

Hillary Clinton's Achilles Heel

By: G. A. Beller, Political Junkie and Author of

NOT BLACK AND WHITE: From the Very Windy City to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue

Prior to the 2008 Iowa caucus, I recall Diane Sawyer interviewing Hillary Clinton regarding the “inevitability” of her lock as the Democratic nominee for the upcoming election. Sawyer mentioned the overwhelming presumption of her winning the primary and then asked Secretary Clinton, who was a Senator at the time, what would happen if she were not the nominee. I remember it as if it were yesterday, Secretary Clinton responded that this was not possible.

Sawyer followed up by questioning the Senator's self-assured response. I clearly remember the arrogant tone and the condescending smirk on Clinton's face when she reiterated to Diane *that* outcome was not a possibility, and dismissed her from further discussion on the subject.

Sawyer continued the interview, which led to a question which has resonated in my mind to this day as the ultimate smoking gun. She asked the Senator about disclosure regarding the donors to The Clinton Foundation. Clinton responded that she would not be disclosing the Foundation's donors. Sawyer, being the consummate interviewer, challenged her. She stated that under the campaign finance laws, it is required that candidates disclose any and all financial matters of the candidate and their immediate family. Therefore, by law, the Clinton Foundation donors must be disclosed. I recall Clinton dismissing it entirely, responding that [disclosure] simply was not going to happen.

At the time of that interview, I couldn't help but feel appalled and outraged that any candidate could justify, on national television, statements that would certainly offend anyone who understands Secretary Clinton's implication. Through the years, this type of attitude has been labeled “The Clinton Way.” It started with Bill and Hillary in the early 1990s and continues to this day.

My takeaway from the Diane Sawyer interview was that Secretary Clinton intended to hide behind the fact that The Clinton Foundation was founded by her husband as a charitable organization, and that she would be able to successfully sidestep the disclosure issue by disavowing her involvement with the foundation. She would take offense toward anyone who dared question the good intentions of her husband's charitable foundation.

I concluded that “The Clinton Way” might just allow the issue of full disclosure of the donors to slip through the cracks. Obviously, Clinton was not nominated as the Democratic candidate in 2008, and the issue of disclosing the foundation's donors seemed to become a moot point.

In an August 14, 2013 article in the Global Edition of The New York Times, the following caption appeared under a photo of the now former Secretary of State:

“Hillary Rodham Clinton addressing the American Bar Association in San Francisco. The Clinton Foundation, long her husband's domain, is becoming the center of her busy public life.”

The article, which dominated the page, went on to state, “Amid speculation about her 2016 plans, Hillary Clinton is adding major new initiatives on women, children and jobs to what has been renamed the Bill, Hillary & Chelsea Clinton Foundation.”

It further reported, “. . . the three Clintons are embarking on a drive to raise an endowment of as much as \$250 million, with events already scheduled . . .”

When I read this article, I was reminded of the Diane Sawyer interview regarding foundation donor disclosure and concluded that Secretary Clinton would not be a candidate for president in 2016. After all, she could no longer denounce the donor disclosure issue by using the defense that the Foundation was her husband's.

Let's recall that she told Diane Sawyer, and the nation, that the donor disclosure was not going to happen. I concluded then, and strongly determine now, that the adamant resistance to disclosure only raises the likelihood that those donors create legal questions which might expose the Clintons to indictments or, at the very least, an impartial investigation that “The Clinton Way” could not control.

Obviously, I was wrong when I concluded Secretary Clinton's name being added to the Clinton Foundation would clearly indicate she would not be a candidate for president. I overestimated her judgement, assuming she would take a pragmatic approach to a high profile issue and her ability to control the narrative. I strongly believe adding her name to the Clinton Foundation was a terrible error in judgment and it will most certainly come back to haunt her and her electability.

Though she ultimately took her name off the Foundation when she announced her 2016 candidacy, the damage was done. “The Clinton Way” would need to turn into “The Clinton Law” for Hillary to survive a full-scale independent investigation.

This brings me to a question which I think deserves serious consideration by the Republican strategists.

Let's face the facts: the Republican PACS attract significant amounts of funding. Assuming Mrs. Clinton is the Democratic nominee, the PACS will spend whatever is necessary in the general election to make certain Secretary Clinton is tarnished beyond electability. In my view, the Clinton Foundation legal issues will contribute dramatically to her undoing.

Much has been written, and will continue to be written, about the abuse of this organization, which Secretary Clinton can no longer disavow. Unless “The Clinton Law” can prevail and withstand the legal scrutiny of The Clinton Foundation, once called The Bill, Hillary & Chelsea Clinton Foundation, the Republicans should embrace and welcome the opportunity to have Hillary Clinton as their opponent.

In 2008, before the Iowa caucus, a little known one-term US Senator rose to national prominence arguably due to the fact Hillary Clinton was his opposition. I would suggest he won primarily because he was running against a severely disliked, arrogant and delusional opponent who underestimated the intelligence of the average voter.

It's all in one's presentation.

Bill Clinton can say something that you know is a lie, and somehow you might reconsider what he just said. You might even believe him. The former President has a gift. That gift is his presentation style.

His wife, on the other hand, possesses none of Bill's charisma. When Hillary Clinton blatantly lies, or even just stretches the truth, she sends out a signal. That signal resembles bright red flashing warning lights. She lacks her husband's skill, and that is her Achilles heel. No one doubts her intelligence, but being smart is not enough.

Being believable, creditable and most of all likeable is something you just can't teach. You either have it or you don't.

In a recent poll, 32% said they believe Hillary Clinton is trustworthy. That means 68% of the respondents said she was untrustworthy. Yes, she will receive votes from the Democratic base and from women who believe it's time for a female president. However, a candidate must win the independent and moderate voter, and having Hillary Clinton as your opponent offers the Republican candidate for president a distinct course for victory. It is the Republican's election to lose.

Full disclosure: I am the author of a recently released novel about the rise of the first African-American to become President of the United States. The novel is entitled, "Not Black And White: From The Very Windy City to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue." My story is fiction, loosely based on fact. The character in my book who is elected president was able to do so based upon the good fortune that his opponents were seriously flawed.

I would argue that winning the vote of the undecided voter comes down to who the voter dislikes the least. Running against a candidate who is dishonest, deceitful, and who believes the rules do not apply to her, offers the Republicans a distinct advantage in the November election.

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