

Hillary Clinton's Favorite White House Traditions

By Nancy Lloyd



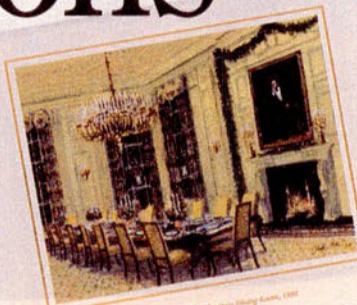
The First Lady and Buddy enjoy walks together. "He loves to chase yellow tennis balls," says Mrs. Clinton. Last year's official White House Christmas card (below).

How do you turn a big White House into a home, sweet home? That was one of the challenges facing First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton when she and her family took up residence at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in January 1993. "The White House didn't have a kitchen table. There are formal dining rooms on two floors, but we wanted a kitchen table," recalls Mrs. Clinton. "So we transformed a butler's pantry into a kitchen, and we start our day by eating breakfast there."

This morning routine gives her a chance to catch up with the White House staff, "who are devoted to caring for this house and the family that lives here," she says. "After six years of being here, we're so comfortable with everybody and we feel so much at home that we get up, have breakfast and talk to the people who work here to find out what's going on." These chats aren't limited to White House business. "The butlers buy me a lottery ticket every week," she chuckles, adding, "Someday we're going to strike it rich and then the butlers and I are all going to retire."

With Chelsea a junior at Stanford University and 3,000 miles from Washington, and the First Lady and the President both traveling extensively, having family time has required some creativity. "When we're all in town we spend as much time as we can together. We try to have meals together. It takes a little extra effort [coordinating] schedules so that you don't fill your time up and then have none left for family."

The glass-walled, sunny solarium on the third floor is their favorite room for spending time together; it's where



they eat meals, play board games and watch television. "It's a really bright, cheerful room set on top of the house, so it has a great view of the Washington monument. It's also where the Kennedys had a little nursery school for Caroline and where President Johnson's daughters would bring their dates late at night. And it's where President Reagan recuperated from his gunshot wounds."

In addition to "a constant stream of friends and family coming for visits so that we don't feel isolated," Mrs. Clinton has found other ways to make the most famous address in America feel distinctively their own. "We have a lot of our belongings—family photos, pieces of furniture and books—that are important to us on the second and third floors."

And they go all out to celebrate special occasions and holidays. "Thanksgiving is a real family time for us," she says. "We have a very traditional meal. It's the way I was raised."

As a child, Mrs. Clinton's mother taught her to cook a turkey with all the trimmings. "We'd also have my favorite bread stuffing (*see recipe, page 45*), green vegetables, whipped potatoes covered with gravy and butter, a cranberry mold and always a relish tray," she recalls. "When Chelsea was a little girl, I spent a lot of time in the kitchen with her. When we were in the governor's mansion in Little Rock, we never had help on weekends, so we'd always cook then."

"At Thanksgiving we would bake cranberry bread and pumpkin pie. We love pumpkin pie." An old family recipe? "It's off the Libby's can—nothing special, but it tastes good!" While living in the White House, Chelsea gets to hone her culinary skills by watching the White House chefs in action. "She's interested in that," says her mother.

The First Family celebrates Thanksgiving not at the White House, but at Camp David, the Presidential retreat in

Washington-based writer Nancy Lloyd is a FC contributing editor. This is her fourth interview with the First Lady.

God is good and God is great and we thank Him for this food.

By His hand we are all fed. Thank you, Lord, for our daily bread.

Mrs. Clinton remembers saying this grace when she was growing up.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

All photos courtesy of the White House.

Maryland. White House chefs prepare the family's meal using recipes from the Clintons' childhoods. When Chelsea became a vegetarian, they added some new dishes. "Vegetable casseroles seem to be the favorite," says Mrs. Clinton.

After the big meal, family members and guests go for walks on the expansive grounds of Camp David, play touch football or golf, watch sports on the big-screen TV or play card games. She adds, "We're also obsessed by board games like Boggle, Upwords and Scrabble."

While living at the White House, the Clintons' extended family has grown. Mrs. Clinton's brother, Tony, and the President's brother, Roger, have each gotten married and their wives have given birth to sons. "It's so much more fun having these little kids around," she beams. "We play checkers with them—they're the best."

Raising kids isn't easy anywhere, but doing it in the White House fishbowl is especially tough. Mrs. Clinton credits former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy with giving her sound advice. "She was incredibly supportive of me. I had lunch at her apartment, and we spent time both in New

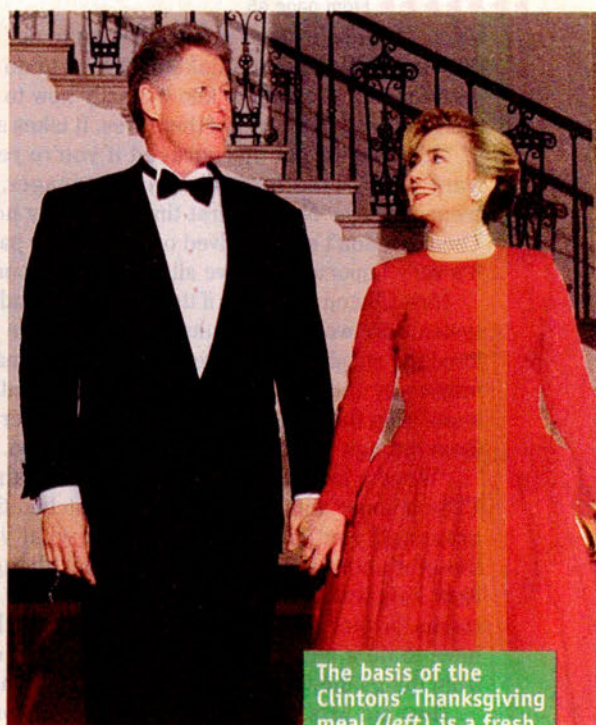
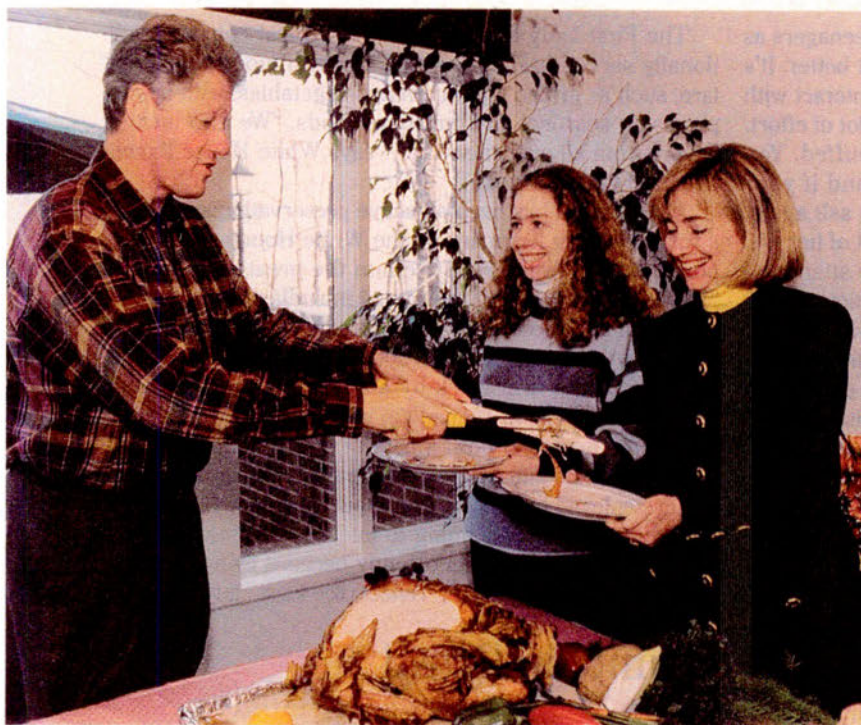
Bless us, Lord, and
These Thy gifts,
Which we are about to receive
From Thy bounty—
Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

This is the grace the Clintons say each night.

York and Martha's Vineyard, and we talked on the phone. She just emphasized how important it was to try to carve out personal and private space for your children no matter where you were, under whatever circumstances.

"It was very touching that she understood so clearly that the most important job any of us have is the obligation we owe to the next generation. She was very intent upon doing that right and she certainly did. When I got to know John and Caroline better, I found them to be delightful, engaging, charming, intelligent people and really a wonderful reflection of their mother."

As the mother of a teenager, Mrs. Clinton believes that parenting teens takes skill, patience and persis- ▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶



The basis of the Clintons' Thanksgiving meal (left) is a fresh turkey from Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

The Clintons (above) host a state dinner. In the kitchen, chefs decorate each plate before it is presented to the guests.

White House Traditional Bread Stuffing

Cooking is a participatory sport, so experiment and have fun with it, says Walter Scheib, the executive chef at the White House. "On Thanksgiving, don't eat as fuel, but as part of a great day. Balance and variety in your diet are important. You'll eat less and enjoy it a lot more."

Cut 1 loaf (16 ounces) sourdough or other crusty-type bread into ¾-inch cubes. Turn into two 15 x 10 x 1-inch jelly-roll pans. Heat in 350° oven 30 minutes or until dry, tossing occasionally. (You may cover fresh-cut bread cubes with parchment paper and let dry at room temperature 1 to 2 days.) Heat 3 tablespoons olive oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add 1 large onion, chopped, 2 ribs celery, chopped, and 1 large carrot, chopped; sauté 3 to 5 minutes or until slightly tender. Place bread

cubes in large bowl; add 2¼ cups chicken broth; toss to moisten. Add vegetables, 2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary or ½ teaspoon dried, 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme or ½ teaspoon dried, ½ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon ground black pepper. Spoon into 2½- to 3-quart shallow baking dish. Cover with aluminum foil. Bake in 350° oven 35 minutes or until heated through. Uncover; bake 10 minutes. Makes 10 cups.

Editor's note: For a moister stuffing, add more chicken broth as desired to bread cubes.



The Christmas Tree in the Clintons' residence (left). The First Lady consults with Chief Floral Designer Nancy Clarke about centerpieces. Clarke suggests using warm water when arranging flowers. "The plants can drink it more easily," she says.



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tence. "We don't pay as much attention to our teenagers as they need. We have to think about how to do it better. It's hard for a lot of adults to know exactly how to interact with their kids and to be part of their lives. It takes a lot of effort.

"It's easy to get discouraged if you're rebuffed. You want to do something with your teenager, and if your teenager says 'No' the first time, you may not ask again. Then you don't stay involved or ready to be part of her life. It's very important and we all have to pay more attention."

Mrs. Clinton questions if the current TV- and movie-rating systems are working. "Adults have to be more willing to enforce the standards. Kids get dropped off at malls and go to movies by themselves. Lots of times, parents don't even know what they see and there's no adult supervision to talk them through it. That's true with television, too.

"We're a long way from the days when there was one TV in a house and the whole family watched the same program and you had to contend with what your parents thought about it or what your brother thought about it. Now kids watch TV in isolation, often alone in their own rooms, or they go to movies with their peers. I think we do have to do a better job of trying to protect our children from things they may not be ready to experience."

How did Mrs. Clinton keep the lines of communication open with her teenage daughter? "There isn't any magic formula. It's just something you have to work at all the time because children change and their interests change and their friends change. And their challenges change, so you just have to be really aware of what's going on in your child's life...that means kind of hanging around and being there whenever the opportunity arises that they may want to talk about it to you."

On November 1st the White House will celebrate its 200th birthday. In honor of the occasion, Mrs. Clinton has written a behind-the-scenes book, *An Invitation to the White House: At Home With History* (Simon & Schuster). "We've highlighted the historic aspects and talked about White House entertaining from state dinners to family birthday parties. We've included recipes that represent the American cuisine that we've served here," says Mrs. Clinton.

The First Lady has replaced many meat courses traditionally served in the White House with more vegetarian fare, such as grilled and marinated vegetables, with an emphasis on seasonal and nutritious foods. "We also include flavors from all over the world," says White House Executive Chef Walter Scheib.

Mrs. Clinton has been an active preservationist and—as a way of leaving her mark on the White House—has incorporated more American style into the great old building. "We've redone many of the rooms including the State Dining Room and the Blue Room and acquired artwork, too—the first work by an American 20th-century woman, Georgia O'Keefe, and a first work by a noted African-American artist, Henry Ossawa Tanner. I'm very proud that the people who come here feel both a part of history and very welcome as guests and participants in the making of history.

"I've enjoyed living here enormously and I've had a great time, but we know it's going to end. I was thinking about that with a lot of nostalgia recently because living here has been a wonderful privilege," reflects the First Lady. ■

Pumpkin Bread

The President's Favorite Holiday Treat

Sometimes this bread is served as a cake by covering it with a coconut or cream-cheese frosting.

Makes: 12 servings.

Prep: 30 minutes.

Bake: at 350° for 1 hour.

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 4 eggs, slightly beaten
- 2 cups solid-pack pumpkin puree (not pie filling)

1. Heat oven to 350°. Grease and flour 10-inch tube pan.

2. Sift together flour, sugar, baking soda, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and salt into large bowl. Make well in center; pour in oil and eggs. Beat on low speed until well blended. Add pumpkin; continue beating until completely mixed in. Turn batter into prepared pan.

3. Bake in 350° oven 1 hour or until top springs back when lightly pressed with fingertip or wooden pick inserted in center comes clean.

4. Cool cake in pan on wire rack 15 minutes. Turn out onto wire rack; invert. Cool.

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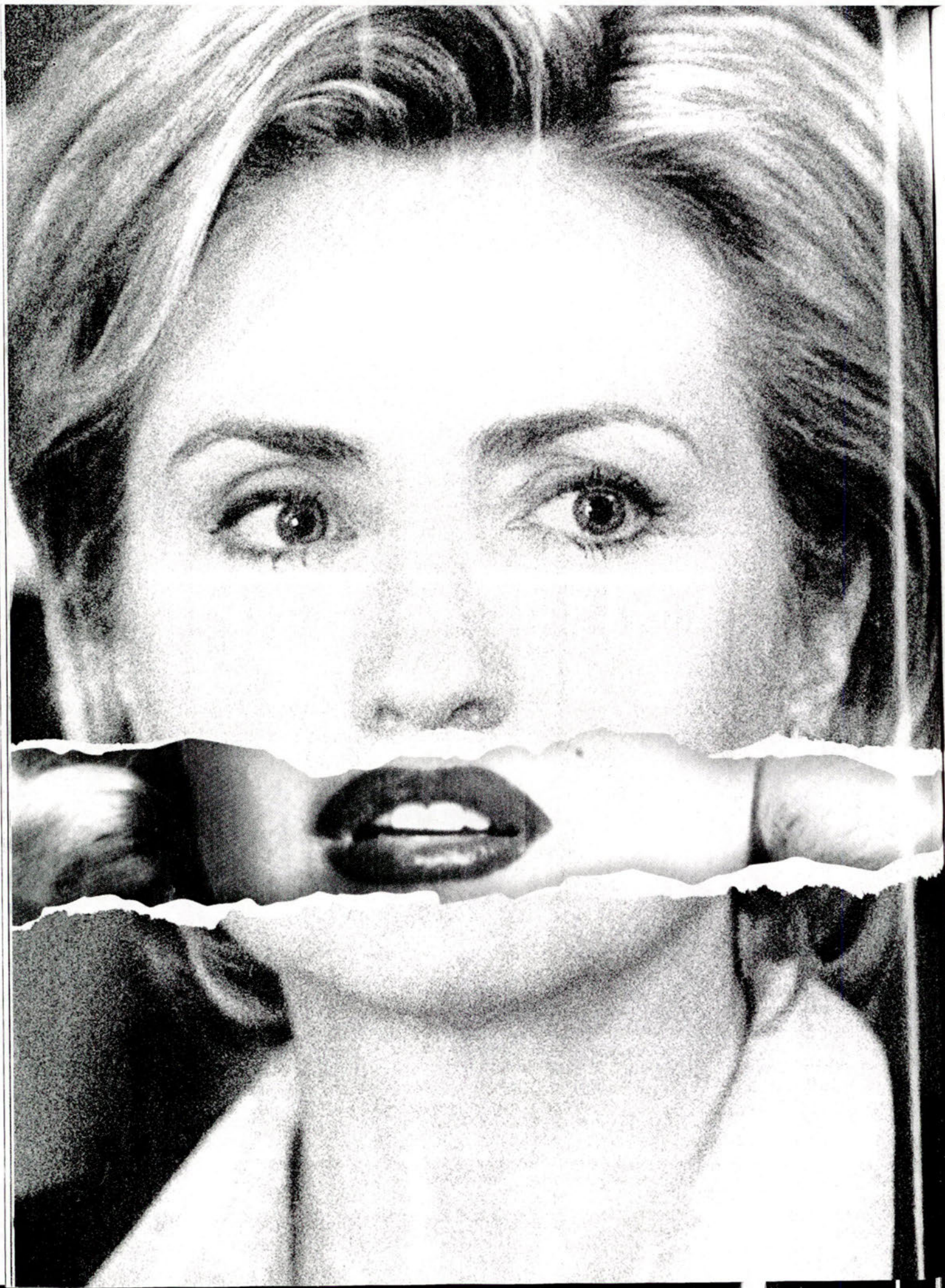
She has a sexy mouth, I think. That slight palatial overbite—it gets to me. She seems expert at marshaling her mouth’s resources, at inspiring its ingenuity. She can fold her lips into an origami of fleeting smiles. Her basic smile is sort of chipmunky and schoolmarmish, but sometimes, when she is pouncing on the possibility of

YOU’LL NEVER LOOK AT HILLARY CLINTON THE SAME WAY AGAIN

an *idea*, her lips extend their reach into her cheeks and carve out a wolfish, carnal line, as though nothing could please her more than her own hunger. Her mouth is enigmatic in its capacity for adjustment—it seems both the origin and repository of her secrets. Sure, when she is under duress, it can appear small, pinched, grudging,

harsh, unforgiving, and grimly determined—nippy—but when she is at ease, free to discuss, you know, the *issues* . . . well, then her mouth becomes the very instrument of her freedom, and her laugh rings the bell of her throat. Her laugh is the sexiest thing about her, in fact; it packs a lewd wallop because it seems

By Tom Junod



to take her by surprise. There's a wickedness about her laugh, in its offhand suggestion that she is willing to be entertained, to be *pleased*. It's quick and sudden, an unabashed, throaty gargle, and it seems to put dazzle in her eyes from below, like footlights.

She has pretty eyes, I think. They're direct, almost imperiously so, but not cold. They seem shy—shy beneath their veneer of command. They are almond shaped, slightly catty, set high in the broad planes of her face, above the shadowed triangles of her mighty cheekbones. When she is tired, her eyes are the first to show it, to betray the accumulation of everything she has gone through, to reveal the surplus of her makeup. She wears plenty of makeup. Her skin is lined and slightly worn and depends on light from other sources—from her eyes, from her smile, even from the hounding incandescence of television. Like her husband, she knows how to look good when she's tired. She

enough to escape her longing, and now like a woman of incipient bloom. I imagine it would be easy to make her blush. I imagine her easily courted and easily seduced by a certain stripe of practiced seducer, and if you were to ask—as all men eventually do, when the subject is Hillary Rodham Clinton—that terrible question, “Would you . . . ?” I would have to say, yes, I would.

Sure I would. Of course I would. Hell yes, I would.

I would do it.

I would vote for Hillary Clinton in a New York minute.

I was flying to upstate New York to see Hillary Clinton when I heard the Hillary joke. I had a window seat. I was reading a magazine article about her when the man next to me leaned in to



The most salient and interesting fact about Hillary is that so many men absolutely hate her and that their hatred is not so much political as it is sexual. Under the guise of political discontent, men say things about Hillary they would never say about other women.

owns things that sparkle in the harshest illumination—her earrings, her wedding ring. Of course, her hair is bright and fixed, but sometimes a tendril of it will come loose and fall into her face and she will seem open to the intrigue of dishevelment. Of course, the tilt of her chin is proud, and her posture impeccable. She shows very little skin other than her throat and hands, but her throat is clean and delicate and alive, and her hands are small and vivid, organs of attack and exclamation and instruction and delight. She is not a large woman; she is on the short side, and sparse in the shoulders and the chest. She looks up at most of the men she meets. She wears expensive pantsuits, drapery around her legs, and flat shoes. She projects an aura of power but not of invincibility, and the men who surround her often seem inspired to protect her, or at least to offer her escort. She still looks like the smartest girl at the dance, waiting, the girl not smart enough to escape her vulnerability nor ambitious

my ear and in a loud, plain whisper said, “What’s the Hillary Clinton KFC special?”

I put the magazine in my lap. “Okay,” I said. “I give up. What is it?”

“Two small breasts, two large thighs, and two left wings.”

I looked at the man. He was sitting in the middle seat and was representative of every man who has ever sat next to me in the middle seat for as long as I’ve been flying. He had a hearty anonymity. He was friendly to me but fatalistic—cheerfully hostile—in regard to everything else, particularly politics and the mass media. He was too big for his seat and ate his allotted bag of snack mix with a kind of puzzled, proprietary disappointment. He was an engineer in his early fifties with an imposing

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I tr couldr and ca seemec what i fact ab her an if Geo bands, for to a to oper dergro specific endless about l women she see their ov ter leg whethe Clinton ass.” Si answer- Bill, so that ins may as v in refere one an Clinton the only lows. Sh prudes, wouldn of desire such, the tion the Yes, that in return sexual sl stands as feeling a nism and fidelity a has she b example- she runs t the quest she can i “Hey,

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belly, thick forearms, reddish hands, squarish fingers, graying hair combed to the side, and a well-kept, graying beard. He was wearing aviator-style eyeglasses, a golf shirt, blue jeans, and white sneakers. He had a laptop. When I told him, with a craven and guilty chuckle, what I thought of his joke—"That's cold, man"—he shrugged, as if in noncommittal apology, and then said confidentially, "I'll bet you she has bigger balls than Bill."

I tried to return my attention to the article about Hillary but couldn't. It was a long article, full of facts about Whitewater and cattle futures and Travelgate and health care, but now it seemed incomplete, as any article would that did not address what is to me the most salient and interesting and inexplicable fact about Hillary Clinton—that so many men absolutely *hate* her and that their hatred is less political than it is sexual. Indeed, if George Bush was said to remind women of their first husbands, Hillary reminds men of . . . well, it's hard to say, exactly, for to ask men to contemplate the question of Hillary Clinton is to open oneself to an entire subterranean *world* of men, an underground encounter group where the gripes are various and specific and churlish and childish and reflexive and paltry and endless. Under the guise of political discontent, men say things about Hillary Clinton that they would *never* say about other women, much less their wives, although, if truth be told, what she seems to embody is nothing more and nothing less than their own resentment that they didn't marry a woman with better legs and bigger tits. For instance: I once asked a man whether he could ever bring himself to cast a vote for Hillary Clinton, only to hear him say, "Are you kidding? Not with *that* ass." Since then, I have heard so many variations of this stock answer—from "She has thick ankles" to "She couldn't satisfy Bill, so how's she gonna satisfy me?"—that I've come to realize that instead of asking, "Would you vote for Hillary Clinton?" I may as well be asking, "Would you *do* Hillary Clinton?" Indeed, in reference to our First Lady, the two questions are practically one and the same. To say that you wouldn't vote for Hillary Clinton is not only to exercise political choice but to maintain the only sense of superiority—sexual superiority—that she allows. She turns men priggish, Hillary does; she turns them into prudes, always forced to say what they *won't* do or what they *wouldn't*, and if by that turn she doesn't quite become an object of desire, she becomes at the very least a test of desire and, as such, the most interesting sexual persona of our time, not to mention the most polarizing political wife since Marie Antoinette. Yes, that's right: Accused of abnegating her proper sexual role in return for power, she has gained the ability to get under men's sexual skin in a way no actress or supermodel ever could, and stands as the incarnation of every unresolved and irreconcilable feeling a certain kind of man has about his wife and about feminism and about marriage and about the entire question of sexual fidelity and about women in general. Indeed, so potent a totem has she become that some men—the man in the middle seat, for example—refuse even to grant that she's a woman. And when she runs for the Senate, she will have to confront men who answer the question "Would you vote for her?" with a vehemence only she can inspire:

"Hey, man: Not with *your* lever."

She looked virginal on the day she lost her political virginity—the day she and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan made the chaste march down a country road arm in arm, in order to send the signal to New York and all the world that if she wanted his job, he accepted her ambition. Don't take my word for it; the metaphor of Hillary's maidenhead was suggested by one of

Moynihan's neighbors, who gains authority simply by being one of the very few people who watched the spectacle without the added inducement of an editor assigning her to be there. This was July 7, 1999. This was the day Hillary Clinton was to inaugurate her "listening tour" of New York State and thereby—by deed if not by word—announce her designs on the Senate seat that Moynihan was vacating. A tribe of two hundred reporters gathered on Moynihan's nine-hundred-acre farm, debouching from three air-conditioned tour buses and squeezing themselves onto the bleachers set up for the occasion on a field of trampled grass and clover. The neighbors invited themselves and were proud to do so. They trickled in and established themselves on the outskirts of Secret Service perimeters, the skeptics standing with crossed arms, the supporters spreading blankets and taking pictures of those taking pictures. "We're just neighbors," they kept on saying when the reporters got claustrophobic under the benign dissolve of the blue sky and went in search of local color. "We know Pat, and we're here for him. He's *ours*. 'Course, it's not very often that someone like the First Lady comes to Pindars Corners, so there's that, too."

Pindars Corners—God, as the name of the crossroads where Moynihan tilled his earth, it was downright Capraesque, and the neighbors liked saying it as much as the reporters liked writing it. There was Joe, for instance. Joe was a guy. Joe was originally from Lindenhurst, Long Island. Joe wore a ribbed tank top and black shorts. Joe kept his arms crossed. For Joe, it was *all* subtext. He had done some work for Mrs. Moynihan around the farm, and now, under his breath, working the words between his teeth the way he would work a toothpick, he said, "I don't think Mrs. Moynihan likes this. I don't think she likes this at *all*. In fact, I know she doesn't. Why? You know: Hillary. The Clintons. This means *he's* coming. You get her, you get him. That's just the way it is. First Gennifer Flowers, then Paula Jones and Monica. Who's next—my mother?" It was an effectively compressed formulation of Hillary's political and sexual standing—that is, as political hussy and sexual doormat who in order to fulfill her ambitions first had to depend on her husband's sexual allure and now had to countenance his plunder. The complaint against her had always been that she had risen to power without the necessary check of electoral accountability and so communicated sexual threat without the compensation of sexual radiance—that she had never made herself *available* in the way her husband had. On this day, however, all that was about to change, for through the circuit of the media she was presenting herself to the voting public for the first time, and, upon hearing Joe's complaint, a neighbor sitting on a blanket made the nature of the transformation clear: "Nonsense," she said. "Hillary's here because she wants to help. She's here because she *likes people*. Just like her husband. She's not even really a politician." A grave pause. "Well, I guess that changes today," she said. "I guess today Hillary loses her virginity. . . ."

And so she did. There was an assignation. Moynihan met her in a historic little white schoolhouse he had converted into his study. It was said that he wrote his books there. He was waiting for her, out of sight, when the reporters arrived, and later, when Hillary pulled up in a secured minivan, he stepped outside and opened the screen door for her. He was a gentleman, and she a lady. They stayed inside the schoolhouse for about twenty minutes, then emerged into a sylvan scene tainted only by the inescapable apparatus of its political purpose—the big white satellite trucks, the serried ranks of black cameras, the clicking, whirring, humping, griping throng. Reporters were kept behind a rope, and so the First Lady and her escort

had to advance upon them, fifty yards or so down a dusty, unpaved road. They took their time, as though unaware of what they were there for. They even dawdled, Moynihan pointing into the woods, Hillary nodding, forcing her gaze to follow the path of his finger, like a coed still obliged to be interested in her date. She was wearing a dark-blue pantsuit that flowed around her body as she walked. He—with his courteously stooped shoulders, his tintured face, his flaxen white hair turning a blue mirror to the arc-light sky—was wearing khakis and a light-blue shirt, buttoned-down and oxford-clothed. Ever gallant, he hooked his arm into hers, and suddenly, as he squired her, she looked . . . well, she'd never looked better in her life, if you want to know the truth; she looked innocent but eager; she looked ripe, *ready*—free. In the company of her husband, she often displays the classic appearance of a wronged wife—stiff, defensive, wary to the touch, with a poignantly brave set of the jaw signaling external surrender and internal defiance. But now, on the arm of New York's retiring senior senator, she looked young and restored, despite the dark circles attending her eyes. Hell, they *both* looked young, even wistful, and when Moynihan ended his introductory speech to the press by saying, "I hope she will go all the way," he might have been a nice Harvard boy voicing his secret desires for the nice, studious, slightly mousy Wellesley girl he'd come to fancy.

Does Hillary go all the way? Speculation has been offered that she was in fact a virgin when she met her husband at dear old Yale, that she has gone all the way with him and with him only. Now she stood without him in front of a pack of reporters and—Moynihan's courtly presence notwithstanding—she stood very much alone, conspicuously alone, as she announced her determination to listen to New Yorkers before she spoke to them; in effect, to turn herself into a New Yorker by first turning herself into a blank slate. The announcement lasted just a few minutes; then she took questions. She seemed extraordinarily brave at this moment—brave and a little foolhardy, for she was clearly in the process of remaking herself, as a citizen and as a woman and as a politician and as a wife, and yet she had to know that her purity in that regard would remain intact only as long as reporters refrained from mentioning *him* or from otherwise reminding her that even now her fate was tied to his expansive sense of sexual prerogative. As might be expected, they did not refrain for long: three or four questions, max. Then, after she had dispensed with reporters challenging her right to call herself a New Yorker, her knowledge of Canadian trade agreements, and her success at hocking cattle futures—yes, that old chestnut—she heard a woman from the crowd's parting middle ask if she, Hillary Clinton, had somehow profited from her husband's dalliance with that woman, Miss Lewinsky . . . if she expected to receive "the sympathy vote" . . . if, in effect, she expected to become a United States senator because she expected voters to pity her.

It could have been said—heck, it *was* said, in the next morning's news stories—that the First Lady did not answer the question, that she somehow failed to respond. This is not precisely true. She responded, all right. She just responded like a First Lady—like a wife—rather than like a politician. She glazed over. She paused for a second, as though she had been interrupted by a plane buzzing overhead, and then she forced an expression of brisk, coffee-klatch cheerfulness upon her face. She has a sexy voice, a pliable and professional voice, clarion and piping, verging toward the range of alto, but now she tightened its timbre and, as though she were running not for the Senate but rather for junior-high class president, used it to express a wish for a

neutered sort of popularity: "I'm looking forward," she said, "to meeting with New Yorkers. . . . They'll have a lot to tell me about what they think about me." It was a sad answer, a Sally Field-ish answer, but it was altogether more human than most writers and commentators gave her credit for—more human, certainly, than the question itself, although it must be said that the question itself was entirely legitimate, even necessary. It's not as though her husband's affair with Miss Lewinsky is somehow tangential to Hillary's political fortunes, after all. No, it is absolutely central, because it is through the magic of sexual humiliation that she was somehow transformed from the woman the Republicans ran so successfully against in 1994—the woman who did her best to disappear in '95, '96, and '97—into the most admired woman in the country, the steadfast captain of what passes for "family values" in the Clinton White House. For all the speculation concerning her reasons for running for the Senate—for all the "Is it hunger for power or thirst for revenge?" psychodrama bruited about by political reporters—one thing stands clear: She would not be running at all if it were not for Monica Lewinsky. In this country, Hillary Clinton *could* not be running for the Senate, or at least running with a realistic chance of winning, had she not been sufficiently humiliated, or chastened, or feminized, or desexualized, or, as some would have it, emasculated, to satisfy the public craving that this woman be put through some kind of trial. Are questions about Monica Lewinsky legitimate and necessary, then, because they will help us gather some kind of *evidence*, because they will help us know what transpired between the President and the First Lady in the calamitous and—for her—redemptive year of 1998? No: They are legitimate and necessary precisely because we will *never* know what happened between them, and she will never tell. She is the Mona Lisa of long-suffering wives, and unless we find a new way to read her—unless we ask her questions that allow us to read her in a sexual light that doesn't belong to her husband—we will find ourselves unable to read her at all.

The guy sitting behind me was tired. Over three days, we had traveled with Hillary from Pindars Corners to Oneonta, from Oneonta to Cooperstown, from Cooperstown to Utica, from Utica to Rome. At each stop, there was a bit of scheduled political theater called, with Orwellian flair, a "listening event"; at each stop, we had listened to—and watched—Hillary listen. Boy, could she listen. She was an indefatigable listener, insatiable. She listened first to panels of selected guests, then to general audiences, and it must be said that she was Clintonesque: No story was too trivial, no nugget of wonkery too arcane, no concern too parochial, for Hillary to make eye contact with the speaker, nod her head in a pattern of three short, two long, say, "That's very interesting," scribble some notes in a notepad, and then evince not only determined empathy but also a desire for *more*—more stories, more wonkery, more parochial concerns. Neither the bus travel nor the listening was what exhausted the guy behind me, however; no, what tired him out was *not knowing*. He was a White House correspondent for *Time* magazine. He had been covering the Clintons for quite a while, and now, well, he was Hillaryfied. He was Clintonized. He couldn't seem to get over his—and everyone else's—lack of clarity when it came to the Clintons, Hillary in particular. He explained how last year, while it was all happening—when Hillary attacked the "right-wing conspiracy" in January and her husband admitted his deceit in August—the editorial staff at *Time* was split into two schools of thought: one insisting that Hillary had known all along about Monica even as she was out defend-

ing her husband as victim of entrenched and implacable enemies; the other trusting that he had deceived her as he had deceived everyone else. The schism did not bother the correspondent, however, nearly as much as the fact that in support of its argument each side had amassed what seemed to be equally reliable bodies of evidence. "Each side had *sources*," he said, almost abjectly, still unable to accept that the truth of the matter seemed out of reach and that the split was not resolved by fact but rather reconciled by belief, as though Hillary were some kind of religious figure.

And there you have it, or them—the two Hillarys. The one a good wife wronged; the other . . . the other almost unimaginable, not so much Machiavellian as Borgian, a monster of cynicism and cold compromise, bloodless and, yes, sexless, ca-

putative run for the Senate, and the possibility of power.

As for the other Hillary, Hillary the Good—I think I might have seen her in New York, early on, maybe in Oneonta. She was listening. She was nodding. She was writing stuff in her notepad. The harsh television light softened in her eyes and bounced around like the bounding light on a swimming pool. I had assumed that I would have to choose blindly between the Good Hillary and the Bad—that I wouldn't have enough to go on; that in the end my choice would boil down to a question of belief or, rather, some kind of existential decision, a flinging of oneself into the abyss where the truth once was. This is not quite how it happened. I had to make a choice, all right, but it came simply, a function of instinct and feel, when I thought I recognized a *woman* up there in the hot lights. She was not the saintly victim proposed by her adherents—but then, the mistake of her

The microphone was not working. Finally, someone on her staff scooted up and adjusted it on the lapel of her pantsuit. "Is that okay?" Hillary said. It was—her voice was now amplified. "Well," she said as she crossed and recrossed her legs, "I've been waiting for someone to turn me on."



pable of just about anything her accusers can conjure. They are completely different women,

yet not much separates them, really, except for some eight or nine months' worth of knowledge and the fact that one goes all the way and the other doesn't. That's what it all comes down to, doesn't it? The Bad Hillary is not only politically ruthless, she's sexually unavailable—or, worse, sexually withholding. She is the Hillary who, along with Lady Macbeth, prays to be made less of a woman so she can muster what's necessary for a man's work; who, along with Lady M., begs the spirits to "unsex me here, / And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full / Of direst cruelty! . . . Come to my woman's breasts, / And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers." She's the Hillary who, in the words of a lot of men I talked to in upstate New York, "made her deal" and now was getting "paid off" with this, her

adherents has always been to unsex her as eagerly as her enemies do, so that love of Hillary winds up wan and chaste and hatred of Hillary turns out dark and sexual and jealous and potent. The Hillary I saw was not unsexed—she was *resexed*, by the words in her own mouth. She was conducting one of her panel discussions. She was speaking, instead of listening, but nobody could hear her because of a problem with her microphone. At least, the television men couldn't hear her, and they made themselves known. They had primacy, so they started *yelling* at her. Finally, someone on her staff scooted up and adjusted the microphone on the lapel of her flowy blue pantsuit. "Is that okay?" Hillary said. It was okay—her voice was now amplified into its deep clarion call. "Well," she said as she crossed and recrossed her legs, "I've been waiting for someone to turn me on." Her timing was perfect, and she got a big laugh, because suddenly the First Lady was . . . saucy. [continued on page 174]

NICK NOLTE

and a gazebo built to match Monticello's. After *U Turn*, the raven that had perched atop the shoulder of his sadistic, incestuous character stayed on here with Nick. The bird died not long ago and is buried in the yard.

In the new adaptation of Kurt Vonnegut's *Breakfast of Champions*, Nolte steals the movie as a cross-dressing car-lot manager.

"I designed my own dress," he says. "I told the costumer, 'It has to feel sensual. It has to be what the men don't get to wear, you know, the silk and this kind of thing.' So I took this one little dress, a sheer red dress, and I had it on and said, 'This would be good, but he'd probably like the silk to flow down here.' And then I took the dress and I spun it around backward, so the top was cut down here and the straps crossed here. Now I was bare-breasted—a Phoenician woman. That was key to the character."

He wants the dress this second. "I loved shaving my chest!" he says. He gets up off his chair to leave the lab. The computer voice croons to him, "A woman's sexual-temperature-is-never-lost-on-me." Dark-field photos of his sperm are on the table near the scans of his brain. He is pulling open drawers. One is filled with bottles, another with Scotch tape. He throws open the doors of a large armoire. He's saying he thinks he's found the undergarments, sheer and red. "I know it's here somewhere. I swear it! I'll find the dress!"

GEORGE CLOONEY

[continued from page 112] there's a big crowd of twelve-year-olds waiting in the rain. It's Beatlemania. He feints a little, realizes he can't avoid it, and goes over to sign autographs. Immediately they start to crowd in. Girls are laughing, saying, "I can't breathe" and calling him George and then laughing about calling him George—"Oh it's George, we know each other." And George is doing his job. He smudges an autograph and apologizes. "It's got dirt on it," he says. "Do you still want it?"

George's driver steps in with an umbrella. "Note the efforts of the noble driver," he says.

George poses for shots, telling them not to worry, he'll pose for a few. Finally he starts backing off and his noble driver says, "C'mon, give him a rest."

IN CLOONEY'S ROOM, the door hangs open a crack. We're watching the Knicks play the Spurs again, waiting for more buds to show up. A terrific actor named Tim Nelson comes in and shows George his little baseball beeper, which gives him the score of every game currently under way all over the country.

"My respect for you has increased immensely," George says.

Tim is working on the song they sing in the movie, "Man of Constant Sorrow."

"You gotta break your voice with it," he says, trying to break his voice.

Then the record producer T-Bone Burnett comes in. He's tall, dressed in fancy khakis, a

HILLARY CLINTON

[continued from page 119] One could imagine her talking dirty—heck, she *was* talking dirty, sort of—and a few minutes later, when one of the women on the panel started saying "Bill" this and "Bill" that, the woman pulled herself up short and, with her hand over her heart, apologized to Hillary for being so informal, for using her husband's first name. Hillary reached out, placed her hand over the woman's wrist, and said with an amused, intimate chuckle, "That's all right. I know who you're talking about."

It is a strange experience, traveling with the Good Hillary, because when one comes upon the hatred inspired by the Bad Hillary, it seems to come without sufficient cause or antecedent. It's just *there*, waiting for the bus in clusters and lines and slanted little pockets, shrieking and frothing, men and women with rattling signs and assassins' mouths. They were part of the listening tour; they traveled with it, from depressed upstate river town to depressed upstate river town, and so when Hillary was listening, say, to senior citizens inside a senior center in the nearly gutted city of Utica, she also had to listen to people chanting forcefully from outside, *Go home Hillary! Go home Hillary! Go home Hillary!* They had the place surrounded, these folks, back door to front, spilling down the steps of an old redbrick Catholic church across the street. Some of their

signs were pretty good—HILLARY LISTEN TO THIS: GO HOME AND EVITA!—although of course there were the yellow banners emblazoned with pictures of mangled fetuses and the words HILLARY'S CHOICE, as though Hillary's ambition stood in affront to the womb itself. Outside the senior center in Utica, one woman spat and said, "She's not my kind of people. She only has one child. I have three and raised them myself. She's never even owned a house." Another man said, "How can she expect to run a state when she can't even run a marriage?" Although it must be added that his friend interrupted and said, softly and almost chivalrously, "Hey, now, that's not *her* fault."

I didn't get it—how personal the opposition, how punitive, how . . . mean. I didn't get it then, and I don't get it even now, for to contemplate Hillary Clinton is to see a woman who is at least as much a virtuecrat as William Bennett. I mean, isn't she the kind of wife men are supposed to want? Didn't she support her *guy*? Didn't she forgive him even while acting as an enabler of his, um, excursionary brand of sexuality? Hasn't she rescued his political career on at least three occasions, always at great cost to herself? Sure, conspiracists might say she *had* to save him, for power and payoff, but one might also argue that she had more power than anyone in the world last year—she, and as it turned out she alone, had the power to bring down the President of the United States—and

little goofy looking. He hugs Clooney. Next in the door is the singer Gillian Welch. Clooney calls room service and orders a ton of food—burgers and salads and cheesecake.

"During the commercial we'll do 'Man of Constant Sorrow,'" Tim says.

So Burnett goes and gets a beautiful old Gibson guitar and they start running through the number. "It's the last note that's really hard," Tim says. "Ethan says it should sort of come up—'born and *raiiised*.'"

They try it a few times. It's not quite right. "You're not trying to hit normal notes," Burnett says. "You're trying to get more a shaky sound."

They try it some more, Burnett playing the melody on his guitar, but it doesn't quite come together until Burnett asks Gillian Welch for a little help. "This is the tenor part," she says quietly, hitting the notes dead-on.

Tim sings it: "The place where he was born and *raiiised* . . ." Then Burnett and Welch join in on harmony as the old Gibson thumps and twinkles. It's beautiful. Carrying the warmth of that moment, Clooney starts doing impressions of Ethan Coen. Like the time he told him to say a line like Popeye—Clooney demonstrates, doing two Popeye voices—or how in the middle of a bank robbery he told him he should hop up and down for a second like he's got to take a leak. Who thinks of stuff like that? And Welch tells her Ethan story, how he told her to go into a music store and ask for a record as if she knows

they don't have it. "You're so tired, you're so tired. Nothing ever goes right for you." And she says it like she's so tired, like nothing ever goes right for her, and they all laugh and then a security guard knocks on the open door, just checking to see if everything's all right, and for a moment I think George is going to invite him in to watch the game. Except the game is over and none of us really noticed. They're all having too much fun. Clooney sits under the dead TV with a goofy happy smile on his face—there's something magical about a handsome man acting goofy—telling us all about the chicken mudwrestling scene and the time he got his buddy Richard Kind to moon Harry Hamlin's camera—whenever anybody puts a camera down in the house, the boys take it into the bathroom and moon it, but this time nobody was in the mood and finally Richard comes over and George says, Hey, we got Harry Hamlin's camera and we all mooned it and now it's your turn—so poor gullible Richard Kind goes into the bathroom and George asks him a question and when he turns around to answer, George spins the camera around to get Kind's face and butt in the same frame. And two days later Harry Hamlin calls and says, "Why is Richard Kind mooning me in my own camera?"

He's howling. They're all howling. And even though it's late and George has another 6:30 call, he's not in any hurry because this is it, right now, right here in this crappy hotel room: the life he chose. Kilroy is here.

Sedaris Tobias Wolff Scott Anderson Larry Doyle Richard Ford Tom Junod Thomas A. Kelley Rosemary Mahoney Frank McCourt James Allan McPherson Stephen and Mark O'Donnell Michael Paterniti Charlie Pierce Scott Raab David

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HYPERION

HILLARY CLINTON

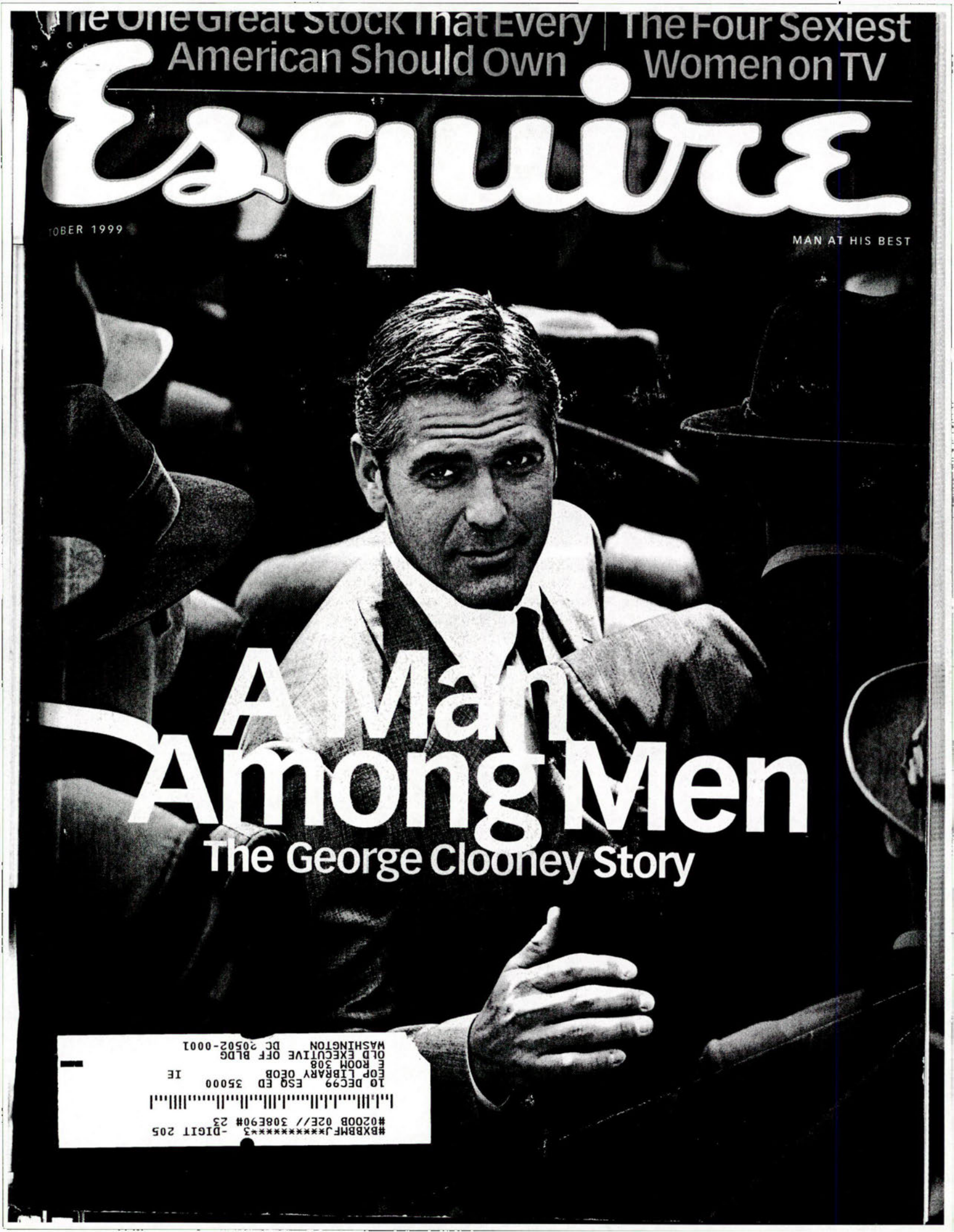
she did not exercise it. Even in the act of running for the Senate she may be announcing her intention to stay with her husband—for surely it would be too much for anyone to undertake a historic political campaign while at the same time undertaking a historic divorce.

It is indeed because of the probity of her personal example that her political opponents have found it necessary to continue holding her in sexual suspicion and sexual contempt. Even her liberalism has nothing to do with license; rather, it has everything to do with trusting the government as the organ and instrument and very incarnation of her own virtue. She is a liberal fundamentalist. Although girded with her own fatal love of making policy, her politics are so nostalgic that they are almost Proustian, and stop after stop on her listening tour found her looking mistily back to the days when government itself was held in high and uncomplicated regard—when, rather than in the presumption of private sin, government found its incarnation in the sugar cubes handed out in public-school gymnasiums in the war against polio. She has a taste for government, because for her government has a taste, and it tastes . . . sweet. "Well, I've actually enjoyed my time in the White House," she said on the first day of the tour, and sure enough, on the last day, when she traveled all the way from Utica to Rome to Syracuse to Albany, she wore around her neck the presidential seal, its avenging eagle interposed between golden globes of chintzy costume jewelry. The seal itself was a cheap-looking thing of stamped gold, but since it allowed her to make one thing perfectly clear—the fact that by running for the Senate she was not out to repudiate the Clinton legacy but to extend it—she wore it as innocently as a sophomore wearing her boyfriend's ring and as brazenly as a biker chick sporting her ride's name in filigreed tattoo.

I have said that the best Hillary Clinton ever looked in her life was the day she presented herself to the press on the arm of Daniel Patrick Moynihan. I was wrong. The best she ever looked in her life was the last night of the listening tour, at a fundraiser in Albany, on the arm of a man named Jerry Jennings. Jerry Jennings is the mayor of Albany. He is a big, beefcakey man, shiny on the stump, publicly effulgent, with a thick head of wavy silver hair. In other words: just her type. Everyone has a type, sexually, and if it is certain that the President failed to marry his type when he married Hillary—his type leaning toward wide, enveloping mouths and brazen, blow-jobby bands of teeth—it is just as certain that Hillary succeeded in marrying her type when she married the President. Of course, what ensued was both tragedy and comedy in equal measure: tragedy for him in that he will always be perceived as comic; comedy for her in that she will always be perceived as tragic and hence will get the last laugh. She gets to be heroic in a way that will

make him look like a clown; she gets to be historic in a way that will mock him throughout history. As the woman who personifies this country's unresolved sexual tensions, she gets to try to resolve them. As a matter of fact, it may be said that *until* Hillary Clinton runs for the Senate and wins, *until* she runs for president and wins, this country will always be in her thrall, and if one wants to calculate how consequential her current political ambitions are, one need only imagine the mad focus of feeling that will attend her Senate campaign come late October 2000 and the insanity that will accompany her presidential campaign come, say, October 2008. The tragedy of the Clintons' marital "arrangement" is that it doomed them both to their own kinds of humiliation—hers sexual, his political—and yet because her humiliation forced her to seek a new beginning even as his spoke to him of his end, Hillary Clinton will wind up being more meaningful than Bill Clinton *ever* was. The President of the United States of America? He will become nothing more and nothing less than Hillary's escort. As she remained at his side, he will remain at hers, as her gilded gigolo, as her sexual foil, as her type, the man who makes her respond, the way she responded in Albany to Jerry Jennings.

Jerry Jennings: Yes, you should have seen her with him. The fundraiser was for a congressman named Michael McNulty, but it was Jennings's show once Hillary came onstage. He introduced her. He testified for her. He wooed her, this slightly tawdry Romeo with the tanning-booth tan. She was tired, talked-out, slightly crushed looking around her exhausted eyes, but when Jennings started extolling her, she looked instantly restored, at once shy and gratified, with a deepened color and a flushed radiance—she had that glow. She clutched her hands in front of her bodice, and, once or twice, as she actually bent at the waist to accommodate her laughter and feeling, she looked sort of like Donna Reed at the end of *It's a Wonderful Life*—the kind of woman actually turned on by the spectacle of goodwill. Jennings escorted her off the stage, and about an hour later, they turned up again on another stage, outdoors, where a local theater was staging a performance of *Gypsy* under the stars. Hillary was supposed to speak at intermission, but the stars disappeared behind a pulpy skein of clouds, and by the time she reached the microphone, the sky was pouring rain. She spoke anyway, pluckily, and as quickly as she could, with Jennings giving her his coat and shielding her with his umbrella. They both got spattered, then Jennings got soaked; he stood very close to her, in his wet white dress shirt, and, by God, she looked *thrilled*. Would he have? Would Jerry Jennings have, um, voted for her that night? Sure he would have. Of course he would have. Hell, yes, he would have. She was a woman, after all, and she looked lovely in the rain. ■



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