Hillary Takes Some Hard Knocks

March 31, 1994 *by Phyllis Schlafly*

It's amusing to see how the liberal male newsmen and commentators have suddenly shed their inhibitions and started to criticize Hillary Rodham Clinton. Some say there has always been a taboo against criticizing First Ladies, but that didn't stop nasty attacks on Nancy Reagan.

Hillary Rodham Clinton should be fair game for political criticism because she voluntarily advertised herself as a career lawyer and as a policymaker in the White House. The former involves embarrassing ethical issues, and the latter involves intensely controversial issues on which any public official should be subject to close scrutiny, thorough investigation, and rough and tumble debate.

When Hillary Rodham Clinton made it clear that she wanted to be considered a fulltime White House official, the female reporters rallied round and elevated her to the status of new feminist icon. She was the symbol, we were told, of the changing of the guard from the now-obsolete model of First Lady Barbara Bush to the new model of Presidential Partner, with her own separate identity and White House staff.

Of course, Hillary doesn't really have an independent career as, for example, Elizabeth Dole has. Mrs. Dole built her own career herself, but Hillary's career and income were built on bringing law business to a firm because her husband was Governor of Arkansas who had appointed judges and regulators who could rule on her cases.

When a feminist finds the going gets tough, the tough feminist beats a hasty retreat to the pose of victim and, in Hillary's case, to the protective mantle of First Lady. She trots out the President to pound the podium and play the role of indignant husband defending his wife.

The Clintons got by with that ruse when he pulled it on Jerry Brown during a 1992 campaign debate, but it's too late to pull that trick again. Macho females as victims are entertaining (e.g., Thelma and Louise), but they don't excite much sympathy in real life, especially if they are lawyers.

At the same time, Hillary has gotten by with actions no man could get by with, such as keeping the proceedings of her 500-person Health Care Task Force secret, and refusing, despite a court order, to release the records.

Hillary Rodham Clinton's diehard defenders have conjured up two conspiracies to defend her.

Conspiracy No. 1 is that the men who criticize her are misogynists or troglodytes or sexists from a bygone era who feel threatened by a "strong" woman. Take your pick of epithets; male chauvinist pigs will do just as well.

That's a childish argument. Nobody ever called Barbara Bush a "weak" woman, and she enjoyed universal admiration. Newsmen should not have to chant "I am not a sexist" before they address the Hillary factor.

Conspiracy No. 2 is an alleged plot of Republicans to destroy the Clinton Presidency for obvious partisan purposes. However, it's not credible that the Republicans could invent or coordinate a conspiracy of James and Susan McDougal, Webster Hubbell, Bernard Nussbaum, and Vince Foster.

Hubbell, the man Clinton once said he most enjoys being with, is being accused by Hillary's former law partners of cheating the firm out of up to $1 million. James and Susan McDougal (now divorced), who were the Clintons' Whitewater partners, accuse Clinton of refusing to give them Whitewater documents they say they need to file their 1993 income tax returns.

Another argument advanced in support of the Clintons is that they and their crowd come from (presumably backward) Arkansas, are "befuddled" by Washington, and shouldn't be held to the same standards of ethics and efficiency as the sophisticated Inside the Beltway elite. Tut, tut: Arkansas is one of the 50 states and has plenty of telephones, computers, faxes, and slick lawyers.

It's time for Hillary Rodham Clinton to take her lumps like a man and answer a great many questions, of which the following are only starters:

1. Did the Rose law firm double-bill the Federal Government for the same work in connection with the Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan, and was it a conflict of interest to take the job anyway?

2. Why did you and Bill Clinton not take an income tax deduction for the $68,000 you said you lost on Whitewater, but did take a $6 deduction for the donation of Bill's used underwear?

3. When are you going to release the records of your Health Care Task Force and let us see the conflicts of interest of those who had financial interests in managed care companies?

4. Explain your apparent conflict of interest in your selling drug stocks short shortly before you publicly excoriated the drug companies, which enabled you to profit from their falling stock prices.

5. What do you know about the mysterious deaths of Vince Foster and several 1992 Clinton campaign security officials, one of whom was the victim of an execution-style murder in Little Rock last September?