

# Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

## Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. paper	Interview of the First Lady Conducted by Mary McGrory; RE: private info [partial] (1 page)	03/18/1994	P6/b(6)

### COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records  
First Lady's Office  
Lissa Muscatine (First Lady's Press Office)  
OA/Box Number: 20111

### FOLDER TITLE:

FLOTUS Press Office Interview Transcripts Volume III 02/02/94--05/31/94 [Binder] :  
[03/18/94 McGrory, Mary Washington Post]

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### RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
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PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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03/18/94  
MCGRORY, MARY  
WASHINGTON POST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Internal Use Only

March 18, 1994

AN INTERVIEW OF THE FIRST LADY  
CONDUCTED BY MARY MCGRORY

Q How do you think it's going?

MRS. CLINTON: I think it's going fine. I mean, that's my perspective, which is obviously influenced by how I see the world. I think health care is going much better than people realize within the Congress. You know, last week, last two weeks I spent lots of time with members of Congress, had lots of one-on-one meetings and lots of group meetings. I was delighted.

I mean, Milan (phonetic) was in a lot of my one-on-one meetings with me. We would meet with somebody for an hour and a half, two hours, and by the end of it, their concerns were narrower than they were when they came in. Their understanding of the alternatives was much greater. Their commitment to seeing it through was really great. It was mostly moderate and conservative Democrats, a couple Republicans. So I feel good about where the Congress is in dealing with the hard issues they're facing.

Q Did anyone suggest to you that this commotion would be getting in the way of health care, of the legislative programs?

MRS. CLINTON: You mean the members of Congress?

Q Yes.

MRS. CLINTON: Not to me personally. They expressed a lot of personal support and, you know, would say things like just keep going, don't get deterred, we're making progress, we're with you. I mean, there was a lot of personal reinforcement. It may be because obviously they were with me, but that's what they were saying.

Q They didn't say look, it was going to be tough anyway, and now with this diversion, and suspicion, and

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controversy, and rancor, it's going to be that much harder?

MRS. CLINTON: They did not say that.

A PARTICIPANT: Mary, what they usually say is she needs to be out around the country every day with them.

MRS. CLINTON: What they say to me is when can you come to my district, how much time can you give me, how many people can you see with me, how many phone calls can you make to my constituents, I have a doctor I want you to talk to. They are asking me to get even more involved and more visible and spend more time traveling.

Q Well, now, how has this hullabaloo affected you? I mean, it seems to me as if all the raves you've gotten have now been, to some extent, replaced by people who say here is this impossible woman with all this information for the public, stonewalls, fires her usher, fires her cook.

MRS. CLINTON: That sounds terrible. It really does. I don't like that person you just described. How is it for me? I am coming to terms, I guess, with some hard facts about political life. Maybe I'm a slow learner, but I've made some mistakes in the way that I perceived this whole situation and what I thought I should be spending my time on. I'm trying to learn from those mistakes and kind of keep my focus and do what I need to do to take care of my family and work on health care and deal with everything else.

Q Anything you regret? Anything you would undo? I mean, what about the propriety of representing the Madison when it was an institution that had business before state agencies? What about that?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, obviously in hindsight I regret it because I never would have thought anybody could have put the interpretation on it that people have. At the time, I had no reason to believe that anyone would think I was acting inappropriately. In fact, if you look at the events that occurred, I didn't get any special favors, I didn't have any action taken on behalf of that client. In fact, the securities commissioner acted, I thought, very appropriately and effectively in dealing with the issues that were presented. So it was never a matter that anybody at the time would have thought to be a conflict or a problem.

Q Do you think that was just because it was

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Arkansas where you all know each other so well?

MRS. CLINTON: No. I talked to a lot of people about this around the country and talked to a lot of people who know a lot about legal ethics. It is not technically a conflict. There was no doubt about who these parties were, and there was no action taken that was inappropriate. So I don't think it was just that it was in that particular state.

Now, in retrospect, a lot of the assumptions people made about appearances of conflict were different in the early part of the 1980s than they are today. So there have been some changes. But certainly, I would never do it again. It's something that even though I don't think it was improper at the time and don't have anybody who I have spoken with who has told me it was, I wish that it had not occurred because I don't like people having any grounds to raise questions about my behavior.

Q Do you think you've lost a little altitude or standing or credit with the public?

MRS. CLINTON: I think that in today's public environment, you go up and down like a roller coaster. Milan and Lisa will tell you that as soon as I finished testifying in Congress, people were being so complimentary I said to my entire staff well, hold on, because we are guaranteed for a ride that goes down now. I come from the "shoe will always drop" school of politics. I assume that if you're built up, then there is an incentive on the part of some to tear you down.

So I view this as the natural ups and downs of politics today. It is not pleasant to live through. It is not something that I think is good for the country or the people involved, but I accept that it is part of what occurs. My personal objective is to keep myself centered, take care of my family, make sure that my husband is taken care of, and my daughter is taken care of, and check in on my mother, and do the things that are personally important to me, and stay focused on health care and any other issues that the president has asked me to work on, and cooperate fully with the special counsel and just continue to work through this.

Q There's just one problem that recurs. The money that was lost in the investment was not claimed as a loss in any income tax or anything. Is there some special reason for

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that?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, there's a series of reasons that go back to when this first was raised back in the campaign. I did not really have records that were ones that I could vouch for because I did not keep the records of the company. I did not have the responsibility for doing so and didn't know what they contained.

So we did the best we could to answer the press questions that came during the campaign and hired an accountant, gave them all the records we had, and they were the best records that were available to us at the time. I really didn't pay any attention to this again until the special counsel was appointed. Since then, I have worked very hard to find every scrap of paper. We have given everything we have found to the special counsel. I am only, in the last couple of months, really sitting down and focusing on them.

So when it came time last year for us to file our taxes, I did not want to be accused of claiming a loss which I could not document to my own satisfaction. I mean, it was the best information we had as of March 1992, but I hadn't spent any time gathering these records. I really thought this whole thing was over. We lost money. How much we lost we didn't have the records for. So we were just willing to eat the loss and go on.

I thought it was the responsible proper course of action. I talked about it with my accountants. They agreed. I could not have been more surprised that I would be criticized for not taking a loss than I could be surprised by anything.

Q I think that what has maybe caused a little confusion is -- I have not seen the text of the two interviews you gave to the magazines, but they were talking about it in our group. If it was a loss, why do you now speak of possibly having to pay more in taxes?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, because here's what has happened. We claimed deductions based on our personal records. We had difficulty obtaining any other records from the corporation during those years. So we went on the very best records we had. We gave them to our accountant. They satisfied our accountant, and we did what was appropriate.

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under the tax laws based on the records we had.

Maybe 10 years, 8 years, 6 years later somebody comes forward and says well, we've just discovered a check that was written on Whitewater that paid this cost to this bank. Well, you also paid it, Bill and Hillary. So even though you were right to believe you were the only one paying it, we now know that they paid it also. So you shouldn't have claimed the deduction.

Well, as we learn these things, we will pay the money back. I mean, we did what we thought was absolutely proper based on the records that were our personal records. We cannot vouch for any other records. That's been one of our problems in this whole thing.

Members of the press get records from somebody. They then come and ask us questions. We can't answer their questions, Mary, because we've never seen the records. We can't vouch for the records. I can't say whether they did or did not really make that payment. But as we have gathered more information, we can satisfy ourselves and we will be as honest as we were when we thought we had the only records now that other records are coming forward.

Q Now, do you think that this is some gigantic misunderstanding? It has presented, as you know, as the Arkansas way of doing business. Everybody is related. Everybody knows everybody else. The ethics lines are a bit blurred, a little casual.

MRS. CLINTON: I think that it is a big misunderstanding. It is fair to say that in any community, and I would argue in the community of Washington, or in the community of Arkansas, or in the community of any small state, or any community, however it's defined, a lot of people know the people they do business with. So maybe they are not as precise in documenting everything they do as they would be if they did business with a stranger. I think that is fair to say.

I don't think, though, that it is unique in the State of Arkansas. I would imagine if you opened the books and records of many of the people who you know in Washington, you would find the same kind of informality because if you do business with people you think you know, you don't spend a lot of time sometimes doing all the niceties.

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Q The "E1" interview plus the interview around Christmastime suggested that you may have thought that certain forces were getting together and planning to undermine you and the president for the purpose of sabotaging these programs. Do you feel that still?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I don't want to go too far on this, but I do believe there is a pattern of activity that originally started in Arkansas among my husband's political enemies who were connected with the Republican party that then spread out and included others kind of in the right wing, whether it's the right wing operatives or the, you know, people associated with them in the Republican party, who I do believe have had a concerted effort to discredit my husband since he entered the New Hampshire primary.

I mean, if you go back and look, this group that is behind a lot of the sources and information and rumor and the innuendo, ran ads against Bill in New Hampshire in October and November of 1991. So there has been a focus to their efforts that has been consistent. I think that anyone who looks at it sees a lot of the same fingerprints on all these stories.

There's almost a joke in Arkansas about, you know, anytime anybody lands from the national press, we know exactly who's going to see them and who's going to pump them and who's going to try to, you know, provide information to them. They're all the same people who have been politically after my husband for years, only now they have more resources and support from national interests.

Q Do you think the press has been excessive (inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: I really don't want to characterize that.

Q I just thought I'd try.

MRS. CLINTON: No.

Q Well, like, Roger Ales' comments, did you feel they were a little bit outside the (inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: I don't know what his job is. I mean, is he still a Republican political consultant?

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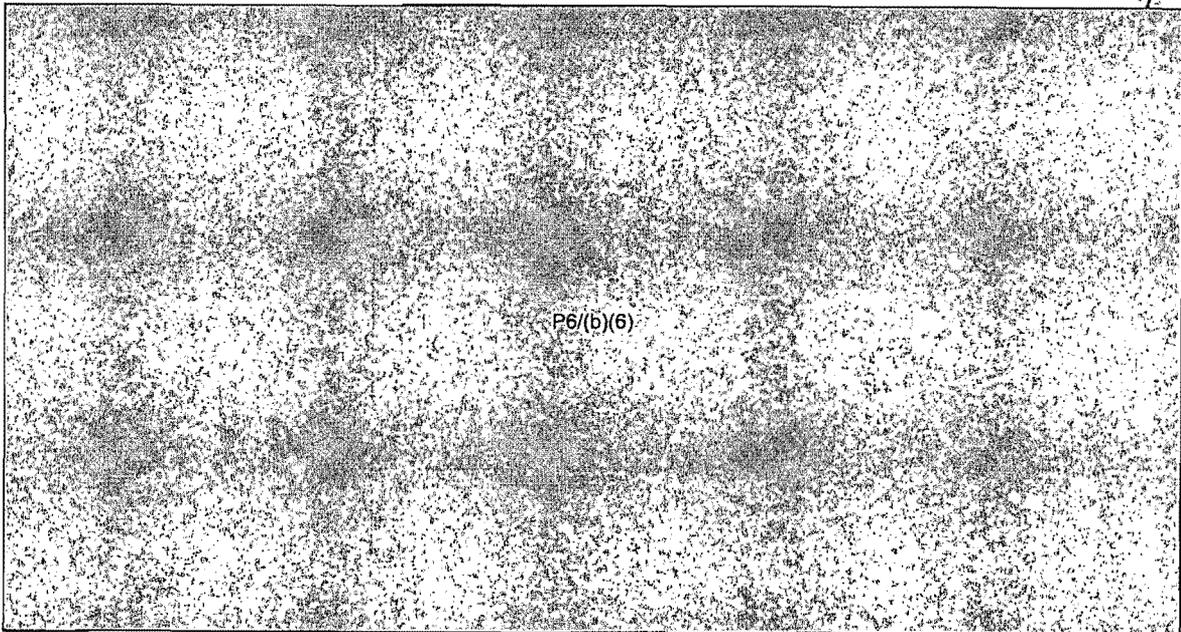
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P6(b)(6)

Q It's been very, very tough. I was just wondering if you felt it affected you personally or it affected the programs you're interested in? I mean, the crowds today, that was a very, very nasty sign.

MRS. CLINTON: But I was surprised there was only one. I mean, I thought the story of today at Boulder was that despite what I would assume were efforts to organize negative comments, there was only one nasty sign in the whole crowd that I could see, which I thought was remarkable.

A PARTICIPANT: It was a public event, and it was known for days that you were coming.

MRS. CLINTON: That's right. All I can tell you is that for the last year and a half since the election, and certainly since health care reform became a real public issue, I've had this kind of personal support from people all around the country. It is difficult for me sometimes to understand the seriousness with which some people address these other issues because I never get asked about them outside of Washington.

Now, that doesn't mean that it's not finally affecting people because, you know, I recognize that if you get questions raised about you, you know, you've got to respond to them. I am working as hard as I can to do that and to cooperate. I don't want anybody to think I have

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anything to hide. I don't have anything to hide. There are questions I can't answer because I don't know what happened.

But I want people to know that neither of us has anything to hide nor do we have any reason to be in any way concerned about the special counsel's investigation. But what I think I missed and one of the mistakes I made was not paying close enough attention until recently how people were really feeling about this, principally in the press. I don't blame the press. I blame me for that. I was just not on that wavelength.

Q Do you think you are now?

MRS. CLINTON: I think I am now, yes. I think you all have gotten my attention. I'm a little slow, Mary. If I can stop thinking about, you know, mandatory alliances, I'll get this other thing worked out.

Q You think that health care is much further along? You don't think that the health care can be stopped by this?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I hope not. I think it can be stopped and stalled by a lot of competing interests, and any use that they can make of this, they obviously will. I understand that. But I really believe that the issue is now so much bigger than any one interest group. What the real challenge is is to figure out how we're going to do it. We're starting to get some real good conversations going in the Congress about what needs to be done to make it happen. So I can only tell you what I personally have seen.

Q As you know, some of the criticism has centered on the fact that people think you are co-president, and if you're going to be, then you have to equal responsibility and you have to have press conferences and you have to answer every question and all that.

I mean, Anna Quinlan, for instance, was quite harsh with you, although she's a sympathizer and a type of a friend, whatever. So they are very ambivalent about you. They have been since the first day they ever saw you. In New Hampshire two years ago, I remember when your husband said you get two for the price of one, and they got a little bit nervous. Then they got more nervous in Illinois. Then, last September when they saw you doing health care, they liked it.

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But they're basically a little jittery. Are they not a little skiddish?

MRS. CLINTON: I think that's fair. I do think that's a fair description. But I am, by no means, the co-president. Anybody who knows my husband knows that. I mean, I am available to him to do what he wants me to do, as is everybody else who works in the White House. We are all there because he selected us. I mean, I'm not any more or less involved than anyone else whom he has sought out for advice or counsel on any subject.

For the vast majority of the government's activities, I have no involvement whatsoever. I have really been focused. Some of my friends say I took this health care thing so seriously. You know, we've had some pretty tough times this past year. My father died, our friend Vince died, my sister-in-law's brother died, my mother-in-law died.

Trying to keep working on what my husband asked me to do, I have shut out a lot of stuff. I shut out a lot of this sort of Whitewater grumbling stuff because I couldn't ever see what anybody was really concerned about. So I've tried to do the job that Bill asked me to do to the best of my ability, but that's it. You know, I am not making decisions behind the scenes. I'm not sitting up in some room picking up the phone, telling people what they're supposed to do. I just don't do that.

Q I wish you would.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, in public, in rooms, I express my opinion. I'm not afraid to do that, but they're not my decisions.

Q I think one of the complicated things really is Vincent Foster's suicide, the appalling story that came out over the weekend. It was on two networks. I couldn't believe it, a story that was said to have come from the offices of Senator Moynihan to the effect that Vincent Foster had been shot and killed in a safe house and then his body transported. I mean, I never heard --

MRS. CLINTON: Well, Mary, I never heard either. I don't understand how responsible journalists can permit those kinds of crazy, terrible rumors to see the light of day. Everyone that I know of who knows anything about the

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circumstances of his death has no doubt that it was a suicide.

Now, I wish I knew the reason why it happened. Every one of us who knew him wishes we knew. We wish we could turn the clock back and maybe we could have said something or done something. I mean, Milan and Lisa and I have talked endlessly among ourselves because he was somebody that everybody cared about who knew him. One day he did this. But we don't sit around presuming to make up stories that try to give answers to what really is a mystery.

It's one of the mysteries in life that if you live long enough and you've known people who have killed themselves, you regretfully have to accept. In some instances, there might be a reason of terminal illness or something like that, but in many cases, you never know. It's usually related to depression that was mapped, and what I think is the case here, by high achievers and people who don't want to let down in front of their family or their friends and get overwhelmed by the disease of depression.

If I could do anything, and Tipper Gore and I have talked about this and I've talked to others arising out of Vince's death, it would be to impress upon people how serious depression is and how you don't always see the signs of it. That's certainly what happened to all of us who knew him.

But I also wish that, you know, responsible journalists would not fall for a lot of this sensationalist rumor mongering and let this poor man rest in peace and let his family get on with their lives instead of having to relive it because of some perverse agenda that someone has trying to twist what happened to him for their own purposes.

Q We can expect now that you will discuss this matter when asked?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, sure, to the best of my ability. Again, I try to tell journalists, and I've done this, they ask me question I don't have a clue what they're talking about. When I say I don't know or we don't have anything to answer that, they must think that I'm not being forthcoming. I wish they would recognize that this is something that we have worked very hard in the last couple months, ever since the special counsel, to piece together everything that we could find out occurred. Not that we could speak for it,

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because we didn't know it at the time, but so that at least we will have some bigger picture.

The end is going to be we lost money, we made a bad land investment and we're sorry that we lost money. But as I said at the press conference, you know, my goodness, suppose we had made money in this deal. I'd probably never hear the end of it.

Q The Republicans, I mean, El Dupato (phonetic)?

MRS. CLINTON: We better go off the record.

Q I mean, here is a man who is investigated for two years by the Ethics Committee.

MRS. CLINTON: Off the record, I think it's a strange choice for them to have made.

Q But they sent out (inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: That's right. Now they've got this attack dog, good guy/bad guy routine. I mean, I have nothing to say about him.

Q No, there isn't really.

MRS. CLINTON: It sort of defies speech.

Q Do you wish Democrats were a little more supportive?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I've actually read some of the things that Democrats have said and I've had reports of other things which they've said, hardly any of which gets in the press. I mean, if you go back to some of the hearings that were held, some of his colleagues went after D'Amato pretty tough and it never got reported.

I got transcripts of it sent to me by senators who wanted me to know they were defending me. Look what I said, Hillary. So I think there's been more of that than has really kind of broken through. George Mitchell gave a great speech, for example. Barbara Boxer has gone after him just with every inch of her considerable energy. A lot of folks have gone after him, but it's not news. I mean, his attacking the president is news. Democrats taking up for us

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is, you know, more predictable.

Q Now, today's unfortunate development, the resignation of Webster Hubbell, another old spin on the (inaudible).

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I know, and I find that very regrettable because, you know, this is a sad loss, I think, for the Department of Justice. I don't know if you got to know him during his time here.

Q Never did, no.

MRS. CLINTON: And everybody who knows him, I mean, the hard-bitten, old line Justice Department people, the other lawyers around Washington, the Hill staff, they loved him. He has such a way of kind of moving along an agenda. Well, I think we're going to have to beef up the civil rights division. Okay, Webb, that sounds good.

I mean, he really has a deft hand, but he could not, apparently, deal with what is the problems that he's got that really are routed in his leaving the firm and feel, I guess, that he could do his job. So I'm very sad about it.

Q Do you want to tell me what happened with the usher?

MRS. CLINTON: Off the record, I'll tell you, okay, off the record.

(End of the tape.)

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