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Interview with the First Lady
by WJAR Radio, Detroit, MI
Via telephone

Q: Mrs. Clinton how are you?

MRS. CLINTON: I'm fine how are you doing?

Q: We understand that you had dinner, or at least met with Princess Diana this weekend, will you tell us about that?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, I did, I had lunch with her on Saturday at the British Embassy. About 30 people were invited to come there, and I had some private time with her before the lunch, and found her to be a delightful, down to earth, funny, charming young woman, I must say that I was very pleased to have had the opportunity to see her face to face. Because as someone who often reads about myself in the paper, I never believe anything anymore unless I absolutely get to meet someone.

Q: Mrs. Clinton did you point out to her that if she was really trying to get away from the harsh glare of the media, that New York was the wrong place to go?

MRS. CLINTON: Well New York and Washington, you're absolutely right. But I think she is interested in the arts, she's interested in projects like AIDS treatment and prevention, particularly for children. In addition to meeting people and attending some social engagements, she really pursued some of those interests, which I respect a great deal about her.

Q: We talked earlier this hour to Kenneth Woodward of Newsweek, who as you know does a story on you in the, on your religious beliefs, in the magazine, this week, and it is somewhat surprising because I don't think most of us ever thought of Hillary Clinton as an "Old Fashioned Methodist," is that an apt description?

MRS. CLINTON: Well I, think it is. I mean I have very strong religious beliefs, and take my faith very seriously and personally, I don't talk about it much. I was willing to talk to him because he is a serious journalist who has studied written

about religious beliefs for years. But it is something that has been a big part of my life, ever since I was a little girl.

Q: One of the biggest buzz words in America today is "abortion." And in the article, he suggests that you feel that abortion is wrong, but should not be criminalized, is that accurate?

MRS. CLINTON: That is. Obviously, in some cases, it is a very difficult decision, and I respect the right of conscience. You know I've come in my own mind to think about this issue as really pro-conscience in the sense of trying to change people's attitudes and feelings so that if a decision is made to choose abortion is done only after the most careful soul searching. I think the issue has become so polarizing and neither side on the divide, is really reflecting what most of us in the great muddled middle feel which is that we do not approve, we are not happy about the number of abortions but cannot imagine what criminalization would do to women and doctors and just the fabric of our life together.

Q: Well pro-choice then to you does not necessarily mean abortion on demand?

MRS. CLINTON: No it does not. The debate has really gotten so distorted over the last years. → I would like it if we could perhaps call a verbal truce, and for people on all sides to work together to figure out how we make abortion, in my husband's word, safe and rare but legal. There are situations that I do not think that any of us should substitute our own judgement or experience or morality for that of a woman and her physician, or in many instances even her parents or her husband. But I think that we have to do a better job of talking about what is really a difficult moral dilemma. As opposed to screaming at each other across the divide that I think is very unproductive.

Q: That is a far more reasoned explanation of a point of view that I have ever heard from either side of the very zealous left and right.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, you know I think that is one of our problems in America right now. Many of us who are working our way through difficult decisions, we need to cool our rhetoric and we need to stop the verbal barrage and try to work through how we are going to deal with very serious problems, that is one. But certainly the high divorce rate bothers me, the break down of the family, teenage pregnancy, and the violence in our communities. I know it's hard to say in a political season but I would be a lot happier instead of hurdling thirty second ads at each other, if candidates would be given the opportunity by the electorate to have much more thoughtful discussions with each other and with the voters. I regret deeply that we are turning this election into sloganeering, especially when I think that there has been

some honest effort on the part of my husband and Democrats as well as some Republicans in the last twenty months deal with some very tough issues. And that is what we should look at.

Q: Both sides are great at mudslinging on television and we live in a world of soundbites and at least for now that's the way it is.

MRS. CLINTON: It is regrettable though.

Q: Despite the fact that nobody likes it. Speaking of politics it is going to be a political visit for you today, you are going I assume, campaigning and raising some money for Bob Carr and some other Democratic candidates.

MRS. CLINTON: That's right. I am and I'm looking forward to being there too.

Q: Where will you be?

MRS. CLINTON: I will be in Detroit and right outside of Detroit. I am going first to Connecticut and then I fly into the airport. I will be with Mrs. Carr and we are going to a fundraising event, actually I guess two or three of them in a row. I will be seeing a lot of people who are supporting Bob Carr for the Senate.

Q: On the last poll that I heard about he is probably five to eight points behind Spencer Abraham, his Republican opponent. He has a long way to go. This is a very interesting, as you know, off year election year, all kinds of interesting election races around the country, a couple of them here but it looks it is possible that the United States Senate could be controlled by the Republicans. How does your husband, the President, obviously he does not like this, but what does he say about it?

MRS. CLINTON: I think that he would say as he has over and over again that we hope that voters are making informed decisions and not just reacting as it is often the case with any election but particularly today, the midterm election. I was laughing with my husband the other day because if you look at somebody like Bob Carr I mean it seems to me that the people of Michigan wanted an economic recovery that would be fueled by responsible budgeting in Washington and he voted for that. The deficit as of today is going to be 203 billion, and that is far below what it was projected to be when George Bush was President and my husband was elected. I think that it is so ironic that for some reason neither this President nor courageous members of Congress, like Bob Carr gets the credit they deserve for voting for a crime bill which is going to put, I think some three to four hundred more police on the streets in Michigan, which will have an impact on crime.

Q: But as you know the crime bill was a very criticized bill, the word "pork" was associated with it as much as crime was. It was not a universally popular bill.

MRS. CLINTON: But isn't that interesting. Here was a bill that had been stuck in Washington and all of the gridlock over the last six years. This President breaks it loose, the Republicans voted for everything that was in that bill. Then at the end they adopt a very callous political strategy to call things that they had voted for, pork in order to try to deprive the President of a victory, that was really a victory for the people of this country. So my problem is that I do not mind anyone being against anything my husband, Bob Carr, or any Democrat is for, but I want them to have accurate information. If they have accurate information, they are going to scratch their heads and say, "you know these fellows really have done a lot on the deficit and crime and a lot of other issues." It is just unfortunate that too often the technique that calling something by a name is more effective then getting the facts out.

Q: But it has been the rule hasn't it, in politics in America for as long as politics has existed in America.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, it's been and has always been a part of our political life but it seems to be worse today. I think that maybe because people are preoccupied with their own lives, there are a lot of issues that all of us are trying to address, our families and our work, our communities, and because of the relentless barrage of advertising and a lot of the other means of repetitively saying something whether it is true or not. I think that people get a little off balance. Again I want everyone to have accurate information. For example, the idea that there is something like 400,000 people in Michigan who are actually getting a tax break because of the budget. There is a vast majority of people in Michigan who saw no difference at all in their taxes where 41,000 or so of the wealthiest people in Michigan had to pay their fair share because frankly they did not during the 1980's. Now as a person who was raised in the middle class by a conservative father, I've listened to my father who is no longer with us, speak in my head and I think that he would say that is a pretty good deal. But for some reason that is not getting through to people and I think it is because of all the other issues in our lives right now.

Q: Would you campaign for Ted Kennedy in Massachusetts, where he is apparently has the fight of his life on his hands.

MRS. CLINTON: I already have and I would be happy to do so again. I have seen first hand what an effective Senator he is and not only in terms of important legislation, like all of the school legislation we have passed in the last twenty months, particularly college loans for middle income families, but

because he is one of the Senators who can effectively work with Republicans and Democrats, which may be a surprise to some of your listeners. For instance, Senator Orin Hatch from Utah, a very staunch Republican, had said over and over again that Ted Kennedy is one of those Senators who can cross party lines. And my goodness we need him now more than ever.

Q: Mrs. Clinton it has been a pleasure to talking to you this morning and I hope that you will enjoy your visit to Detroit this afternoon. We will try to hold off those forecasted late afternoon showers.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, thank you and it was a pleasure talking to you again.

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