

Interview with Carl Anthony
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Q: Back to the fact that you're in this new position of having to talk about the things that you've done and how difficult that is for you...

A: Well you know, I have spent all of my adult life as an activist, as an advocate, as a lawyer, as a political supporter, and in those roles, I feel very comfortable speaking out on behalf of causes and issues that I was in favor of and on behalf of candidates that I support. And there really is a difference in moving from that kind of advocacy role, on behalf of others, to really doing it for myself and it has taken some getting used to for me.

Q: In a personal way, why is that? Do you feel like you don't want to take credit for everything?

A: I think it is a combination of maybe some reticence or shyness. I've said that it's not appropriate to be the person in the spotlight saying, "Hey, look over here." Instead of just looking at the results that one gets, which I've always been more than happy to participate in. So it's one of those challenges that I've had to address in the last couple of weeks as I've gotten used to this.

Q: And you've also been somebody that, I mean you're whole career, you've been a worker in terms of working with your staff, working with advisors, working with people who... I guess.

A: You're right, and that's what I like. I like being part of a team and I like having everybody feel that they have a stake in what we're doing together. And I like the idea that everyone's contribution is valuable because it's only all together that we are able to accomplish whatever goal we've got. And maybe that's more of a person attitude, or maybe it has something to do with gender, I'm not sure, but it is what I'm comfortable with and what I've always done, trying to get as many people involved as possible and make them feel that we're all pulling together toward whatever goal we've set.

Q: Well, now my next question to you is really going to be hard. If you were absolutely forced to, would you look back at all the work you've done over the last six and a half years in terms of real, tangible results; policy as well as the private sector encouragement and private sector filling in(?), but specifically too on pieces of legislation that you worked hard on and you fought hard on with the administration first to agreement to the table(?) and then administration to put it through. What would you say, if you were absolutely forced to and had to say, cause I know you're going to say, "They're all my favorites, they're all important." What would you say are the most important, to you, pieces of work, pieces of legislation policy that you've been a part of, that you hope would be at the top of the list when people start talking about your legacy as First Lady?

A: Wow. I don't know how to answer that, so I'll just pick at it a little bit. Well I was very pleased to play just a minor role in the economic plan in the deficit reduction. You know, I called Congress and I lobbied on behalf of the vote on that which was very difficult for a lot of

democrats to make. But I knew it was the right thing to do and I was very much in favor of the President's policy. And I also am very, you know I look back on the healthcare reform effort and I know that we made mistakes in the way that that was presented, but the incredible opportunity to address this major problem that still exists in America taught me a lot and gave me a much greater understanding of both that particular issues and the political process here in Washington. So those were two very large efforts that I was involved in, one much more publicly than the other, but both of which I thought were incredible efforts that really bore fruit for the country and so I'm very pleased about that. But I'm also very grateful in the role that I played changing the adoption and foster care and child welfare laws in the United States because that's been a love of mine for thirty years. And to finally be in a position where we could change the incentives in the system, where we could provide more protection and support for abused and neglected children, where we could increase the options of children being adopted, have given me as much personal satisfaction as anything I've done because that truly a government responsibility. If the government intervenes in a family to take a child away, then we all become a local parentis, if you will. We all become, through the state agencies, responsible for that child. And we haven't done very well by our children in many instances over the past decades, so that was very exciting for me. Seeing how micro-enterprise came into the main-stream because of the work that I was part of was also something that was very gratifying because it was an issue that I had worked on since 1984 and to bring it to the White House, involve the Treasury Department, to deepen the commitment of USAID, to bring the concepts home to America because I believe strongly in creating economic empowerment among low-income people and providing them with entrepreneurial skills, I've been very gratified by that. And I've also been very pleased to play a role in enhancing women's voices, here at home and especially around the world, not only at the Beijing conference, but in our follow-up work in the Vital Voices initiative and in the way that the role of women became a part of American foreign policy with the change in the Secretary of State and I think with the evidence I could bring to the table that focusing on women's education, healthcare and rights was something that American interests should be involved in promoting. So those are just some of the highlights of things that I have been involved in and that I feel strongly about, but there are so many other.

Q: Yeah, and I mean part of the interesting thing about your work is when we think of other First Ladies, we can usually say, you know, Lady Bird Johnson-Highway Beautification Bill, Jacqueline Kennedy- National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities and maybe a few other things, but in your case, there's been such a wide breadth of activities. In terms of those projects, those efforts, those initiatives that you have seen personally and that you know of that have already affected change in people's lives, which of those would you identify?

A: Well, I think the ones that I mentioned were all ones that have affected people's lives, and we have also been involved in the use of the Holy Pulpit, or whatever the First Lady's equivalent is, for example, the conferences that I held on childcare and early childhood development and the work that I have done putting together public-private partnerships on reading to children and making sure that children had safe places to go through after-school programs. You know, those were either strictly fully pulpit efforts to educate people, particularly around childcare and early childhood development, or they were examples of the kind of public-private partnership which I think is an important development in the last six and a half years. We've really moved to a new plank. So that when we have conferences of gatherings about an issue now, we always try to

bring in the other two sectors, the business sector and the not-for-profit sector so that we have as broad a reach as we can possibly make. And that is more of a process point. Because oftentimes, it is not what we can do directly in so much as the work that we can put into motion that will affect people's lives.

Q: What about the venues for carrying the message on these issues that you care about after healthcare? Let's go back to the fall of 1994 and the healthcare reform does not pass on the Hill in the summer and then there's this Republican majority that comes into Congress. How did all of that affect you in terms of pointing you in a different direction, not necessarily in a different direction in terms of what you wanted to achieve, but a different direction in terms of the best venues, the best way of getting your message out and passing legislation?

A: Well, I think that anytime you are committed to achieving any goals, you have to constantly be evaluating your strategy and so for me it's been a real experience in educating myself about what works and how best to be effective and following the '94 election, I really did a lot of hard work to establish those relations with a lot of business partners and not-for-profit partners, NGO's on a whole range of issues. That was during a time that I spoke out on international issues in Copenhagen, the time I went to Beijing, the time I started working on my book because it became clear that much of what we had tried to do had been deliberately mischaracterized or misunderstood. And there was this false choice being set up between the government as the savior and the government as the demon and there was no sensible middle-ground. And that was not the way I saw the world working and how I saw people getting their needs met. So that's when I began working on the book which I wrote because for me it was important to put in one place what my philosophy was. I was tired of having people characterize what I had to say or what I stood for, and I saw that vividly during the healthcare debate when basically much of what we did had been distorted. So I decided that I'd write my own book, putting down my own views and I do believe that there is a necessary social responsibility that people in any society have to be willing to accept, particularly on behalf of children in order to create the conditions in which children can thrive and families can be successful in raising children. So that's how I responded in the immediate aftermath of what had gone on in that election.

Q: There was a popular misconception, because I sort of knew the reality because a lot of the things that you did post-94, the seeds were planted in '93 and '94, but it appeared in the press and there were a lot of people who didn't know the reality of the situation that Mrs. Clinton has taken a new technique, Mrs. Clinton has gone to continue to work on these issues, but in a more subtle or quieter way. Would you characterize that as entirely untrue that the message was still there but the technique was different?

A: I don't know how I would characterize that because you know I didn't feel like I was doing anything different than what I had always done. I did not have as high a profile in an institutional way as I had with healthcare. So I think it would be understandable for people to say, "Well, there's something different." But in terms of how I spend my days, and what I did, I thought that it was pretty much the continuation of what I'd done through 20 or 30 years, working on the same kinds of issues, trying to raise them, trying to be strategic, trying to figure out how to be effective in promoting them, looking for allies. So I didn't feel that I was doing

anything different, but I think the fact that there wasn't this high profile role that I'd been assigned could certainly have led some people to reach that conclusion.

Q: Do you think that ultimately not having that title and that role ended up being more effective in terms of the legislative successes that have?

A: Well, no, because I think that healthcare, if you go back to FDR and certainly to Truman, healthcare is just a very difficult and contentious issue. It's not like any other issue. It is our country is just not yet resolved how it's gonna deal with the healthcare needs of the population, the aging population, the under-served and uninsured population. So I think that particular issue is extraordinarily difficult to address. And I'm not sure you can draw many parallels from it because of that. Everyone who has attempted to deal with it has at best been able to make incremental progress since medicare and medicaid were passed in the aftermath of President Kennedy's assassination and with very impressive win in 1964 by President Johnson and there were a lot of factors that enabled those important developments to occur. So I think that healthcare is just something that it very difficult to draw too many lessons from that apply to other issues. I think that what you can draw from it is that clearly the only way to make progress, which is what we did after healthcare reform wasn't successful is to be incremental and is to try to put together the coalitions necessary to pass the Children's Health Insurance Program or the Kennedy- Cassabaum(?) Legislation. To make progress in a more incremental way is apparently all that is possible in this kind of environment.

Q: But when, for example, you think about the successful adoption legislation that was passed, unlike healthcare, obviously, you did not testify. You worked sometimes it was almost mundane in terms of the press perception of the mind-numbing realities of getting policy worked out and passed. And maybe the press didn't always have the I don't want to say, intelligence, but they didn't always have the patience or the experience to follow that process.

A: Well, that is always the prerogative of the press, to follow what they think is newsworthy and adoption and foster-care have never commanded the kind of attention that something like healthcare has because it only affects a relatively small number of Americans. It's unfortunate that we have half a million children in foster-care but that's a small number compared to the millions of people who would have been affected by something like healthcare changes. So it's not an issue that is going to have that much newsworthiness in the minds of a lot of the press, but that doesn't in any way take away from its importance or its significance to what kind of country we are and how we take care of children. So for me, they were both very important issues and I was happy to work on both of them. But also in the '95-'96 period, was the period of the most attacks on us from the Congress, so it was not likely I was going to testify on anything at that time. The Congress was firmly in the grip of the Gingrich era and they had different priorities about what was important in the country and how to spend tax-payers money that were not our priority. So we were content to let them pursue their particular agenda while we kept trying to do what we thought would actually further the interest of the vast majority of Americans.

Q: And yet, it's interesting though. When I think back to the time when Eleanor Roosevelt took the job with the Office of Civilian Defense and underwent so much criticism and in fact, she had actually testified earlier in the '30's and that was the first time and that wasn't even criticized,

but the fact that she had taken that post as she said, "I think it's wise for the spouse of a government official never to take a government job" after that. Yet, it does seem that and you seem to suggest that, and not having had that official title that in a sense being able to be more flexible in terms of public, being less able to be drawn in such harsh terms as the "Head of This," or the "Head of That" that flexibility perhaps, has it afforded you sort of more space and ability to?

A: Well, I think it probably has, but I also think that if I'd been the head of something that wasn't controversial, it wouldn't have been a problem. I mean if I would have been testifying on something that was not fraught with all kinds of concerns that I think in this day and time would not be considered that significant. But taking a job, as Mrs. Roosevelt did, or heading up an effort that was really on the front burner of national political concern, it puts you right in the bull's eye of whatever controversy is going to come along. You know, looking back on it, I think both experiences, being on the frontlines with healthcare and then being in a more flexible role on a number of other issues were both very helpful experiences. I learned a lot about the political process and how best to work in it and how best to influence it from both experiences. You know, from just a purely personal perspective, both of those experiences were incredibly helpful to me because they certainly broadened my awareness of a lot of the political processes that are at work in the Congress, in the agencies, in the intersection between the permanent establishment in Washington and the government. So I learned a lot, and so looking at it from this perspective, I feel that I was in an odd way kind of fortunate to have both experiences because if I want to remain in public life and have an influence on issues, I think I'm very well experienced and better able now to do that than many people without that opportunity.

Q: Now I'm going to ask you the famous question. Okay, the famous question. This is the question that everybody wants to know about any First Lady and I think just about every single one of them has successfully avoided it. But, describe the process of how marriage to the President of the United States and the clear and obvious experience, interest, and desire to initiate change, whether through policy or other efforts, that fine line. Basically, I guess I could say, how much influence do you have on the President ultimately? But that simplifying it. Obviously I've talked to Melanne and I've talked to other s and they've told me about the very, upright, straightforward process that's involved between you and the staff in preparing the statistics and information and looking at alternatives and then making a case. As anyone else in policy-development would, and sometimes that goes forward and sometimes it doesn't, and just because you happen to be the President's wife, doesn't necessarily say somehow goes. But in terms of a peer, or in terms of dinner, or getting on the helicopter, or reading the paper, or reading your correspondence, how do the two of you work on influencing each other in terms of public policy?

A: Well, we've been doing this for so many years that it's almost hard to describe because it's almost part of the fabric of our relationship. We talk about everything and have for as long as we've known each other because we're both very interested in trying to see what we can do to make a difference and particularly on issues that we share a common commitment to, we talk a lot. So it's very hard to dissect that. And with Bill, he is someone who solicits opinions and advice from a broad range of people and I'm one of those people, but depending upon the issue, I could be one of two, or one of a hundred, and it just is the way he makes decisions. So I think

that you would have to say that he and I are very much on the same wavelength on issues and on personnel and on matters that are of concern to the presidency. But that he makes the ultimate decisions, and that is how it should be. So I can't really dissect it much more than that.

Q: Are there times when you'll say, "You know, this is really, really, I think this a really important issue I'm hearing a lot about it and I'd really wish you'd..."

A: Oh, absolutely, but all you can do is say, "This is a really important issue. I'm hearing a lot about it. Here's what I think about it, and I wish you would take that into consideration." And yet, my perspective on that may not be as informed as someone else's. Any good decision maker has to be opened to a variety of opinions and information from any different sources, and I think one of Bill's strengths and one of the things that I've tried to learn from him is to be constantly seeking out information because it's so easy to get isolated here. And I would not want a President who listened only to one person. I would not want a President who, whether it was a family member, or a staff member, or an outside advisor who always did what that one person had to tell him. I think that would be a very dangerous situation for the country. So I'm very much in favor of the way he gathers information to make decisions. And I think I've certainly played a role in that, but you know, at the end of the day, he's the one who has to make the decision, explain the decision, live with the decision, and I think that's the way it should be.

Q: But is there ever a situation where if maybe he didn't, if you sort of planted the seeds and maybe other things were on his mind and he didn't pick up on it, would you bring it up again, or sort of one ...

A: Oh sure, if I thought it were important, but a lot of times I've mentioned it once and that's it. If I think it's really important, or if I get new information, if I talk to somebody else who gives me some feedback then I would pass that on.

Q: Are there, do the two of you, you know, because I think of the Roosevelts too and how Mrs. Roosevelt, during the New Deal years, was really super as the Eisen years so simplifies what she really did, but back then, during the war years, when she would come to him with things that it was more of a characterized (?) by even her daughter as even more of a negative in that he never seemed to be able to get away. Do the two of you ever place those kinds of limits? Do you ever say, "This is family time and we're not going to..."

A: Oh, all the time. You have to. It would be inhuman to be that serious and that intense all the time. You'd go out of your mind, especially under the glare and pressure that this job places on people. And so we have a lot of times where it's just nothing serious at all and you couldn't... (unfinished thought). It just don't think it'd be fair, it wouldn't be fair to the person who bares the responsibility of making the decision to only have that kind of conversation. And you know, one of the great ways that Bill relaxes is by playing cards and by playing board games and those are times when you can't think of much else.

Q: How about yourself?

A: Oh, I play with him a lot of the time. I can't stay up as late as he does, so thankfully often other people, like my dear brother who is a night owl... (unfinished) But you know, we do a lot of that and watch a lot of movies. You can't talk about policy in movies. You watch the movie then you talk about the movie. But we really do try to have private, personal time. And I also don't write memos to my husband the way Mrs. Roosevelt did and leave them in the basket by his bed. You know, first of all, it takes too much time and I don't put anything in writing if I don't have to, so it just is something in passing that I would say to him.

Q: What about you know there's been a lot of press people, it's been a lot of speculation, that people have been saying, "Oh, Mrs. Clinton didn't really agree with her husband on welfare reform, or maybe there's a bit of a difference or conflict with her stated views recently on Mideast policy and administration point of view. What have been, over the years, those policy issues that perhaps you didn't agree with initially, that you had different points of view on that you were able to show him with evidence that your point of view was the right or more accurate point of view?"

A: Well, you know, I just wouldn't talk about those. I'll take welfare as an example. I supported welfare reform, but I was very concerned about the specifics, so there were many conversations back and forth with my staff and the President's staff, with me and the President, me and the President's staff, with all kinds of combinations of people. And I was pleased that he vetoed two of the Republican bills that I thought deserved to be vetoed. And I supported the bills that he signed, especially with the conditions that he put on about trying to reinstate some of the benefits that had been, in his view and mine, eliminated. So, that's an example where I supported the direction of the policy. I had questions about specifics. I supported the decisions that were made about vetoes. I supported including some of the things that the Congress didn't want and making that a condition of the President's approval. And I supported his signing it with the conditions that he put on at the time that he signed it. So, it's a work in process that it's something that you just keep going back on, and you keep raising with people and sometimes you're successful and sometimes you're not.

Q: And you would not want to discuss those things. I think that's again right there in the tradition of First Ladies. Don't ever tell. It's all mysterious. The reporting, the coverage of your years as First Lady, Melanne and I have talked about this. I've been frankly astounded that nobody has ever sought to really write an article that examines and looks at where you have had a tangible effect. Now people can argue that this was a good thing or that wasn't a good thing based on their political philosophy or point of view. But I'm just talking about just taking a whole look and it's astounding what Melanne and her staff have assembled in terms of organizing things as well as the recent web pages that I've been looking at closely. It's overwhelming. It's astounding what you've done. Yet, the press has not, and thereby the public, except for those who have worked directly with you or have benefited don't have this perception generally. Why do you think that is? What is it about the role of First Lady or the kinds of feelings that your work as First Lady may have engendered? Why do you think that coverage has not been full?

A: Carl, I don't know. I think you'd have to ask the people who cover the White House. You know, some of it might be that there hasn't been one theme, so it would take a certain amount of

effort and resources to follow what I've done and that's just never been a part of the political reporting. I think that some of it may be just categories, you know, there still has been a struggle to come to grip with what this role is at the end of the century and what I mean in this role, so I think that people are still confused about where they would cover what I do, how that sort of fits the preconceptions or the stereotypes. And some of it is we haven't publicized it in a continuous way because we've done so many things that if we work on behalf of a certain change in the support, for example, of children's hospitals. You know, we do an event and we invite the press, but it may not be the most important or exciting thing going on that day in the press's view, so they don't cover and it just gets lost in the next thing we do which may be two days later we do something else. I think that it's been difficult to follow what I have been doing because there has been so much of it. It has been so varied. It has occurred in many different venues. Many people have been involved and there hasn't been any one person or one branch of the media that has taken that on as an assignment.

Q: In terms of the press, some of the press that you have gotten, obviously the last few years there have been big and momentous and difficult situations; the impeachment trial, the endless Whitewater hearings, I have my ideas about how it is that you are able to get up every day and go at it and fight for adoption policy changes or make a trip to a God-forsaken village in a small town in Central Europe, or to just a place that has really been forgotten, off the beaten track, I should say, and how do you do that? You know, here you are you go through all the trouble. You staff, they plan a trip with the State Department. They go over to Cosistan(?). You find a project and a group of women, who with a small loan could really make an enormous change in their village and you know Ken Starr is doing this or that and this is in the paper, that's in the paper. How do you do it?

A: Well, I never lost track of what I thought was important. And to me, this was an opportunity that would come once in a lifetime to be part of this incredible experience and to use whatever energy that I could muster on behalf of helping other people. And I knew that so much of the rest of this stuff was a sideshow and unpleasant and very difficult sideshow from time to time with constant investigations, but at the end of the day, that just wasn't going to stand the test of time in my view, so I felt that I had an opportunity and I had an obligation and I really enjoyed what I did everyday. I like trying to help people. I like trying to write the balance between the vulnerable and the rest of the world and then to give people a feeling of hopefulness and some reason to believe that their lives could be better. I really think that's part of what we're supposed to do here on this earth. So, it wasn't even a difficult challenge for me. It was part of what I believe, part of who I was just fortunate enough to have the chance to do it from this rather incredible position. You know, people ask me all the time, "What has it been like for you here?" And they are looking at the headlines, you know, they are looking at the story of the week or the month and certainly there have been some painful times and challenging times, but when I look back, what I remember and what I enjoy is all of the incredible opportunities that I have been given by being here. And I feel really blessed about that.

Q: It's interesting when you talk about sort of your mission or how what you do as a person is important to you. I mean looking, clearly the time you went to Chicago and talking to Don Jones and looking at your early years, this has always been a theme of your life. I was looking at all of the different things that you've done and back in '92 a lot of people were saying, "Mrs. Clinton,

you've done all of these things professionally, Children's Defense Fund and Yale Child Studies Center, you've worked as the First Lady of Arkansas, you are considered one of the top most brilliant attorneys in the country, even (that run for political office?), and you said at the time that, "Well, I think a lot of people can contribute to the political process without being elected, without being in elective politics." How has that changed now as you are looking at the work you've done as First Lady for the nation and the world? And that the world has, in a sense, been a part of your constituency. And then looking at New York and a constituency that clearly you would (build if you have to be the first line of response to ...?) How have you made that change of deciding that elective politics was something you could be involved in?

A: Well, it came slowly as people began talking to me about what I could do in the Senate for New York and for the country, and I began thinking hard about it and decided that I've seen, in the last few years, how important it is what goes on in the Senate. The country is really going through a significant transition and there are lots of forces at work. We're really setting the framework for what kind of country we're going to have for the next century. And if you look at what has happened in just the last six and one half years as the President and Vice President and everyone that works to sort of put the country on a different footing. Time and again, the decisions that I believed were important to our future were made by one vote or a handful of votes in the Senate. I mean we would not have had the economic recovery that we've enjoyed if we had not had Al Gore's tie-breaking vote in the Senate for the deficit-reduction plan. We would not have had the crime-controlling measures that the President fought so hard if there had not been just a handful of Senators willing to stand against the NRA and put tougher gun laws into effect and the Brady Bill and a hundred-thousand more police on the street. Just in the last couple of weeks, our fight to have more sensible gun control legislation wouldn't have been successful without just a handful of Senators. In fact, once again Al Gore broke the vote, the tie by his vote. So, for the first time in many, many years, what happens in the Congress is critical to what happens to the future of the country. (tape ends)

(cont.)

Since I care deeply about what happens in the future and think that these decisions will have a direct impact on how people live in New York, how they raise their children, how they send them to school, what kind of jobs and economic opportunities they have, whether they can afford healthcare. I've decided that I should be part of that debate. And if I'm fortunate enough to persuade the people of New York that I should be their representative, then I would be in the thick of things, helping to make the decisions that I think would be in the best interest of New York and in the country.

Q: What about Illinois? Now there have been some, a lot, of discussion about Illinois. What is it, 2004, a lot of people have thought that after being in this pressure-cooker of the White House that if you take a little break, take a little breather to either write memoirs, work on the library, to decompress and then maybe then go back to your home state. What ultimately made you thinking about not, that that was not a possibility?

A: I had intended to live in New York most of the last couple of years as I've thought about decisions after the White House. That's what I thought would be my future residence and so my

mind had already moved to that long before anybody had talked to me about running for office in New York. I just imagined that I would be living there and working there and involved in the life of New York. It just seemed almost serendipitous that what I'd intended to do coincided with what people were urging me to do. So it seemed a natural step for me.

Q: You also mentioned Al Gore a couple of times and you worked closely with the Vice President and of course there's other speculation which is that if Vice president Gore is nominated for the Presidency from the Democratic Party that would Mrs. Clinton ever accept the offer of being the vice-presidential candidate.

A: I'm not even going to comment on that. I will say this. I believe Al Gore will not only be nominated, I believe he will be elected because once the presidential campaign is actually joined and people have to make a decision between the candidates, Al Gore's experience and his positions, and his enormous imagination in terms of what we need as a nation in order to prepare ourselves for the future will be very persuasive to people and he will be elected.

Q: But so, if you were to be working with his formally, officially, it would be as potentially as a member of the United States Senate?

A: That's right.

Q: What about, this was sort of touched on just a little bit in the beginning, how it's a new hat for you. How it's a new kind of position to be in. How about in terms of it being you are the potential candidate and the President is the potential candidate's spouse? How does he feel about that? I know there's some mention to that you've also talked to ... this week, Chelsea before reaching a final decision and how will this, obviously it's going to change the dynamics of your family life, how will that shift in sort of the balance of political power... (unfinished thought)

A: Well you know, Bill has been incredibly supportive and incredibly helpful. He's now giving me advice. So I'm taking it under advisement. We're having a great time talking about all of the various aspects of running for office and it is something that he seems to be more than ready to, not only support, but embrace because he also has a very active plan for what he'll do after he's no longer President. That includes a library, it includes writing, and he thinks it'll be exciting if I choose this and I'm fortunate enough to be elected. I'll be back to work after having been a volunteer and it'll be fun. To us, it's not that different from anything we've done in our lives in the last x-number of years.

Q: But it's interesting too because I guess before, well obviously when you married, neither of you were in politics in the sense that he hadn't been elected yet and there was, of course, a lot of people thought you at that time, even after you graduated from law school, people said, "She would be great in politics and so now is there any kind of sense that, "It's my turn. Now it's me that's going on."?

A: No, I just don't feel that way. I mean it's... I don't know how to describe it other than it's something that you know, kind of came to me out of the blue. It's not anything that I ever really

thought I'd do. I just didn't. And this has been something that I've thought hard about and looked at and it just seems to make sense. But it's not anything I planned. It's not anything I thought actively about.

Q: What had you thought about as a possibility?

A: Well, I thought about you know, people have talked to me about all different kinds of things. You know, certainly doing some writing, not only memoirs, but other books, speaking, starting a foundation to follow through on a lot of the work that I had done. So there were ideas percolating out there, all of which were interesting to me. But after considering all of it, I felt that now may be the time for me to consider this other alternative and there was good reason to do it because of the political situation and the stakes of this next election for people.

Q: The possibility, I know still that it's officially still an exploratory committee and I know that at some point there's speculation that at some point, perhaps in the autumn that it will officially become a campaign. What could you potentially foresee that might make you not go further with it beyond the exploratory committee?

A: I think that the exploratory phase of any political campaign is just what it says. I'm really interested in hearing from New Yorkers about what's on their minds. I think it would be very presumptuous of me to skip the process of really immersing myself in how New Yorkers are thinking about the economy, or healthcare, or education, because although I have a lot of experience and a great deal of information about these matters, acquired over thirty years of work. There are always variations in places within any state. Just within the last couple of weeks being in upstate New York, I've been fortunate enough to learn some very interesting ideas from people about what could be done to help that region of New York. And in a private meeting with a group of citizens in Westchester County, outside New York City, I was very pleased to learn about some of the local grassroots efforts that were going on that you couldn't know about unless you traveled the state and you listened and you learned from people. So, I just want to take my time doing that.

Q: In doing that also, in taking the time to do that, considering how productive you've been as First Lady and the kind of schedule that you've kept, how does the role of First Lady get affected? The question I'm always asked as a historian is essentially how she works it out personally. So I throw the question to you. How can you be the kind of First Lady you've been and the level of involvement and also be a candidate?

A: Well, I have a lot of energy and I have always worked hard to keep the priorities that I've set for myself and I intend to do that with the obligations of being First Lady. But realistically, 2000 is an election year and most people in a position like this, or even in the Congress or in the White House find that they can't get as much done for the country or further their agenda until the election is over. So I see the fulfilling of my obligations all the way into 2000 as being something that I will certainly be committed to doing. But I also know realistically, after having been now through several election cycles and one Presidential cycle since we've been in the White House, is that once you get into that election year, you spend most of your time on political matters and campaigning. Whether it's campaigning on behalf of someone else, or my

husband, or in the event I go forward on my own, you are furthering the work that you had done in the White House. I mean when I go out to speak, as a potential candidate, about the economy, or healthcare, or education, I'm going to be promoting ideas that I have worked on and that I would like to see be continued. And if I am not successful in promoting those ideas as First Lady, I would like to make sure that they are promoted in the political process after the White House. So it's a constant interweaving of the two roles. And of course, most people who run for public office have another job. You know, someone who's in the Congress who runs for the Senate has to continue to be a member of Congress. Someone who is a governor who runs for President has to continue to be a governor. So that for me, I see it in a similar light.

Q: I just have one final question and that is I guess how, and this is something I alluded to in the memo I wrote you a couple of months back, I think about you and your life here, the schedule you keep, granted your daughter is getting older now, she is in college away from home, but I hear, and I know you as a person, and then I hear the stuff that is said and I read it and this is my quote. "The garbage and the baloney, and the attacks that I see, and you know, Guiliani goes down to Arkansas, or the New York Post says this, or something... how do you do it and how is it that you're willing to undertake and endure all of that in making this blaze for the Senate? There are so many things in the road. There are so many roadblocks and people willing to be roadblocks.

A: And they would not be there if they did not believe that what I believe and what I represent were not antithetical to what they believe and what they represent. And if I subject myself to the political process, I'm willing to stand up for what I believe in and what I want to represent. And what I think most people, and certainly I believe most voters in New York, are more interested in what their Senator can do for them, not in the political back and forth and give and take of the drama that plays out in much of the political commentary and political campaigning these days. And so for me I see a lot of that as just diversionary and I think it is intended to either drown out or divert attention from what I would do for the economy, or what I would do for education, or how I would try to continue to help people with healthcare. And those who would try to drown that out don't agree with me, and that's what elections are for. I would just trust the people to make what they thought was the best decision for them.