 Oct. 1993, 52.

reporter, the plan was "ripe with mandates—benefits packages, employer responsibilities, powerful new bureaucracies to supervise" the implementation.⁸³

Testimony Before Congress

Before the massive, comprehensive plan went up for congressional approval, HRC met with members of congress, briefing them personally and attending various committee meetings. She became the first first lady to testify before congress on a policy proposal that she had spearheaded. One reporter called her performance "a stellar debut before congress."⁸⁴ Most media accounts were surprisingly positive in their analysis of Mrs. Clinton's testimony on Capitol Hill. One journalist wrote: "She came, saw and wowed the place, answering every question about the health-care plan she had shepherded to the Capitol door. The members were in various stages of awe. The media were in full gush. Under the spotlight, under pressure, she was a pro."⁸⁵ Another said that "armed with a stack of facts and more than a dash of charm, Hillary Rodham Clinton captivated two House committees."⁸⁶ Still one more fan reported that "all told, she answered more than 120 questions and by all signs, wowed lawmakers who were effusive in their public flattery and praise."⁸⁷ Dan Rostenkowski, the chair of the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee, before which HRC testified, reportedly said to the first lady that "I think in the very near future, the president will be known as

⁸³Joe Klein, "Scenes from a Marriage," *Newsweek*, 4 Oct. 1993, 52.

⁸⁴Jodi Edna, as quoted in "Hillary on the Hill; 120 Questions Later, a Rave Review," In *Health Line* [online], 29 Sept. 1993, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS [25 Feb. 1997].

⁸⁵Ellen Goodman, "Memo to Hillary: Focus on Eleanor," *Des Moines Register*, 30 Sept. 1994, 11.

⁸⁶As quoted in "Hillary on the Hill; 120 Questions Later, a Rave Review," In *Health Line* [online], 29 Sept. 1993, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS [25 Feb. 1997].

⁸⁷*Ibid.*

your husband."⁸⁸ Others said that the first lady was "one of the best prepared witnesses" ever to testify before congress.⁸⁹

Despite these and other positive reviews of her performance, Mrs. Clinton was criticized by some. Her detractors pointed out that members of congress seemed so intimidated by the first lady that they did not dare ask her some of the most difficult questions.⁹⁰ One reporter commented that "there weren't any really, really tough questions asked. And even the questions that were difficult that had to do with financing and other issues were put rather obliquely."⁹¹ Another reporter said that Mrs. Clinton was asked "softball questions."⁹²

The Failure of Health Care Reform

The media coverage of the first lady's role in the task force changed dramatically after her testimony before congress. Mrs. Clinton's plan was all-encompassing, and she was unwilling to compromise; for her, it was all or nothing, a formula that rarely works on Capitol Hill.⁹³ Moreover, she openly touted the \$100 billion figure for her health-care plan as if she did not understand that the taxpayers would have to pay for the program, which would inevitably bring controversy.⁹⁴ According to one critic,

Hillary reform was about helping the poor and sick; resistance could only be selfishness and greed. . . . Hillary lit the fires of her own misplaced moral outrage;

⁸⁸Dan Rostenkowski, as quoted in "Hillary on the Hill; 120 Questions Later, a Rave Review," In *Health Line* [online], 29 Sept. 1993, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS [25 Feb. 1997].

⁸⁹As quoted in "Hillary on the Hill; 120 Questions Later, a Rave Review," In *Health Line* [online], 29 Sept. 1993, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS [25 Feb. 1997].

⁹⁰Drew, 311.

⁹¹As quoted in "Hillary on the Hill; 120 Questions Later, a Rave Review," In *Health Line* [online], 29 Sept. 1993, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS [25 Feb. 1997].

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Woodward, 190.

⁹⁴Ibid.

dictated a legislative strategy that risked losing everything rather than compromise on her grand moral vision; and waited for the public to rise up and support her. They never did; congress realized eventually that it did not have to pass anything; and like a latter-day Catherine the Great, Hillary found herself reduced to sulking.⁹⁵

In addition to criticism of the first lady's naïveté, the insurance industry waged a war against the initiative, spending an estimated \$300 million to defeat the plan.⁹⁶ In the end, insurance companies and conservatives won the battle over health-care reform. The bill was declared dead, and the Clinton administration's hopes of any kind of reform died along with it. For the purposes of this paper, what is most important is how the two sides interpreted HRC's role first in formulating the health-care proposal and then in its eventual downfall.

The Sinner Side: Blaming the First Lady

Conservatives on the "sinner" side of the HRC myth blamed the failure of health care almost wholly on the first lady, who they maintained should never have been appointed to such a post, since she was an unelected figure with no mandate to wield such power. For such critics, the first lady's leadership was wholly unwarranted. A perfect example of this criticism comes from Richard Grenier, writing in the conservative *Washington Times*. The following lengthy diatribe severely criticizes HRC, traveling down the slippery slope from her handling of health care to her power in the White House and her role in her marriage:

⁹⁵Andrew Sullivan, "Why Health Was Too Hot for Hillary," *Sunday Times* [London] [online], 18 Sept. 1994, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ALLNWS [19 May 1996].

⁹⁶One study by the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania found that half the ads on health-care reform broadcasted by special-interest groups were "unfair, misleading, or false." (Steven Waldman and Bob Cohen, "The Lost Chance," *Newsweek*, 19 Sept. 1994, 73).

Hillary Clinton is of an arrogance and conceit rarely encountered in this world. . . . [While Bill Clinton is willing to compromise], Hillary will veto anything short of the house's Gephardt bill [for full health-care coverage]. Now a careless reading of the U.S. Constitution reveals no mention of the first lady having veto power over legislation. So perhaps we're heading for a new-age constitutional crisis here. Perhaps the Children's Defense Fund, that champion of children's rights, will come out for Chelsea having the veto power also. Why not? Who are we to disregard so cavalierly the political authority of the only Clinton who speaks for the American future?

It's just a tiny bit off, meanwhile, to hear bitter complaints of unprecedented "personal, vicious" attacks from Hillary Clinton, whose fellow anti-Vietnam War activists went charging through the streets of America screaming: "Hey, hey, LBJ! How many kids have you killed today?" By conventional standards, moreover, Hillary is not the consummately virtuous person she seems to think she is. Bill and Hillary, in fact, whether or not they differ ideologically, provide an interesting contrast in styles of deceit. The country decided some time ago that it couldn't trust Bill Clinton around the corner. But Hillary's lying, while more classical, should not be underrated—while remaining well within the traditional framework of the sanctimonious school.⁹⁷

After listing two dozen "brazen lies the first lady has told,"⁹⁸ Grenier goes on:

If this woman is so smart, how come she doesn't know—far from saving money—that there's no way in this world that her grandiose plans for health-care reform are not going to cost a fortune. Keeping people alive who'd otherwise die is wonderful but costly. Extending coverage to the poor, even "transportable" insurance and eliminating exclusion for "pre-existing conditions" all cost money I will not have this woman lecture me on the health-care benefits of welfare states, regarding which she utters an inanity every time she opens her mouth. . . . Hillary, I've noticed, has become rather rancorous of late, as if she wanted to rap us all on the knuckles for not doing what she says. But we're not the slow students, Mrs. Clinton. You're the slow student.

The country's gradually becoming aware that somebody's going to have to pay for all this wondrous health care, whereas Hillary who with her stooges cooked up her vast, complex plan in secret, not only hasn't figured out how to pay for it, she hasn't even figured out that there's anything to pay. Democratic leaders have already emphatically distanced themselves from the president on health care, and if they had their wits about them they'd cut Hillary loose tomorrow.⁹⁹

⁹⁷Richard Grenier, "A Few Words of Advice for the First Lady," *Washington Times*, 17 Aug. 1994, A17.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*

⁹⁹*Ibid.*

These expostulations highlight a number of points. First, they sum up many of the Republican attacks on the health-care proposal in general and HRC's role specifically—that the plan was not realistic, that it cost too much money, and that Mrs. Clinton should not have been in charge of formulating the policy proposal. But perhaps more important than the content of Grenier's criticism is his tone. Grenier does not examine HRC's role rationally; on the contrary, he uses a condescending, sarcastic, and at times even enraged tone in assessing the first lady's role. At times, he sounds as if he has a personal vendetta against HRC.

Consider the attacks on HRC. Grenier does not merely critique health care and the first lady's role in reforming the system; his attacks are fierce and personal: "Hillary Clinton is of an arrogance and conceit rarely encountered in this world. . . . Hillary is not the consummately virtuous person she seems to think she is." Moreover, Grenier ignores HRC's excellent education and her past experience in successfully heading similar task forces while her husband was governor. He does not mention the insurance industry's \$300 million war against Mrs. Clinton's health-care proposal; in fact, Grenier attributes the failure of health care entirely to the first lady. He also attacks the first lady with sarcasm and hyperbole. For example, he discusses a possible "constitutional crisis" involving the first lady's power. This attack repeats another beloved issue of conservatives, who believed that the first lady's powerful role in the government was in fact unconstitutional. He also facetiously proposes giving first daughter Chelsea Clinton veto power, as if the fourteen-year-old could possibly have the experience and education of her mother. Grenier's attack makes a mockery of HRC's background and education, and he equates Mrs. Clinton's intelligence with that of a dependent child. Most of these

attacks are vicious personal attacks against HRC specifically, and they serve more generally as attacks on the type of role she carved out for herself and others who are like her.

Grenier's main criticism stems from the first lady's role in the process—that is, her apparent "veto power" over the legislation. Grenier does not understand how Mrs. Clinton *dare* share any power with her husband. He claims that HRC is not at all "virtuous," a characterization that implies that a strong, powerful woman cannot possibly have a typically-female quality such as virtuousness. Grenier seems quite troubled by the first lady's role: she helped formulate the policy that her husband later hoped to sign; in effect, she was making the real decisions, not he. That kind of power in a woman greatly disturbs Grenier and many other conservative critics.

The overall tone of the piece is so dramatic and sarcastic because Grenier clearly feels threatened by the first lady. For example, he says that "I will not have this woman lecture me on the health-care benefits of welfare states, regarding which she utters an inanity every time she opens her mouth." This statement indicates that Grenier considers the first lady a real threat; she was trying to lecture him and tell him what to do. Grenier feels personally threatened by Mrs. Clinton's power; in fact, at one point, he addresses her as if she were reading the piece: "We're not the slow students, Mrs. Clinton. You're the slow student." Clearly, HRC's attitude and demeanor, along with her unapologetically public role in the White House, personally disturb Grenier, who is responding not only as a reporter, but also as a conservative ideologue. The content and tone of this piece mimic those of many conservative attacks. Conservative critics attacked HRC so viciously

because she was a woman with power who could not be checked and whose status represented a real threat to them personally.

The Saint Side: A Victim of the Vicious Insurance Industry

Liberals and others who subscribed to the saint image of the Hillary Rodham Clinton myth also acknowledged the defeat of health care, but they hardly blamed the first lady. On the contrary, they believed that Mrs. Clinton did an exemplary job in leading the fight for health care reform; one article described the first lady as someone "with an evangelical zeal that has chilled her opponents";¹⁰⁰ Congressman Jim Cooper called her "extraordinarily able, almost visionary . . . sharp as a tack."¹⁰¹ Rather than blaming health-care reform's failure on the first lady, they blamed the insurance industry's barrage of advertisements and the political climate in Washington. In fact, HRC directly contributed to this conclusion by blaming the special-interest groups for the defeat of the legislation.¹⁰² At one point, the first lady said that no one should "underestimate the capacity of special interest groups to scare people."¹⁰³

The liberal explanation for the defeat of health care, like the conservative one, moved beyond the policy itself to the role of the ultimate inside player, the first lady. While conservatives rebuked HRC's power, calling her in effect a "co-president," liberals celebrated that power and recognized that the power structure in Washington (and, for

¹⁰⁰Maurice Weaver, "Mrs. Clinton's Reform Drive Set to Trigger 'a Dirty War,'" *Daily Telegraph*, 1 June 1993, 14.

¹⁰¹Judy Keep and Judi Hasson, "First Lady Swaying the Skeptics / Health Plan's Still Out, But She's Winning Rave Reviews, *USA Today*, 23 June 1993, 6A.

¹⁰²Waldman and Cohn, 73.

¹⁰³Weaver, 14.

that matter, in the United States) was not yet ready to handle a qualified and intelligent woman taking charge of such a crucial issue. As one reporter put it:

It's Hillary Clinton who will get most of the blame, partly because she headed the team that drew up the health reform proposal, but mostly because she had the unmitigated audacity to be a woman willing to wield power once she got hold of it.

"Hillary," says one member of the first lady's staff, "has been thrown to the dogs, and no one in the new regime here is going to lift a finger to defend her."¹⁰⁴

Just as conservatives thought of HRC as only one example of many powerful women, so did liberals. Just as conservatives felt a personal stake in the debate about the first lady's role in health care, so did liberals. By 1994, when health care was declared dead, HRC was not just a woman going about her life. She had become an icon, a woman who represented a much larger debate in society about the role of women with such power. As we shall see, in the coming years, both liberals and conservatives took the ensuing debates over HRC very seriously and oftentimes personally; the stakes were high, and the outcome of the debate would greatly affect American society.

¹⁰⁴Michael Moran, "The Humiliation of Hillary," *Evening Standard*, 29 Sept. 1994, 13.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CLINTON SCANDALS

All the things that marked the excess of the 1980s are things which we spoke out against. I think it's a pretty long stretch to say that the decisions that we made to try to create some financial security for our family and make some investments came anywhere near there.

—Hillary Rodham Clinton¹⁰⁵

The only insecurity I have is the media. Because a misinterpretation by the media is never corrected. They'll misinterpret a quote and say, "I'm sorry." But what about the people who read it?

—Michael Jordan¹⁰⁶

By the end of 1994, today's "saint or sinner" Hillary Rodham Clinton myth began to solidify, with half the country celebrating her rejection of traditional gender roles and the other half vehemently opposing it. The myth was further refined by the advent of a

¹⁰⁵As quoted in Pat Buchanan and Michael Kinsley, "Taking a Stand" [television transcript], in *CNN News: Crossfire*, 22 April 1994, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ALLNWS [19 May 1996].

¹⁰⁶As quoted in Gene Lyons and the Editors of *Harper's Magazine*, *Fool for Scandal: How the Media Invented Whitewater* (New York: Franklin Square Press, 1996), 1.

series of scandals including, in the words of one reporter, "Whitewatergate, Bimbogate, Travelgate, Haircutgate, Chickengate, Futuresgate, Troopergate, and any of the myriad gate-suffixed scandals drifting up to Washington like some Arkansan marsh-gas."¹⁰⁷ The "gate" suffix represented an attempt by conservative critics and the media to make "the Clinton scandals" seem as corrupt as the Watergate affair, the constitutional crisis of the 1970s. However, as the above reporter indicated, journalists and critics took the "gate" suffix a bit far, and by the end of Bill Clinton's first term in office, the suffix had become hackneyed and meaningless. Nevertheless, the Clinton scandals did indeed profoundly affect the portrayal of the first lady. Perhaps the best way to begin to explain how these incidents influenced the development of the HRC myth is first to explain the undisputed facts in the major scandals. And there is no better place to begin than with Whitewater, the failed land deal from the 1970s that would haunt the Clintons 20 years later with charges of unethical behavior and violations of conflict-of-interest laws.

A Brief Explanation of the Clinton Scandals

Whitewater

The Whitewater affair began in 1978, just two months before Bill Clinton took office as governor of Arkansas. The deal involved the Clintons and their friends Jim and Susan McDougal, whom Bill Clinton knew through the Arkansas governor's office. The idea of Whitewater was simple: the two couples formed the Whitewater Development Corporation and bought 230.4 acres of undeveloped land along the White River in the

¹⁰⁷Ann Leslie, "Why Americans Have Come to Loathe Their Fearsome First Lady; Something About Her Produces a Fierce Rage in People. Even Other Women Hate Her," *Daily Mail*, 19 Dec. 1994, 14.

Ozarks, an area in north-central Arkansas. They then subdivided that land into 42 lots and planned to sell them individually; the McDougals estimated that they would make profits of some \$250,000.¹⁰⁸

To pay for the land, the Clintons and the McDougals took out a \$20,000 loan from the Union National Bank of Little Rock as a down payment, and they borrowed \$182,000 from Citizens Bank and Trust of Floppen, Arkansas, to buy the property. The investors hoped to pay off the interest and make money by selling off the individual lots of land. Unfortunately for them, the Arkansas real estate market quickly went downhill, and interest rates for land purchases increased from 8 to 18 percent.¹⁰⁹ Soon, the four partners were making interest payments from their own money, not their profits; by the mid-1980s, the Clintons had lost tens of thousands of dollars.¹¹⁰ These are the basic ingredients of Whitewater; as we shall see, beyond these, conservatives and liberals disagree as to the "facts." In fact, the truth was so muddled that in August 1995, Senator Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY) began Whitewater hearings. After one year and \$20 million spent, the committee seemed no closer to ascertaining what the facts were than when it had started.

Cattlegate

Another alleged scandal was so-called Cattlegate or, as some conservatives called it, "Hillarygate." This scandal, which took place in 1978, involved Hillary Rodham Clinton's suspiciously lucrative commodity trading with a company called Refco. Mrs.

¹⁰⁸Martin Gross, *The Great Whitewater Fiasco: An American Tale of Money, Power, and Politics* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1994), 14.

¹⁰⁹David Maraniss, *First in His Class: The Biography of Bill Clinton* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 374.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*

Clinton's contact was Jim Blair, the chief outside attorney for Tyson Foods, the world's largest poultry company. Blair told Mrs. Clinton to open an account with Refco and use his broker, Robert "Red" Bone, and he allegedly promised to help Mrs. Clinton make all her future trades.¹¹¹

The first lady of Arkansas first invested \$1,000; by the end of the first day, she had made \$5,300, and within one year she had made \$99,537.¹¹² According to one conservative critic, Mrs. Clinton's profit was statistically impossible if she had followed the official rules of the trade; she would have had to invest \$14,400 to make that much money.¹¹³ White house officials insisted that Blair himself had made thirty out of thirty-two trades for HRC; nevertheless, some believed that she received special treatment. As conservative Martin Gross has said, there was a "suspicion that someone cut a lot of corners to steer Bill and Hillary to nearly \$100,000 in commodities gains."¹¹⁴

Travelgate

The "Travelgate" affair came to light in May 1994, when White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers announced that seven permanent workers in the White House Travel Office had been fired because of "financial mismanagement" and "shoddy accounting procedures."¹¹⁵ Other charges against the group involved cashing \$18,000 in checks with no record, as well as not asking for competitive bidding for chartered flights that carried the press corps.¹¹⁶ The seven workers, who included Billy Dale, the head of

¹¹¹Gross, 8.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 9.

¹¹⁵As quoted in Drew, 174.

¹¹⁶Drew, 175.

the travel office, were fired without a hearing. Myers announced that Catherine Cornelius, Bill Clinton's 25-year-old cousin from Little Rock, would take over the office. Until Cornelius arrived, travel arrangements would be handled by World Wide Travel, Inc., a Little Rock travel agency that had worked with the Clinton/Gore campaign. This change in itself was considered scandalous, as charges of nepotism arose; however, the situation soon worsened as it was revealed that the first lady had a key role in the firings. According to Washington journalist Elizabeth Drew, "the picture that was drawn [of HRC by the media] was of cronyism and looseness with the truth."¹¹⁷

Vince Foster's Death

The final aspect of the Clinton scandals that this paper will review is the death of White House attorney Vincent Foster, a longtime friend of the Clintons and a colleague of HRC. On 20 July 1993, Foster was found dead beside a Civil War cannon in Fort Marcy Park, Virginia. He died of an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. Foster had the names of two Washington psychiatrists in his pocket and recently had been prescribed an antidepressant medication.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, White House Chief of Staff Mack McLarty, who was a close friend of Foster's, was mystified by the apparent suicide: "Try as we might, all of our reason, all of rationality, all of our logic, can never answer the questions raised by such a death."¹¹⁹ This quotation provided ample ammunition for conservative talk-show hosts and others to perpetuate conspiracy theories about a murder. For example, Rush Limbaugh made the following claim on

¹¹⁷Drew, 179.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, 255.

¹¹⁹As quoted in Drew, 253.

several occasions: "Vince Foster was *murdered* in an apartment owned by Hillary Clinton, and the body was then taken to Fort Marcy Park. . . . A bogus crime scene" was designed to make it look like a suicide.¹²⁰ Others claimed that Foster had been having an affair with the first lady.¹²¹

Conspiracy theories also surfaced that raised questions about how Mrs. Clinton and members of her staff handled Foster's office after his death. The office was not sealed off until 10:15 the morning after his death. The night of the suicide, lawyer Bernard Nussbaum, HRC's chief of staff Maggie Williams, and Patsy Thomason, all close confidantes of the first lady, entered Foster's office allegedly to look for a suicide note, but they stayed in the office for two hours.¹²² They removed materials from Foster's desk and gave most of the files to the FBI. However, the files that included information on the Clintons' personal affairs were secretly sent to the Clintons' personal attorney in Washington. Conservatives said that the White House was trying to cover up its actions on the night of the alleged suicide.

In addition, critics rebuked the White House for its handling of a note written by Foster, in which he declared that "I was not meant for the job or the spotlight of public life in Washington. Here ruining people is considered sport."¹²³ The note was found ripped into 27 pieces a week after Foster's suicide, with one missing piece later found in Foster's briefcase. The White House offered numerous explanations for the delay in making the note public; David Gergen claimed that officials had wanted to show the note

¹²⁰As quoted in Lyons, 7.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Drew, 257.

¹²³As quoted by Drew, 258.

to Foster's wife first, but the public remained suspect as conservatives tried to link Mrs. Clinton directly to Vince Foster's death.

The Conservative Interpretation of Whitewater

Martin Gross's *The Great Whitewater Fiasco*

While many conservative commentators discussed the implications of Whitewater and the other Clinton scandals, this section will focus specifically on conservative journalist Martin Gross's book *The Great Whitewater Fiasco: An American Tale of Money, Power, and Politics*.¹²⁴ The book begins by comparing the Clinton scandals to a Shakespearean drama epitomizing "politics as usual. It illustrates the destructive alliance of money and government that increasingly plagues our democracy. . . . It is the epitome of how too many politicians in too many towns, Washington included, confuse their own good with the good of the people."¹²⁵ He describes HRC, a key character in the drama, as "wife, right hand, and left hand, aide to and manager of Bill Clinton."¹²⁶ Gross says that Whitewater is "important because it represents American politics as *usual*. It's a case of corruption, or near corruption, of conflict-of-interest, of abuse of ethics by a large number of people in public life. . . . Whitewater (and its parallel tales) is perhaps the most instructive case in the juxtaposition of money, power, hubris, and politics in recent times."¹²⁷

¹²⁴Another conservative account of the Whitewater affair is James Stewart's *Blood Sport: The President and His Adversaries* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996). This section will focus on Gross's book, however, because it more clearly illustrates the conservative interpretation of Mrs. Clinton's role in "the Clinton scandals."

¹²⁵Gross, from the back cover of *The Great Whitewater Fiasco*.

¹²⁶Gross, ix.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, 19-20, 23.

Gross, like many other conservative critics, deconstructs the Whitewater affair (and, for that matter, the myriad other scandals in the Clinton administration) differently from others; his version of "the facts" *seem* different from the mainstream media's version.¹²⁸ According to Gross, Whitewater, like Watergate, represents American political corruption at its worst. He cites the following laundry list of what he considered egregious violations of the public interest on the part of both Bill and Hillary Clinton: bank loans made without collateral, campaign contributions and loans paid with political favors, unwarranted appointments, misuse and theft of federal guaranteed funds, deals with lobbyists against the public interest, conflicts-of-interest in the legal and banking worlds, political "slush funds" used to lobby congress, unethical behavior by government agencies, attempts to stifle investigations, abuse of banking laws, and perhaps worst of all, White House cover-ups.¹²⁹

It would be difficult to underestimate the number of times that Gross fingers Mrs. Clinton for her egregious behavior in the Whitewater affair. Gross describes HRC as a corrupt wife, a woman obsessed with making monetary gains no matter what the price. For example, Gross examines the \$30,000 loan that Mrs. Clinton personally took out in order for the Whitewater Development Corporation to buy a model house; he notes that HRC herself was given the deed for the house and the land; but that Whitewater, not she, regularly paid the principal and interest on the first lady's personal loan.¹³⁰ When the lot

¹²⁸I use the word "seem" here because on many occasions, Gross does not actually dispute the mainstream media's version of "facts" in Whitewater; rather, he uses sarcasm, innuendo, and other rhetorical devices to make his point. Examples of this distortion abound; at one point, he makes the following comment about HRC's name being advertised in the Rose Law Firm submissions: "only the first clue to her real role, which was probably managing the whole operation." (Gross, 112). This is only one of myriad examples of Gross making allegations with no proof.

¹²⁹Gross, 23-4.

¹³⁰Ibid., 76.

was eventually sold through an installment contract, Mrs. Clinton continued to hold the deed to the land while she personally pocketed \$3,000.¹³¹ Gross concludes that throughout these scandals, HRC was obsessed with money and willingly compromised the public interests for her personal financial gain.

Gross similarly paints a grim picture of the connection among Madison Savings and Loan, a bank owned by James McDougal that was intricately involved in the Whitewater affair; the Rose Law Firm, where HRC worked; and the Arkansas's Governor's Office, where Bill Clinton was governor. Gross charges that Madison was part of "an S&L empire, the star of which was Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan of Little Rock, the vehicle behind the Whitewater tale."¹³² HRC was the Rose lawyer doing work for Madison;¹³³ meanwhile, Madison was loaning money to Whitewater and was receiving special treatment from the Clinton gubernatorial administration. According to Gross, Madison was issuing bad loans and needed to be shut down, but the Clintons and the McDougals fought to delay its closure, costing the taxpayers a total of \$68 million.¹³⁴

Gross clearly blames Mrs. Clinton for the Madison debacle: "Hillary had managed to waste the taxpayers' money."¹³⁵ But he goes beyond this claim, describing the first lady as a vindictive, heartless woman with no interest in the public good. For example, he states that

¹³¹Gross, 76.

¹³²*Ibid.*, 87.

¹³³According to Gross, Mrs. Clinton and her husband were personally responsible for arranging for the \$2,000/month retainer that Madison gave to the Rose Law Firm. He says that Mrs. Clinton clearly advertised her name in these Rose submissions, which was "one the first clue to her real role, which was probably managing the whole operation." (Gross, 111-112).

¹³⁴Gross, 107.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, 151.

today, Hillary's sixth sense has been injured by the hubris that's emerged with her unprecedented new power and by the defensiveness she has picked up in the White House trenches—one reminiscent of the atmosphere of the Nixon years.

Her current political failings seem to come from her frustrations, especially her propensity to be a "control freak," as modern parlance terms it. With her brains and her golden girl history of being in charge of whatever she wanted, she is confused by not being able to manipulate events as she used to.¹³⁶

Gross's book concludes by explaining that the White House has to reorganize itself completely in order to avoid the myriad controversies surrounding it. He suggests a new plan for the White House, one that includes a provision to "eliminate spouses' conflicted role in government."¹³⁷ He says that HRC "has invented a new concept—political partnership—an idea not mentioned in the Constitution or in any congressional legislation."¹³⁸ Gross is appalled by the notion of a political partnership, and he cannot believe that the first lady, whom he believes belongs in the East Wing of the White House, has a staff of thirteen, including a chief of staff. He estimates her expense to taxpayers at \$2 million.¹³⁹ He says that "Hillary has stepped over the line [that modern first ladies have set as a boundary]."¹⁴⁰ Gross suggests that congress enact legislation to limit her role, and "since Hillary's role in the administration is basically nonfeminist (based on marriage, not true appointment or election), it should be handled by new regulations."¹⁴¹ The legislation Gross demands that congress enact includes the following:

An equitable appropriation from congress would be a staff of three for the first lady, with offices not in the West Wing but in the White House residence. Along with that a stated allowance for travel, etc. None of her staff should be permitted to attend any White House meetings involving the governance of any nation, as Hillary's staff now does. . . . Period.

¹³⁶Gross, 158.

¹³⁷Gross, 284

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹Ibid., 285.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 287.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

On the surface, Gross seems to reaffirm a traditional role for the first lady—if a few staffers were good enough for Barbara Bush, then why should Hillary Rodham Clinton have a staff of thirteen? On a deeper level, however, Gross's critique of the first lady's audacity in wielding so much power so publicly actually serves to put down all women of power. Gross's critique forces Mrs. Clinton into a double bind: he criticizes her as a "nonfeminist" because she has gained her power through marriage,¹⁴² but also he criticizes her role in the White House because it crosses the boundaries set by more traditional first ladies such as Mamie Eisenhower and Barbara Bush. Gross implies that a powerful woman such as HRC should not mix her marriage with her work; they are like oil and water. He suggests that a woman must choose between the two, and he sees an inherent conflict in Mrs. Clinton, who intertwines her marriage and her career.

William Safire's "Congenital Liar" Comment

Mrs. Clinton also came under heavy attack from conservative *New York Times* columnist Bill Safire, who saw her role in the Clinton scandals as atrocious. According to Safire:

Americans of all political persuasions are coming to the sad realization that our first lady—a woman of undoubted talents who was a role model for many in her generation—is a congenital liar.

Drip by drip, like Whitewater torture, the case is being made that she is compelled to mislead, and to ensnare her subordinates and friends in a web of deceit.¹⁴³

¹⁴²This point in itself is highly dubious. It is true that Mrs. Clinton is married to the president; however, she also is a highly intelligent woman who has a great deal of experience on the policy issues to which she is assigned. Without this knowledge and experience, she undoubtedly would not wield so much power, no matter who her husband is.

¹⁴³William Safire, "Blizzard of Lies," *New York Times*, 8 Jan. 1996, A27.

Safire backs up his comments by citing three of the Clinton scandals—Cattlegate, Travelgate, and Vince Foster's suicide. In the commodity trading scheme, he says that "as the governor's wife she profited corruptly. . . . She [later] lied for a good reason: to admit otherwise would be to confess taking . . . a \$100,000 bribe."¹⁴⁴ Safire also maintains that

the abuse of presidential power known as Travelgate elicited another series of lies. . . . We now know, from a memo long concealed from investigators, that there would be 'hell to pay' if the furious first lady's desires were scorned. . . . Again, she lied with good reason: to avoid being identified as a vindictive political power player who used the FBI to ruin the lives of people standing in the way of juicy patronage.¹⁴⁵

Finally, Safire says that with regards to how Mrs. Clinton and her staff handled Vince Foster's office search after he committed suicide, Mrs. Clinton's "closest friends and aides, under oath, have been blatantly disremembering this likely obstruction of justice, and may have to pay for supporting Hillary's lie with jail terms."¹⁴⁶ Like Gross, Safire provides little evidence for his insinuations. Nevertheless, the media seized his comments rabidity and a feeding frenzy ensued.

Safire's column sparked a great deal of debate in Washington: White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry said that the president wished he could deliver "a more forceful response to Mr. Safire's nose."¹⁴⁷ Journalists wrote thousands of articles on Safire's comment and the president's reaction. Safire himself wrote three subsequent columns on the subject. One justified his use of the word "congenital," saying that he "rejected habitual, inveterate, and chronic as too mild, baldfaced as too trite and pathological as too severe; congenital, with its sense of 'innate' and connotation of 'continual,' . . . seemed just

¹⁴⁴Safire, "Blizzard," A27.

¹⁴⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷As quoted in William Safire, "President as Pugilist," *New York Times*, 11 Jan. 1996, A25.

right."¹⁴⁸ Safire's unapologetic and sarcastic tone in this column mocks the first lady; furthermore, he argues that she is untrustworthy, an unelected, unconfirmed, un-fireable official whose "congenital lying" will never be punished. Like Gross's attacks on HRC, Safire contends that Mrs. Clinton is not only powerful but also power-hungry and corrupt; she wields too much power to be trusted.

Other Conservative Critiques of HRC

While Gross's book and Safire's columns largely criticized the first lady because of the intricate details of Whitewater and the various gate-suffixed scandals, other critics were more general in their critiques of the first lady. They used the scandals to segue into discussions of HRC's demeanor and her role in the White House and in her marriage. Tony Snow, a right-leaning columnist for the *Detroit News*, appeared on *Crossfire* to tell Americans that

the simple account of Hillary Rodham Clinton's participation in the commodities deal has changed a half dozen times in the last week. This is a family that has kept extraordinarily scrupulous records of its taxes over the years, so scrupulous that if you look back through past returns, you will find thank-you notes from churches where the Clintons have given a gift of assorted cookies and it's been taken away from their taxes. They have documented every place where they can trim down their taxes, which is the American way, but I don't buy the sloppiness excuse. This is an administration that has hid stuff that looks embarrassing for a long period of time and now has sent it off to the special prosecutor.¹⁴⁹

Snow continued, describing the first lady in the worst possible light. For example, when he was questioned about a suspicious \$6,000 deduction made by the Clintons in the 1980s, he stated:

¹⁴⁸William Safire, "On Language; Congenital, Liar, Punch," *New York Times*, 4 Feb. 1996, 18.

¹⁴⁹"The Hillary Defense," [television transcript], in *CNN News: Crossfire*, 12 April 1994, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ALLNWS [19 May 1996].

I really don't have any idea whether they did [purposefully avoid paying the \$6,000 in taxes] or not. I mean, it's kind of interesting because Leona Helmsley became a laughingstock around the United States for failing to pay 1 percent of her income taxes. . . .¹⁵⁰

That Snow would compare Hillary Rodham Clinton with Leona Helmsley, one of the most hated women in American society, shows how powerful and mean-spirited Snow's argument is.¹⁵¹ Indeed, Snow, Gross and other conservatives considered Hillary Rodham Clinton a true sinner in the Whitewater land deal. They portrayed her in the most negative possible light, explicitly tying her role in Whitewater to her current controversial role as first lady.

Many conservative attacks, such as Safire's "congenital liar" characterization, focused on Mrs. Clinton's alleged hypocrisy and lying. One reporter said that "truthfulness is at stake. The Clintons campaigned against greed and against corner-cutting, fast-buck artists. However, during the 'greed decade,' Hillary Rodham Clinton piled up \$1 million in investment and income for her family. . . . Reagan would be proud."¹⁵² Another reporter stated:

"We're not about money," Hillary Clinton was quoted as saying during the campaign, a statement we now recognize as a gigantic exercise in self-delusion. The first lady's foray into the tricky commodities market reportedly resulted in a 100-to-1 return (a \$100,000 gain on a \$1,000 investment), which would be phenomenal for a veteran player, and is especially commendable for a first-timer.

Not a money person? Hillary could have been named rookie of the year. She's good—very good.

For all their false humility, the Clintons have had little trouble multiplying their dollars. According to one review of their late 1970s tax returns, the Clintons'

¹⁵⁰"The Hillary Defense," [television transcript], in *CNN News: Crossfire*, 12 April 1994, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ALLNWS [19 May 1996].

¹⁵¹In fact, Leona Helmsley parallels HRC because she is hated for being overly-powerful and domineering in her husband's business interests. This direct comparison helped frame conservative attacks of the first lady as a woman who had too much influence on his husband and his political deals.

¹⁵²Paul Craig Roberts, as quoted in David Shribman, "Opinion Roundup in the Wake of Whitewater," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 13 April 1994, A13.

income rose about 280 percent over three years. There's the sort of success story to make Ronald Reagan weep with joy.¹⁵³

Some right-wing portraits of the first lady went beyond verbal attacks to visual ones as well. For example, the *Washington Post* analyzed the cover of *TIME* magazine that featured an excerpt from *Blood Sport*, the controversial book by James Stewart that chronicled the Clinton scandals. The *Post* said that the magazine

features a cover photo of Hillary Rodham Clinton looking like a gothic fiend. At first glance, she's a vampire—ghastly white skin, scarlet lips, teeth slightly bared—coming at us all cloaked in black. In that eternal cliché of suggested guilt, her glance is averted. But study the image for a minute, and you'll notice that the "M" in "TIME" forms two perfect horns on the first lady's head. This is no mere bloodsucker: It's Satanella.¹⁵⁴

This cover literally portrayed the first lady as a sinner, a devil incarnate. She is no victim; on the contrary, she is someone to be feared, a woman whose past actions and current behavior made her evil, certainly not someone to be trusted.

Attacks such as these reinforced the sinner image by focusing on the first lady's alleged lies and her controversial role as the financial investor in the family. Implicitly, however, conservative critics suggested much more: By focusing on Mrs. Clinton's role as the family moneymaker, a woman obsessed with investments and accruing money and power, they portrayed her in a masculine light. HRC was seen as taking on roles typically associated with the male's sphere (moneymaker, investor, etc.). Much more than her husband, Mrs. Clinton was seen as "wearing the pants in the family"; that is, HRC seemed as if she was in charge of her family, something that stereotypically was left to the husband in a marriage.

¹⁵³Dave Shiftlett, as quoted in David Shribman, "Opinion Roundup in the Wake of Whitewater," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 13 April 1994, A13.

¹⁵⁴Excerpt from the *Washington Post*, as quoted in David Brock, *The Seduction of Hillary Rodham* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 183-4.

The Liberal Interpretation of Whitewater

Gene Lyons's *Fools for Scandal*

While conservatives bitterly attacked Hillary Rodham Clinton for her questionable commodity trading, her role in Whitewater and the travel office firings, her handling of the Vince Foster suicide, and everything from being an unelected co-president to being a "congenital liar," liberals defended the first lady as a victim of the media and conservatives. Liberals claimed that conservatives were deliberately trying to taint Americans' image of HRC. Perhaps the best summary of the liberal point of view comes from Gene Lyons and the editors of *Harper's* magazine in the book *Fools for Scandal: How the Media Invented Whitewater*. In this book, Lyons argues that in their coverage of the Whitewater affair, the media created a scandal out of nothing and left the Clintons as victims. Lyons states that

Whitewater and what Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich calls "the Clinton scandals" . . . portray the entire state of Arkansas as a veritable American Transylvania: a dark, mysterious netherworld populated by a mob of ignorant peasants and presided over by a half-dozen corrupt tycoons in collusion with the Clintons as the Count and Countess Dracula. . . . So why should you care about Arkansas's hurt feelings? Because you are being duped as surely as Twain's fictional Arkansas rustics who lined up to buy tickets to *The Royal Nonesuch*. Almost everything you may think you know about Bill and Hillary Clinton, the presidential libido, and the couple's allegedly seamy business dealings back in darkest Arkansas—from Gennifer Flowers to the entire Whitewater affair—rests on 'facts' that are somewhere between highly dubious and demonstrably false. Far from being the result of muckraking reporting by a vigorous and independent press, what 'the Clinton scandals' amount to is possibly the most politically charged case of journalistic malpractice in recent American history. . . . [Whitewater is] the result of one of the nastiest and most successful political "dirty tricks" campaigns in recent Americans history.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵Lyons, 4-5.

Lyons calls Whitewater "the granddaddy of all the wildly inaccurate stories to come out of Arkansas during the Clinton presidency."¹⁵⁶ To prove his case, he cites myriad examples of innuendo and suspicion of wrongdoing by the first lady and others, examples that he claims are not grounded in fact.

One example Lyons uses is the "congenital liar" characterization in Bill Safire's *New York Times* column. Lyons deconstructs one of Safire's columns in which the columnist stated: "Why the White House cover up? For good reason: The [Rose Law Firm billing] records show Hillary Clinton was lying when she denied actively representing a criminal enterprise known as Madison S&L."¹⁵⁷ Lyons refutes this comment by pointing to an HRC quotation from a press conference. According to Lyons, the first lady never denied representing Madison; she merely denied heavy involvement in the account. She said that

I arranged that the firm would be paid a \$2,000 a month retainer. And that was ordinary and customary. That would be billed against, unlike retainers at some really big law firms that if you pay the retainer they keep it, no matter whether they do any work for you. This was really an advance against billing. . . . Your attorney, the young bank officer did all the work and the letter was sent. But because I was what we called the billing attorney—in other words, I had to send the bill to get the payment made—my name was put on the bottom of the letter. It was not an area that I practiced in. It was not an area that I really know anything, to speak of, about.¹⁵⁸

Lyons concludes this example by rhetorically asking "had the first lady, as Safire alleged, lied about representing Madison? Not at all."¹⁵⁹

Lyons deconstructs Jeff Gerth's *New York Times* article that broke the Whitewater story in December 1993 in a similar manner. Lyons rhetorically wonders:

¹⁵⁶Lyons, 24.

¹⁵⁷As quoted in Lyons, 26.

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

¹⁵⁹Lyons, 26.

"How much corruption, after all, was apt to be found in a development whose roads remained unpaved some sixteen years after Bill and Hillary Clinton invested in it?"¹⁶⁰ Lyons claims that while Gerth's article was competently researched and accurate on the surface, it contained many half-truths that gave the story an extremely negative connotation. For example, Lyons cites Gerth's opening line: "Bill Clinton and his wife were business partners with the owner of a failing Savings and Loan Association that was subject to state regulation early in his tenure as governor of Arkansas, records show."¹⁶¹ Lyons says that

while technically factual, Gerth's lead appears calculated to obscure at least as much as it reveals. A simple narrative chronology—adding the "when" to the "who" and the "what"—would have made the Whitewater deal look far less suspicious. After all, how could Bill Clinton have known in 1978 that McDougal would buy a controlling interest in an S&L in 1983? How could either man have anticipated the great S&L meltdown of the 1980s? Having failed to guess the future, what should the Clintons have done with their Whitewater investment? Could a buyer have been found in, say, 1984 to relieve them of their share of a losing proposition? What ethical questions might *that* have raised ten years later? These are the kinds of questions reporters are supposed to ask themselves before raising the scandal flag.¹⁶²

For Lyons, this story, the first of what became myriad investigations into HRC's investments throughout the 1970s, did not contain all of the facts. Lyons feels that these omissions were intentional, close to a conspiracy.¹⁶³ The media were so wrapped up in building an exciting story that they conveniently left out some of the most important details.

¹⁶⁰Lyons, 30-31.

¹⁶¹As quoted in Lyons, 33.

¹⁶²Lyons, 33.

¹⁶³Gerth points to a record of Beverly Bassett Schaefer's letter to Jeff Gerth claiming that "I provided you with a detailed account in writing of the facts. This information was ignored and, instead, you based your story on the word of a mentally ill man [Jim McDougal] I have never met and documents which you admitted to me on the telephone on February 26, 1992, were incomplete." (Lyons, 40-41).

Lyons similarly analyzes and debunks other media accounts of Whitewater and the Clinton scandals. At one point, he expresses his disbelief that Jeff Gerth and Stephen Engelberg would allege a quid pro quo between Hillary Rodham Clinton and Jim McDougal at an April 1985 political fundraiser held by McDougal. Lyons uses a sarcastic tone to refute the charge:

You might wonder why, if federal auditors had supposedly pronounced Madison Guaranty insolvent in 1984, they were discussing a stock issue in April 1985, but mere logic fades when the press has a political quarry like the first lady caught in the crosshairs. . . . Regardless of Hillary Rodham Clinton's motives, for her to have ventured anywhere near Madison in any capacity would have been a damn fool thing to do. But the fact is that the first lady didn't "argue" anything "before state regulators" [as Gerth and Engelberg alleged]. Nor did anyone. There were no hearings held and no formal application [was] filed. Rather, her name appeared at the bottom of a letter written by a junior member of the Rose Law Firm expressing the opinion that it would be permissible under state law for Madison Guaranty to make a preferred stock offering.¹⁶⁴

Lyons continues to portray HRC as a victim when he discusses a *New York Times* "corrections" piece that stated that "an article on March 18 [1994] about Hillary Rodham Clinton's commodity trades misstated benefits that the Tyson Foods company received from the state of Arkansas. Tyson did not receive \$9 million in loans from the state; the company did benefit from at least \$7 million in state tax credits, according to a Tyson spokesman."¹⁶⁵ Lyons furiously replies that

in the journalistic equivalent of double jeopardy, *Times* editors, having convicted Hillary Clinton on a spurious charge, decided she was still guilty, but of a *new* charge: helping Tyson Foods to \$7 million in tax credits. No sooner had Hillary Clinton held her April 22, 1994, press conference on Whitewater-related issues than the *Times* scolded that the first lady's performance had been smooth but cleverly evasive.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴Lyons, 43-44.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 51.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 52.

The examples go on and on about Whitewater; Lyons painstakingly deconstructs every minute detail that the conservatives allegedly blew out of proportion to make a scandal out of what amounted to a failed investment. He similarly deconstructs the other Clinton "scandals," emphasizing that the media were so wound up in finding the big, exciting story that they missed the truth. For example, he discusses the conservative allegations that Vince Foster was murdered:

*Newsweek's Michael Isikoff summed up the press pack's mentality in a PBS interview with Charlie Rose in July 1995. "Whitewater started to take off as an issue in December 1993 [with the news] that Whitewater documents were spirited out of Foster's office in the hours after his death by top White House aides [Lyons's emphasis]. . . . No single allegation seemed more troubling or suspicious than to somehow link Foster's death to Whitewater. You know, is there any possibility that he was so worried about Whitewater that he killed himself because he was so fearful about some damaging disclosure? Or is it even worse than that? Some people believe that Foster was murdered, even though there's really no evidence of that."*¹⁶⁷

Of course, some people also believe in leprechauns, sex perverts from outer space, and Pat Robertson's ability to alter the path of hurricanes through prayer. Indeed, Robertson continues to flog the conspiracy theory of Foster's death on the *700 Club*. It only underscore's Isikoff's irresponsibility to point out that his remarks were made in July 1995, *more than a year after* independent council Robert Fiske's report ruling that there was no evidence linking Foster's death to Whitewater.¹⁶⁸

Again and again, Lyons refutes the media's interpretation of the Clinton scandals, portraying Mrs. Clinton as an innocent victim of a vicious press corps that was, in the words of one journalist, "committed to finding something wrong."¹⁶⁹ This liberal portrayal fits in with the image of the first lady as a saint, a victim of outside forces trying to put her down. For liberals like Lyons, the first lady was being victimized by the media and conservatives precisely because she was a woman who unapologetically

¹⁶⁷As quoted in Lyons, 64-65.

¹⁶⁸Lyons, 65.

¹⁶⁹Anthony Lewis, as quoted in Lyons, 141.

showed her power and intelligence. She was a saint, a woman being forced to endure cruel, vicious, and, most important, untrue attacks about her past and present power.

David Brock's *The Seduction of Hillary Rodham*

Surprisingly, another "liberal" assessment of the first lady's role in the Whitewater affair came from David Brock, the conservative reporter who broke the "Troopergate" scandal in 1994, in which Bill Clinton allegedly used Arkansas state troopers to help him in his romantic pursuits and marital infidelity. Brock's book, *The Seduction of Hillary Rodham*, was expected to be the true conservative's dream, an examination of the "sinner" side of the first lady. The book, however, greatly disappointed conservatives, since it actually defends HRC, portraying her as a victim of her husband's exploits. In the book, Brock argues that Whitewater was a serious issue, but that Mrs. Clinton was not the one to blame. Rather, her husband was at fault, but she was so controversial that the American people made her an easy target.

While Gene Lyons implies that there was some kind of media conspiracy linked Mrs. Clinton to Whitewater, David Brock explicitly states that Republicans were engaged in "a witch hunt"¹⁷⁰ to link the first lady to the scandal. He quotes an anonymous Senate Whitewater Committee lawyer, who said that he was planning to "kick Hillary's ass."¹⁷¹ According to Brock, another Republican aide reportedly would say anything to discredit Susan Thomases and Maggie Williams, friends of the first lady who were involved in the clearing of Vince Foster's office after his suicide: "You want me to call them lying bitches,

¹⁷⁰Brock, *Seduction*, x.

¹⁷¹Brock, *Seduction*, x.

I'll call them lying bitches."¹⁷² Brock asserts that there was a Republican obsession with linking HRC to Whitewater; Senator Rod Grams (R-MN) reportedly said "well, we know Hillary is a pivotal player in this [Whitewater]. . . . She is at the heart of this whole investigation. I mean, everything kind of runs through her office and out of her office."¹⁷³

Brock also focuses on refuting Republican attacks on the first lady; he claims that Mrs. Clinton "had not exactly been the dazzling super-lawyer that national media reports have universally described."¹⁷⁴ Brock argues that the media should have focused on Bill Clinton instead of his wife, for he was the one who really did have control of the finances.

Brock says that

by focusing on Hillary's supposed venality, critics . . . overlooked the more salient question of whether she had allowed her career as a lawyer to become an appendage of the political co-candidacy. . . . Hillary's representation of Madison Savings and Loan . . . fits her pattern of stepping in to protect Bill's political interests rather than to make money.

Brock's account not only disputes the conservative interpretation of HRC's involvement in Whitewater, but also it questions the entire conservative portrayal of the first lady. Brock rejects the negative conservative image of Hillary Rodham Clinton as the breadwinner and moneymaker; he believes that she has made sacrifices for her husband. He states his feelings plainly and simply when he writes that "while the view of Bill as inept in dealing with money is widely accepted, Hillary's professed ignorance of Whitewater's finances and her apparent willingness to let someone else act in her name does not seem to square with her image as a deal-oriented lawyer and hard-driving task-master."¹⁷⁵ For Brock and liberals, the press used a double standard for Bill Clinton and

¹⁷²Ibid.

¹⁷³Ibid., 183.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 91.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., 198.

his wife. The media stressed the image of HRC as a breadwinner to define her role in Whitewater.

Brock therefore rejects the conservative portrayal of the first lady and offers a new one that focuses on the first lady as a victim, the captive of her husband's interests and machinations. "If anything," says Brock, "the evidence suggests that Bill, far more than Hillary, was the real insider when it came to Whitewater and Madison Guaranty. . . . The heart of the Whitewater scandal was [Bill] Clinton's apparent willingness to use his public office to help his private business partner and political supporter."¹⁷⁶ For Brock, then, HRC is a victim in several respects—a victim of her husband, a victim of partisans in congress, and perhaps, as Lyons argues, a victim of the media.

Conclusion

One of the most interesting aspects of the Clinton scandals is the mixed reaction to them. As we have seen, liberals and conservatives disagree as to what exactly happened in Whitewater and the other scandals as well as the first lady's role in them. That there could be such different interpretations of what had happened shows that Hillary Rodham Clinton, with the myriad controversies surrounding not only Whitewater but also her role in health care and in the 1992 campaign, is an icon over which a larger cultural war is being fought.

Liberals like Mrs. Clinton for the very reason that conservatives criticize her: she is a powerful, intelligent, and abrasive woman not afraid to say what is on her mind. Moreover, she is a woman in control—in control of her family, in control of her husband

¹⁷⁶Brock, *Seduction*, 198.

and her marriage, perhaps even in control of the White House and policymaking. It was *she* who was formulating the policy that *he* later hoped to sign in the battle to reform the health-care system; she made the crucial decisions. In a similar vein, the Clinton scandals portray the first lady as the breadwinner and the moneymaker in charge of the family. At one point, Bill Clinton even said that "I'll always feel like I'm sixteen. And Hillary was born at age forty."¹⁷⁷ Here, President Clinton plays into the image of him as childish and irresponsible, someone who does not conform to the traditional image of the powerful man. Quotations such as this one gave credence to the image of the first lady as a domineering woman in her marriage and the White House.

Indeed, in her marriage, in her work, and in American politics, HRC is seen as a dominating force. For some, her domineering presence is good; she is seen as a saint, the symbol of the modern American woman trying to balance her work life with a family and marriage. For others, HRC is like the cover of *TIME* previously described—the devil incarnate, Satanella, a power-monger to be feared. As we shall see in the next chapter, Mrs. Clinton represents a cultural battleground over which these two images are fought and the larger issue of a woman's proper place in the marriage and the work force is disputed.

¹⁷⁷As quoted in Brock, 188.

CHAPTER FIVE

PARTNERS ONLY IN POWER? GENDER TRANSGRESSIONS IN THE CLINTONS' MARRIAGE

I suddenly came to a place where perception is more important than it had ever been in my life—where I was being, I thought, painted in ways based almost on tea-leaf reading.

—Hillary Rodham Clinton¹⁷⁸

As we saw in the last chapter, Hillary Rodham Clinton is more than an ordinary person or even an ordinary first lady. She is a symbol of a cultural battle being fought in the United States about a woman's place in society. Generally speaking, the two sides do not dispute the facts; rather, they cannot agree on how to interpret those facts. For

¹⁷⁸Hillary Rodham Clinton, as quoted in Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Hating Hillary: Hillary Clinton Has Been Trashed Right and Left—But What's Really Fueling the Furies?" *New Yorker*, 26 February/4 March 1996, 121.

example, both sides agree that Mrs. Clinton had a prominent role in the 1992 campaign, in formulating the legislation to reform the health-care system, and in Whitewater. However, those who subscribe to the saint image consider her role a reason to like her and her husband more, while those who subscribe to the sinner image consider that same role a reason to detest the first lady. In order to understand this phenomenon, it is first necessary to turn back to each issue we have already examined.

In 1992, HRC and Bill Clinton portrayed themselves as a new kind of political couple. On many occasions, both touted their "two-for-the-price-of-one" deal. They sold themselves to the American people as a political partnership. Moreover, Mrs. Clinton played a prominent role in the campaign, both at public appearances and in the behind-the-scenes strategy sessions. This role began to shape the image. By many accounts, Mrs. Clinton saved her husband's campaign. She protected him against the "bimbo eruptions," telling Americans that while the two had experienced their "problems," they had worked through them and were still in love. Nevertheless, at times the Clintons seemed less than happily married. Rumors circulated that Mrs. Clinton remained married to the governor not because she loved him, but because of the very political partnership that they spoke of so frequently on the campaign trail. She was not his lover and wife; she was his partner and political mate.

Conservatives found this characterization a reason to dislike the first lady. Compared with other first ladies, Mrs. Clinton was much more powerful and much less affectionate with her husband. She seemed power-hungry and self-interested. Conservatives equated her domineering role as a sign that the marriage was not based on love but rather common political goals; they implied that a woman with so much power

could not possibly have a traditional marriage based on love. For liberals, the partnership between HRC and her husband was a reason to like Mrs. Clinton even more. They considered her an intelligent and experienced woman who added another dimension to her husband's campaign. They thought that receiving "two-for-the-price-of-one" was good, and they believed that above all else, Mrs. Clinton had earned her place as her husband's equal partner. Liberals also emphasized that such a partnership offered no proof that the two were not in love. On the contrary, the left believed that the Clintons were both partners in power and partners in love.

The image of HRC as a partner further developed in the health care debacle, in which people saw Mrs. Clinton actually shaping the legislation that her husband would later hope to sign into law. They saw the health-care bill as *her* plan, not the president's; she was the one setting into motion her own plan. Conservatives equated this maneuvering with a co-presidency; to them, President Clinton was merely a rubber stamp of the first lady. This appalled conservatives, who said that the president, not the first lady, had been elected, so he should do the governing. Liberals, on the other hand, liked Mrs. Clinton more because of her high-profile role in developing the proposed health-care legislation. On Capitol Hill, in the White House, and in the inner power circles in Washington, Mrs. Clinton had proven herself a capable and intelligent woman who had earned her role. Liberals saw conservative attacks on the first lady as unfounded; they thought that the attacks had more to do with the first lady's gender than with her qualifications.

Finally, the Whitewater affair helped to solidify the image of the political partnership on both sides of the political spectrum. Whitewater and the myriad gate-

suffixed scandals confirmed that Mrs. Clinton had control of the money in the family. In a reversal of traditional gender roles, she, not he, traded cattle futures and made a small fortune in a year; she, not he, pushed them to enter the Whitewater land deal; she, not he, fired the travel office workers in order to bring in friends from Arkansas. For liberals, Mrs. Clinton's role as the financial manager of the Clinton partnership was another reason to like her; it showed how powerful she really was, and they reveled in her power, which they believed she had earned. Conservatives again saw Mrs. Clinton's power a reason not to like her. She was too powerful; she had too much control; she took on too much of what stereotypically had been reserved for men.

By the time independent council Kenneth Starr began his Whitewater investigation and Senator Al D'Amato (R-NY) began Whitewater hearings, the partnership that HRC and Bill Clinton had talked about so much in 1992 had come back to haunt them. While liberals liked that partnership, conservatives used it as fuel to spread their hatred of HRC. Today, Mrs. Clinton is despised as much as she is revered. As Henry Louis Gates, Jr., has said: "Like horse-racing, Hillary-hating has become one of those national pastimes which unite the elite and the lumpen. Serious accusations have, of course, been leveled against the president's wife, but it's usually what people think of her that determines the credence and the weight they give to the accusations, rather than the reverse."¹⁷⁹ Indeed, people choose what facts and accusations to believe based on which side of the myth they believe. Those who think of the first lady as a saint tend to disregard attacks on her character and her past actions, while those who see Mrs. Clinton as a sinner help give

¹⁷⁹Gates, Jr., 116.

credence to those same attacks. These images of the first lady are inherently contradictory. As David Brock puts it:

Who is the real Hillary Clinton? Is she the articulate lawyer and political activist who first emerged in the "two for one" Clinton candidacy of the 1992 presidential campaign? The cookie-baking super mom who soon replaced her? The Lady Macbeth of Little Rock? A latter-day Joan of Arc, bringing health coverage to all? A foul mouthed lamp-throwing harridan? Saint Hillary, exponent of the politics of meaning?¹⁸⁰ The Ivan Boesky of cattle-futures trading? Or, finally, a virtual recluse in the White House, comically "channeling" the spirit of Eleanor Roosevelt?¹⁸¹

Perhaps one reporter sums it up best when she asks: "Is she [Mrs. Clinton] the anti-Christ or a saint of American politics? Is she a ruthless politician or merely a smart woman whose intellect intimidates le tout Washington? Should she run for president or be content to be first lady?"¹⁸² What is clear in all the attacks and acclamations of the first lady is that no one denies that the Clintons are partners in power. The remainder of this section will examine how both liberals and conservatives interpret that partnership according to their views on the Clintons' marriage.

The Conservative Interpretation of HRC's Role in the Marriage

Hillary and Bill Clinton are at a gas station. As Bill fills the tank, Hillary gets out of the car and speaks to the gas station attendant. When she is about to leave, she gives him a hug. Bill, curious, asks Hillary how she knows the man. "Oh," says Hillary, "I used to date him in high school." Bill laughs and says: "If you had married him, you would have been a gas-attendant's wife instead of the first lady of the United States." Hillary

¹⁸⁰This refers to a speech HRC gave in 1994 in Texas in which she spoke of "the politics of meaning," which she saw as a way to bring morality into politics. A few weeks after the speech, Mrs. Clinton was on the cover of the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* with a halo over her head and a caption that read "Saint Hillary."

¹⁸¹This refers to a feeding frenzy that occurred in mid-summer of 1996 after Bob Woodward's book *The Choice* came out. The book alleged that Mrs. Clinton had held seances in the white house with a spiritual advisor in order to channel the spirit of her hero, Eleanor Roosevelt, for advice. (Brock, *Seduction*, v-vi.)

¹⁸²Suzanne Fields, "Suspicious of Faustian Bargain Feed Skepticism Toward First Lady's Power," *Washington Times*, 1 June 1994, 11A.

laughs. "No, Bill," she says, "if I had married him, he would be the president of the United States."¹⁸³

One of the most interesting aspects of the Clinton partnership are the liberal and conservative views on the Clintons' marriage. For conservatives, the marriage is phony: Bill and Hillary Clinton married each other in order to pursue their political goals together; love has no place in the marriage. The conservative attacks on the first lady's role in the marriage come on three fronts: first, Bill Clinton's alleged philandering; second, Hillary Rodham Clinton's supposed sexual preference and affairs; and third, what HRC needs from her marriage.

Bill Clinton's Alleged Philandering

As we have seen, allegations of Bill Clinton's "extracurricular" sexual exploits are hardly new to Americans. The Jennifer Flowers feeding frenzy that surfaced during the 1992 election season was only one of myriad "bimbo eruptions" that plagued the Clinton camp. However, the portrait that emerged of Bill Clinton's sexual escapades in the infamous January 1994 "Troopergate" article by David Brock¹⁸⁴ added a much more negative slant to the view of the Clinton marriage in general and HRC's role in it specifically.

In Brock's article, a dozen of the Arkansas state troopers who were assigned to protect Governor Clinton explain that their duties at that time went far beyond his

¹⁸³Joke widely circulated throughout e-mail.

¹⁸⁴Although David Brock's 1996 book *The Seduction of Hillary Rodham* was decidedly pro-HRC, before the publication of the book Brock was considered an arch-conservative who detested both Clintons. While in the last chapter, Brock was considered a "liberal" because of some of his views in *Seduction*, in this chapter he is considered a conservative because of the extremely negative views he expressed of HRC in the "Troopergate" story.

physical protection. The troopers allege that they helped then-governor Clinton pursue his romantic affairs. According to Brock,

the troopers said their "official" duties included facilitating Clinton's cheating on his wife. This meant that, on the state payroll and using state time, vehicles, and resources, they were instructed by Clinton on a regular basis to approach women and to solicit their telephone numbers for the governor; to drive him in state vehicles to rendezvous points and guard him during sexual encounters; to secure hotel rooms and other meeting places for sex; to deliver gifts from Clinton to various women (some of whom, like Flowers, also had state jobs); and to help Clinton cover up his activities by keeping tabs on Hillary's whereabouts and lying to Hillary about her husband's whereabouts. . . . They said that their facilitation of the activities ranged from wiping make-up off his shirt collar, to standing "Hillary watch" while Clinton cavorted, to arranging sex sessions in hotel rooms and parking lots, to sneaking women into the governor's mansion while Hillary and Chelsea slept.

The troopers said Clinton devised and they executed an elaborate plan to accommodate his sexual appetites. . . . For at least a decade, Clinton was prone to extramarital affairs often more than one at a time, and to numerous one-night stands. According to the troopers, the clandestine sexual encounters occurred even after the presidential election and continued through Clinton's final days in Little Rock.¹⁸⁵

Clearly, Brock's serious charges are leveled largely against the president, not the first lady. Nevertheless, the charges have a profound effect on HRC's image. The article discusses Bill Clinton's alleged philandering in great detail; for example, Brock states that "when Hillary was out of town, . . . Bill wouldn't hesitate to seize the opportunity to entertain women at all hours of the day and night, clearing them through the gates for what the troopers said he called a 'personal tour of the mansion.'"¹⁸⁶ Descriptions of the president's affairs such as this one affected the image of the first lady by glorifying the president's sexual exploits. The barrage of Brock's article and the myriad other media accounts of Bill Clinton's affairs have made it seem normal to Americans that the

¹⁸⁵David Brock, "Living with the Clintons; Bill's Arkansas Bodyguards Tell the Story the Press Missed," in *American Spectator* [online], available: LEXIS-NEXIS library: CMPGN File: AMSPEC [10 March 1997].

¹⁸⁶*Ibid.*

president would want to have an affair. Implicitly, such a characterization does not portray the first lady as a victim of her husband's cheating; rather, the accounts of Bill Clinton's philandering suggest that the president can only satisfy his voracious sexual appetite through his mistresses, not his wife. Thus, Mrs. Clinton is not the object of her husband's passions and desires because she is, as the title of one book termed it, a "partner in power,"¹⁸⁷ not a partner in love. Mrs. Clinton's aphrodisiac is not sexual; her only aphrodisiac is power.

Brock's article also explicitly describes the nature of the Clintons' marriage: "As the troopers saw it, the Clintons' relationship is an effective political partnership, more a business relationship than a marriage."¹⁸⁸ The troopers said that Mrs. Clinton knew about her husband's affairs and often let her temper loose. She apparently had asked a trooper "[what] do you think you're doing? I know who that whore is. I know what she's doing."¹⁸⁹

The allegations that Mrs. Clinton knew of her husband's affairs further contribute to the conservative image of the first lady as a power-hungry woman willing to, as one reporter put it, "do whatever is necessary to achieve her goal, no matter how bitter the pill she must swallow."¹⁹⁰ Several troopers recalled one occasion in which Bill Clinton "spent an inordinate amount of time speaking with an attractive woman at a public event."¹⁹¹ Mrs. Clinton allegedly said: "Come on Bill, put your dick up. You can't fuck

¹⁸⁷Roger Morris, *Partners in Power: The Clintons and Their America* (New York: Henry Holt, 1996).

¹⁸⁸Brock, "Living with the Clintons."

¹⁸⁹As quoted in Brock, "Living with the Clintons."

¹⁹⁰Leslie Bennetts, "Pinning Down Hillary," *Vanity Fair*, June 1994, 106.

¹⁹¹Brock, "Living with the Clintons."

her here."¹⁹² Brock's alarming allegations that Mrs. Clinton knew about her husband's affairs have helped fuel the conservative slant on the Clinton partnership.

For conservatives, Bill Clinton's philandering serves as a bargaining chip for HRC and has allowed her to gain more power. For example, Connie Bruck wrote in the *New Yorker* that "it seems plain that his indebtedness to her must only increase with each allegation of sexual impropriety. How free the president is to deny his wife what she seeks is a corollary question."¹⁹³ Another reporter said that "it was inevitable then that the public would ask, or at least wonder, whether Hillary had made a cynical private deal with Bill, if not to forgive and forget, to forgive in exchange for tangible power perks of the president's office."¹⁹⁴ Again, these portrayals imply that Mrs. Clinton is a ruthless woman whose marriage is not based love but rather on power. One reporter took the allegations a step further, stating that when HRC was married, she understood that "the day's going to come when a woman can run for president, but it's not now, so that the best way for her to have influence in her lifetime is to help her man get elected president and then to have a lot of input into it. . . . [The Clintons' relationship] is grounded in mutual respect, understanding, and emotional fidelity."¹⁹⁵ The reporter never states that the marriage is grounded in romance, sexual desire, or love; according to this particular report, the marriage is a political partnership that has nothing to do with traditional romance and is based wholly on politics and power.

¹⁹²As quoted in Brock, "Living with the Clintons."

¹⁹³As quoted in Suzanne Fields, "Suspicious of Faustian Bargain Feed Skepticism to Ward First Lady's Power," *Washington Times*, 1 June 1994, 11A.

¹⁹⁴Fields, 11A.

¹⁹⁵"Clinton's Marriage a Political Winner Different Strengths Combine to Produce a Fast Moving Career," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 18 July 1994, 1B.

HRC's Sexual Preference and Her Alleged Affair with Vince Foster

Other attacks on HRC's role in the marriage center not on her husband's philandering, but rather on her direct role in her marriage. The most potent of these attacks are aimed at questioning Mrs. Clinton's heterosexuality; or, conversely, asserting that far from loving her husband, HRC carried on an affair with Vince Foster throughout her marriage and until his death.

The first of these charges is highly dubious. According to one professor, Mrs. Clinton is alleged to have "been spotted in the White House making love with a female veterinarian."¹⁹⁶ Another reporter said that

rumors of lesbianism persist: an affair with an actress, a tryst with a colleague, the encounter interrupted by a veterinarian who accidentally walked into her bedroom looking for Socks, the White House cat. These stories, while unfounded, have caught on in part because people are looking for a way to justify marital infidelity without blaming the president.¹⁹⁷

Not only are people looking for a way to justify Bill Clinton's marital infidelity, but also they want to justify the first lady's role in her marriage. Conservatives use the rumors of lesbianism as further proof that Mrs. Clinton is not interested in her husband for love; rather, she is interested in the power she can accrue by being his partner in power.

Similarly, those who believe that Mrs. Clinton had an affair with Vince Foster want to prove that the Clintons' marriage that was supposedly based on love was actually a farce. Brock's Troopergate article discusses HRC's alleged affair in great detail. Brock states without reservation (and no solid proof) that "Hillary herself was intimately involved with the late Vincent Foster."¹⁹⁸ Brock further states that

¹⁹⁶Gates, Jr., 133.

¹⁹⁷Laura Blumenfeld, "Ultra Feminist: Hillary Rodham Clinton; Feminism Now," in *Cosmopolitan* [online], May 1994, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ALLNWS [19 May 1996].

¹⁹⁸Brock, "Living with the Clintons."

according to the troopers, whenever Clinton left town, no sooner would he be out of the mansion gates than Foster would appear, often staying in the residence with Hillary into the wee hours of the morning. One of the off-the-record troopers drove Hillary and Foster to a mountain cabin in Heber Springs, maintained by the Rose firm as an out-of-town retreat for its lawyers, where the two spent significant amounts of time alone. Patterson and Perry [two of the troopers] were both aware of this at the time. On several chance occasions—at the Heber Springs retreat, and once stopped at a traffic light in Little Rock—troopers said they observed Foster and Hillary embracing and open-mouth kissing.

Patterson once saw the two in a compromising position at a birthday party for Hillary held at the Little Rock French restaurant Alouette's. . . . Foster emerged from the dining room on his way to the men's room. "He came up behind Hillary, and squeezed her rear end with both of his hands. Then he winked and gave me the 'okay' sign," Patterson said. "On the way back, Huber was turned away, and Vince put his hand over one of Hillary's breasts and made the same "okay" sign to me. And she just stood there cooing, 'oh Vince. Oh Vince.'"¹⁹⁹

The many conservative accusations that Mrs. Clinton carried on an affair with Foster serve the same purpose as the attacks on her sexual preference: they undermine Mrs. Clinton's role in her marriage and buttress the argument that the first lady is a partner in power, not in love. These attacks are further supported by "evidence" cited by right-wing critics about Mrs. Clinton's role in her marriage. For example, the Troopergate article alleges that HRC once screamed at her husband "I need to be fucked more than twice a year."²⁰⁰ Comments such as these cast further doubt on HRC's claim that she is an adoring wife who truly loves her husband, and they imply that a marriage based on true equality and egalitarianism cannot possibly be based on love and romance. In other worlds, marriages that veer away from the traditional courtship are inherently false, and egalitarian marriages therefore are phony.

What HRC Needs from Her Marriage

¹⁹⁹Brock, "Living with the Clintons."

²⁰⁰Hillary Rodham Clinton, as quoted in Brock, "Living with the Clintons."

The above attacks on both Bill and Hillary Clinton combine to paint a startling portrait of what the first lady needs from her marriage. Conservatives allege that Hillary Rodham Clinton does not need love from her marriage; she could receive that from Vince Foster or from the women with whom she had had affairs. Mrs. Clinton uses her marriage for another purpose: to fulfill her need for power.

One of the best examples comes from conservative radio talk-show host Don Imus, who regularly airs a parody of the song "The Lady is a Tramp." In the parody, a Rush Limbaugh-sounding character sings:

She goes to state dinners with her lesbian friends
Makes big investments with high dividends
Forgets to pay taxes but then makes amends
That's why the first lady is a tramp.²⁰¹

The song attacks the first lady because of the role she assumes in the marriage. She has "lesbian friends," implying that she herself is a lesbian, certainly not her husband's love interest. At the same time, she "made investments with high dividends," helping to provide financial security for her family; this gibe attacks the first lady's role as the breadwinner. The next line alleges that the first lady lies about her past and is obsessed with making as much money as possible; again, this accusation debunks the notion that HRC is the stereotypical wife. Finally, the assertion that "the first lady is a tramp" uses sexual language to imply that the first lady is not an innocent woman who loves her husband unconditionally; there is a price for her loyalty. The language also implies that the first lady sleeps around; love means nothing to her, and she is willing to do anything with anybody to further her own political interests.

²⁰¹Don Imus, as quoted in Brock, *Seduction*, vi.

The cumulative Republican attacks imply more than just that "the first lady is a tramp." They suggest that she does not need love, sex, and the happiness typically associated with a marriage. Unlike most American women who typically do want love and happiness, Mrs. Clinton needs only power from her marriage—political power, financial power, personal power. She is obsessed; and like any woman obsessed, she is willing to do anything to further her obsession, even stay in a marriage that clearly does not satisfy her sexual and romantic needs. Conservatives believe that her marriage is a farce; the vows that she took "to have and to hold until death do you part" have nothing to do with love.

HRC's Transgression of Gender Roles

Q: Why doesn't Hillary Clinton wear miniskirts?

A: Because her balls would show.²⁰²

As we have seen thus far, conservatives do not portray the Clintons' marriage as a perfect union based on love. To conservatives, the Clintons married for political purposes, and Hillary Rodham Clinton has greatly benefited from Bill Clinton's rise to the presidency. Because conservatives so often link Mrs. Clinton's role in her marriage with her role in the White House, this section will analyze how the first lady transcends the stereotypical gender role assigned to women both in both these arenas, acting more as the stereotypical man than the stereotypical woman.

²⁰²As quoted in Laura Blumenfeld, "Ultra Feminist: Hillary Rodham Clinton; Feminism Now," in *Cosmopolitan* [online], May 1994, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ALLNWS [19 May 1996].

The first place to begin this discussion is with the stereotypes that exist of the proper role for both men and women. In 1992, when Mrs. Clinton spoke out against the "cookie baking" world of women and said that she was not just "standing by her man," she was rebelling against the traditional gender role assigned to women. Women traditionally have been part of the "gentler" sex whose primary concern is to raise a family and to stay at home to attend to domestic work. Men, on the other hand, are the traditional breadwinners, the moneymakers who work all day and expect their meal to be cooked for them when they come home at night. While women attend to the domestic work of the house, men make the money, pay the bills, and serve as the primary financial providers. In short, men belong to the public sphere, while women are confined to the private sphere of the domestic world. Since the feminist movement's resurgence in the 1960s, these roles have been in transition. Slowly, women have moved into the public sphere and have assumed roles of increased power. Nevertheless, women still face these stereotypes; in many ways, women such as HRC in the public sphere are still vilified for their roles. Mrs. Clinton's blatant violation of those roles troubles conservatives.

In particular, HRC has come under scrutiny and attack because other recent first ladies, especially her predecessor, Barbara Bush, who tended to conform to these traditional gender stereotypes. In the words of one reporter: "We all want big tit; we want [HRC] to be our mother. We don't want Hillary to be distanced from her essential duty: to nurture and take care of us. That's why we loved Barbara [Bush]."²⁰³ According to another source, when HRC received her White House tour from departing

²⁰³Martha Sherrill, as quoted in Laura Blumenfeld, "Ultimate Feminist: Hillary Rodham Clinton; Feminism Now," *Cosmopolitan*, May 1994, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ALLNWS [19 May 1996].

first lady Bush, she was uninterested in redecorating; her main concern was where she would fit all her books.²⁰⁴ That Mrs. Clinton has chosen to put her books in the policymaking West Wing of the White House is especially troubling for conservatives, who prefer first ladies to stay in the residential East Wing.

The West Wing location of HRC's offices troubles conservatives symbolically as well as literally. As previously mentioned, first ladies traditionally have confined themselves to the East Wing of the White House, where the residence is located and the social planning occurs. The West Wing, on the other hand, is the policymaking wing where the president and his advisors traditionally spend their days. Mrs. Clinton's refusal to confine herself to the East Wing blatantly violates the stereotype of women (and especially of first ladies) as homemakers and caretakers, not policymakers and breadwinners. Mrs. Clinton represents not only a new first lady but also a new kind of American woman who defies the confines of the stereotype. By refusing to stay in the White House residence, Mrs. Clinton also has affirmed her political partnership with her husband, which again opposes traditional gender roles and the stereotypical conception of a marriage.

Conservatives are angered by Mrs. Clinton for embracing the qualities typically associated with men. In her marriage, she is the primary breadwinner; not only did she used to make more money than her husband, but also she was once in charge of investing that money to try to provide for her family's future. In addition, the first lady does not let her husband do his job alone; in both Arkansas and in Washington, she has helped to formulate critical policy that has been integral to her husband's administrations. But

²⁰⁴Laura Blumenfeld, "Ultimate Feminist: Hillary Rodham Clinton; Feminism Now," *Cosmopolitan*, May 1994, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ALLNWS [19 May 1996].

perhaps what angers conservatives most is the notion that the *real* center of power in the White House is HRC. Republicans fear that Mrs. Clinton is accountable only to herself, not to her husband or any public official. According to conservative columnist Suzanne Fields: "What's different about Hillary's power in the White House is its lack of accountability. What we know about Hillary defies the image of a long-suffering wife, even after the 'stand by my man' defense in the '92 campaign, and suggests hypocrisy."²⁰⁵ Fields implies that if Mrs. Clinton were somehow accountable to somebody other than herself, her power would be controlled and therefore her role would be more easily justified. But because Mrs. Clinton is married to the president, no one can control her power—not even the president himself, who apparently has no control over her. Conservatives therefore see HRC as someone whose power must be limited.

Fields also rebukes Mrs. Clinton for allegedly having "veto power" over certain cabinet appointments, and Fields uses this speculation as proof that HRC controls her husband and has the real power in the marriage and the White House.²⁰⁶ Fields says: "[Mrs. Clinton] is credited with forcing the president's promise to veto any health care legislation that does not require universal coverage. She delayed the appointment of an independent counsel in Whitewater-Madison."²⁰⁷ For Fields and many other conservatives, Mrs. Clinton's power does not result from her hard work or intelligence, but rather from "a pact with the devil";²⁰⁸ they believe that the first lady has been unable to earn such power on her own. The right considers Mrs. Clinton a "co-president"—in fact, the term appeared in over 92,000 articles about the Clintons in 1993.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵Fields, "Suspensions," 11A.

²⁰⁶*Ibid.*

²⁰⁷*Ibid.*

²⁰⁸Max Brantely, as quoted in Fields, "Suspensions," 11A.

²⁰⁹Troy, 361.

Another attack on Mrs. Clinton's role as the real center of power in the White House comes from the appropriately-titled *Big Sister Is Watching You: Hillary Clinton and the White House Feminists Who Now Control America—And Tell the President What to Do* by purportedly number-one best-selling author Texe Marrs. The book is published in Texas by the "Living Truth Publishers." The title itself reveals how Marrs feels about the first lady; she "tell[s] the president what to do," so she is the one who truly has the power. Like Big Brother from George Orwell's *1984*, Mrs. Clinton is trying to control everyone in the country, their actions and thoughts. Moreover, the title reveals that Marrs is troubled by Mrs. Clinton's gender; it is not only Mrs. Clinton who "tell[s] the president what to do"; it is also "the White House feminists."

The book is filled with attacks on the first lady's influence, power, and beliefs. The tone of the book is set by the epigraph, a statement made by Dan Rather on the *CBS Evening News*: "Being president is a job for just one person. And for the next four years, that person is Hillary."²¹⁰ An examination of the chapter names reveals the evils Marrs sees in HRC. In part one, "Now Let Us Praise Big Sister," the chapters include: "The Reversal of Reality," "The Objective Is Control," "The Fourth Reich of the FemiNazis," "The High Priestess of WomanChurch: Big Brother in Drag," and "Hillary, Our President." These chapters aim to establish HRC as the authority in the White House. While she is technically the first lady, she has more power than the president.

The next part of the book, "Hillary Plays Hardball," includes chapters such as "Hillary Frightens and Terrifies Bill," "Who Wears the Pants?," "The View from the West

²¹⁰Dan Rather, as quoted in Texe Marrs, *Big Sister Is Watching You: Hillary Clinton and the White House Feminists Who Now Control America—And Tell the President What to Do* (Austin, Texas: Living Truth Publishers, 1993).

Wing," "Hillary: 'I Will Crucify' Gennifer Flowers," "Hillary in Charge of Political Appointments," "Is Bill Clinton Subservient to Wife, Hillary?," and "The Wicked Witch of the West." This section clearly tries to portray HRC as a witchy woman who "wears the pants in the family." Other chapters in the book include, among many others, "Hillary: On the Killing of Babies," "Hillary: On Lesbianism and Homosexuality," "Hillary and the CommuNazi Power Grab," "Women Reinventing the World," and "Eleanor Roosevelt: Communist, Lesbian, Radical Feminist." These are all gendered and sexualized. Marrs attacks female sexuality (e.g., HRC and ER's supposed lesbianism) and Mrs. Clinton's gender transgressions in her marriage because he is intimidated by such women who veer from the traditional model of marriage. Moreover, it is clear from these and other chapter titles that Marrs feels personally threatened by HRC's rise to power in Washington. To Marrs, Mrs. Clinton has not earned her power; she is one of the "radical White House feminists" who has usurped her authority and threatened the future of the United States.

Marrs's introduction provided further insight as to his views. He begins by stating that

Hillary Rodham Clinton is not just co-president of the United States—she's the real power in Washington, DC. And to help her run the big show, Hillary has brought in some very unusual feminist "talent." A motley collection never before equaled in American history, Hillary's women friends include lesbians, sex perverts, child molester advocates, Christian haters, and the most doctrinaire of communists.²¹¹

These feminists include "Attorney General Janet ("Johnny") Reno"—who is portrayed as a man (Johnny) who "wickedly burned to death the innocent women and children at the

²¹¹Marrs, 11.

Branch Davidian compound in Waco."²¹² Another radical feminist is former Surgeon General Dr. Joycelyn Elders, who "is out to make sure that pre-schoolers and elementary school children are given condoms and instructed on how to use them."²¹³ Poet Maya Angelou, who wrote the 1992 inaugural poem "On the Pulse of Morning," is also indicted as a radical feminist. Marrs claims that "she's been acclaimed as the 'feminist Robert Frost.' . . . Problem is, her real name is *not* Maya Angelou. And some of those books she's written? . . . Well, they are different, to say the least. *Big Sister* reveals that Maya Angelou is, in fact, a former stripper, prostitute, and madam."²¹⁴

The accusations about the other White House feminists continue against Donna Shalala, Laura D'Angelo Tyson, Roberta ("Bob") Achtenberg, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and of course HRC herself, who apparently has secretly funded "hard-core, Marxist terrorist organizations."²¹⁵ The attacks on HRC and other women in the White House are ridiculous; Maya Angelou was never a stripper, prostitute, or madam; there is absolutely no proof that Mrs. Clinton ever helped fund Marxist terrorist organizations; Janet Reno has never been shown to have had ulterior motives in the Waco incident. Nevertheless, Marrs's narrative is important because it shows how passionately many conservatives felt about HRC and the role she (and other women) played in the White House. Marrs's book also shows how gendered and sexualized the conservative critique of HRC is. What really bothers Marrs is that HRC and her "feminist comrades" who "now rule America" transgress gender roles and wield a great deal of power in the public sphere that is traditionally associated with men. He is intimidated by these feminists who advocate an

²¹²Ibid.

²¹³Ibid.

²¹⁴Marrs, 11-12.

²¹⁵Ibid., 13.

egalitarian role for women in marriage and the workforce. He would prefer to stay with the status quo, and therefore his attacks focus on HRC's deviation from the status quo.

Camille Paglia's "Ice Queen, Drag Queen"

As we have seen, Mrs. Clinton rejects traditional gender roles. She is the breadwinner, the investor, the policymaker, the power-holder—all roles typically associated with men. More important, she is *not* the cookie-baker, the silent wife, and the homemaker—all roles typically associated with women. Conservative critic Camille Paglia summarizes HRC's transcendence of gender boundaries in a piece called "Ice Queen, Drag Queen," which states that "what we see . . . is a consummate theatrical artifact whose stages of self-development from butch to femme were motivated by unalloyed political ambition. She is the drag queen of modern politics, a bewitching symbol of professional women's sometimes-confused search for identity in this era of unlimited options."²¹⁶

Paglia goes on to present her psychological portrait of the first lady, stating that "groomed to excel, young Hillary the thinker would sense the danger in seeming too feminine, which meant passive and vulnerable."²¹⁷ Throughout her childhood, college, law school, and her first years of marriage, Mrs. Clinton wore little makeup and dressed casually; Paglia claims that HRC's "frumpy, owlsh, bookworm" appearance was "an ardor-quenching, defensive tool"²¹⁸ meant to fight against the status quo for women. Paglia concludes that Mrs. Clinton, though technically female, actually shares many

²¹⁶Camille Paglia, "Ice Queen, Drag Queen: A Psychological Portrait of Hillary," In *New Republic* [online], 4 March 1996, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: NEWRPB [8 March 1997].

²¹⁷Ibid.

²¹⁸Ibid.

characteristics with men in her rebellion against a woman's traditional role.²¹⁹ This critic claims that later, when Mrs. Clinton exchanged her gaudy glasses for contact lenses and her old, worn outfits for a more modern wardrobe, she did not give up her "masculinity" but merely disguised it, becoming a drag queen: "Good student that she is, Hillary had discovered that the masks of femininity could be learned and appropriated to rise in the world. She had become a political drag queen, a master-mistress of gender roles. But her steely soul remains, the butch substrate."²²⁰ Paglia concludes her article by stating that "like Judy Garland, Maria Callas or Madonna, with their excesses, heartbreaks, torments and comebacks, Hillary the man-woman and bitch-goddess has become a strange superstar whose rise and fall is already the stuff of myth."²²¹

Paglia's article, in many ways, is comedic: thinking of the first lady as a "man-woman" certainly provokes some laughter. But at the same time, Paglia's piece provides a clear metaphor for Hillary Rodham Clinton, a woman who is struggling to retain her own identity in a society that labels women not for who they are, but for what they do. Thus, Paglia's piece, though comedic, does point to a fundamental truth about the conservative portrayal of HRC: Any woman who is intelligent and powerful is vulnerable to charges that she is not "feminine." HRC's "masculinity" stems from her power. This violation of gender norms deeply troubles many conservatives. HRC is labeled "Queen Hillary,"²²² "a deeply cynical ruthless shrew,"²²³ and "a selfish, money-grubbing cheat"²²⁴ by those

²¹⁹Ibid.

²²⁰Camille Paglia, "Ice Queen, Drag Queen: A Psychological Portrait of Hillary," In *New Republic* [online], 4 March 1996, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: NEWRPB [8 March 1997].

²²¹Ibid.

²²²Gary Aldrich, as quoted in Brock, *Seduction*, vi.

²²³Roger Morris, as quoted in Brock, *Seduction*, vi.

²²⁴James Stewart, as quoted in Brock, *Seduction*, vi.

on the right who openly criticize her power and influence in the White House. The right is intimidated by Mrs. Clinton because she takes on a man's role in her marriage and in the White House. They attack her for her gender transgressions, when their real concern is stopping her work on public policy issues.

HRC's Influence on the Perception of Bill Clinton

HRC's transgression of gender roles threatens America's perception of Bill Clinton's masculinity in their marriage. Throughout the campaign and his first years in office, Bill Clinton often associated himself with subjects not in the masculine realm, associations that gave the right wing ammunition to attack his masculinity. In the 1992 campaign, Governor Clinton defended himself against charges that he had been a "draft dodger" during the Vietnam war. Because fighting in a war (even an unpopular one) is considered masculine—in fact, females are barred from combat—Bill Clinton found himself defending both his actions and his masculinity. After he was elected, the president once again found himself far away from traditionally masculine issues. For example, in 1993, Bill Clinton took on the "gays in the military" issue and defended the right of gay men to serve in the armed forces. Moreover, the president talked about "soft" issues such as child care, education, and abortion. At first, he was considered a "domestic policy president" who avoided foreign entanglements, unlike George Bush, the former naval aviator whose highest approval ratings had come during the Persian Gulf war. "Soft" issues and domestic politics are not seen as masculine.²²⁵

²²⁵The words "soft" and "hard" that are used to describe stereotypical female and male issues are themselves highly gendered and sexualized terms. When women like HRC are described as discussing *hard* issues, they are being masculinized sexually. In Mrs. Clinton's case, this term reinforces her image as a "masculine" kind of woman who transcends gender boundaries.

Bill Clinton therefore has been vulnerable to attacks on his masculinity because of the issues and policies that he has advocated on the campaign trail and in office. What has made matters worse for him is the media portrayal of his wife, who is associated with the masculine sphere. And the more that HRC is seen as male, the less that her husband is seen in that light. As former president Richard Nixon has said: "If the wife comes through as being too strong and too intelligent, it makes the husband look like a wimp."²²⁶ Thus, the more that Mrs. Clinton is seen as masculine, the less that her husband is seen as masculine and the more that he is seen as feminine. Ironically, the man who has been portrayed as a philanderer is also a wimp in his marriage, unable to assert control over his wife.

Thus, by attacking Mrs. Clinton for being too "masculine," conservatives at the same time comment on Bill Clinton, who allows his wife considerable leverage in their marriage and who indeed considers HRC his equal. In attacking the first lady, conservatives also attack the president and the egalitarian union between them. When conservatives ask "where's Lee Harvey Oswald when America needs him"²²⁷ in reference to the first lady, they actually hope for an assassin to destroy the kind of power Mrs. Clinton has and the kind of egalitarian relationship she shares with her husband.

Conservatives maintain that Mrs. Clinton is so power-hungry that her marriage is phony; they imply that no one with so much power could possibly be in love. They do not understand how a woman who so clearly violates traditional gender boundaries and stereotypes could possibly have a traditional marriage based on love, sex, and romance.

²²⁶Richard Nixon, as quoted in Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Beyond the Double Bind: Women and Leadership* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 35.

²²⁷Kim Masters, "The Politics of Hate," *Washington Post*, 7 Nov. 1994, D1.

To them, a woman who was so power-hungry does not need love, and her marriage can only be based on power and mutual goals. In other words, conservatives reject the kind of egalitarian marriage that the Clintons have, claiming that such a marriage is inherently illogical.

These conservative attacks on HRC therefore actually serve as a commentary on a woman's role in society. Conservatives put women into two categories—those who have great power and have prospered in the masculine world, and those who conformed to traditional gender roles and stay within the boundaries of the feminine world. Mrs. Clinton fits into the former, and conservatives believe that because of her masculine identity, she cannot share any of the stereotypical ambitions of women—to have a family, to fall in love, to be taken care of. Mrs. Clinton is an example of how women are placed into one of two categories—either the "masculine" world of power and policy, or the "feminine" world of cookie baking and standing by your man. Mrs. Clinton is attributed the masculine qualities of the first world, while she is denied the feminine qualities of the second world.

The Liberal Response

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON TYPE SOUGHT by Jewish single attorney, 31, who is bright, witty, sincere, and cute. There's nothing sexier than an intelligent, powerful, and successful female who knows what she wants.²²⁸

—An item clipped from the personal ads, which was blown up, mounted, and hung on the wall in the first lady's offices

Liberals take the opposite view of Mrs. Clinton's role in the marriage and in the White House. They reject traditional sex roles, and they laud HRC for excelling in the

²²⁸Gates, Jr., 124

male-dominated world of law and finances. For liberals, Mrs. Clinton has earned her power; she is intelligent and hard working; and above all else, she has the education and experience to command respect and admiration. Moreover, liberals believe that HRC has been able to gain her power and excel in a male-dominated world not by sacrificing love; they believe that she is both a powerful lawyer and advocate, and a good wife and mother, able to survive in the traditional male sphere while enjoying the love that conservatives associate with the female sphere. Liberals embrace the Clintons' egalitarian marriage and understand it to be real, unlike conservatives who find it inherently phony. Liberals praise HRC's role in the marriage and the White House. They consider her a "saint" not because she herself is perfect, but rather because she represents the many intelligent and hardworking women who are fighting to survive and prosper in the male-dominated world of power and prestige.

Defending HRC's Role in the Marriage

Liberals have constantly rebutted accusations that Mrs. Clinton does not love her husband and married him only to facilitate her own rise to power. They point out that Mrs. Clinton herself is extremely intelligent and driven; she does not need any help rising to power. As one long-time friend of HRC has said:

All her friends are going to work in New York and Washington law firms, she's a hot-shot lawyer, she goes to Arkansas? There is one, and only one, reason for it: she's crazy-ass in love with him—and it is still true. She gets that goofy look on her face. She lights up around him. It's the thing people don't understand about her at all—they just don't see that side.²²⁹

²²⁹Gates, Jr., 124.

Many liberals also complain about the media's portrayal of the first lady, which they claim is inaccurate. HRC herself has admitted that "sometimes I read about myself and I go, ooh, I don't like her at all."²³⁰ She also has said that "[I'm] not as good as people say . . . [or] as bad as other people claim."²³¹ Historian Carl Sforazza Anthony, an expert on first ladies, says that "she really isn't this icy Machiavellian schemer or the liberal social architect which the caricature portrays. She's actually a lot more mundane, more ordinary than that; she's a warm, human, regular kind of person, feeling her way towards doing what she believes is right."²³²

Defending HRC's Power

The left most staunchly defends the first lady when she is attacked for wielding so much power in the White House. First, liberals maintain that despite what conservatives might say, Hillary Rodham Clinton has earned her power. She went to Wellesley College and Yale Law School, two of the most respected institutions of higher education in the country; she had worked for the House of Representatives committee that was formulating impeachment charges against President Richard Nixon; she did critical work for the Children's Defense Fund; she was once a senior partner for one of the most important and influential law firms in Arkansas. To liberals, Hillary Rodham Clinton is fully qualified for her role in the White House.

Moreover, the left rejects the conservative use of traditional gender roles to frame its portrayal of Mrs. Clinton. Liberals believe that Mrs. Clinton's control of the finances,

²³⁰Leslie, 14.

²³¹Brock, *Seduction*, x.

²³²As quoted in Leslie, 14.

her ability to be the breadwinner for the family, and her foray into other typically male activities make her a stronger person. They do not deny that Mrs. Clinton transcends stereotypical gender roles, but believe that transcending gender roles is important and appropriate. In a similar vein, liberals believe in the political partnership that Mrs. Clinton shares with her husband. Liberals say that this partnership is not solely political; HRC loves her husband. The ideologues on the left do not deny the existence of a partnership; they simply state that Mrs. Clinton has earned her place in that partnership. They think highly of the egalitarian relationship between the president and first lady. In fact, HRC's situation represents exactly what feminists and liberals want: an egalitarian marriage and a powerful role in the working world for women. Feminists and liberals celebrate Mrs. Clinton's life because she presents a model for them to follow.

Liberals also refute conservative charges that Mrs. Clinton is a co-president, pointing out that many of the president's closest advisors and confidantes are also unelected and unimpeachable. As Henry Louis Gates states,

It's easy to point to previous first ladies who have wielded significant power. . . . More to the point, perhaps, is the fact that voters do not elect a president's friends, either, yet they often have an incalculable sway over the president's administration. Nor is the position of White House chief of staff, arguably the most powerful one in most administrations, subject to senate confirmation.²³³

Implicit in Gates's comment is that Mrs. Clinton is being attacked not because of her actual position in the government, but because of her gender. This argument in fact is used by many liberals, especially feminists, who see the attacks on the first lady as larger attacks on women in society. As Leslie Bennetts has said,

there's a complete double standard. All of the qualities that we most prize in male executives are qualities that, when a woman exhibits them she gets completely

²³³Gates, Jr., 124.

demonized. . . . Our expectations of the first lady are extremely confused and contradictory and pretty much impossible to meet. The whole term is an anachronism. It conjures up these visions of afternoon teas and white gloves. . . . That has a lot to do with our expectations—impossible expectations, sometimes—for . . . how we want women to behave.²³⁴

As this quotation indicates, many liberals feel that Mrs. Clinton is fighting a battle against societal expectations not only of women, but also specifically of first ladies. Other liberals follow this argument one step further and state that the attacks on Mrs. Clinton are motivated not only by the expectations of her personally, but also because of expectations of women generally. In the words of one female reporter:

First, she [HRC] was charged with being flip and independent—the "stand by your man" and "cookies" comments. In short, a woman with attitude.

When that didn't succeed in derailing her (though it caused a pause), she was attacked for having ambition. Ah, ambition. What woman who has ever held power has not heard this charge? Then came "the vision thing," where Hillary was presented as a philosophical lightweight, an unrealistic do-gooder. If any of our last six presidents had uttered sentences half as articulate, or visions as broad, he would be enshrined today as a great thinker. . . . All our images of real power project that one [male] visage. Thus, anyone else is inevitably seen as incompetent, or, when too clearly capable to be so easily dismissed, as overreaching. Flaws that could be overlooked in regard to commanding white men seem magnified in others.²³⁵

This reporter's comments are deeply personal. For example, she states that "if any of our last six presidents had uttered sentences half as articulate, or visions as broad, he would be enshrined today as a great thinker." Clearly, this woman feels that the attacks on HRC are unfairly targeted at her own gender; but more important, the reporter's tone is serious and personal, as if she has a personal stake in the debate over Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The attacks and defenses of the first lady are usually fierce or impassioned because the stakes are so high. Proponents of each side of the myth use HRC as a

²³⁴As quoted in "Hillary Clinton—Future President?" [television transcript], in *CNN News: CNN & Company* [online], 25 May 1994, available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ALLNWS [19 May 1996].

²³⁵Joan Steninau Lester, "First Lady Offers National Vision," *Fresno Bee*, 10 July 1994, B9.

symbolic cultural battleground to fight about women's roles in society. For those who subscribe to the sinner image, Mrs. Clinton's rejection of stereotypical gender roles threatens the status quo in the United States generally and threatens them personally as well. Those who subscribe to the saint image, on the other hand, look to the Clintons' marriage and partnership as a model to which to aspire.

By the advent of the 1996 election, these two sides of the myth had solidified. As the next chapter will show, the 1996 Clinton campaign designed a specific strategy that would allow HRC to focus on her "saint" image for those who liked her but that allowed her to neutralize her "sinner" image for those who did not like her.

CHAPTER SIX

AN ATTEMPT TO DECONSTRUCT THE MYTH: "THE HILLARY PROBLEM" IN THE 1996 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

By 1996, the Hillary Rodham Clinton myth was fully ingrained in Americans' minds. On the one side, the conservative press began talking about "co-president Mrs. Clinton"; cars featured bumper stickers urging people to "impeach President Clinton—and her husband"; conservative talk-show host Rush Limbaugh played "Hail to the Chief" every time he mentioned HRC; and radio stations played a song that began with "I am Hillary; hear me roar. I'm more important than Al Gore."²³⁶ At the same time, however, Mrs. Clinton continued to attract a group of supporters who saw her as a feminist role model who represented women's increased power in the work force and in marriage. Mrs. Clinton was a polarizing figure to the electorate. She was no longer considered an asset to the campaign; on the contrary, strategists began to refer to "the Hillary problem."²³⁷ The

²³⁶Mary Voboril, "Campaign Helpmates: Hillary's Florida Tour," *Newsday*, 10 Oct. 1996, B4.

²³⁷Voboril, B4.

problem was that the first lady was immensely popular with core Democratic base voters, who saw her as a beacon of liberal ideals; however, at the same time she was extremely unpopular with others, who excoriated her for her power and her rejection of traditional gender roles. The campaign needed to make sure that the moderate swing voters who did not approve of HRC did not consider the first lady a decisive campaign issue. As a result, the Clinton campaign devised a "stealth" campaign strategy for the first lady, designed both to downplay her role to her detractors and at the same time to emphasize her role to her supporters so that she would not become a campaign liability. HRC launched an "image makeover" designed to change perceptions of her, so that throughout the campaign she could play an active role with core Democratic voters, while her new subdued image did not encourage her detractors to vote against her husband because of her. This image makeover tried to move her out of the masculine world of power and policy and into the feminine world that she had not been associated with previously, a world that was less threatening to more conservative independent and Republican swing voters.

The Hillary Problem Defined

The Hillary problem was at its worst in the week before the Democratic convention, when Mrs. Clinton's popularity polarized the electorate. Her favorable/unfavorable ratings were split down the middle at 35/39,²³⁸ 35/37,²³⁹ 39/44,²⁴⁰

²³⁸"Double Act in Command," *Scotsman*, 29 Aug. 1996, 13.

²³⁹Ann Scales and Bob Hohler, 28 Aug. 1996, "Hillary Clinton Speaks Up for Parents; Stresses Family Needs in Convention Address." In *Boston Globe* [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS [23 Sept. 1996].

²⁴⁰John King, 28 Aug. 1996, "One Happy Family." In *Record* [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS, Library: NEWS File: CURNWS [23 Sept. 1996].

and 38/58.²⁴¹ One-fifth of voters said that they would be less likely to vote for the president because of the first lady, while others indicated that they would be more likely to vote for him because of her.²⁴²

Furthermore, internal polling numbers indicated that voters held strong feelings toward the first lady: those who approved of her performance strongly supported her, while those who disapproved adamantly opposed her.²⁴³ For example, the Pew Research Center asked voters to describe the first lady in one word, and the top responses were: "strong," "dishonest," "intelligent," "smart," "rhymes with 'rich,'" "good," "bossy," "aggressive," "outspoken," "okay," "crook," and "domineering."²⁴⁴ With the exception of "okay," every word on the list was highly charged, either positively ("strong," "intelligent," etc.) or negatively ("rhymes with rich," "domineering," etc.).

Internal polling numbers further revealed which parts of the electorate strongly supported HRC and which parts staunchly disliked her. A poll conducted by *USA Today*, CNN, and the Gallup organization on 12-15 January 1996²⁴⁵ found her approval ratings at 43/51. It also found that young women, liberals, and African Americans tended to highly approve of Mrs. Clinton, while conservatives and married men tended to disapprove of her.²⁴⁶

²⁴¹Susan Jacoby, "Running Mates: The Incumbent First Lady Unquestionably Raises More Hackles Than Challenger. But Why?" *Newsday*, 28 Aug. 1996, B4.

²⁴²"13 Oct. 1996, "CNN Presents Profiles of Hillary Clinton and Elizabeth Dole," [television transcript]. In *CNN Presents* [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: SCRIPT [27 Oct. 1996].

²⁴³Ibid.

²⁴⁴Jim Lehrer, 27 August 1996, "The Hillary Factor," [television transcript]. In *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: SCRIPT [23 Sept. 1996].

²⁴⁵The reason a January poll was used is that it was the only poll that broke down the first lady's approval/disapproval ratings by demographic groups.

²⁴⁶Susan Page, "First Lady: Behind the Numbers," *USA Today*, 26 January 1996, 4A.

Demographic Group	Favorability Rating of HRC
Self-described liberals	77 percent
Conservatives	26 percent
Moderates	47 percent
18-29 year old women	61 percent
30-49 year old women	48 percent
Married men	29 percent
Never married men	49 percent
Black women	81 percent
Black men	74 percent

This poll, as well as several others conducted in the height of the election season, demonstrated a clear gender gap between how men and women felt about HRC: Men tended to dislike her, while women often saw her as a positive role model. Younger women and women working outside the home tended to like her best, with the latter group giving her a 73 percent approval rating.²⁴⁷ According to Andrew Kohut, the director of the Pew Research Center: "To many men, [Mrs. Clinton] gets under their skin and represents a lot of the tension between the sexes in the 1990s. But for women, particularly younger women under 30, she's a role model."²⁴⁸ This statement underscores that HRC symbolized a new kind of independent woman. In order for the first lady to change her image for the electorate, she would have to change her symbolic nature, a feat that undoubtedly would be difficult to do.

Mrs. Clinton's stealth strategy was designed to emphasize her role to base voters and downplay her role to swing voters. To achieve the former goal, Mrs. Clinton campaigned in Democratic strongholds and spoke with women, minorities, liberals, and

²⁴⁷Jacoby, B4.

²⁴⁸Lehrer, "The Hillary Factor."

other core Democratic supporters. To achieve the latter goal, Mrs. Clinton tempered and neutralized her image by discussing soft issues in neutral places such as schools and child care centers. In addition, the campaign took steps to minimize national media attention at the events, since her national press coverage tended to focus on scandal and controversy. Mrs. Clinton did not aim to specifically change the negative impressions of her detractors; rather, she hoped merely to temper her image to the point that she was not a decisive issue for such voters. As Kohut said: "The American public has a pretty fixed notion of Hillary Clinton and the only thing that will occur is that she will become less salient; they'll think about her less."²⁴⁹ The campaign wanted to avoid as many scandalous feeding frenzies as possible.

HRC's Image Makeover in the Pre-Campaign Season

The Clinton campaign launched HRC's image makeover many months before the campaign season began. Far from discussing policy issues such as health-care reform and controversies such as Whitewater, Mrs. Clinton began to move to softer issues such as children, families, and education, many of which were issues that her husband had been stressing at the start of his own term. These softer issues were associated with the feminine sphere and allowed Mrs. Clinton to market herself as a woman and to downplay the "masculinity" with which she previously had been associated, a characterization that had caused so much controversy about her role in Washington.

²⁴⁹Lehrer, "Hillary Factor."

The HRC makeover went into full force in early 1996 with the publication of the first lady's book *It Takes a Village and Other Lessons Children Teach Us*.²⁵⁰ The entire book presented a new image of the first lady. Everything about the book, from the front cover to the picture on the back, attempts to change how the first lady was seen. Mrs. Clinton's front cover includes a painting of Mrs. Clinton's ideal "village": children flying a kites, a school bus taking children to school, a mother holding hands with her son, a farmer planting seeds as his child sits in a tree and watches. In the center of the cover is a small, almost subliminal painting of a family—a mother, father, boy and girl—holding hands and going for a walk. Clearly, the cover is meant to convey a traditional family image for the first lady.

Even the pictures of Mrs. Clinton plays up a new family-friendly female image of the first lady. On the inside cover, Mrs. Clinton is featured in the White House in a pastel-green traditional female suit, with the pearls at her neck and the ring on her finger glimmering appropriately. She stands behind a chair and smiled with a matronly look on her face. Her hair was shoulder-length and curled at the ends. Mrs. Clinton looks passive and happy, in stark contrast to the many controversial pictures and headline from the covers of news magazines during the previous four years. Similarly, on the back cover, Mrs. Clinton is pictured surrounded by ten children smiling and laughing. The pictures certainly do not portray HRC as the policymaking, power-hungry first lady who was accused of usurping her authority. Indeed, they are the type of photographs people associate more with traditional first ladies like Barbara Bush.

²⁵⁰Hillary Rodham Clinton, *It Takes a Village and Other Lessons Children Teach Us* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

Even the descriptions on the inside cover of the book are aimed at changing the image of the first lady. The "about the author" section says that "Hillary Rodham Clinton is America's first lady. A longtime child advocate, she lives in the White House with the president and their daughter, Chelsea. This is her first book."²⁵¹ This description never mentions that the first lady spearheaded the failed health-care initiative that formed the crux of Bill Clinton's first year in office. It does not even mention that Mrs. Clinton is a lawyer. In a similar vein, the description of the book on the inside cover does not discuss anything controversial about the book. According to the cover, the first lady's book "chronicles her quest—both deeply personal and, in the truest sense, public—to discover how we can make our society into the kind of village that enables children to grow into able, caring, resilient adults."²⁵²

HRC's book also aims to reform the image of the first lady with its content. In *It Takes a Village*, the first lady discusses her own life with personal details about being a mother, daughter, and wife. She thus challenges the attacks on her gender transgressions. The book is filled with anecdotes about her own life, especially as a mother. In fact, first daughter Chelsea seems to be the star of the book. In the first chapter, Mrs. Clinton states that

Chelsea's birth transformed our lives, bringing us the greatest gift of joy—and humility—any parent could hope for. Like every child, Chelsea was her own person from the beginning. She arrived with a look of determination on her face that conveyed a focus and intensity we would come to know well. I prayed that I would be a good enough mother for her.²⁵³

²⁵¹From the cover of Clinton, *It Takes a Village*.

²⁵²*Ibid.*

²⁵³*Ibid.*, 9.

This quotation is typical of HRC's book. It is not controversial—there is little that can be said against childbirth and child rearing; there are no glaring or controversial policy proposals to be found. Moreover, the description of Chelsea's birth allows Mrs. Clinton to portray herself sympathetically as a mother who, like all women, has gone through both joyous and difficult times with her child. The quotation also includes another theme of the first lady's book: religion. She "prays" that she will be a good mother; here, without imposing her religious views on others, Mrs. Clinton portrays herself as a pious mother who only wants what was best for her daughter.

In another chapter, entitled "No Family is an Island," Mrs. Clinton states that "I want you to know a little about my family, because my experiences, *like everyone's*, have informed my views"²⁵⁴ [my emphasis]. Mrs. Clinton wants people to think of her not as a symbol of a powerful woman, but rather as a regular person. She says that her experiences are "like everyone's," implying that hers are no different from other women's experiences. Later in this chapter, Mrs. Clinton describes her own family and upbringing, again to show that she has been reared in the same way as millions of other people; she is no more special than anyone else. For example, she states that "one of our favorite pastimes as children was listening to him [her father] tell stories of his life 'before you were born.'"²⁵⁵ A few pages later, we find out that "the whole clan, along with friends and neighbors who dropped by regularly, sat for hours on the front porch of the cottage, chatting and playing pinochle."²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴Clinton, 20.

²⁵⁵Ibid., 21.

²⁵⁶Ibid., 23.

Hundreds of similar examples are scattered the book and allow Mrs. Clinton to personalize her life for her readers. The book was written to help HRC move away from conservatives' portrayal of her as a witch-like figure who usurped her power. HRC counters this images in her book by discussing soft issues that were associated with women: children, families, and education. HRC indirectly attacks the Republican quest for "family values" when she repeatedly states that "all of us, whether we acknowledge it or not, are responsible for deciding whether our children are raised in a nation that doesn't just espouse family values but values families and children."²⁵⁷ HRC redefines the Republican "family values" issue on her own terms and exposes the supposed hypocrisy of the GOP's family-oriented platform.

In addition to discussing policy proposals generally, Mrs. Clinton also suggests specific programs to help children. These programs are not policy proposals that involved the government; rather, she presents helpful hints for people to put into action themselves. For example, she advocates the importance of immunizing children when she describes the benefits of programs such as Big Brother/Big Sister that allow children to find positive role models in their lives; she even discusses the importance of making sure that children are safe at all times. It is difficult to argue with the first lady's assertions, which are hardly bold or daring new solutions to large problems. For example, she says that "safety-minded parents keep household poisons, plastic bags, and matches out of reach. Landlords and public housing authorities install screens to prevent accidents, fix dripping hot-water faucets so children don't scald their hands, and repaint peeling walls so that children don't ingest lead, which can harm their developing brains."²⁵⁸ Hardly

²⁵⁷Clinton, *It Takes a Village*, 7.

²⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 131-2.

anyone, perhaps not even Rush Limbaugh, can argue that keeping poisons, plastic bags, and matches away from children is a bad idea. She does not propose to force landlords and public housing authorities to abide by certain standards; rather, she merely points out that many are already "safety-minded." Little controversy can be found in the many such statements that appear throughout the book.

It Takes a Village is only the beginning of the Hillary Rodham Clinton image makeover from a "masculine" woman concerned with amassing power to a "feminine" one concerned with soft issues. Throughout the 1996 election, Mrs. Clinton carefully planned her campaign schedule in order to avoid as much controversy as possible. However, this strategy was not always easy to implement.

The 1996 Environment and the Threat of Elizabeth Dole

The 1996 election hardly provided HRC with an ideal environment for pursuing her campaign strategy. The Dole campaign tried to highlight HRC's unpopularity and present the first lady in sharp contrast to Bob Dole's wife, Elizabeth Hanford Dole (EHD), who was markedly more popular than Mrs. Clinton. This environment made it difficult for Mrs. Clinton to accomplish the second half of her campaign strategy—to avoid national press coverage and neutralize her image for swing voters who did not approve of her.

Although Bob Dole was trailing by double digits in August and polls showed that he was not connecting with the electorate, he had one undeniable asset to his campaign: his wife. While Mrs. Clinton received evenly divided favorable/unfavorable ratings, Mrs. Dole's favorability ratings were usually at least triple her unfavorability ratings. For

example, in polls conducted after her convention address, her ratings were: 39/10,²⁵⁹ 54/16,²⁶⁰ and 58/18.²⁶¹ Polls also showed that voters preferred EHD over HRC; in a *Newsweek* poll conducted the week after the Republican convention, voters indicated that Mrs. Dole would make the better first lady, 42 to 28 percent.²⁶² Moreover, the electorate felt less charged about Mrs. Dole than about Mrs. Clinton. In the Pew Center poll, voters described EHD with neutral adjectives. The most frequent responses were "intelligent," "okay," "good," "nice," "strong," and "honest." The first adjective with an even slightly negative connotation was "old," and that was number ten.²⁶³

The Dole campaign took full advantage of the disparity between the two women, trying to focus swing voters who disapproved of the first lady on her controversial role. It did so in two ways: first, by giving Mrs. Dole a prominent role; and second, by indirectly and directly attacking the first lady.

Highlighting Elizabeth Dole's Role

The Dole campaign tried to focus moderate swing voters on the controversies surrounding the first lady primarily by giving EHD a high-profile and seemingly traditional role in the hope that voters naturally would discriminate between Mrs. Dole and Mrs. Clinton. EHD shied away from discussing her first-rate education, her impressive background, or her views on public-policy issues. Ironically, Mrs. Dole herself was hardly a traditional woman. She had been a cabinet official in the Reagan

²⁵⁹Scales and Hohler.

²⁶⁰James Toedtman and Charles V. Zehren, "Hillary Clinton Returns to Spotlight," *Newsday*, 27 Aug. 1996, A4.

²⁶¹Jacoby, B4.

²⁶²Scales and Hohler.

²⁶³Lehrer, "Hillary Factor."

administration, and she was the head of the American Red Cross. Like Mrs. Clinton, EHD made more money than her husband. Similarly, the Doles' marriage seemed to be more egalitarian. Nevertheless, EHD learned her lesson from HRC and kept the media's focus out of her own career. In fact, despite her background, Mrs. Dole took on a traditional political spouse's role throughout the campaign. Rather, she discussed, as she constantly put it, "the man I love."

In her speeches, radio addresses, and television appearances, Mrs. Dole focused on her husband. For example, Mrs. Dole's so-called Oprah Winfrey-style convention address was devoted to "speaking about the man I love."²⁶⁴ In this speech, she described her husband as "the most compassionate, most tender person that I've ever known—the man who, quite simply, is my own personal Rock of Gibraltar."²⁶⁵ After her successful convention address, Mrs. Dole took her Oprah-style show on the road and devoted myriad speeches to praising her husband. For example, at a California appearance she said:

These are the values that led my husband to risk his life on the battlefields of Italy. These are the values that sustained him through three and a half years in hospitals after the war. . . .

[Through] the Dole Foundation . . . he's raised millions of dollars to help people learn a skill, be in the mainstream, and contribute to our society. . . .

Now, down at the White House here's what they said: 'They can't do it. They can't cut taxes and balance the budget simultaneously.' They're right. 'They' can't do it, but Bob Dole can and Bob Dole will do it!²⁶⁶

Time and time again, Mrs. Dole spoke about "my husband"—his career, his qualifications for the presidency, his vision for the future of the United States. She hardly ever

²⁶⁴"Speakers List: Elizabeth Dole, Wife of Robert Dole, Pete Wilson, Governor (R-CA)." *AllPolitics*, 14 Aug. 1996, Available: <http://allpolitics.com/conventions/san.diego/transcripts/0814/l.dole.fdch.shtml> [24 Nov. 1996].

²⁶⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶⁶Jim Lehrer, 2 Oct. 1996, "Where They Stand," [television transcript]. In *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: SCRIPT [8 Oct. 1996].

discussed her life, and the most she would say about her future was that she planned to resume the presidency of the American Red Cross in 1997, implying that unlike Mrs. Clinton, she would not work on policy initiatives.

By constantly focusing on her husband and by highlighting her plans to work outside of the White House, Mrs. Dole made it clear that she was not the one running for public office and would not wield the kind of power that HRC did. While she certainly would not be a traditional political spouse (she would work outside of the White House), she also would not be *threatening* in the way that powerful HRC was. As one GOP youngster stated, Mrs. Dole "speaks like an old-fashioned wife. She'll know her place if her husband's elected." ²⁶⁷

Mrs. Dole's appearances garnered a great deal of national media attention, much of which compared her with Mrs. Clinton—everything from the "Hillary vs. Liddy" cover of *Time* in mid-July to CNN shows that compared the lives of the two women. This media coverage made it difficult for Mrs. Clinton to neutralize her image for swing voters, since they were constantly bombarded with Mrs. Dole's more traditional, "the man I love" approach to campaigning.

Indirectly and Directly Attacking the First Lady

The Dole campaign further tried to focus the electorate on Mrs. Clinton's controversial role by attacking her both directly and indirectly. Most of the indirect attacks came from the candidate himself and Mrs. Dole. The Doles often brought up the controversies surrounding the first lady. For instance, Senator Dole cited Travelgate, a

²⁶⁷Margaret Downey, "Mrs. Clinton Has a Tough Act to Follow," *Atlanta Constitution*, 27 Aug. 1996, 7A.

scandal that largely involved the first lady, when he attacked the Clinton administration's ethics.²⁶⁸ This attack indirectly implied that the powerful first lady, not just the president, was involved in the administration's ethics violations. In addition, Mrs. Dole mentioned that "the Clintons"—not just the president—still had plans to "nationalize health care."²⁶⁹ Mrs. Dole subtly reminded voters about accusations that Mrs. Clinton was a co-president when she said that she (Mrs. Dole) was not "someone who could be the next president."²⁷⁰ And she told a group of suburban Republican women that "one of the finest careers that you can choose today is to be a homemaker, a mother, and a volunteer. Not everyone has to go into the marketplace."²⁷¹ Again, this speech reminded voters of one of Hillary Rodham Clinton's major soundbites from 1992, in which she said that she "could have stayed at home and baked cookies and had teas."

In a radio address, Mrs. Dole said that Bob Dole's proposal was "a far cry from what Mrs. Clinton proposed when she testified before a congressional committee that the administration's target was 'zero growth' in Medicare spending."²⁷² Again, this statement served as a reminder to voters that Mrs. Clinton was the first first lady to testify before congress on a matter of public policy.²⁷³ While the Doles generally spoke of HRC indirectly, at times they veered toward direct attacks. For example, Senator Dole in his

²⁶⁸"First Lady Takes Low Key but Active Role in Campaign," [radio transcript], in *National Public Radio Morning Edition*, [online], 16 Oct. 1996, available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: CMPGN File: SCRIPT [27 Oct. 1996].

²⁶⁹Bob Hohler, "Mrs. Clinton vs. Mrs. Dole: Spouses Stump in Clash of Villages and Messages," *Boston Globe*, 28 Oct. 1996, A1.

²⁷⁰"Spousal Politics on the Stump: Hillary Clinton, Elizabeth Dole Tailor Campaigns to Radically Different Roles," in *Courier-Journal* [online], 6 Oct. 1996, available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS [27 Oct. 1996].

²⁷¹Jill Lawrence, "On the Road, Spouses Making Strides," in *USA Today* [online], 25 Sept. 1996, available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS.

²⁷²"Text of Elizabeth Dole's Radio Address," [transcript], in *U.S. Newswire* [online], 28 Oct. 1996, available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: CMPGN File: CURNWS [6 Nov. 1996].

²⁷³Susan Baer, "First Lady is Looking for a Fresh Start Tonight; Convention Speech Is Seen as a Chance to Polish Her Image," *Baltimore Sun*, 27 Aug. 1996, 1A.

convention address stated that "with all due respect, I am here to tell you that it does not take a village to raise a child. It takes a family to raise a child."²⁷⁴ This attack challenged the premise of HRC's book *It Takes a Village and Other Lessons Children Teach Us*. Elizabeth Dole did not mention HRC in her convention address, but she did compare herself with the first lady when journalists asked her to do so. For example, EHD said the following on the *Today* show: "I am a mainstream conservative; she is a liberal, very, very liberal. . . . And that's a distinct difference."²⁷⁵

The Doles' indirect attacks were much tamer than attacks on the first lady by other Republicans who were not directly associated with the campaign. Senator Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY) said: "The president defended Hillary by saying the following quote: 'I have never known a person with a stronger sense of right and wrong in my life, ever.' Well, Mr. President, that seems to be the problem."²⁷⁶ Even deceased Republican president Richard Nixon was allowed a soundbite from the book *Nixon Off the Record*, one that revealed his less-than-flattering portrayal of Mrs. Clinton, whom he described as "a smiling barracuda."²⁷⁷ Nixon said: "Hillary is ice-cold. You can see it in her eyes. . . . It's good that he [President Clinton] won't succeed because his ideas—which are really hers—are still out there and we'd have the Johnson presidency all over again."²⁷⁸ Nixon, like many other conservatives we have examined, seems intimidated by the Clintons' violation of traditional gender boundaries. *She*, not he, is the one in charge; his ideas are

²⁷⁴Scales and Hohler.

²⁷⁵Koppel, "Hillary Clinton and Elizabeth Dole."

²⁷⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷⁷Delia M. Rios, "First Lady Puzzle: Why Do People Hate Hillary and Love Elizabeth?" in *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* [online], 29 Sept. 1996, available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS [8 Oct. 1996].

²⁷⁸*Ibid.*

actually *hers*. While Nixon specifically attacks HRC, he also more generally attacks the kind of role she has in her marriage and in the White House.

Many other Republicans attacked HRC as well. All of these attacks—from Mrs. Dole's subtle reminders of her rival's past and present controversies to President Nixon's blunt assessment of Mrs. Clinton—were replayed in soundbites throughout the media. They reinforced Mrs. Clinton's controversial role, but they also backfired in one respect. By attacking Mrs. Clinton as a liberal, the Dole campaign helped reinforce President Clinton's moderate image, since the first lady absorbed many such attacks against the president.²⁷⁹

*HRC's Campaign Schedule*²⁸⁰

In order to accomplish her strategic objectives in the 1996 environment, Mrs. Clinton traveled almost exclusively to Democratic strongholds and spoke mainly with preselected base voters who already approved of her role.²⁸¹ She spoke about soft, non-controversial issues, such as children, families, and parenting. Finally, the campaign took proactive steps to ensure minimal national press coverage of HRC. The campaign often made it difficult to track the first lady by leaving out events on her daily schedule or by releasing her schedule at the last moment, if at all.²⁸² The press corps was not allowed to travel on the campaign plane with her;²⁸³ national press reporters had to follow her on

²⁷⁹Todd S. Purdum, "Advisers See Bright Side to Criticism of First Lady," *New York Times*, 25 Aug. 1996, 1.

²⁸⁰Throughout this section, please refer to the table in the appendix of this chapter.

²⁸¹George L. Church, "Hushed on the Stump: Hillary Campaigns Without Press or TV Sound Bites, but the Whitewater Issue Follows Her Anyway," *Time*, 7 Oct. 1996, 48.

²⁸²See the White House web site: <http://library/whitehouse.gov/Retrieve.cgi?dbtype=text&id=7279&query=Hillary>.

²⁸³Church, 48.

commercial planes, and her schedule was so hectic and varied that doing so was often quite difficult.²⁸⁴ As a result, most events Mrs. Clinton attended were covered by only a handful of local reporters, and they usually had to stand in the back of the room, which made it difficult to ask questions.²⁸⁵ In addition, the first lady carefully selected her words to avoid the kinds of jarring soundbites that had made their way into the evening news in previous years,²⁸⁶ and she granted only a handful of interviews, usually to soft television shows that were not interested in generating controversial news stories.²⁸⁷

Throughout the campaign, Mrs. Clinton spoke carefully selected words to carefully selected audiences in carefully selected cities, in order to shore up Democratic support and temper her controversial image. In the words of one reporter, "Hillary Rodham Clinton is . . . not discussing feminist firsts. . . . From her outfits (pastels and pearls) to her subjects (children and education), she is a model of traditional political spousehood. Her mission is to bury her image as an activist, some would say pushy, co-president."²⁸⁸

Where She Went

Despite the controversies surrounding her, Hillary Rodham Clinton played an active role in the 1996 presidential race. She campaigned four or five days a week,²⁸⁹ visited approximately twelve states each week,²⁹⁰ spoke in at least twenty-eight

²⁸⁴Church, 48.

²⁸⁵Frank Bruni, "The First Lady: On Trail, She's First Mom and First Wife," *New York Times*, 13 Oct. 1996, 20.

²⁸⁶*Ibid.*

²⁸⁷Hohler, A1.

²⁸⁸Lawrence.

²⁸⁹Bruni, 20.

²⁹⁰Lawrence.

states,²⁹¹ and made up to ten appearances each day.²⁹² Because she was such a polarizing figure, the campaign wanted to make sure that she campaigned in friendly states where she would be well-received.

Mrs. Clinton attended 25 events in states in which the Clinton campaign led by 20-28 points, 34 events where the lead was 10-19 points, 23 events where it was 2-9 points, 10 where the race was even, and only two events in states where the Clinton campaign was behind by 2-5 points [see appendix]. Hence, of the 94 events, over half, 59, occurred in states in which the campaign led by double digits at the time of the visit. Most of the other visits, 23, occurred in states in which the Clinton campaign had a single-digit lead. The remaining few visits, 12, occurred in states in which the race was either tied or the Clinton camp was losing, yet the campaign minimized the risk for the first lady by scheduling the events in "safe," neutral places, such as schools, children's museums, and union halls.

Not only did Mrs. Clinton visit solidly Democratic states, but also she tended to return time and time again to key cities and regions of the country where she was most popular and the Clinton campaign was doing best. For example, the campaign scheduled her on 28 trips to the Northeast and Midwest, regions of the U.S. where the Clinton campaign usually was leading by double digits. Mrs. Clinton also made trips to the cities in which she was most popular. She visited her hometown of Chicago four times; in addition, she scheduled several campaign events in Massachusetts, where she was more

²⁹¹See table in the appendix.

²⁹²Warren P. Strobel, "Hillary Speaks to 'Hearts' of Liberals: Champions Role of Government in Everyday Life," *Washington Times*, 28 Aug. 1996, A1.

popular than most politicians.²⁹³ She scheduled only 19 trips outside of the Northeast and Midwest, and in most of these states, the Clinton lead was substantial (e.g., in California, 22 points; in New Mexico, 13 points).

Types of Events She Attended

In 1996, HRC abandoned almost all policy-oriented events for those that would allow her to promote her traditional image.²⁹⁴ Almost three-quarters of the events she attended—68 in all—were not conventional campaign rallies. Rather, they were discussion-centered events that focused on softer issues such as children, parenting, and family values. These events included visits to local neighborhoods; tours of local elementary, middle, and high schools; visits to child care centers; roundtable discussions; visits to community service organizations and mentoring programs; discussions at churches with community leaders and volunteers; breakfasts; tours of children's museums; and visits to hospitals, including a visit to the Hillary Rodham Clinton Medical Complex. Mrs. Clinton even paid a visit to Sunnyside High School, most likely the most optimistic-sounding school in the area.

These events were generally small, intimate gatherings aimed at garnering positive local media coverage rather than controversial national coverage. As one reporter said: "For the first lady, the gaudy greasepaint of presidential politics has been thoroughly

²⁹³One Massachusetts poll found that Mrs. Clinton was more popular than her husband, Al Gore, Bob Dole, Elizabeth Dole, and Jack Kemp (Peter S. Canellos, "Mrs. Clinton Far More Popular in Mass. than Elsewhere," *Boston Globe*, 14 Sept. 1996, A20).

²⁹⁴The only policy-centered events that she attended were conferences involving women, such as "In Harm's Way: A National Forum on Women and Violence" and "The U.N. [Beijing] Conference on Women a Year Later." These were not very controversial, since not many people were opposed to domestic violence or basic women's rights around the world, and they allowed HRC to shore up the support of the liberal Democratic base voters.

sanitized. There are no loud balloons, no loud music [sic], and no cries for presidential blood."²⁹⁵ Few sharp soundbites could be replayed on the national nightly news from her roundtable discussions or her tours of local neighborhoods; the first lady took relatively few risks when she spoke with schoolchildren in elementary, middle, and high schools.

Of course, Mrs. Clinton also attended more conventional campaign events such as rallies and fundraisers. HRC, who was immensely popular with liberal Democratic activists, was the most sought-after campaign surrogate for fundraising.²⁹⁶ According to one organizer in Michigan: "When people heard that Hillary Rodham Clinton was coming, the tickets practically sold themselves."²⁹⁷ In all, Mrs. Clinton helped raise at least \$6.7 million for the Democratic National Committee (DNC), mainly through the Women's Leadership Forum (WLF), a fundraising arm of the DNC.²⁹⁸ She attended at least 12 fundraisers,²⁹⁹ eight of which were sponsored by the WLF, attended by liberal women who staunchly supported her.³⁰⁰ Mrs. Clinton also took relatively few risks at campaign rallies. Most of the 26 rallies were in support of congressional and senatorial candidates, and many were held at liberal university campuses or on other inviting territory, such as public libraries and elementary schools.³⁰¹

²⁹⁵6 Oct. 1996, "Spousal Politics on the Stump: Hillary Clinton, Elizabeth Dole Tailor Campaigns to Radically Different Roles," in *Courier Journal* [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS [27 Oct. 1996].

²⁹⁶16 Oct. 1996, "First Lady Takes Low Key but Active Role in Campaign," [radio transcript]. In *National Public Radio Morning Edition*, [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: CMPGN File: SCRIPT [27 Oct. 1996].

²⁹⁷*Ibid.*

²⁹⁸In all, the WLF raised at least \$8 million to help Democratic candidates. Most of the fundraisers included HRC, Tipper Gore, or both. See both: Clifford Pug, "First Lady Keeping a Lower Profile; Hillary Clinton Still Shadowed by Whitewater, FBI Files," *Houston Chronicle*, 30 Oct. 1996, A4. Jurek Martin, "An Addiction to Money," *Financial Times* [London], 26 Oct. 1996, 6.

²⁹⁹In fact, Mrs. Clinton probably attended many more fundraisers, but the exact number is difficult to assess owing to the campaign's unwillingness to release such information.

³⁰⁰18 July 1996, " Clintons, Gores at Democratic Women's Fundraiser," In *Reuters North American Wire* [online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS [10 Dec. 1996].

³⁰¹Koppel, "Hillary Clinton and Elizabeth Dole."

Whom She Targeted

Just as the Clinton campaign made sure that Hillary Rodham Clinton spoke in friendly cities and went to non-controversial events, the campaign also carefully-selected (and, by some accounts, preselected)³⁰² audiences filled with base voters. HRC attended 20 events targeted at women, especially with young women and women working outside the home, both of whom were among her most loyal supporters.³⁰³ For instance, she led several roundtable discussions with working women, attended eight WLF fundraising dinners with thousands of women, and traveled to Connecticut College to discuss the president's plan to expand the Family and Medical Leave law.

Similarly, the first lady attended five events exclusively with African Americans and Hispanics, both core Democratic constituencies.³⁰⁴ Such events included the minority caucuses during the conventions, an address to the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and a rally in Texas with a largely Hispanic audience. She also traveled through inner cities, spoke at university campuses, and visited nursing homes and retirement communities. She even spoke with members of the Hillary Rodham Clinton fan club, an event clearly filled with the first lady's staunchest supporters. These appearances allowed her to rally the support of liberal base voters by exciting them about the election and encouraging them to vote on 5 November.

Mrs. Clinton also attended events with audiences who would help neutralize her controversial image. She attended 18 events with children. Obviously, children would

³⁰²Hohler, A1.

³⁰³Jacoby, B4.

³⁰⁴Two-thirds of the 1.5 million registered Hispanic Texans vote Democratic, and as previously mentioned, blacks approved of HRC's performance by over 70 percent. ("Your Voice Will Be Heard"; Hillary Clinton Tells Texans Their Votes Will Be Rewarded," *Houston Chronicle*, 2 Nov. 1996, 24).

not be voting in the election. These events reinforced her softer, more traditional image for swing voters. For example, she was presented with the Girl Scout patch for smoking prevention activities, read a book aloud to children at a community service organization, discussed how to avoid violent confrontation with elementary school children, toured a computer lab at a high school, and addressed students and teachers at elementary and secondary schools throughout the country.

In a similar vein, many of the events Mrs. Clinton attended featured parents, who helped focus HRC on family-oriented issues. For example, Mrs. Clinton attended a Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program roundtable discussion with parents and teachers at an elementary school; she spoke with new mothers at a birthing clinic; she held a discussion with parents of children in a reading program.

What She Said

Throughout the 1996 campaign, HRC spoke of children, family values, and education; she veered away from public policy considerations; she seldom attacked the opposition. As one reporter put it, Mrs. Clinton "spends much less time impugning on the opposition than she does protecting the image aimed at countering the harsh impressions that have contributed to her low favorability ratings."³⁰⁵

Hillary Rodham Clinton's prime-time convention address on 27 August 1996 provides an excellent example of how the first lady tried to appease both her supporters and detractors. The convention address itself was a hotly debated subject within the White House. According to Harold Ickes, Deputy White House Chief of Staff, some

³⁰⁵Hohler, A1.

strategists asked "why should the president's wife be speaking [at the convention]? We're nominating and electing a president, not his wife."³⁰⁶ However, Ickes said that after Elizabeth Dole gave a long and well-received address at the Republican convention, White House officials felt that they had no choice but to allow the first lady to speak at the Democratic convention.³⁰⁷

The campaign did, however, specially tailor the prime-time speech in order to satisfy both her proponents and opponents. For the latter group, the speech featured soft issues such as the value of children, the significance of being a good parent, and the importance of education. In her own words: "I want to talk about what matters most in our lives and in our nation—children and families."³⁰⁸ She discussed these issues with a more conservative slant, often using the word "responsible" and "responsibility," as she did in this statement: "Of course, parents, first and foremost, are responsible for their children. But we are all responsible for ensuring that children are raised in a nation that doesn't just talk about family values, but acts in ways that values families."³⁰⁹ In all, the first lady used words that revolved around the family 91 times.³¹⁰

In addition, Mrs. Clinton took advantage of her the convention address to paint a new image of herself grounded in personal anecdotes from her past. She discussed her role as Chelsea's mother, how she felt when Chelsea was born, how nervous she used to be when she attended parent/teacher conferences with her husband, how Chelsea would be in the class of 2001 in college. Likewise, she spoke personally about her role as a wife,

³⁰⁶Richard Berke, "The Democrats: An Overview," *New York Times*, 28 Aug. 1996, A1.

³⁰⁷Ibid.

³⁰⁸27 Aug. 1996, "Text of Hillary Clinton's Speech to Democrat Convention" [transcript]. In *CNN News* [online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS; Library: NEWS File: CURNWS [4 Nov. 1996].

³⁰⁹Ibid.

³¹⁰The words break down as follows: children, 24; boys, 4; girls, 4; kids, 4; babies, 4; daughters, 4; parents, 18; mothers, 6; fathers, 3; family, 20.

referring to "my husband" and "Bill." She told the nation that "in October, Bill and I will celebrate our twenty-first wedding anniversary. . . . Bill was with me when Chelsea was born, in the delivery room, in my hospital room when we brought our baby daughter home [sic]."³¹¹ She stated that "Bill and I are fortunate that our jobs have allowed us to take breaks from work not only when Chelsea was born, but to attend her school events and take her to the doctor."³¹² She mentioned members of her family 21 times in order to focus the electorate on the personal side of the first family, away from Whitewater and the myriad other controversies that engulfed the Clintons. These comments also underscored that the Clintons' marriage was a partnership of love as much as it was a partnership based on power.

Mrs. Clinton also tried to temper her image in the address by focusing on Bill Clinton's accomplishments. By discussing what "my husband" and "the president" has done—as opposed to what "we" have done—she tried to deflect criticism that she was a co-president. She said "my husband" 4 times, "the president" 5 times, and "Bill Clinton" once. She discussed the president's past policy successes and future policy plans—not her past successes and future policy plans—when she said: "The president also hasn't forgotten that there are thousands of children languishing in foster care who can't be returned home. That's why he signed legislation last week that provides for a \$5,000 tax credit for parents who adopt a child."³¹³

The first lady also interwove liberal ideas into the overall conservative framework of her address; doing so allowed her to speak to liberal base voters. For example, she

³¹¹27 Aug. 1996, "Text of Hillary Clinton's Speech to Democrat Convention" [transcript]. In *CNN News* [online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXJS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS [4 Nov. 1996].

³¹²*Ibid.*

³¹³*Ibid.*

directly responded to Bob Dole's attack on her book *It Takes a Village* at the Republican convention by saying:

To raise a healthy, happy, and hopeful child, it takes a family; it takes teachers; it takes clergy; it takes businesspeople; it takes community leaders; it takes those who protect our health and safety; it takes all of us. And it takes a president. It takes a president who believes not only in the potential of his own child, but of the American family—who believes not only in the promise of us each as individuals, but in our promise together as a nation. It takes a president who not only holds these beliefs, but who acts on them. It takes Bill Clinton.³¹⁴

This response was framed conservatively, centering on family values and responsibility and on her husband rather than her; she reinforced her traditional image. However, the speech also advocated a much more Democratic vision for the future that called for community responsibility as much as individual responsibility, which pleased liberal Democratic base voters.

Mrs. Clinton built on the themes that she established in her convention address on the campaign trail.³¹⁵ She spoke about children, education, and parenting, and she made many more observations than political appeals. For example, few people could disagree with the following statement, which the first lady made when she visited the Gallery 37 Art Project in Chicago, a community service organization that paired teenagers with professional artists:

As I walk around visiting with some of the students who are here, I had [sic] the strong impressions that the experience here is not just as an apprentice in art, but as an apprentice in life, with its richness and diversity as represented here in this great city. Children need something to say yes to; and young people, particularly those served by Gallery 37, need to know that all of us in the adult [community] respect and honor their world.³¹⁶

³¹⁴27 Aug. 1996, "Text of Hillary Clinton's Speech to Democrat Convention" [transcript]. In *CNN News* [online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS [4 Nov. 1996].

³¹⁵This section relies heavily on the limited accounts of HRC's speeches and campaign appearances, since the White House did not make the first lady's speeches public. This silence may reflect the campaign's desire to avoid national media coverage of Mrs. Clinton.

³¹⁶Lehrer, "The Hillary Factor."

This statement—only one of many of its kind—was hardly bold or daring; there was no controversial soundbite for the national evening news or the national daily papers.

A common theme in HRC's discussions about children was the happiness that children bestow upon adults. For instance, when Mrs. Clinton visited Disney World for the theme park's twenty-fifth anniversary, she said: "We want to thank you for bringing joy and delight to millions of children and the young at heart. . . . Thank you for reminding us that there are no limits to the American imagination, . . . and for making children the heart and soul of all your endeavors."³¹⁷ Mrs. Clinton ended her speech as a group of schoolchildren began to sing "It's a Small World" in a carefully orchestrated photo opportunity.

HRC also spent time on the campaign trail discussing another theme from the convention address: her book. The book allowed her to deflect attacks against her without appearing mean-spirited, while at the same time safeguarding her family-oriented image. For example, at the dedication of the Jane Addams park in Chicago, HRC allied herself with the social reformer, saying that Addams "understood that it does take a village to raise a child, and it takes a neighborhood to become a village, to make sure that everyone is given a chance to live up to their God-given potential."³¹⁸

When Mrs. Clinton was not discussing children, parenting, and villages, she could be heard discussing her husband's accomplishments, just as she did in her convention address. She discussed President Clinton's campaign theme, "the bridge to the twenty-first century," promoted his plan to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act, discussed

³¹⁷Voboril, B4.

³¹⁸Jane Fullerton, "First Lady Is Front, Center in Chicago," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 27 Aug. 1996, 1A.

his "commitment to working families," talked about the 10.5 million new jobs the president created, and lauded many of the president's other accomplishments.³¹⁹ For example, on a campaign stop in Lansing, Michigan, HRC said: "I saw firsthand what we mean when we talk about the American community, what my husband means when he talks about building a bridge that is big enough and wide enough and strong enough for everyone to walk across together."³²⁰ Comments such as this one reinforced the notion that the president—not the first lady—was the policymaker.

Oftentimes, Mrs. Clinton simultaneously tried to support her husband while she personalized her own image with voters. For example, in a speech in Boca Raton, Florida, she talked about her childhood experience—something that not many voters had heard about, considering the controversial news coverage she had received—and related it to the president's agenda. She said:

I had people say to me after the convention, 'What's the president of the United States [doing] talking about parent teacher conferences, and that he wants parents to go and be involved and go take their children or their parents to the doctor?' And I thought back to when I was in elementary school. I remember so clearly after Sputnik went up . . . [that] my teacher told me that President Eisenhower wanted us to do more math. . . . And I thought to myself, 'I'm not interested in math, but if the president wants me to do it, I guess I should pay more attention to it.' I want our young people, I want our students, I want our parents to know that they have a president who really does expect them to do well in school and expects parents to be part of their children's education.³²¹

Statements such as these allowed the first lady to neutralize her image by both describing her personal upbringing and discussing her husband's accomplishments.

³¹⁹Lawrence.

³²⁰16 Oct. 1996, "First Lady Takes Low Key but Active Role in Campaign," [radio transcript]. In *National Public Radio Morning Edition*, [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: CMPGN File: SCRIPT [27 Oct. 1996].

³²¹Koppel, "Where They Stand."

The only times that Mrs. Clinton discussed issues other than children, parents, education, her husband, and her personal life were when she spoke to strongly Democratic audiences who shared her liberal views. For example, she spoke in front of hundreds of Hispanic business leaders in the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce about the need for affirmative action programs. She said that "access to capital is still not what it should be."³²² By the end of the speech, the businessmen were chanting "viva Hillary," and they declared their full support of the Clinton campaign.³²³

Since the first lady wanted to avoid as much controversy as possible, she turned down most requests for interviews, many of which had, in the past, been catalysts for controversy.³²⁴ She did, however, grant a handful of interviews to soft television shows that were less structured and tended to appeal to women, such as *Good Morning America*, *Larry King Live*, and *Live with Regis and Kathy Lee*. The soft television format allowed her to stay on-message (and, in her case, on-image) with little or no filtration.

HRC selected interviews in which she had total control of the formats. She used some of these interviews to tell personal anecdotes from the past. For example, Regis Philbin asked her about the first time she went to Disneyworld, not about her commodity trading in Arkansas; this gave her the opportunity to discuss stories about her life when Chelsea was growing up.³²⁵ Similarly, on *Good Morning America*, Charles Gibson let the first lady speak openly and without interruption about her husband's accomplishments and his campaign. Her comments allowed her to emphasize that her husband was the one running for reelection: "I feel confident that people are really beginning to understand

³²²Lawrence.

³²³Ibid.

³²⁴Koppel, "Hillary Clinton and Elizabeth Dole."

³²⁵Ibid.

what the president has done";³²⁶ "I do feel confident that the president's message is out."³²⁷

Mrs. Clinton also used these interviews to respond to Republican attacks in an above-the-fray manner that made her seem beyond politics and partisan bickering. For example, she told Charles Gibson that she was not offended by Senator Dole's convention attack on her book. She said: "I just hoped that perhaps he got some wrong information, and I'd be happy to send him a copy of the book."³²⁸ She told Judy Woodruff on *Inside Politics* that

everyone knows it takes a family to raise a child. I wrote in my book that the family has the primary responsibility for children. But I pointed out that every child, mine included, is influenced by people and forces outside the family. And if we, as a nation, are going to do more than just pay lip service to family values, then we have to understand how important it is that we as a nation take responsibility for our children.³²⁹

These responses allowed HRC to show swing voters that these attacks were unfair, without seeming vindictive or overpowering.

The toughest questions that interviewers asked the first lady involved her role in the 1996 campaign. However, once again, the soft format of these television shows gave her full command of her responses, since the interviewers almost never asked difficult follow-up questions. For example, after Larry King asked the first lady what her role in 1996 would be, she responded: "Same as ever. I'm just going to be out there working as

³²⁶Charles Gibson, 29 Aug. 1996, "Tipper Gore Interview," [television transcript]. In *Good Morning America* [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: CMPGN: File: SCRIPT [27 Oct. 1996].

³²⁷Ibid.

³²⁸Ibid.

³²⁹Judy Woodruff, "Hillary Clinton—I am Not Hurt By Republican Jabs," [television transcript], in *Inside Politics* [online], 26 Aug. 1996, available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: SCRIPT [23 Sept. 1996].

hard as I can, speaking, doing whatever I'm asked to do."³³⁰ The last part of her answer allowed her to emphasize a traditional role over a policymaking one. King never pointed out that she seemed to have a more active role in 1992, nor did he ask about the various Clinton scandals. In a similar vein, when King asked the first lady to compare herself with Elizabeth Dole, he did not probe further after she responded: "I don't think there's anything to compare. We're two different people. I admire her public service, and I think it's terrific that many women are showing the world how accomplished they are in speaking and handling issues and situations, so I say the more, the merrier."³³¹

Even HRC's arguably most challenging interview in the most conventional setting—with Judy Woodruff on *Inside Politics*—was hardly difficult for the first lady. Woodruff asked Mrs. Clinton to discuss her reaction to the controversial welfare bill that Bill Clinton had recently signed into law. HRC said that "much of my thinking on welfare reform rests on my belief that my husband will do what he said. . . ." ³³² The remainder of the response was completely on-message; HRC discussed her husband's commitment to ensuring that families that work hard will advance; she never elaborated any of her own objections to the law.

Woodruff's only follow-up question was whether welfare should be an issue in the campaign, which provided a perfect opportunity for Mrs. Clinton to distance herself from public policy. She said: "That's for somebody else to decide, not me."³³³ Later in the interview, Woodruff asked the first lady whether she would agree to a debate with

³³⁰Larry King, 29 Sept. 1996, "Interview with Hillary Clinton," [television transcript]. In *Larry King Live* [online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS [27 Oct. 1996].

³³¹Ibid.

³³²Judy Woodruff, 26 Aug. 1996, "Hillary Clinton—'President Will 'Correct' Welfare Bill," [television transcript]. In *Inside Politics* [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: SCRIPT [23 Sept. 1996].

³³³Ibid.

Elizabeth Dole, to which Mrs. Clinton responded adamantly: "No . . . because the president is the one who is running for reelection, and he has a challenger. Those are the men that the people will have to choose between. They're going to be making decisions, and that's what I think voters want to know about."³³⁴ Again, Woodruff's questions allowed the first lady to promote her new image without fear of the consequences.

Conclusion

Before we can assess whether the Clinton campaign successfully solved the Hillary problem, we must first recall the goals of Mrs. Clinton's strategy. HRC needed to rally the support of base voters who already thought highly of her. She also needed to avoid becoming a decisive issue for moderate swing voters, many of whom disapproved of her controversial role. She needed to temper her image so that swing voters who did not like her would not consider her a decisive campaign issue.

On election day, the electorate remained polarized in its attitudes toward the first lady. Exit polls indicate that voters preferred Elizabeth Dole over HRC, 50 to 43 percent.³³⁵ Nevertheless, President Clinton won reelection by a comfortable margin, and he did so largely with the support of his moderate swing voters. These voters represented 55 percent of his vote and preferred him over Dole, 57 to 33 percent. Most swing voters, many of whom may not have liked the first lady, did not consider HRC's role a decisive issue and cast their ballot for the president.

³³⁴Woodruff, "Hillary Clinton—"I Am Not Hurt By Republican Jabs."

³³⁵All exit poll information comes from the Voter Research Service nationwide exit polls from the Allpolitics web site: <http://allpolitics.com/elections/natl.exit.poll/index1.html> and <http://allpolitics.com/elections.natl.exit.poll/index2.html> [11 Dec. 1996].

Mrs. Clinton's other target group, liberal base voters, overwhelmingly supported the president. They represented 31 percent of Clinton's vote and voted for him over Dole 78 to 11 percent. Moreover, internal polling numbers indicate that the president gained the support of the demographic groups that the first lady targeted as base voters. For example, 58 percent of the president's support came from women, and women voted for Clinton over Dole 48 to 43 percent. More specifically, working women, who represented 33 percent of Clinton's support, voted for him over Dole 56 to 35 percent. In addition, African Americans and Hispanics overwhelmingly supported Clinton. The former group comprised 17 percent of the Clinton vote and preferred the president over Dole, 84 to 12 percent. The latter group comprised 7 percent of the Clinton vote and voted for him over Dole 72 to 21 percent. Clearly, the base voters that HRC targeted overwhelmingly supported the president.

These polling numbers show that the Hillary problem did not disappear after the election. HRC continued to divide the nation, despite her efforts to neutralize her image to her detractors. The reason she was unable to change her image is that the myth was fully ingrained in the American mind before the election. People who believed that she was like a saint would believe that no matter what the critics said; in a similar vein, those who believed she was like a sinner would believe in her evil image no matter what issues she took on. The following chapter will examine why the myth was unalterable.

Appendix to Chapter Six

Hillary Rodham Clinton's Schedule

- WLF=Women's Leadership Forum

Date	Event ³³⁶	Location	C/G Lead ³³⁷
M 8/26	1. Arkansas and Connecticut delegation meetings	Convention, Chicago, IL	
	2. Women's caucus meeting with Tipper Gore	Chicago, IL	
	3. Democratic Governor's Association forum	Chicago, IL	
	4. Luncheon celebrating opening of Jane Addams park w/Mayor Daley	Chicago, IL	
	5. Reception hosted by WLF and EMILY's List *\$125/plate fundraiser, raised \$200,000	Chicago, IL	
	6. Visit to Christo Rey High School	Chicago, IL	
Tu 8/27	1. Visit Gallery 37 Youth Outreach Project with Margaret Daley	Chicago, IL	
	2. Visit local neighborhood	Chicago, IL	
	3. Convention address	Chicago, IL	
W 8/28	1. Illinois and Iowa delegation meetings	Chicago, IL	
	2. Black caucus meeting	Chicago, IL	
	3. Hispanic caucus meeting	Chicago, IL	
	4. Visit Helen McCorkie school and local neighborhood	Chicago, IL	
	5. Greet President upon arrival in Chicago		
Th 8/29	1. Florida and Pennsylvania delegation meetings	Chicago, IL	
	2. Visit local community	Chicago, IL	
	3. Youth caucus meeting	Chicago, IL	
	4. Watch Bill Clinton's address at convention	Chicago, IL	
F 8/30	1. *Bus tour with Bill Clinton	Cairo, IL; Paducah, KY; Memphis, TN	
Sa 8/31	1. *Bus tour with Bill Clinton		
W 9/4	1. *Address to members of the Hillary Rodham Clinton Fan Club	East Room, White House	
Th 9/5	1. WLF reception *"Network '96" fundraiser	Austin, TX	even

³³⁶All event and location information was provided by the White House unless preceded by an asterisk, which indicates information from wire services and published reports in newspapers.

³³⁷This column indicates the Clinton/Gore campaign's lead in the state at the time that HRC visited. Information comes from politicsnow's ballot maps throughout the campaign (<http://www.politicsnow.com/resource/polltrack/maps/3way>).

	2. Address to students at the Univ. of Texas—Austin	Austin, TX	even
	3. Tour of and remarks at the Imani School at the Power Center.	Houston, TX	even
	4. WLF reception; *\$125/plate dinner, \$1000-\$2000 VIP reception, raised at least \$250,000	Houston, TX	even
F 9/6	1. Kelly Airforce Base-Southwest Enrichment center mentoring program—discussion	San Antonio, TX	even
	2. Arrival at Dallas airport (press event)	Dallas, TX	even
	3. WLF reception	Dallas, TX	even
M 9/9	1. HRC presentation with the Girl Scouts's patch for smoking prevention activities	S. Portico, White House	
Tu 9/10	1. Tour of and discussion at the Crittendon Stella Sanford Child Care Center	Sioux City, IA	10+
	2. Address to students, faculty and parents at West Middle School	Sioux City, IA	10+
	3. Address to students and faculty at South Eugene High School	Eugene, OR	14+
W 9/11	1. Tour and address to students, faculty, parents at Puente Learning Center	Los Angeles, CA	22+
	2. Children's Institute International Conference: "In Harm's Way: A National Forum on Women and Violence"	Beverly Hills, CA	22+
	3. Tour White House craft exhibit and dinner, Los Angeles County Museum of Art	Los Angeles, CA	22+
Th 9/12	1. Santa Barbara City College Roundtable discussion	Santa Barbara, CA	22+
	2. Clinton/Gore '96 rally at Santa Barbara College	Santa Barbara, CA	22+
	3. Fundraiser with Bill Clinton	Los Angeles, CA	22+
M 9/16	1. "Lessons with Borders" conference, Johns Hopkins University	Baltimore, MD	15+
	2. WLF fundraising dinner; *800 present, \$200 dinner, \$1000 special reception, raised over \$250,0000	Baltimore, MD	15+
Tu 9/17	1. Next Door Foundation "Read With Me Program"—tour, discussion with parents, and book reading to children	Milwaukee, WI	19+
W 9/18	1. Discussion with community leaders at Fourth Av. Methodist Church	Fairbault, MN	12+
	2. Community rally	Fairbault, MN	12+
	3. Denver airport arrival (closed to press coverage)	Denver, CO	5+
	4. Tour of Stephens elementary school after school program and discussion with parents	Denver, CO	5+
	5. Remarks to U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce	Denver, CO	5+
F 9/20	1. *Clinton/Gore campaign rally with Bill Clinton	Sioux Falls, SD	3-

Tu 9/24	1. Breakfast for Nina Hyde Center for Breast Center Research	White House	
	2. Discussion at Connecticut College focusing on Family and Medical Leave Law and commitment to working families	New London, CT	26+
W 9/25	1. Tour of birthing center at Lakewood hospital and discussion with parents and hospital staff	Lakewood, OH	10+
	2. Visit to "Almost Home" wing of the Dayton Medical Center and discussion with parents and hospital staff	Dayton, OH	10+
Th 9/26	1. Los Angeles Times and Times Mirror Management Conference	Los Angeles, CA	16+
	2. Address at DNC fundraiser	Beverly Hills, CA	16+
	3. Address hosted by Rock the Vote: "8000 Sunset Rocks the Vote"	Los Angeles, CA	16+
F 9/27	1. WLF reception with Tipper Gore	San Francisco, CA	16+
Sa 9/28	1. "The UN Women's Conference a Year Later."	Washington, DC	
M 9/30	1. *Address to community leaders and volunteers at Saint Paul Church	Jacksonville, FL	5+
	2. Disney World 25th Anniversary Celebration	Orlando, FL	5+
	3. Dedication of Breast Cancer Center	West Palm Beach, FL	5+
	4. Democratic rally	West Palm Beach, FL	5+
	5. WLF reception	Boca Raton, FL	5+
Tu 10/1	1. *Democratic fundraiser \$100 regular tickets; \$1000 VIP tickets	West Palm Beach, FL	5+
Th 10/3	1. Tour of Wilmington High School computer lab and address to students, faculty, and community	Wilmington, DE	6+
	2. Address to students of Cheltenham High School	Montgomery County, PA	16+
	3. Clinton/Gore rally at physical education building at Penn State campus	Penn State, Abington-Ogontz	16+
F 10/4	1. Discussion with students, faculty, and staff at Robert L. Ford Elementary School	Lynn, MA	23+
	2. Address at Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University	Cambridge, MA	23+
	3. Clinton/Gore '96 rally at Thomas Crane Public Library	Quincy, MA	23+
Sa 10/5	1. Address at unveiling and dedication ceremony for sculpture of Eleanor Roosevelt	New York City, NY	20+
	2. Join president in Chautaugua, NY	Chautaugua, NY	20+
Tu 10/8	1. YWCA children's pledge card presentation	Detroit, MI	21+
	2. Roundtable discussion on the DARE program at Mott Elementary School	Flint, MI	21+
	3. Clinton/Gore '96 rally at Plumbers Hall	Chicago, IL	16+

	4. *\$1000/plate WLF fundraiser		
W 10/9	1. Address to students and faculty at Mt. Vernon High School	Mt. Vernon, IL	16+
	2. Address to students and faculty at West High School	Madison, WI	23+
	3. Address at University of Wisconsin—Green Bay	Green Bay, WI	23+
	4. *Fundraiser at U. Wisconsin for Democratic candidates in northern WI	Green Bay, WI	23+
	5. *\$250/plate private reception at Concourse Hotel	Madison, WI	23+
Th 10/10	1. Address to National Council of Negro Women	Washington, DC	
	2. Discussion at Charles T. Adams Senior Center	Wilkes Barre, PA	16+
	3. Address to students, faculty, and community at East High School	Erie, PA	16+
M 10/14	1. Tour of the Impression Five Science Center	Lansing, MI	21+
	2. Address to people of Lansing	Lansing, MI	21+
	3. Fundraising reception at Chicago Hilton and Towers	Chicago, IL	22+
Tu 10/15	1. Roundtable discussion with seniors at Armory Park Senior Center	Tuscon, AZ	2+
	2. Address to students, faculty, and community at Sunnyside High School	Tuscon, AZ	2+
	3. Join president in Albuquerque	Albuquerque, NM	13+
F 10/18	1. Discussion with working women at adult learning center	Nashua, NH	15+
	2. Clinton/Gore '96 rally at City Hall	New Haven, CT	28+
Sa 10/19	1. Address to community	Burlington, IA	10+
	2. Address about education at Iowa Western Community College	Council Bluffs, IA	10+
	3. Annual Jefferson Jackson day dinner at Drake University	Des Moines, IA	10+
M 10/21	1. Announcement of two public/private partnerships to provide humanitarian aid to Bosnians	East Room, White House	
Tu 10/22	1. WLF luncheon and discussion with working women	Denver, CO	6+
	2. Clinton/Gore '96 rally at University of Nevada	Las Vegas, NV	even
	3. Address—Barbara Greenspan lecture series, University of Nevada	Las Vegas, NV	even
	Note: this is national college day for the campaign (GOTV)		
W 10/23	1. Discussion with working women at the Fletcher Jones Cultural Gallery of the Lied Discovery Children's Museum	Las Vegas, NV	even
	2. Clinton/Gore '96 rally at the University of Missouri	Columbia, MO	4+
Th 10/24	1. Clinton/Gore '96 rally at Ohio University	Athens, OH	14+

	2. Clinton/Gore '96 rally	Akron, OH	14+
Sa 10/26	1. *Hillary and Bill Clinton spend time alone for HRC's birthday		
	This is the campaign's Get Out the Women's Vote Weekend		
Su 10/27	1. "New Jersey Women's GOTV Kickoff" at Garden State Park	Cherry Hill, NJ	27+
	2. Clinton/Gore '96 rally at the University of Maine at Orono	Bangor, ME	15+
M 10/28	1. Visit to Munjoy Hill Community Policing Center and walk through community to Cummings Community Center. Discussion with police officers and community members.	Portland, ME	15+
	2. Fema Disaster Field Office visit and photo opportunity	Westbrook, ME	15+
	3. Clinton/Gore '96 rally	Pawtucket, RI	28+
	4. Clinton/Gore '96 rally at the Stellar Center for the Arts, SUNY Stony Brook	Stony Brook, NY	20+
W 10/30	1. Ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Cambridge Medical Center at the Hillary Rodham Clinton Medical Complex	Deerfield Beach, FL	8+
	2. Seniors rally at the Century Village	Deerfield Beach, FL	8+
	3. Clinton/Gore '96 rally	Tallahassee, FL	8+
Th 10/31	1. Address at Olivette Institutional Baptist Church	Cleveland, OH	8+
	2. Clinton/Gore '96 rally	Brooklyn, OH	8+
	3. Clinton/Gore '96 rally	East Lansing, MI	10+
	4. Clinton/Gore '96 rally	Springfield, IL	14+
F 11/1	1. Clinton/Gore '96 rally at University of Missouri	Kansas City, MO	9+
	2. Clinton/Gore '96 rally at the International Convention Center	Brownsville, TX	5-
Sa 11/2	1. Address to students, faculty, and community at San Bernardino College	San Bernardino, CA	11+
	2. Clinton/Gore '96 rally at University of California, San Diego	La Jolla, CA	11+
Su 11/3	1. *Visit to Burton's Restaurant	Corvallis, OR	9+
	2. *Clinton/Gore '96 GOTV rally at Oregon State University	Corvallis, OR	9+
	3. *Clinton/Gore '96 GOTV rally at University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse	LaCrosse, WI	7+

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE MEANING OF THE MYTH

Mrs. Clinton as a Star

As we have seen, the Hillary Rodham Clinton myth has not disappeared. Despite the Clinton campaign's conscious effort to change Mrs. Clinton's image with her detractors, she continues to divide the nation to the same extent that she did before the election. The myth has been unalterable precisely because Americans see Mrs. Clinton as a myth, a symbol, not a real person. She serves as a symbol for both sides—for proponents of the saint side, she is the modern American woman who is trying to carve out a role for herself in a male-dominated world of power. For proponents of the sinner side, she is the antithesis of the traditional feminine values. Those who believe in the sinner side of the myth are not just intimidated by HRC; they feel personally threatened by women like her who assume powerful roles. In a similar vein, those who believe in the

saint side of the myth idolize the first lady because she represents the kind of powerful, intelligent woman whom they admire.

In *Stars*, Richard Dyer argues that "stars are, like characters in stories, representations of people. Thus they relate to ideas about what people are (or are supposed to be) like. . . . They are just as much construed images, constructed personalities as 'characters' are."³³⁸ Hillary Rodham Clinton may not live in Hollywood, but she nevertheless fits Dyer's definition of a star. HRC is indeed a "constructed image"; Americans rely on the media to construct her for them and do not know who she really is. And she certainly represents "ideas about what people are (or are supposed to be)." Indeed, Mrs. Clinton has been the source of controversy because she represents a new kind of woman who rejects traditional gender roles and retains power in the marriage and the workforce. Thus, although Dyer does not refer specifically to politicians as stars, his thesis still applies to HRC.

Portrayals of HRC in Popular Culture

This paper has already shown how HRC is, in Dyer's words, a "produced image" and "construed personality" similar to "characters" in the movies.³³⁹ The media have constructed images of HRC for the public, images that have built up the myth. In the 1992 campaign, the health-care debacle, the "Clinton scandals," and the portrayal of the Clintons' marriage, Mrs. Clinton assumed a persona that in some ways is realistic but is also, in part, fictionalized. This is not to say that the portrayals of the first lady are not

³³⁸Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: BFI Publishing, 1986), 22.

³³⁹*Ibid.*

grounded in fact; rather, the portrayals use so-called facts to fictionalize the first lady for Americans.

Mrs. Clinton is a "star," or an icon, and has taken on a personality that the media have constructed for her. While Americans do not know the real HRC, they know her persona. This persona is so strong that it appears as a character in popular culture. The perfect example comes from Henry Beard and John Boswell's *The Unshredded Files of Hillary and Bill Clinton*,³⁴⁰ a comical parody of the myth. The authors compile HRC's "confidential files." One such file is an essay the first lady supposedly wrote in second grade entitled "What I Would Do If I Were Queen of America." In this parodic essay, the young Ms. Rodham states that "because I am smarter than everyone, I say what we're going to do, and no arguing or talking back or taking votes. . . . I say what's bad and what's not, but just because it's bad when you do it doesn't mean it's bad when I do it. . . . When I break a rule or tell a lie it doesn't count because as queen I have permanent double x-sies."³⁴¹ This clearly parodies the sinner side of the myth in which HRC dominates and holds herself to different ethical standards from everyone else; it directly relates to the allegations about Whitewater and to the criticism of her powerful role as first lady.

In another "file" from this collection, First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy writes to HRC in 1963, saying: "How kind of you to write and encourage me to run against Jack for the presidency next year. I'm sorry to say that I have made a firm decision to support my husband's bid for a second term, but I think if I had more supporters like you I would most certainly be a shoe-in!"³⁴² This comical piece works on several levels as a parody

³⁴⁰Notice that HRC's name comes before her husband's in the title. This play reinforces yet again the supposition that HRC was the center of power in the Clintons' marriage.

³⁴¹Henry Beard and John Boswell, *The Unshredded Files of Hillary and Bill Clinton* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996), 3.

³⁴²Beard and Boswell, 5.

of the myth. On the one hand, it portrays Mrs. Clinton as a hard-edged feminist who has always believed in reversing gender roles. Such a characterization, of course, is far from true—in fact, Mrs. Clinton was once a "Goldwater girl" who campaigned for Barry Goldwater and a proud member of the Republican party—but the current images of HRC are grounded much more in the fictionalized myth than in any kind of factual reality. Moreover, the 1963 "file" starkly contrasts Mrs. Kennedy's passive, ultra-*feminine* style and tone with Mrs. Clinton's aggressive, ultra-*feminist* style and then buttresses HRC's own gender transgressions. The book is filled with many other examples of HRC's "files," including a letter from the Girl Scouts stating the organization's shock that Mrs. Clinton found selling cookies door-to-door "a demeaning and belittling activity that perpetuates hateful sex-based stereotypes."³⁴³ This book is hardly the only comical portrayal of the first lady. HRC manifests herself in various other forms of popular culture, from late-night talk show jokes and top-ten lists to internet web sites devoted to praising and lambasting the first lady [see appendix]. All these popular culture portrayals of the first lady demonstrate the pervasiveness of the HRC myth.

Fictionalized Portrayals of HRC

In addition to portrayals of the first lady in popular culture, Mrs. Clinton also appears as a fictional character. One of the most controversial books to come from Washington, *Primary Colors* by Anonymous,³⁴⁴ chronicles the 1992 election in a "fictional" account that has been widely regarded as nonfiction because of its parallels to the Clinton campaign in the 1992 election. In this book, the character of Susan Stanton is

³⁴³Ibid., 4.

³⁴⁴Anonymous was later revealed to be journalist Joe Klein.

modeled after HRC. She is married to a governor from "a small southern state who has set his sight on the presidency."³⁴⁵ The book mixes real events from the 1992 election with fictionalized events. For example, Governor Stanton has a difficult time in the New Hampshire primary because Cashmere McLeod (Gennifer Flowers) has said that she had an affair with the governor and has tapes to prove it. In addition, Mrs. Stanton, like Mrs. Clinton, is a powerful woman who assumes a major role in the campaign. However, these true incidents are mixed in with fictionalized accounts of the election. Susan Stanton cheats on her husband when she sleeps with Henry Burton, the character who is modeled after George Stephanopoulos. As far as anyone knows, such a liaison did not actually occur. Nevertheless, *Primary Colors* succeeds in portraying the incident as reality because it does not seem implausible for Mrs. Clinton's persona to have committed adultery—especially in light of the allegations that she had an affair with Vince Foster and that her marriage is a farce.

In another book, appropriately-titled *The First Lady*, by E.J. Gorman, HRC appears as Claire Hutton. Although this book claims to be a work of fiction, the description on the back cover is remarkably similar to Mrs. Clinton's own life:

Times are hard for America's newest first lady. Plagued by rumors of infidelity, her husband faces a tough reelection campaign while her teenage daughter is collapsing under the strain of nonstop media attention. But her life becomes infinitely worse when an old college friend is found dead, shot under mysterious circumstances. . . . The media is against her. The president cannot help her. To clear her name, she must find out who is framing her—but the killer may be closer to her than she can possibly expect.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁵From the inside cover of Anonymous [Joe Klein], *Primary Colors: A Novel of Politics* (New York: Random House, 1996).

³⁴⁶From the back cover of Gorman, *The First Lady*.

In this book, the first lady is framed by a Rush Limbaugh-like conservative radio talk-show host, who murders Mrs. Hutton's longtime friend and implicates the first lady. The real killer has a vendetta against the first lady because she once broke up with him after he physically abused her, and then she married the man who would later be president. Ironically, *The First lady* provides a somewhat sympathetic portrayal of HRC—she is framed by the conservative talk-show host and eventually by the mainstream media, which implicates her in the murder early on. She is not to be blamed, and society eventually accepts her innocence.

All of these portrayals show how Mrs. Clinton's persona is literally fictionalized. Mrs. Clinton is an important icon in the United States today, as evidenced by her pervasive presence in fiction and popular culture, in addition to the myriad media accounts of her. As a star, Mrs. Clinton takes on a new persona that is assigned to her by the media and therefore is not hers. Americans do not know who she really is, only who they are told she is. Nevertheless, they relate to that persona because it, in Dyer's words, "[embodies] values that are under threat."³⁴⁷ That is, Americans relate to HRC's "star"-like qualities because those qualities reflect the current debate in the United States about feminist values and the proper role of women.

The Significance of the HRC Myth

What is most interesting about Dyer's analysis of movie stars is that it applies so well to HRC and other political figures (e.g., Newt Gingrich). The book was written to apply to glamorous Hollywood, but it also applies the not-so-glamorous Washington.

³⁴⁷Dyer, *Stars*, 32.

Why is it that political figures, especially HRC, seem to fit Dyer's definition and construction of a "star"? Political figures have become virtually indistinguishable from celebrity movie stars; their lives of scandal and politics provide the same kind of excitement for the media as do Hollywood's stars. And like Hollywood's elite, who represent certain types of people to whom Americans look up, Washington's elite represent certain types of people who Americans are constantly emulating. As Dyer states in another book about Hollywood stars, "stars represent typical ways of behaving, feeling and thinking in contemporary society, ways that have been socially, culturally, historically constructed."³⁴⁸

Thus, because Mrs. Clinton has come to represent a certain kind of woman—powerful (or, by some accounts, power-hungry), intelligent, hardworking, contemptuous of stereotypical gender roles—she functions as any star would. Dyer states that stars are "representations of people";³⁴⁹ this statement rings true for HRC. People look to her and like her or dislike her (or, more likely, love her or despise her) because of the type of woman she represents, not necessarily the person she herself is. Conservatives assail her for her rejection of gender roles—her financial deals, her power as a lawyer and then as a first lady, her non-lady-like demeanor—because they are threatened by the many women like HRC who are trying to rise in corporate America. Similarly, liberals canonize the first lady for the very qualities that conservatives despise in her, especially her transgression of gender roles. Unlike conservatives, liberals believe that intelligent, talented women like HRC deserve to rise in the work force in the same way that men with

³⁴⁸Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 17.

³⁴⁹Dyer, *Stars*, 22.

equal qualifications would. As Betty Friedan has stated, "Hillary Clinton [represents] a massive Rorschach test of the evolution of women in our society."³⁵⁰

It seems somewhat illogical that one woman can be interpreted so differently. Yet it is important to remember that as a myth and a star, Mrs. Clinton is not just a woman; rather, she is a representation of a type of woman. As a representation, she functions as many stars do. As Dyer states in *Stars*, "star images function crucially in relation to contradictions within and between ideologies, which they seek variously to 'manage' or resolve."³⁵¹ In *Heavenly Bodies*, Dyer expands on this statement by saying that "each element [of a star's persona] is complex and contradictory, and the star is all of it taken together."³⁵² Thus, Dyer argues that stars are able to remain popular because they internalize and manage contradictions in society. In other words, stars' inherent contradictions help make them all things to all people.

This amalgamation helps explain the saint or sinner HRC myth. Mrs. Clinton, as a representation of a powerful woman, internalizes many contradictions—she is intelligent and smart, yet at the same time much of her power derives from her marriage; she is a mother, yet she is also the financial dealer who in one year made \$100,000 by trading cattle futures. Not only does Mrs. Clinton contain contradictions within her own life, but also the separate events in her life can be interpreted in contradictory ways. This anomaly has been shown in each of the past chapters: in the health care debate, liberals loved her powerful role, while conservatives found that very role as a reason not to like

³⁵⁰Betty Friedan, as quoted in Jamieson, 22.

³⁵¹Dyer, *Stars*, 38.

³⁵²Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies*, 8.

her; likewise, liberals thought that HRC's gender transgressions were clearing the way for all women of power, while conservatives found those gender transgressions threatening.

The Hillary Rodham Clinton myth is so prevalent and permanent in the 1990s precisely because Mrs. Clinton is a star, an icon who represents a powerful woman in modern American society. Mrs. Clinton is someone over whom conservatives and liberals fight—about her role specifically, but also, more generally, about a woman's role in society. Proponents of the saint side of the myth do not necessarily believe that Mrs. Clinton is perfect; rather, they believe that she is the perfect representation of a woman struggling in a male-dominated world to gain the power and prominence that she has earned. She is a saint not because she has never committed a sin, but rather because her success in the male-dominated world will symbolize success for all would-be powerful women trying to make it in that world. Proponents of the sinner side of the myth, on the other hand, do not deny that Mrs. Clinton has some positive qualities, such as her intelligence; rather, they believe that she represents the kind of woman who will threaten the status quo of the country. She will bring change, and that change threatens the current power structure that favors conservatives.

Today, the Hillary Rodham Clinton myth persists. Mrs. Clinton remains in the White House, with about half of Americans loving her and half abhorring her. That Mrs. Clinton has been able to survive the myriad attacks launched against her and her family, as well as the millions spent to find a reason to indict her in the Whitewater affair, is a testament to the state of the women's movement today. Powerful women can survive in the male-dominated world; however, survival is still a struggle and victory is far away.

For today, the saint or sinner myth is alive and well. Whichever side dominates will leave its mark in history and will define a new role for women in American society.

APPENDIX
EXAMPLES OF POPULAR CULTURE PORTRAYALS
OF HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

Buttons of Hillary Rodham Clinton from the 1996 campaign:



Images resized at a lower resolution.

Bumper stickers of HRC from the 1996 campaign:



Images resized at a lower resolution.

Cover of the *New York Daily News* on 24 June 1996, when it was revealed that HRC had consulted a spiritual advisor about her problems in the white house:



Image resized at a lower resolution.

Various birthday cards featuring the first lady:

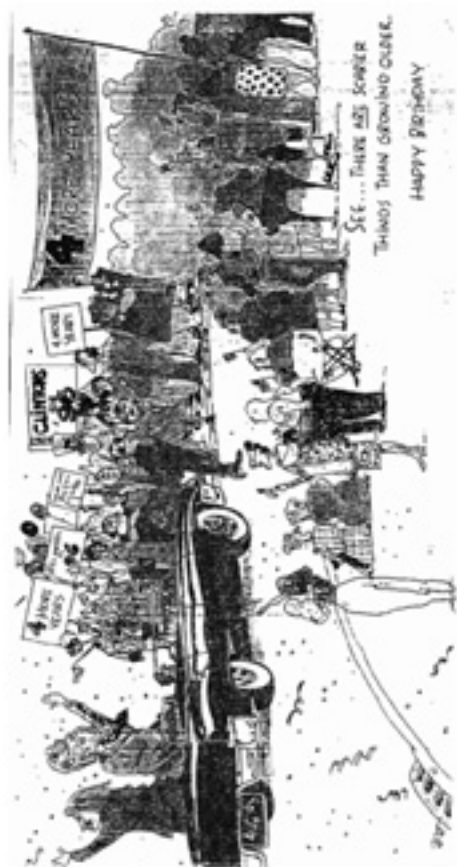


Image resized at a lower resolution.

.. One day, the President & 1st Lady
were driving thru ARKANSAS
when they stopped at a gas station
where Hillary's ex-boyfriend still worked.
Bill said to her, "See, if you'd married
him - you'd be working here .."



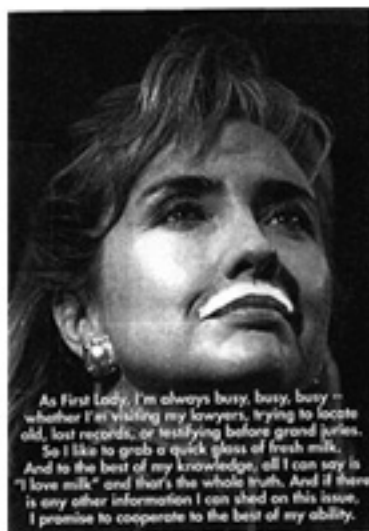
.. to which Hillary replied:

"if I'd married him,
he'd be President of the U.S.A. !



LIE.

Image resized at a lower resolution.



I just wanted to wish you
a very happy birthday!
(And that's the truth, the whole truth
and nothing but the truth.)

As First Lady, I'm always busy, busy, busy -
whether I'm visiting my lawyers, trying to locate
old, lost records, or testifying before grand juries.
So I like to grab a quick glass of fresh milk.
And to the best of my knowledge, all I can say is
"I love milk" and that's the whole truth. And if there
is any other information I can shed on this issue,
I promise to cooperate to the best of my ability.

Image resized at a lower resolution.

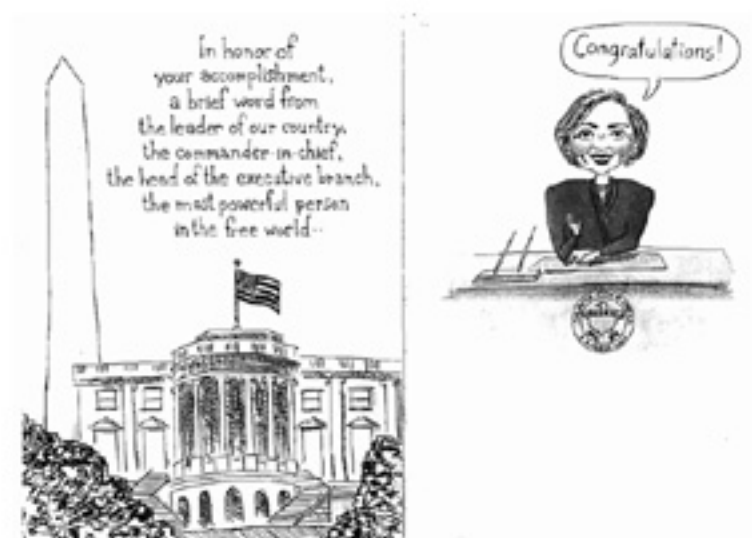


Image resized at a lower resolution.

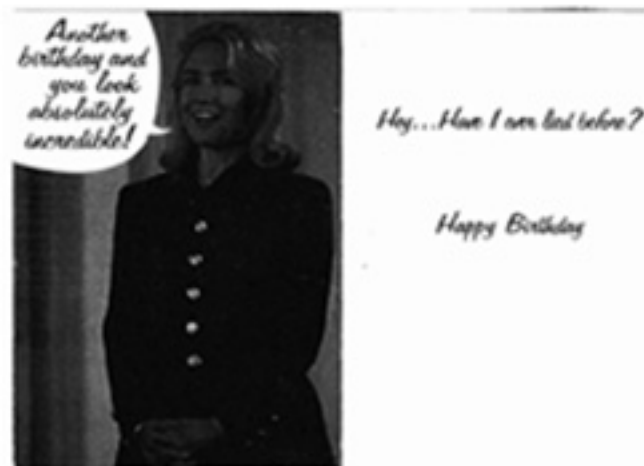


Image resized at a lower resolution.

Postcards of the first lady from Political Americana in Washington, DC. Although it is difficult to decipher in a photocopy, on the postcard on the left, Mrs. Clinton is wearing her husband's clothes while the president is wearing her attire.



H.R.H. Hillary Rodham Clinton
Co-President of the United States of America



Image resized at a lower resolution.



Image resized at a lower resolution.



Image resized at a lower resolution.

The sides of a matchbook featuring Tipper Gore and Hillary Rodham Clinton on one side and Al Gore and Bill Clinton on the other:

Hillary and Tipper



Image resized at a lower resolution.

The following appeared on many benches in Cincinnati, Ohio the day following the reelection of Bill Clinton:



Image resized at a lower resolution.

The cover of the London *Sunday Times Magazine* from 22 September 1996:



Image resized at a lower resolution.

An article featuring the first lady from the tabloid newspaper *The Weekly World News* in the 1996 campaign:

MY AMERICA

Italian tabloids catch Hillary after dip in Lake Michigan!

PHOTO HUMILIATES OUR FIRST LADY — AND OUR NATION!

The weekly-dash *Il Giornale* with a shock paper size that specializes in sensational photographs of First Lady Hillary Clinton (left) is up starting in Rome about the First Lady's recent vacation in Italy. The Italian tabloid caught the First Lady in a compromising position, using a telephone camera to take a picture of her in a compromising position. The First Lady was seen in a compromising position, using a telephone camera to take a picture of her in a compromising position. The First Lady was seen in a compromising position, using a telephone camera to take a picture of her in a compromising position.

This is the most shocking invasion of privacy since the Jackie Kennedy fopless shots!

Ed Anger

ED ANGER HILLARY POLL

YES! NO! YES! NO! YES! NO!

Ed Anger

MY AMERICA

Image resized at a lower resolution.

Image resized at a lower resolution.

Various political cartoons of the first lady:



Image resized at a lower resolution.



Image resized at a lower resolution.

HILLARY



Image resized at a lower resolution.



Image resized at a lower resolution.

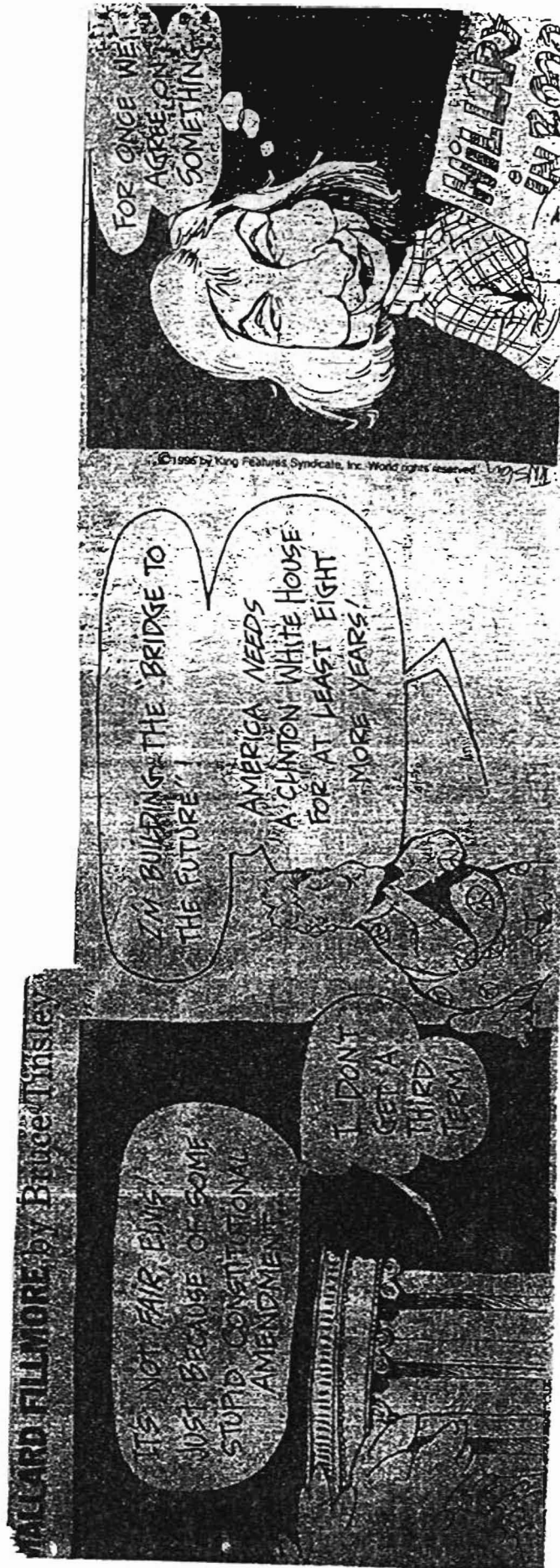
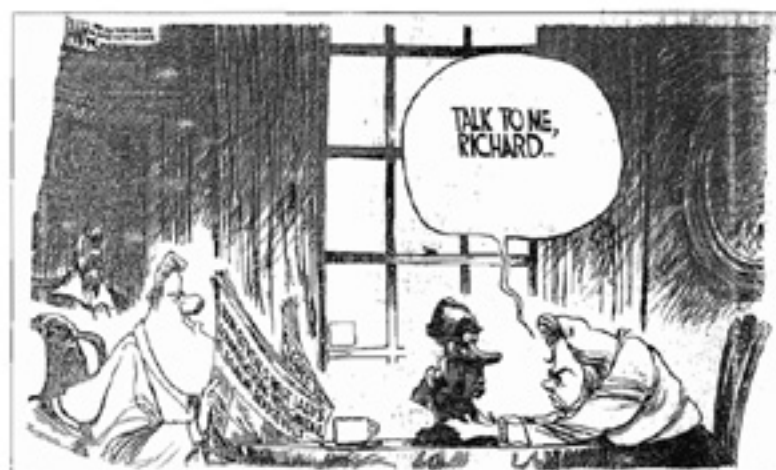






Image resized at a lower resolution.



By Michael Ramirez, Memphis Commercial Appeal, for USA TODAY

Image resized at a lower resolution.



It's your birthday...
Hope you're treated royally.

Image resized at a lower resolution.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chapter One: A Historical Introduction to the HRC Myth**Books**

Anthony, Carl Sferrazza. *First Ladies: The Saga of the Presidents' Wives and Their Power, 1961-1990*. Volume II. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1991.

Caroli, Betty Boyd. *First Ladies: An Intimate Look at How 38 Women Handled What May be The Most Demanding, Unpaid, Unelected Job in America*. Expanded Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Goodwin, Doris Kearns. *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front In World War II*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994.

Troy, Gil. *Affairs of State: The Rise and Rejection of the Presidential Couple Since World War II*. New York: The Free Press, 1997.

Chapter Two: The 1992 Election**Books**

Drew, Elizabeth. *On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994.

Germond, Jack W. and Jules Witcover. *Mad as Hell: Revolt at the Ballot Box, 1992*. New York: Warner Books, 1993.

Goldman, Peter, Thomas M. DeFrank, Mark Miller, Andrew Murr, and Tom Mathews, with Patrick Rogers and Melanie Cooper. *Quest for the Presidency 1992*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1994.

King, Norman. *The Woman in the White House: The Remarkable Story of Hillary Rodham Clinton*. New York: Birch Lane Press, 1996.

Matalin, Mary and James Carville. *All's Fair: Love, War, and Running for President*. New York: Random House, 1997.

Woodward, Bob. *The Agenda: Inside the Clinton White House*. New York: Pocket Books, 1994.

Periodicals

Baltz, Dan. "Clinton Concedes Marital 'Wrongdoing'; In TV Interview, Presidential Hopeful Asks Public to Drop Questions." *Washington Post*. 27 Jan. 1992. A1.

Barrett, Laurence I. "Moment of Truth; Insisting that Flowers' Charges Are 'False,' Bill Clinton Faces the Biggest Test of His Political Career." In *Time* [Online]. 3 Feb.

1992. Available: LEXIS NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS. [19 Feb. 1997].
- Canellos, Peter S. "Clinton denies story in appeal to U.S. Audience; Says Private Life Shouldn't Be Issue." *Boston Globe*. 27 Jan. 1992. 1.
- Carlson, Margaret. "The Dynamic Duo: How the Clintons Turned Their Marriage Into a Political Powerhouse." In *Time* [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS. [22 Feb. 1997].
- "Clinton: '60 Minutes' Reviews." In *Hotline* [Online]. 28 Jan. 1992. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS. [19 Feb. 1997].
- Cooper, Matthew. "The Hillary Factor." In *U.S. News and World Report* [Online]. 27 April 1992. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS. [19 Feb. 1997].
- Grove, Lloyd. "Hillary Clinton: Political Adviser, Lawyer and Mother—Candidate's Wife Wants to Have It All." *Houston Chronicle*. 13 March 1992. 1.
- Hines, Cragg. "Near Miss During Interview; Clinton Cites Marital Woes, Denies Affair; Candidate, Wife Gamble Campaign on TV Show." 27 Jan. 1992. A1.
- "'I Have Absolutely Leveled' With Voters." *Washington Post*. 27 Jan. 1992. A6.
- Koppel, Ted. "GOP Attacks on Hillary Clinton." [Television transcript]. In *ABC News: Nightline* [Online]. 18 August 1992. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS. [19 Feb. 1997].
- Lauter, David and Ron Brownstein. "Clinton Says Sex Rumors Are Irrelevant; Politics: In TV Interview, Candidate Says He Will Not Deny Having Committed Adultery. He and His Wife Again Attack Tabloid's Accusations." *Los Angeles Times*. 27 Jan. 1992. A1.
- McDonald, Marci. "His Best Defense; Hillary Clinton Battles to Save Her Husband's Foundering Campaign for the White House." In *Macleans* [Online]. 24 February 1992. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS. [19 Feb. 1997].
- O'Brien, Patricia. "The First Lady With a Career? Hillary Clinton; Cover Story." In *Working Woman* [Online]. August 1992. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS. [19 Feb. 1997].
- Stevenson, Jennifer and Barbara Hijek. "Running Mate." *St. Petersburg Times*. 8 March 1992. 1F.

Chapter Three: Health-Care Reform

Books

- Drew, Elizabeth. *On The Edge: The Clinton Presidency*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994.
- King, Norman. *The Woman in the White House: The Remarkable Story of Hillary Rodham Clinton*. New York: Birch Lane Press, 1996.
- Troy, Gil. *Affairs of State: The Rise and Rejection of the Presidential Couple Since World War II*. New York: The Free Press, 1997.
- Woodward, Bob. *The Agenda: Inside the Clinton White House*. New York: Pocket Books, 1994.

Periodicals

- Bruning, Fred. "Though, Smart and a Presidential Bedmate." In *Maclean's*. [Online]. 21 Dec. 1992. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS. [22 Feb. 1997].
- Grenier, Richard. "A Few Words of Advice for the First Lady." *Washington Times*. 17 Aug. 1994. A17.
- "Hillary on the Hill; 120 Questions Later, a Rave Review." In *Health Line* [Online]. 29 Sept. 1993. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS. [27 Feb. 1997].
- Keep, Judy and Judi Hasson. "First Lady Swaying the Skeptics / Health Plan's Still Out, But She's Winning Rave Reviews." *USA Today*. 23 June 1993. 6A.
- Klein, Joe. "Scenes from a Marriage." In *Newsweek*. [Online]. 4 Oct. 1993. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS. [22 Feb. 1997].
- Moran, Michael. "The Humiliation of Hillary." *Evening Standard*. 29 Sept. 1994. 13.
- Sullivan, Andrew. "Why Health Was Too Hot for Hillary." *Sunday Times* [London] [Online]. 18 Sept. 1994. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ALLNWS. [19 May 1996].
- Waldman, Steven and Bob Cohen. "The Lost Chance." *Newsweek*. 19 Sept. 1994. 73.
- Weaver, Maurice. "Mrs. Clinton's Reform Drive Set to Trigger 'A Dirty War.'" *Daily Telegraph*. 1 June 1993. 14.

Chapter Four: The Clinton Scandals

Books

- Brock, David. *The Seduction of Hillary Rodham*. New York: The Free Press, 1996.

Cohen, Jeff and Norman Solomon. *Through the Media Looking Glass*. Maine: Common Courage Press, 1995.

Drew, Elizabeth. *On The Edge: The Clinton Presidency*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994.

Gross, Martin. *The Great Whitewater Fiasco: An American Tale of Money, Power, and Politics*. New York: Ballentine Books, 1994.

Lyons, Gene and the editors of *Harper's Magazine*. *Fool for Scandal: How the Media Invented Whitewater*. New York: Franklin Square Press, 1996.

Maraniss, David. *First In His Class: The Biography of Bill Clinton*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994.

Stewart, James. *Blood Sport: The President and His Adversaries*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996.

Woodward, Bob. *The Agenda: Inside the Clinton White House*. New York: Pocket Books, 1997.

Periodicals

Buchanan, Pat and Michael Kinsley. "Taking a Stand." [Television transcript]. In *CNN News: Crossfire*. 22 April 1994. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ALLNWS. [19 May 1996].

Fields, Suzanne. "Suspicious of Fustian Bargain Feed Skepticism Toward First Lady's Power." *Washington Times*. 1 June 1994. 11A.

Gates, Jr., Henry Louis. "Hating Hillary: Hillary Clinton Has Been Trashed Left and Right—But What's Really Fueling the Furies?" *New Yorker*. 26 Feb./4 March 1996.

"The Hillary Defense." [Television transcript]. In *CNN News: Crossfire*. 12 April 1994. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ALLNWS. [22 Feb. 1997].

Leslie, Ann. "Why Americans Have Come to Loathe Their Fearsome First Lady; Something About Her Produces a Fierce Rage in People. Even Other Women Hate Her." *Daily Mail*. 19 Dec. 1994. 14.

Safire, William. "Blizzard of Lies." *New York Times*. 8 Jan. 1996. A27.

_____. "On Language; Congenital, Liar, Punch." *New York Times*. 4 Feb. 1996. 18.

_____. "President and Pugilist." *New York Times*. 11 Jan. 1996. A25.

Shribman, David. "Opinion Roundup in the Wake of Whitewater." *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*. 13 April 1994. A13.

Chapter Five: Partners Only in Power? Portrayals of the Clintons' Marriage

Books

Brock, David. *The Seduction of Hillary Rodham*. New York: The Free Press, 1996.

Jamieson, Kathleen Hall. *Beyond the Double Bind: Women in Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Marrs, Texe. *Big Sister Is Watching You: Hillary Clinton and the White House Feminists Who Now Control America—And Tell the President What to Do*. Austin, Texas: Living Truth Publishers, 1993.

Morris, Roger. *Partners in Power: The Clintons and Their America*. New York: Henry Holt, 1996.

Troy, Gil. *Affairs of State: The Rise and Rejection of the Presidential Couple Since World War II*. New York: The Free Press, 1997.

Periodicals

Bennetts, Leslie. "Pinning Down Hillary." *Vanity Fair*. June 1994.

Blumenfeld, Laura. "Ultra Feminist: Hillary Rodham Clinton; Feminism Now." In *Cosmopolitan*. [Online]. May 1994. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ALLNWS. [19 May 1996].

Brock, David. "Living With the Clintons; Bill's Arkansas Bodyguards Tell the Story the Press Missed." In *American Spectator*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: CMPGN File: AMSPEC. [10 March 1997].

Carlson, Margaret. "Man of the Year: The Dynamic Duo; How the Clintons Turned Their Marriage Into a Political Powerhouse." In *Time*. [Online]. 4 Jan. 1993. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS [22 Feb. 1997].

"Clinton's Marriage a Political Winner Different Strengths Combine to Produce a Fast Moving Career." *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. 18 July 1994. 1B.

Cooper, Matthew, Kenneth T. Walsh, Susan Dentzer, and Thomas Toch. "Co-President Clinton?" In *U.S. News and World Report*. [Online]. 8 Feb. 1993. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS. [22 Feb. 1997].

Deacon, James. "Mr. and Mrs. President." In *Maclean's*. [Online]. 1 Feb. 1993. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS. [22 Feb. 1997].

Fields, Suzanne. "Suspicious of Fustian Bargain Feed Skepticism Toward First Lady's Power." *Washington Times*. 1 June 1994. 11A.

Gates, Jr., Henry Louis. "Hating Hillary: Hillary Clinton Has Been Trashed Left and Right—But What's Really Fueling the Furies?" *New Yorker*. 26 Feb./4 March 1996.

"Hillary Clinton—Future President?" [Television transcript]. In *CNN News: CNN and Company*. [Online]. 25 May 1994. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ALLNWS [19 May 1996].

Klein, Joe. "Scenes from a Marriage." In *Newsweek*. [Online]. 4 Oct. 1993. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ARCNWS. [22 Feb. 1997].

Leslie, Ann. "Why Americans Have Come to Loathe Their Fearsome First Lady; Something About Her Produces a Fierce Rage in People. Even Other Women Hate Her." *Daily Mail*. 19 Dec. 1994. 14.

Lester, Joan Steninau. "First Lady Offers National Vision." *Fresno Bee*. 10 July 1994. B9.

Masters, Kim. "The Politics of Hate." *Washington Post*. 7 Nov. 1994. D1.

Paglia, Camille. "Ice Queen, Drag Queen: A Psychological Portrait of Hillary." In *New Republic*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: NEWRPB. [8 March 1997].

Chapter Six: An Attempt To Deconstruct the Myth: "The Hillary Factor" in the 1996 Election

Books

Clinton, Hillary Rodham. *It Takes a Village and Other Lessons Children Teach Us*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996.

Sabato, Larry. *Feeding Frenzy: How Attack Journalism Has Transformed American Politics*. New York: The Free Press, 1993.

Periodicals

Anderson, Lisa. "Speech May Let First Lady Reshape the 'Hillary Factor.'" *Chicago Tribune*. 27 Aug. 1996.

Baer, Susan. "First Lady Is Looking for a Fresh Start Tonight; Convention Speech is Seen as a Chance to Polish Her Image." *Baltimore Sun*. 27 Aug. 1996. 1A.

Berke, Richard. "The Democrats: The Overview." *New York Times*. 28 Aug. 1996. A1.

- Broder, John M., and Paul Richter. "First Lady Focuses on Family." *LA Times*. 28 Aug. 1996. A1.
- Bruni, Frank. "The First Lady: On Trail, She's First Mom and First Wife." *New York Times*. 13 Oct. 1996. 20.
- Bumiller, Elisabeth. 13 Oct. 1996. "Profile of Elizabeth Dole." [Television transcript]. In *CNN Sunday Morning* [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: CMPGN File: SCRIPT. [27 Oct. 1996].
- Burdum, Todd S. 26 Aug. 1996. "An Unpopular Hillary: Clinton's Secret Weapon?" In *International Herald-Tribune*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS. [27 Oct. 1996].
- Canellos, Peter S. "Mrs. Clinton Far More Popular in Mass. than Elsewhere." *Boston Globe*. 14 Sept. 1996. A20
- Clark, Charles S. "First Lady's Vote Impact Uncertain." *San Diego Union-Tribune*. 5 July 1996. A2.
- Clayton Jr., William E. 27 Aug. 1996. "For Many, the First Lady's Either Devil or Angel." In *Houston Chronicle*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS. [27 Oct. 1996].
- Clinton, Hillary Rodham. "Changed Attitude About Women Reflected in New Laws." *Charleston Gazette*. 4 Nov. 1996. 5A.
- _____. "Shannon Lucid: Space Veteran Proves the Sky is Not the Limit for Our Dreams." *Charleston Gazette*. 21 Oct. 1996. 5A.
- 28 Aug. 1996. "Clinton Watcher Maraniss Says First Couple is 'Focused.'" [Television transcript]. In *Inside Politics*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: CMPGN File: SCRIPT [27 Oct. 1996].
- Church, George L. "Hushed on the Stump: Hillary Campaigns Without Press or TV Sound Bites, but the Whitewater Issue Follows Her Anyway." *Time*. 7 Oct. 1996. 48.
- 18 July 1996. "Clintons, Gores at Democratic Women's Fundraiser." In *Reuters North American Wire*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS. [10 Dec. 1996].
- 13 Oct. 1996. "CNN Presents Profiles of Hillary Clinton and Elizabeth Dole." [Television transcript]. In *CNN Presents* [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: SCRIPT.

- 11 Oct. 1996. "Democracy in America—They Don't Bake Cookies Preview." [Television transcript]. In *CNN Morning News*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: CMPGN File: SCRIPT. [27 Oct. 1996].
- Dobbin, Muriel. 27 Aug. 1996. "A Battered First Lady Keeps on Pitching." In *Sacramento Bee*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: CURNWS [23 Sept. 1996].
- "Double Act in Command." *Scotsman*. 29 Aug. 1996. 13.
- Downey, Maureen. "Mrs. Clinton Has a Tough Act to Follow." *Atlanta Constitution*. 27 Aug. 1996. 7A.
- Dye, Michael. "Double Act in Command as Hillary Turns on Magic." *The Scotsman*. 29 Aug. 1996. 13.
- Eisner, Alan. 18 Aug. 1996. "Clinton Defends Himself, Hillary in Interview." In *Reuters News Service*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: WIRES. [23 Sept. 1996].
- Feldman, Linda. "First Lady Brings Light—and Heat—to Campaign." *Christian Science Monitor*. 1.
- 26 Aug. 1996. "First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's Schedule During the Democratic National Convention Aug. 26-29." In *U.S. Newswire*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS. [23 Sept. 1996].
- 16 Oct. 1996. "First Lady Takes Low Key but Active Role in Campaign." Radio transcript]. In *National Public Radio Morning Edition*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: CMPGN File: SCRIPT. [27 Oct. 1996].
- Fullerton, Jane. "First Lady is Front, Center in Chicago." *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. 27 Aug. 1996. 1A.
- Gallagher, Tony. 29 Aug. 1996. "Mother of All Makeovers for the First Lady: Worldwide Special on the New Family-Friendly First Lady." In *Daily Mail*. [Online]. " Available: LEXIS-NEXIS. Library: NEWS. File: CURNWS. [23 Sept. 1996].
- German, Art. "The Embattled First Lady Gets Some Sacramento Support." *Sacramento Bee*. 8 Aug. 1996. N4.
- Gibson, Charles. "Tipper Gore Interview." [Television transcript]. In *Good Morning America*. [Online]. 11 Oct. 1996. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS. Library: CMPGN. File: SCRIPT. [27 Oct. 1996].

- Gunther, Booth. 24 Oct. 1996. "Adwatch: The Presidential Race." In *Tampa Tribune*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS. [6 Nov. 1996].
- 21 June 1996. "Hillary Rodham Clinton Takes Public Heat in Polls." [Television transcript]. In *CNN News*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: CMPGN File: SCRIPT [23 Sept. 1996].
- 27 Aug. 1996. "Hillary Talks to Reporters After Her Speech." [Television transcript]. In *CNN News*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: CMPGN File: SCRIPT. [27 Oct. 1996].
- Hohler, Bob. "Mrs. Clinton vs. Mrs. Dole: Spouses Stump." *Boston Globe*. 28 Oct. 1996. A1.
- Jacoby, Susan. "Running Mates: The Incumbent First Lady Unquestionably Raises More Hackles Than Challenger. But Why?" *Newsday*. 27 Aug. 1996. B4.
- Jennings, Peter. 23 Sept. 1996. "Hillary Clinton and Elizabeth Dole." In *ABC News: World News Tonight*. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: CMPGN: File: SCRIPT [27 Oct. 1996].
- King, John. 28 Aug. 1996. "One Happy Family: First Lady Gets Raucous Applause." In *The Record*. [Online]. 28 Aug. 1996. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: CURNWS. [23 Sept. 1996].
- King, Larry. 29 Sept. 1996. "Interview with Hillary Clinton." [Television transcript]. In *Larry King Live*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: CURNWS. [27 Oct. 1996].
- Koppel, Ted. 18 Oct. 1996. "Hillary Clinton and Elizabeth Dole." [Television transcript]. In *ABC News: Nightline*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: SCRIPT. [27 Oct. 1996].
- Lawrence, Jill. "On the Road, Spouses Making Strides." *USA Today*. 25 Sept. 1996. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS. Library: NEWS. File: CURNWS. [27 Oct. 1996].
- Lehrer, Jim. 27 Aug. 1996. "The Hillary Factor." [Television transcript]. In *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: SCRIPT. [23 Sept. 1996].
- Lehrer, Jim. "Where They Stand." [Television transcript]. In *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*. [Online]. 20 Oct. 1996. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS. File: SCRIPT. [8 Oct. 1996].

- Maraniss, David. "First Lady in Prime Time; Target for Criticism Recaptures Spotlight." *Washington Post*. 27 Aug. 1996. A1.
- Martin, Jurek. "An Addiction to Money." *Financial Times* [London]. 26 Oct. 1996. 6.
- Morin, Richard, and Dan Balz. "As Skepticism Arises, Clinton's Lead Narrows." *Washington Post*. 2 July 1996. A1.
- Page, Susan. "First Lady: Behind the Numbers." *USA Today*. 26 Jan. 1996. 4A.
- Pug, Clifford. "First Lady Keeping a Lower Profile." *Houston Chronicle*. 30 Oct. 1996. A4.
- Purdum, Todd S. "Advisers See Bright Side to Criticism of First Lady." *New York Times*. 25 Aug. 1996. 1.
- Raasch, Chuck. 27 Aug. 1996. "Which Hillary Spoke Tuesday? A Home-and-Hearth First Lady." In *Gannett News Service*. [Online]. 27 Aug. 1996. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: WIRES. [23 Sept. 1996].
- 27 Aug. 1996. "Reaction to Hillary Clinton on the Floor." [Television transcript]. In *CNN News*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: SCRIPT. [27 Oct. 1996].
- Rios, Delia M. 29 Sept. 1996. "First Lady Puzzle: Why Do People Hate Hillary and Love Elizabeth?" In *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS. Library: NEWS File: CURNWS. [8 Oct. 1996].
- Saner, Mark. "Despite Rumors, the First Lady Will Play Central Role in Chicago." *San Diego Union-Tribune*. 27 Aug. 1996. A1.
- Scales, Ann, and Bob Hehler. 28 Aug. 1996. "Hillary Clinton Speaks Up for Parents; Stresses Family Needs in Convention Address." In *Boston Globe*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS. [23 Sept. 1996].
- 6 Oct. 1996. "Spousal Politics on the Stump: Hillary Clinton, Elizabeth Dole Tailor Campaigns to Radically Different Roles." In *Courier-Journal*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS. [27 Oct. 1996].
- Stevenson, Jennifer L. 1 Sept. 1996. "Picking on Hillary: Is it Fair?" In *St. Petersburg Times*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS. [23 Sept. 1996].
- Strobel, Warren P. "Hillary Speaks to 'Hearts' of Liberals; Champions Role of Government in Everyday Life." *Washington Times*. 28 Aug. 1996.

- 28 Oct. 1996. "Text of Elizabeth Dole's Radio Address." [Radio transcript]. In *U.S. Newswire*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS. Library: CMPGN. File: CURNWS. [6 Nov. 1996].
- 27 Aug. 1996. "Text of Hillary Clinton's Speech to Democrat Convention." [Television transcript]. *CNN News*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: CURNWS.
- Toedtman, James, and Charles V. Zehren. "Up Front and Center: Hillary Clinton Returns to Political Spotlight." *Newsday*. 27 Aug. 1996. A4.
- Troxler, Howard. "First Lady Presented in New Role." *St. Petersburg Times*. 27 Aug. 1996. 1A.
- Voboril, Mary. "Campaign Helpmates: Hillary's Florida Tour." *Newsday*. 10 Oct. 1996. B4.
- Woodruff, Judy. 26 Aug. 1996. "Hillary Clinton—I Am Not Hurt By Republican Jabs." [Television transcript]. In *Inside Politics*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS: Library: NEWS File: SCRIPT. [23 Sept. 1996].
- _____. 26 Aug. 1996. "Hillary Clinton-President Will 'Correct' Welfare Bill" [Television transcript]. In *Inside Politics*. [Online]. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: SCRIPT. [23 Sept. 1996].
- Yoachum, Susan. "Voters Prefer Hillary Clinton in Field Poll." *San Francisco Chronicle*. 10 September 1996. A2.
- "'Your Voice Will Be Heard'; Hillary Clinton Tells Texans Their Votes Will Be Rewarded." *Houston Chronicle*. 2 Nov. 1996. 24.

Web Sites

"Clinton-Dole-Perot Ballot." *PoliticsNow*. [24 Nov. 1996]. Available: HTTP:
<http://www.politicsnow.com/resource/polltrack/maps/3way/august/3way0805.htm>
<http://www.politicsnow.com/resource/polltrack/maps/3way/august/3way0821.htm>
<http://www.politicsnow.com/resource/polltrack/maps/3way/september/3way0905.htm>
<http://www.politicsnow.com/resource/polltrack/maps/3way/september/3way0916.htm>
<http://www.politicsnow.com/resource/polltrack/maps/3way/september/3way0920.htm>
<http://www.politicsnow.com/resource/polltrack/maps/3way/september/3way0926b.htm>
<http://www.politicsnow.com/resource/polltrack/maps/3way/october/3way1003.htm>
<http://www.politicsnow.com/resource/polltrack/maps/3way/october/3way1009.htm>
<http://www.politicsnow.com/resource/polltrack/maps/3way/october/3way1016.htm>
<http://www.politicsnow.com/resource/polltrack/maps/3way/october/3way1024.htm>
<http://www.politicsnow.com/resource/polltrack/maps/3way/october/3way1029.htm>
<http://www.politicsnow.com/resource/polltrack/maps/3way/october/3way1030.htm>

<http://www.politicsnow.com/resource/polltrack/maps/3way/october/3way1031.htm>
<http://www.politicsnow.com/resource/polltrack/maps/3way/november/3way1104.htm>

"First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's Schedule." *White House*. Available: HTTP:
<http://library.whitehouse.gov/Retrieve.cgi?dbtype=text&id=7279&query=Hillary>
 [21 Nov. 1996].

[5 Nov. 1996]. "National Presidential Exit Poll." *Allpolitics*. [11 Dec. 1996]. Available
 HTTP:
<http://allpolitics.com/elections/natl.exit.poll/index1.html>
<http://allpolitics.com/elections/natl.exit.poll/index2.html>

Chapter Seven: Mrs. Clinton As a Star

Books

Anonymous [Joe Klein]. *Primary Colors: A Novel of Politics*. New York: Random House, 1996.

Beard, Henry and John Boswell. *The Unshredded Files of Hillary and Bill Clinton*. New York: Broadway Books, 1996.

Dyer, Richard. *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986.

_____. *Stars*. London: BFI Publishing, 1986.

Gorman, E. J. *The First Lady*. New York: Forge Books, 1995.

Jamieson, Kathleen Hall. *Beyond the Double Bind: Women in Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Additional Works Consulted

Books

Edsforth, Ronald and Larry Bennett, eds. *Popular Culture and Political Change in Modern America*. New York: SUNY Press, 1991.

Fiske, John. *Understanding Popular Culture*. New York: Routledge Press, 1989.

Kurtz, Howard. *Media Circus: The Trouble With America's Newspapers*. New York: Times Books, 1994.

Herman, Edward S. and Noam Chomsky. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1988.

Patterson, Thomas. *Out of Order*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

Periodicals

Kelly, Michael. "Saint Hillary." *New York Times Sunday Magazine*. [Online]. 23 May 1996. Available: LEXIS-NEXIS Library: NEWS File: ALLNWS. [19 May 1996].