
Subject: Clinton goes apeshit.

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..and the results are awesome!

<http://thinkprogress.org/clinton-interview>

Quote:

WALLACE: In a recent issue of the New Yorker you say you're sixty years old and you're worried about how many lives you can save...Is that what drives you in your effort to help?

CLINTON: Yes. That sounds sort of morbid. The tone in which I said was almost whimsical and humorous. This is what I love to do it's what I think I should do. I've had a wonderful. I got to be president. I've lived the life of my dreams. I dodged a bullet with that health thing. I think I owe it to my fellow countrymen and people around the world to help save lives and help people see the future. But as it happens I love it. I feel it's a great gift. I feel it's a rewarding way to spend my life.

WALLACE: Someone asked you ...he asked you if you could do more good as a former president than as a president and you said only if I live a long time.

CLINTON: Yea that's true.

WALLACE: how do you compare the powers of being in office and what you can do out of office?

CLINTON: When you're president you can operate on broader scope. You can simultaneously work to stop the genocide in Kosovo, bring peace to the middle east, pass a budget that gives millions of kids a chance to have after school programs... So in other words you've got a lot of different moving parts and you can move them all at once.

But you're also more at the mercy of events. That is 43 did not run for President to deal with the events of 9/11 but once it happened it wasn't as if he had an option. Once I looked at the economic data after I won the election, I realized I would have to work harder to reduce the deficit and therefore have less money in my first year to invest in things I wanted to invest in.

WALLACE: So what is it that you can do as a former president.

CLINTON: So what you can do as a former president, you don't have as wide a range of powers so you have to concentrate on fewer things. But you are less at the mercy of ...events. If I say look we're going to work on economic empowerment of poor people, on fighting aids and other diseases, on trying to bridge the religious and political differences between people and on trying to avoid the worst calamities of climate change and try to revitalize the economy in the process, I can actually do that. Because tomorrow when I get up and there's a bad headline in the papers, it's President Bush's responsibility and not mine. That's the joy of being a former potus. And it is true that if you live long enough and have discipline in the way you do it — like this CGI — you might be able to effect as many lives as you did when president.

WALLACE: When we announced that you were going to be on fox news Sunday, I got a lot of email from viewers, and I got to say I was surprised most of them wanted me to ask you this question. Why didn't you do more to put Bin Laden and al Qaeda out of business when you were President. There's a new book out which I suspect you've read called the Looming Tower. And it talks about how the fact that when you pulled troops out of Somalia in 1993, Bin Laden said I have seen the frailty and the weakness and the cowardice of US troops. Then there was the bombing of the embassies in Africa and the attack on the USS Cole.

CLINTON: OK..

WALLACE: ...may I just finish the question sir. And after the attack, the book says, Bin Laden separated his leaders because he expected an attack and there was no response. I understand that hindsight is 20 20.

CLINTON: No let's talk about...

WALLACE: ...but the question is why didn't you do more, connect the dots and put them out of business?

CLINTON: OK, let's talk about it. I will answer all of those things on the merits but I want to talk about the context of which this...arises. I'm being asked this on the FOX network...ABC just had a right wing conservative on the Path to 9/11 falsely claim that it was based on the 911 commission report with three things asserted against me that are directly contradicted by the 9/11 commission report. I think it's very interesting that all the conservative Republicans who now say that I didn't do enough, claimed that I was obsessed with Bin Laden. All of President Bush's neocons claimed that I was too obsessed with finding Bin Laden when they didn't have a single meeting about Bin Laden for the nine months after I left office. All the right wingers who now say that I didn't do enough said that I did too much. Same people.

They were all trying to get me to withdraw from Somalia in 1993 the next day after we were involved in black hawk down and I refused to do it and stayed 6 months and had an orderly transfer to the UN.

Ok, now let's look at all the criticisms: Black hawk down, Somalia. There is not a living soul in the world who thought that Bin laden had anything to do with black hawk down or was paying any attention to it or even knew al Qaeda was a growing concern in October of 1993.

WALLACE: ...I understand...

CLINTON: No wait...no wait...Don't tell me. You asked me why I didn't do more to Bin Laden. There was not a living soul...all the people who criticized me wanted to leave the next day. You brought this up so you get an answer.

WALLACE: I'm perfectly happy to. Bin Laden says...

CLINTON: And secondly...

WALLACE: Bin Laden says...

CLINTON: Bin Laden may have said that...

WALLACE: Bin Laden says it showed the weakness of the US...

CLINTON: It would have shown the weakness if we left right away but he wasn't involved in that. That's just a bunch of bull. That was about Mohammed Adid, a Muslim war lord murdering..thousands of Pakistani Muslim troops. We were all there on a humanitarian mission. We had not one mission — none — to establish a certain kind of Somali government or to keep anybody out. He was not a religious fanatic.

WALLACE: But Mr. President...

CLINTON: There was no Al Qaeda...

WALLACE: ...with respect if I may. Instead of going through 93.

CLINTON: You asked you. It you brought it up.

WALLACE: May I ask a general question that you can answer. The 9/11 Commission, which you talk about, and this is what they did say, not what ABC pretended they said...

CLINTON: Wait, Wait...

WALLACE: ...they said about you and 43 and I quote, "The US government took the threat seriously, not in the sense of mustering anything like that would be....to confront an enemy of the first, second or third rank"

CLINTON: That's not true with us and Bin Laden...

WALLACE: ...the 9/11 commission says...

CLINTON: Let's look at what Richard Clarke says. You think Richard Clarke has a vigorous attitude about Bin Laden?

WALLACE: Yes I do

CLINTON: You do?

WALLACE: I think he has a variety of opinions and loyalties but yes.

CLINTON: He has a variety of opinion and loyalties now but let's look at the facts. He worked for Ronald Regan. He was loyal to him. He worked for George Herbert Walker Bush and he was loyal to him. He worked for me and he was loyal to me. He worked for President Bush; he was loyal to him. They downgraded him and the terrorist operation. Now, look what he said, read his book and read his factual assertions — not opinions, assertions. He said we took vigorous action after the African embassies. We probably nearly got Bin Laden.

WALLACE: ...

CLINTON: Now wait a minute...

WALLACE: ..cruise missiles..

CLINTON: I authorized the CIA to get groups together to try to kill him. The CIA was run by George Tenet who President Bush gave the medal of freedom to and said he did a good job.. The country never had a comprehensive anti terror operation until I came to office. If you can criticize me for one thing, you can criticize me for this, after the Cole I had battle plans drawn to go into Afghanistan, overthrow the Taliban, and launch a full scale attack search for Bin Laden. But we needed baseing rights in Uzbekistan which we got after 9/11. The CIA and the FBI refused to certify that Bin Laden was responsible while I was there. They refused to certify. So that meant I would have had to send a few hundred special forces in helicopters and refuel at night. Even the 9/11 Commission didn't do that. Now the 9/11 Commission was a political document too. All I'm asking is if anybody wants to say I didn't do enough, you read Richard Clarke's book.

WALLACE: Do you think you did enough sir?

CLINTON: No, because I didn't get him

WALLACE: Right...

CLINTON: But at least I tried. That's the difference in me and some, including all the right wingers who are attacking me now. They ridiculed me for trying. They had eight months to try and they didn't..... I tired. So I tried and failed. When I failed I left a comprehensive anti-terror strategy and the best guy in the country, Dick Clarke... So you did FOX's bidding on this show. You did you nice little conservative hit job on me. But what I want to know..

WALLACE: Now wait a minute sir...

CLINTON:..

WALLACE: I asked a question. You don't think that's a legitimate question?

CLINTON: It was a perfectly legitimate question but I want to know how many people in the Bush administration you asked this question of. I want to know how many people in the Bush administration you asked why didn't you do anything about the Cole. I want to know how many you asked why did you fire Dick Clarke. I want to know...

WALLACE: We asked..

CLINTON:..

WALLACE: Do you ever watch Fox News Sunday sir?

CLINTON: I don't believe you ask them that.

WALLACE: We ask plenty of questions of...

CLINTON: You didn't ask that did you? Tell the truth

WALLACE: About the USS Cole?

CLINTON: tell the truth.

WALLACE: I...with Iraq and Afghanistan there's plenty of stuff to ask.

CLINTON: Did you ever ask that? You set this meeting up because you were going to get a lot of criticism from your viewers because Rupert Murdoch is going to get a lot of criticism from your viewers for supporting my work on Climate Change. And you came here under false pretenses and said that you'd spend half the time talking about...

WALLACE: [laughs]

CLINTON: You said you'd spend half the time talking about what we did out there to raise \$7 billion dollars plus over three days from 215 different commitments. And you don't care.

WALLACE: But President Clinton...

CLINTON:

WALLACE: We were going to ask half the question about it. I didn't think this was going to set you off on such a tear .

CLINTON: It set me off on such a tear because you didn't formulate it in an honest way and you people ask me questions you don't ask the other side.

WALLACE: Sir that is not true...

CLINTON: ...and Richard Clarke...

WALLACE: That is not true...

CLINTON: Richard Clarke made it clear in his testimony...

WALLACE: Would you like to talk about the Clinton Global Initiative?

CLINTON: No I want to finish this.

WALLACE: Alright

CLINTON: All I'm saying is you falsely accuse me of giving aid and comfort to Bin Laden because of what happened in Somalia. No one knew al Qaeda existed then...

WALLACE: Did they know in 1996 when he declared war on the US? Did no one know in 1998...

CLINTON: Absolutely they did

WALLACE: When they bombed the two embassies...

CLINTON:...

WALLACE: Or in 2000 when they hit the Cole.

CLINTON: What did I do? I worked hard to try and kill him. I authorized a finding for the CIA to kill him. We contracted with people to kill him. I got closer to killing him than anybody has gotten since. And if I were still president we'd have more than 20,000 troops there trying to kill him. Now I never criticized President Bush and I don't think this is useful. But you know we do have a government that think Afghanistan is 1/7 as important as Iraq. And you ask me about terror and Al Qaeda with that sort of dismissive theme when all you have to do is read Richard Clarke's book to look at what we did in a comprehensive systematic way to try to protect the country against terror. And you've got that little smirk on your face. It looks like you're so clever...

WALLACE: [Laughs]

CLINTON: I had responsibility for trying to protect this country. I tried and I failed to get bin laden. I regret it but I did try. And I did everything I thought I responsibly could. The entire military was against sending special forces in to Afghanistan and refueling by helicopter and no one thought we could do it otherwise...We could not get the CIA and the FBI to certify that Al Qaeda was responsible while I was President. Until I left office. And yet I get asked about this all the time and they had three times as much time to get him as I did and no one ever asks them about this. I think that's strange.

WALLACE: Can I ask you about the Clinton Global Initiative?

CLINTON: You can.

WALLACE: I always intended to sir.

CLINTON: No you intended to move your bones by doing this first. But I don't mind people asking me. I actually talked o the 9/11 commission for four hours and I told them the mistakes I thought I made. And I urged them to make those mistakes public because I thought none of us had been perfect. But instead of anybody talking about those things. I always get these clever little political...where they ask me one sided questions... It always comes from one source. And so...

WALLACE:...

CLINTON: And so...

WALLACE: I just want to ask you about the Clinton Global Initiative but what's the source?

You seem upset?

CLINTON: I am upset because..

WALLACE: ...and all I can say is I'm asking you in good faith because it's on people's minds sir. And I wasn't...

CLINTON: There's a reason it's on people's minds. That's the point I'm trying to make. There's a reason it's on people's minds because they've done a serious disinformation campaign to create that impression. This country only has one person who has worked...against terror...under Regan...only one, Richard Clarke. And all I'd say anybody who wonders whether we did wrong or right. Anybody who wants to see what everybody else did, read his book. The people on my political right who say I didn't do enough spent the whole time I was president saying why is he so obsessed with Bin Laden. And that was wag the dog when he tried to kill him. My Republican sec of defense — and I think I'm the only person since World War II to have a Secretary of Defense from the opposite party — Richard Clarke, and all the intelligence people said that I ordered a vigorous attempt to get Osama Bin Laden and came closer apparently than anybody has since.

WALLACE: alright...

CLINTON: And you guys try to create the opposite impression when all you have to do is read Richard Clarke's findings and you know it's not true. It's just not true. And all this business about Somalia — the same people who criticized me about Somalia were demanding I leave the next day. Same exact crowd..

WALLACE: one of the...

CLINTON: ...So if you're going to do this for gods sake follow the same standards for everybody.

WALLACE: I think we do sir

CLINTON: ...be fair.

WALLACE: I think we do. One of the main parts of the global initiative this year is religious reconciliation. President Bush says that the fight against Islamic extremism is the central conflict of the century and his answer is promoting democracy and reform. Do you think he has that right?

CLINTON: Sure. To advocate democracy and reform in the Muslim world? Absolutely. I think the question is what's the best way to do it. I think also the question is how do you educate people about democracy. Democracy is about way more than majority rule. Democracy is about minority rights, individual rights, restraints on power. And there's more than one way to advance democracy but do I think on balance that in the end after several bouts of instability do I think it would be better if we had more freedom and democracy? Sure I do. ...The president has a right to do it? Sure I do. But I don't think that's all we can do in the Muslim world. I think they have to see us try to get a just and righteous peace in the Middle East. They have to see us as willing to talk to people who see the world differently than we do.

WALLACE: Last year at this conference you got 2.5 billion in commitments, pledges, how did you do this year?

CLINTON: Well this year we had 7.3 billion as of this morning.

WALLACE: 7..excuse me...

CLINTON: 7.3 billion as of this morning. 3 billion of that is. That's over a multi-year. These are at most 10 year commitments. That came from Richard Branson's commitment to give all his transportation profits to clean energy investments. But still that's over 4 billion. And we will have another 100 commitments and probably raise another billion dollars. We have a lot of commitments still in process.

WALLACE: When you look at the 3 billion from Branson plus billions that Gates is giving and Warren Buffet, what do you make of this age of philanthropy?

CLINTON: I think that for one thing really rich people have always given money away. They've endowed libraries and things like that. The unique thing about this age is first of all you have a lot of people like Bill Gates and Warren Buffet who are interested in issues around the world that grow out of the nature of the 21st century and its inequalities — the income inequalities, the education inequalities, the health care inequalities. You get a guy like Gates who built Microsoft and he actually believes that he can help overcome all of the health disparities in the world. That's the first thing. Second thing...there are a lot of people with average incomes who are joining me because of the Internet. Take the tsunami for example we had 1.3 billion dollars given....by households. The third things you have all these NGO that you can partner with along with the government. So all these things together mean that people with real money in ways that help people that before would have been only the object of government grants and loans.

WALLACE: I know we're over but can I ask you two political questions. Let's talk some politics. In that same New Yorker article you say you're tired of Karl Rove's BS. I'm cleaning up what you said.

CLINTON: I also say I'm not tired of Karl Rove. I don't blame Karl Rove. If you've got a deal that works you just keep on doing it.

WALLACE: So what is the BS?

CLINTON: well every even number year right before an election they come up with some security issue. In 2000 right before the election ...In 2002 our party supported them in undertaking weapon inspections in Iraq and were 100% behind them in Afghanistan and they didn't have any way to make us look like we didn't care about terror. And so they decided they would...the homeland security bill that they opposed and they put some pill in it that we wouldn't pass like taking the job rights away from 170,000 people and then say that we were weak on terror if we weren't for it... This year I think they wanted to make the question of prisoner treatment and intercepted communications the same sort of issue until John Warner came and Lindsey Graham got in there and it turns out there were some Republicans who believe

in the constitution and their convictions...some ideas about how best to fight terror.

As long as the American people believe that we take this seriously and we may have our differences over Iraq but I think we'll do fine this election. Even if they agree with us about the Iraq war we could be hurt by Karl Rove's new foray if we don't make it clear that we care about the security of this country. We want to implement the 9/11 commission recommendations which they haven't in four years. We want to...Afghanistan against Bin Laden. We want to make America more energy independent. If they want to talk about Iraq say what they really want about Iraq.

But Rove is good and why I honor him...I've always been amused by how good he is. But on the other hand this is perfectly predictable. We're going to win a lot of seats if the American people aren't afraid. If they're afraid and we get divided again then we'll only win a few seats.

WALLACE: Do you think the White House and the Republicans want to make the American people afraid.

CLINTON: Of course they do. They want another homeland security bill and they want to make it not about Iraq but some other security issue. Where if we disagree with them we are by definition endangering the security of the country. And it's a big load of huey. We've got 9 Iraq war veterans running for House Seats. President Reagan's Secretary of the Navy is the democratic candidate for Senate in Virginia. A three star admiral who was on my NSC staff — who also fought terror by the way — is running for the seat of Kurt Weldon's in Pennsylvania. We've got a huge military presence in this campaign and you can't let them have some rhetorical device that puts us in a box that we don't belong in. That's their job. Their job is to beat us. But our job is to not let them get away with it and if we don;t we'll be fine.

WALLACE: Mr. President thank you for one of the more unusual interviews.

Fox News is aggressively promoting this interview of "CLINTON UNHINGED!". They cannot resist manipulating his comments, even in a teaser. Notice where they cut off the end of his comments: "I tried and I failed." Of course they wouldn't dare leave in the following line: "...but at least I tried."

At least he ripped Wallace a new one.
