

August 13, 1999

To: Marsha Berry
From: Eleanor Clift

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2/22/00

Deep
Background

Hold
Sched.
→ Lissa

Dear Marsha,

Following up on our conversation yesterday, I would like to request an interview with the First Lady for a book project on women and politics. The publisher is Scribner, and our editor is Lisa Drew, whose work I believe Mrs. Clinton is familiar with.

The publication date is spring 2000 when we anticipate both major parties will be talking about putting a woman on the presidential ticket in the second spot. Our book, tentatively titled "Madam President," will explore how the political terrain has changed for women since the Ferraro experience in 1984, the special challenges women still face, and what it will take for women to begin running in equal numbers to men for high office.

To construct the narrative, we have interviewed a number of prominent women, Republicans and Democrats, including Elizabeth Dole, New Jersey Gov. Whitman, Texas Sen. Hutchinson, Ann Richards, Geraldine Ferraro, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, New Hampshire Gov. Shaheen and Shirley Chisholm, who still insists that being a woman was a bigger handicap than being black in her 1972 presidential run.

We would like Mrs. Clinton to talk generally about the trends that she sees for women gaining ground in national politics, and to discuss her own evolution from being a political partner to her husband to becoming a candidate in her own right. When my husband and co-author, Tom Brazaitis, and I submitted the proposal for this book a year and a half ago, we listed Hillary Clinton as the first chapter because her efforts to expand the role of First Lady and the strong reactions she evoked made her the template for today's women in politics. As I mentioned to you, I have raised an interview informally with both Ann Lewis and the First Lady (at the Millennial evening on women). Both seemed amenable. Obviously, Mrs. Clinton's interest in running for the Senate makes her participation even more important.

I want to emphasize that this project has nothing to do with Newsweek, where I am a contributing editor. I can promise you that anything Mrs. Clinton tells us will be embargoed for the book. As for timing, an October interview would be best for us. Thank you for your consideration.

Eleanor Clift
626-2030

FAX MESSAGE



Hood race
From: Barbara W. Carlson

To: LISSA MUSCATINE

Fax #: 202-456-7805

Date: FEB 25 2000

Pages: cover + one

Lissa - Here are a number of questions.
Any or all - if ^{you} can get a response I
will appreciate it.

I have a little time now.

Thanks,

Barbara

1. With politics as hardball as it is now, would parents be advised to encourage their children to pursue a political career? Would they WANT to see their kids in politics? I understand Chelsea is premed; if she turned to politics, would parents be happy/ worried/ proud?
2. Widely reported that Mrs. Clinton does not like the press. Is this true? Is it a discomfort with press? Is there a feeling the press or media (lot of territory there) distorts her image or words?
3. I had asked if she was comfortable being a candidate. What I mean is, some people (like the President) appear to thoroughly enjoy plunging into crowds -does she? Does she like the give and take with the press that's generally part of campaigning? Does she feel it will help or hinder to allow more access to reporters, even McCain style, with reporters on bus (maybe not practical for her) but at any rate more interviews, more opportunities for questions. Is the press treating her fairly now?
4. Besides reminding herself of the value of what she is trying to do, being in the Senate, how else does she steel herself to keep at it after personal prying questions (like the radio talk host in Buffalo) and attacks by Giuliani. One woman running for office told me that after bad publicity she hugs her daughter and husband and then everything is OK. Does Mrs. C. hug someone or ponder what E. Roosevelt had to put up with or what....I am not being either facetious or smart alecky; I genuinely wonder how some people manage under barrage of bad publicity. (One politician told me she got so fed up with what she felt untrue cruel remarks she got out of office -this at local level - until she got mad enough at the council to run again.)
5. Mrs. C. barely mentions Giuliani - except implicitly. Is there anything in the strategic planning on how she will respond to what most people expect may become vicious attacks? Why does she think he would be a poor senator? Does she think he has done a good/bad job in NYC? *why?*
6. On question in January on St. Patrick's Day parade, Howard Wolfson I believe said Mrs. C. was just leaving it open when she said she hoped to be in the parade. Was the answer not in fact the result of a lapse in memory that the parade is a hot potato? Are there many other hot potatoes in NY especially in the city? Does it bother the First Lady to speak to different groups, Orthodox Union, Irish group, African-American churches etc. as though these are SEPARATE voters, and each group must be appealed to on basis of ethnicity?

TRANSCRIPT
First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Interview with Eleanor Clift and Tom Brazaitis for their book on Women in Politics
February 23, 2000

HRC: And we, um, we're working with DC to create a DC campaign to prevent teen pregnancy. We never made any progress with the former mayor and this mayor is really on board about it so I'm going to give you that. There is a wonderful story because we now have the lowest rate of teen parents on record and we're decreasing the rate of pregnancy and decreasing the rate of abortions so I think we're all heading in the right direction. That's the good news.

The bad news is that you have neighborhoods and even counties in this country where the percentage of out of wedlock births are at ninety percent so we still have a huge concentrated population. But it's not just, you know, there are neighborhoods in New York City like that. What happens in rural New York, there are rural counties where the rate is forty percent. So it's a problem that is (pause) but we're making progress. We really are beginning to kind of reach teens but boy it's tough.

EC: [inaudible question and laughter many overlapped comments]

EC: Well this is for a book on women in politics.

HRC: OK

EC: And, um, so I'm going to start asking your perspective on why you think women have moved so slowly (inaudible) especially senate governorships.

HRC: Well, you know, I think that there are several reasons for it. One is the nature of our system which makes it very difficult for anybody to run for public office with the fundraising requirements, with having to appeal to a large electorate, especially if you're running statewide, with the relentless scrutiny and sort of media culture that exists. So I think that there are elements of this that are unique to the American political system. And then I think that there are issues pertaining to gender, and what people think still today as we begin this new century is the appropriate role for women. I just came from a DSCC lunch where the present democratic women senators hosted a lunch to raise money for those of us who are running and several of them were very funny. I think Blanche Lincoln said, "It doesn't matter what I say about an issue. If I have an run in my panty hose that's all anybody will talk about." Diane Feinstein said, "It doesn't matter how good you are on the issues, you're still judged differently. You can be absolutely a person of incredibly integrity and credibility but it is still a harder sell. You know I just think that there are issues that are kind of endemic into women's roles that are probably cross cultural and then there are these unique burdens that one bears in the American political system.

EC: (inaudible question)

HRC: I don't know the answer to that. I think that anything that furthers the definition of equality and institutionalizes it does have a ripple effect on how people view themselves and the legitimacy of the efforts that they undertake and how the society thinks about these issues. So we probably would have in some way contributed to lowering barriers but these are pretty deeply embedded.

TB: Do you think there's any reason to bring back the ERA and try again?

HRC: Oh you know in today's political climate I think it's unlikely it would be successful and I don't know that it would be a (inaudible) to the efforts to just engage in a battle that couldn't be successful. But I don't think that some time in the future if it appears the political situation has changed that it might be.

EC: In the early seventies, when you were (inaudible)

HRC: Well, I was pleased they were there. I wasn't there for political office so they weren't people that I looked to. I was more looking at role models like Mary Wainwright Edelman or Jane Adams or even people that aren't famous whom I knew who had labored in the trenches on behalf of children's issues and women's issues. But I was very admiring and as a little girl I had a liking for Margaret Chase Smith because she was one of the few people in the republican party and I was raised in a republican family, who stood up to Joe McCarthy and so I thought she was a woman of great courage. So I admired her kind of glitzy yankee integrity and so I often looked to women in public positions with admiration but I wouldn't have any sense of relating to them.

EC: (question)

HRC: No, not elected office.

EC: Right, when did that (inaudible)

HRC: Not seriously. People would say that to me but I was never personally interested in it. I always saw great opportunities in sort of citizen activism and political volunteer efforts and I very well might have at some points been interested in an appointive job. But I didn't think I was interested in elective office and I knew I wasn't interested in judiciary which is another thing people talked to me about. So I always just saw myself as a citizen activist.

TB: I think because you are a candidate running, younger generations of women are going to look to you as a role model and you and others...I am wondering if your own daughter has ever looked at politics as a possibility.

HRC: No

(laughter)

HRC: You know yesterday I called Margaret Daniels who lost her husband and expressed my sympathy and she said a lot of things about growing up the daughter of somebody in political life and that she couldn't get away from it fast enough. And I think that many young people are in that position.

EC: (inaudible comment)

HRC: Absolutely...(muffled discussion – get water)

EC: (inaudible question)

HRC: Well, Eleanor, I don't know. You and Tom have observed this probably more closely than I have over the years. I think that everyone has his or her own individual script. But there are certain givens...you're going to run for public life...a political position. And I think that for women there is still a greater scrutiny and burden about how its carried off and the stylistic range seems to be more limited as to what is or is not appropriate for a woman to do or say or appear. So I think that there may very well be some different scripts that come with gender just as they do to some extent with region of the country or there's a particular ethnic constituency that is important. There are all kinds of factors that have to be taken into account but ultimately it's the individual. Today in that room where we had six democratic women senators I'm sure they have some things in common but you know compare Barbara Michulsky to Diane Feinstein to Barbara Boxer to Blanche Lincoln to Patty ____ to Mary _____ and I mean you have some real variety there of experience and presentation and I think ultimately it's the individual.

TB: (inaudible question)

HRC: I think that oh you know the same old stories that people were talking about at the lunch today that if you got a run in your pantyhose that's more important than anything else. I mean I've seen lots of speeches and lots of student and you know not the greatest sartorial combinations but that's not usually what you should refer to but I mean it's just ...it's just those kind of superficial standards that are often still used to judged women in those roles.

EC: (inaudible question)

HRC: No, we've funded...(laughter). It was a big luncheon for contributors to the SCC. But everybody spoke so...

TB: The New York Times said that you acknowledged that your early campaign in their words was ____, ____, unfocused and _____. (laughter). I'm wondering why did things get off to such a rough start.

HRC: Well I was...I had to learn how to be a candidate. I mean when I started I said that I was going to listen and learn at Senator Moynihan's farm, and I really meant it. I had not made up my mind I was going to run when I started the listening tour because I wanted to make sure I had had felt comfortable about it, that I thought I could win, that I was doing it for the right reasons and so for me it really was as I said it was – it wasn't some...it was in and of itself an effort to

get out and listen and learn about the state of New York about the New Yorkers and learn how to be a candidate and it wasn't until the fall that I really believed that it was both the right thing to do and that I would win.

TB: And like a lot of other candidates...(inaudible)

HRC: Well there's that too. I really did think that I would have a little more of an opportunity to be a usual candidate. I have been around as you have dozens, hundreds, of candidates by now and you know nobody's perfect. It doesn't matter how many times you've done it, if you're new to it, if you're a rookie, you're gonna make mistakes obviously. But there was no margin for being under the radar to mix a metaphor. To try to get out there and kind of learn as I went along and regroup and keep going. I had a great time doing it...I mean I wouldn't have made a decision to do it if I hadn't ended up enjoying it and so for me it's all part of how you learn to do something you've never done before

EC: (inaudible)

HRC: Well you know I want to be sure that people hadn't just persuaded me to do this because I was frankly surprised when I campaigned very hard in '98 for democrats and we were more successful than anybody thought and I knew we were going to be. I could sense it out there and I felt really good about the election and I was pretty tired and so it was the Thursday night after the Tuesday '98 election. And Senator Moynihan taped the press interview saying he wasn't going to run again. Now I didn't know that because it wasn't going to run until like Sunday I guess. And my phone immediately started ringing – immediately. With New York democratic elected officials and activists calling me asking me to consider this based largely I think on what I'd done for Chuck Schumer. They'd seen me on a lot of different campaign settings and so they...and I thought it was an off the wall idea and I told them so. And I assumed that somebody whether it be Carl ____ or Andrew Cuomo or a member of congress or somebody would really come out quickly and shut the door and say, I'm going to do this. And that didn't happen. And so everybody kept pushing me and pushing me and then one day I think it was either, it was probably February I think I went to church and I came home and the phone rang and somebody said, did you see Bob Torecelli on meet the press. And I said no. And a friend of mine she said, he just said you were going to run for the senate in new york – he was definitely sure about that. I couldn't believe it and I called Bob and I said "What are you talking about?" and he said, "You're going to do it." I said "Bob I'm not going to do it". I mean I'm having an argument about my life (laughter). But it you know it just kept coming back and they kept coming to see me and so I began to put my toe in the water and I began to call people in New York, I called county chairs and local elected officials and other activists. But I still just wasn't completely committed. And then late spring, Nita really wanted to make a decision and I said "If you want to do this go ahead. I really can't make a decision – I am not clear at all if this is the thing to do." And for a lot of reasons – money raising is daunting – I think running against Giuliani and the republican establishment – you know, she decided to stay where she was. So then I took the next step which was the listening tour. But ever step along the way I had to stop and say, you now, am I doing this because Bob Toricelli said I was going to do it – am I doing it because Charlie Rangle keeps calling me and saying that I'm going to do it or wants me to do it so that's how it kind of went forward.

EC: (inaudible question) – you're even – it's a little more daunting I would imagine.

HRC: Well, it's a little more realistic. I mean that was totally unrealistic. I mean I have been I don't know how many campaigns – I mean that was the other thing – you had to get into it to find out how realistic it was – I mean it was totally unrealistic – it had no basis. The factors of going and putting together a political campaign and running against a very formidable opponent – at that point was he going to run – was he not going to run – with all of that going on. So for me I finally made the decision that I was going to do it when I realistically concluded after having gone through the mistakes and I was still even – I was still within the margin of error – I was still being called a carpet bagger. I was under all of this kind of mirage and I knew I could win because I had spent enough time on the ground – I had shaken enough hands – I had been across the state and I could tell how people were thinking about issues – so like you know – the fall, I began to get very convinced it was the right thing to do so I had to start seriously raising money which I really didn't begin until september. And it just made sense. But I think from where I started with all of these unrealistic expectations and encouragement to run to where I am today – this is real. That was...

EC: (inaudible), you must know that.

HRC: Eleanor, not only that. I was somewhere on one of my listening tours and I was at a college campus and a professor of political science came up to me and he said, "you know, Mrs. Clinton, New York has the second worst record in America in electing women to the government" and I said, "Now you tell me". And it's true. "I mean it's not only that we've never elected a woman to the senate, we've never elected a woman state-like anything. Except Lieutenant Governors who were connected to governors. Two or three of those which don't really count for much. Every other state except West Virginia has broken that barrier. And I've talked to a lot of people in the state – it's a very tough state. I mean the political environment is rich, complex, diverse and extremely tough. And it's like going through constant hazing and you know you really have to learn how to deal with it and it's daunting and it's offputting I'm sure for men as well as for women. But you kinda get into sort of a rhythm and once you get into the rhythm of it you see what's really going on. They dump on you – you get back up and keep going. It's like a little chit mark. They dump on you again and you get up and keep going and it's like anything else. Once you do it for a while you get the sense of how it works and you get ready to do it again.

TB: (inaudible question)

HRC: I hope not but I think there's obviously reasons for that. I was very interested in Elizabeth Dole's campaign, I don't know if you've had a chance to talk with her.

TB: We have spoken with her.

HRC: And I don't know if that's because (inaudible), and it turned out that she did. I don't know what that third means. You know because you can get a third to say no to anything in the polls and if that third consists of people that would never vote for a woman, there's a third of

people who wouldn't vote for nearly any kind of a candidate. So it's hard to know what that really means. Because if you concede a third to your opponent starting off that's a pretty daunting task...you're going to have to get the remaining two thirds to be able to win. But on the other hand I think so much of it is volatile. And it's hard to know who you would bring into a race, who you would be able to encourage to vote. I think that it is more difficult for a woman in our system again, on a larger scale, for the reasons that I talked about before. In a Parliamentary system, you know I'm not sure if Margaret Thatcher could have run and won in the (inaudible) but she could have run and won within her peers because they have worked with her, they acknowledged her as a leader, they accepted her philosophy, all she had to do was keep her small constituency happy and the inarticulated contingent (?) that she could get enough people to be able to carry. And there are some women you can point to around the world, Golda Meir for example who could emerge from a Parliamentary system again because that was a nationwide election when she was running. But there are very few in very few countries that have been elected in any system comparable to our system so you can't really compare apples to oranges in a parliamentary system and a presidential system. And I look at our system and the amount of money that you have to raise and the kind of relentless campaign that you see the four leading contenders in both parties ranging the men who show that toughness – the way a woman has to modulate herself in public - it's just so awfully difficult than it is for most men. I think of some of the things we have already heard from all four candidates. I mean you could take any woman we can imagine – pick an accomplished office holder like Diane Feinstein, who has proven her ability of real tough election in the biggest state in the country. And you could have her say some of the things that each of the four have said and it would have been considered inappropriate, unacceptable, offensive. She couldn't be as tough, or as whiny, or as sanctimonious, or self righteous. It would be – it would not work coming out of a woman's mouth.

TB: That's what you meant earlier by [inaudible].

HRC: Absolutely, and so you know it's so funny because you know I look at the women that successful – obviously I know the democratic women better than the republican women – and you know each of them I give a lot of credit to for overcoming these stereotypes and these burdens. But they have to be able to do it in the context of the state and you have to really work hard on the constituencies. You know I campaigned very hard for Barbara Boxer. You know Barbara's forming a committee in California who's turning out liberal women and minorities and she only campaigned in Los Angeles and San Francisco. She never went, that's an overstatement, but she rarely went to the valley or Sacramento or San Diego because she concentrated where her votes were and she was able to do that. Now you could imagine I guess in an electoral format a woman candidate being able to do that to some extent but it's really hard to imagine where this....

TB: But what percent about [inaudible] in your case if can't really be who you are and you can't express the range of who you are

HRC: Well you can be who you are but you just have to be very conscious that you're given no benefit of the doubt as a woman for being who you are. And you know think about Pat Schroeder and Pat Schroeder was a very accomplished legislator and very few legislators other

than male politicians [inaudible] but she did it. I mean you take somebody like [inaudible]. You know Bella ____ could be as tough as nails and it couldn't go statewide in New York. Or Gerry Ferraro who is a friend of mine who I think is fabulous – you know there is just, I don't know, there are – it's like living in the courtroom which I do know something about – you have to have your own style, you have to be able to present yourself effectively but there are just some things you have to be really careful about as a woman.

TB: [inaudible]

HRC: Well, you know, I just think that the different strip or the number of strips may be more limited than the number available to male politicians.

EC: The question coming up on your campaign why aren't your [inaudible] very direct and outspoken and they feel that it's very...who is Hillary? [inaudible]

HRC: But one of the things that the vice president found out when he ran for president is that it is very well known and then totally unknown. This man has been in congress, in the senate, and vice president for seven years and he, and no body knew he'd served in congress. Nobody outside of Tennessee knew he'd been a senator – I mean there he was – he was the guy behind the president. So why should you vote for the guy standing behind the president? He had to totally reintroduce himself to the American people. And I think that was a big surprise to him, it was a big surprise to me when I watched the campaign unfold. I have done exactly the same thing. I am the most unknown known person you can imagine. I mean nobody knows what I did for thirty years. You know all the work I did to promote republicans in the private sector. And people don't know much about what I did in the white house and that's understandable because both Al and I have been part of a team. Our job, as we saw it, was to support the president in achieving the goals of this administration which we both whole heartedly support so there wasn't much room or opportunity or even desire really for us to do anything other than to support the president's initiatives and cut, make a contribution to make them successful. So all of a sudden he steps out first and people are saying why should we vote for him – he's just the vice president. I step out and people say what has she done – who is she? So what I find is that's what the beauty of a campaign is – to reintroduce yourself to people. You can't assume that anybody knows anything about what you have done or what you care about and what I find as I travel around the state and as I meet with groups of people that once you talk about what I've done for I think three decades people think, "Gosh, I didn't know that" or "isn't that interesting" or "that's fascinating" or "gosh, I wish somebody had told me that". And so that's what a campaign is all about.

EC: [inaudible] unelected spouse who's taking credit for things that are going on in the White House – I understand that you are part of a partnership but this whole relationship is [inaudible]. Then there is concern about President Clinton and then the health care thing didn't work out. I know you have done lots of things [inaudible].

HRC: Well you know because I think voters who are voting for senators want to know what I would do if I were senator and I can talk about the things I have done just as the vice president can talk about the- you know none of us are in the white house for any reason other than the

person who is president – you know, he picked the vice president. I'm here in a relationship – you know everybody is. And so I think ultimately all of the accomplishments and contributions are his because none of us would have been given the chance to do any of this without being here and being part of this team but I think it is fair for people to know what I would have done and what I've tried to do and other responsibilities that I've carried out and that's why when I made my announcement and put together a video about some of the things that I've done over the course of a lifetime and certainly over the course at the white house because it is something that people don't know and since I'm running to continue in part the policies that I think are good for New York and good for the country I think it is only fair for the voter to know what I had to do with any of those policies and then people who wouldn't vote for me because I did anything are not going to vote for me anyway. But people who are among the 59% of new yorkers who voted for president in 1996 I think it is important for them to know where I stood on the issues that they obviously ratified because they voted.

TB: inaudible – As first lady you have been closer to the president than anyone except the person who is actually president. I wonder if you've noticed anything or seen anything or been aware of anything about that job that would pose a problem for women that [inaudible]

HRC: No I think it is totally up to the individual. I find that there is no blanket general answer to any question like that. There are some men who would be and have been great presidents and some who would be and have been scolding presidents. (laughter). And there are women if we ever get to that point who would be great presidents and women who wouldn't be. There isn't any general, stereotypical answer that can be given to that and I think it depends upon all of the personal characteristics related to the job and certain amount of stamina. You have to have obviously a lot of physical and mental and emotional stamina to perform this or really any job in public office – certainly an executive job. But I think that at the end of the day it's coarseness (?).

TB: You said your husband doesn't sleep.

HRC: not much.

TB: is that a requirement?

HRC: No no I think that if the job could be done differently – it depends on what your goals are – it depends on whether you're an activist or not – it depends on whether you're focusing on one or two things or whether you're interested in a whole range of issues that come before a president. You know there have been successful presidents in this century that have had very different styles. Even ones I disagree with but I would point to them and say that can be done differently.

TB: And you can testify to any woman who can [inaudible]

HRC: I think I can [inaudible]

(Laughter)

EC: I am going to ask you, in the dark of the night, you must think about the fact that you could lose this and you must have dealt with that. And so I'm awfully curious [inaudible]

HRC: Well, that's just not the way I see my life. You know I will have had an interesting full life no matter what happens in November. I want to do this because I really would like to serve in the senate. And I'd like to be on the front lines of solving problems that I see in new york and that I know exist around the country. But you know I wasn't planning to do this and I was looking forward to living in new york and writing and speaking and maybe working at a foundation or in some other capacity doing the work that I've always done on behalf of children and families and women's issues. And so in one way I will continue that work in the senate and if that didn't work out I would continue that work anyway so for me losing does not hold any fear at all. I think you get out there every day doing the best you can - you've gotta get better so there's more people to vote for you and you try to have fun doing it. I mean I'm having a really good time now - now that I've sort of gotten my footing and I'm getting in the rhythm of it - I'm having a good time. I love this. I like meeting people - I like talking about issues - I like the give and take now and I'm really sort of into it and because I have been able to more like what I did before the white house being a lawyer you know I just can't overestimate how different it is if you believe that you're here at the white house with more than a presidential agenda than if you were on your own as a lawyer of the poor or as a candidate now you know it's just a different experience. And so for me this has been a lot of fun.

TB: Just one more thing - is there any chance, in your mind, than even [inaudible] of the senate?

HRC: I think it is possible. I think it is definitely possible. I mean I think it's still possible for Elizabeth Dole.

TB: Yeah I think that's [inaudible due to laughter] if it goes on and the democrats follow...

HRC: I mean this could be a really good year for women if that were to happen - I can't predict one way or the other because I don't really even understand the candidate on the other side.

EC: I think you have gotten your ____ except ____ That was a mistake.

HRC: It's supposed to be a joke!

EC: I know I know but people didn't get it.

HRC: I thought it was the clearest way of saying ...I mean who can't make a salad or an omelet. I was amazed when people said...I mean I had one serious man after I went - who I shook hands on a ropeline after the announcement who said "(whisper)" - it was a joke.

TB: [inaudible] get in a lot of trouble when ____ talk about food...(laughter)