

August 22, 2013

Turns out many in the media have been following the lead of the NY Times re Hillary Clinton. Jake Tapper starts us off with the dénouement of Benghazi.

*As of today, it's official, the Obama administration is holding no one responsible for what happened before the deadly attacks on the U.S. compound in Benghazi, Libya. Last fall, it was only a matter of days after those four Americans were killed in Benghazi before evidence started appearing indicating that State Department officials paid insufficient attention to requests from diplomats and security personnel in Libya desperately asking for additional security. Around that time, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton put four State Department officials on administrative leave. But, as of today, those four have been invited back to work. Secretary of State John Kerry decided that the four do not deserve any formal disciplinary action, and a State Department official tells me that there was no breach of duty for these officials and that they are not returning to their previous positions. ...*

Salon with a Camille Paglia interview that will not please Hillary.

*... As a registered Democrat, I am praying for a credible presidential candidate to emerge from the younger tier of politicians in their late 40s. A governor with executive experience would be ideal. It's time to put my baby-boom generation out to pasture! We've had our day and managed to muck up a hell of a lot. It remains baffling how anyone would think that Hillary Clinton (born the same year as me) is our party's best chance. She has more sooty baggage than a 90-car freight train. And what exactly has she ever accomplished — beyond bullishly covering for her philandering husband? She's certainly busy, busy and ever on the move — with the tunnel-vision workaholicism of someone trying to blot out uncomfortable private thoughts.*

*I for one think it was a very big deal that our ambassador was murdered in Benghazi. In saying "I take responsibility" for it as secretary of state, Hillary should have resigned immediately. The weak response by the Obama administration to that tragedy has given a huge opening to Republicans in the next presidential election. The impression has been amply given that Benghazi was treated as a public relations matter to massage rather than as the major and outrageous attack on the U.S. that it was.*

*Throughout history, ambassadors have always been symbolic incarnations of the sovereignty of their nations and the dignity of their leaders. It's even a key motif in "King Lear." As far as I'm concerned, Hillary disqualified herself for the presidency in that fist-pounding moment at a congressional hearing when she said, "What difference does it make what we knew and when we knew it, Senator?" Democrats have got to shake off the Clinton albatross and find new blood. The escalating instability not just in Egypt but throughout the Mideast is very ominous. There is a clash of cultures brewing in the world that may take a century or more to resolve — and there is no guarantee that the secular West will win. ...*

Jennifer Rubin with interesting take on Benghazi.

*A former Bush national security figure had an interesting take on Hillary Clinton's challenge, should she run for president in 2016, and her historical legacy, even if she doesn't.*

*The observation has been made by numerous critics of the Obama administration that the real center of national security power has always been in the Oval Office, where political operatives*

*played an inappropriately large role on national security matters. The former official says this is no excuse for Hillary: "She was perfectly happy to be an irrelevant secretary of state, racking up the frequent-flier miles, rather than engaging in a serious policy debate in Washington. A secretary of state has to do a lot of showing up, but that travel has to be restrained or one is never in Washington long enough to impact the important decisions."*

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*Hillary's famous 3 a.m. phone call ad turned out to be prophetic. Obama was not prepared for the myriad of foreign policy challenges. But neither was she.*

Here's [Politico](#) on the story.

*Tabloid headlines. Personal dramas. Organizational disarray. Score-settling between rival factions documented in news accounts like a soap opera.*

*Does this have a familiar ring?*

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*But it has all still renewed the question that hangs over Hillary Clinton: Has she learned from the mistakes of the past, and can she finally break some recurring cycles in her public life? Can she manage a functional, and focused, national campaign? ..*

[The NY Post](#) zeros in on Clinton organizations' travel expenses for 10 years. Would you believe \$50 million?

*Bill Clinton's foundation has spent more than \$50 million on travel expenses since 2003, an analysis of the non-profit's tax forms reveal.*

*The web of foundations run by the former president spent an eye-opening \$12.1 million on travel in 2011 alone, according to an internal audit conducted by foundation accountants. That's enough to buy 12,000 air tickets costing \$1,000 each, or 33 air tickets each day of the year.*

*That overall figure includes travel costs for the William J. Clinton Foundation (to which Hillary and Chelsea are now attached) of \$4.2 million on travel in 2011, the most recent year where figures are available.*

*The Clinton Global Health Initiative spent another \$730,000 on travel, while the Clinton Health Action Initiative (CHAI) spent \$7.2 million on travel.*

*CHAI also spent \$2.9 million on meetings and training, according to the report, conducted by the Little Rock, Ark. Accounting firm BDK CPA's and Advisors. All three entities have global reach, while CHAI has the most staff.*

*It's impossible to discern from tax filings how the total travel costs were reached, although the former president is known to rack up his personal miles on private jets.*

*Wealthy businessman John Catsimatitis has lent aircraft to Clinton and to the foundation multiple times for travel, including Clinton's recent trip to Africa along with daughter, Chelsea.*

*Clinton sometimes uses Catsimatitis' Boeing 727, opting on other flights to use a smaller Gulfstream jet. ...*

**Power Line** cheers on Maureen Dowd.

*You know the old saying about how even stopped clocks are right twice a day. The New York Times op-ed columnist version of this would be that one of the Krugman-Friedman-Collins-Dowd foursome will get something right about once a year. (I'll take once a decade from Friedman or Krugman.)*

*Today is Maureen Dowd's turn to get something right, reminding us of why she was a popular political news journalist before the Times ruined her by making her an self-indulgent, faux-introspective op-ed columnist. She trains her snarky eye on a worthy target: the Clintons. ...*

**Jennifer Rubin** says the Clintons never change.

*You can see how Hillary Clinton lost in 2008. She comes in with an air of entitlement. The chattering class declares her the prohibitive favorite. She runs a campaign with questionable political judgments based on her own inevitably. The cloud of controversies that follow the Clintons like Pig Pen's dust comes blowing in. The pundits and then the voters are reminded what an ordeal the Clintons can be while Hillary Clinton's innate caution and lack of accomplishment make her less than stirring as a presidential candidate. Enter someone to her left to remind primary voters that they are forever being cheated of a "real" standard bearer.*

*With the exception of a rival to her left, you can easily fit 2016 into the same sequence. In 2008 Clinton was 30 or more points ahead in early polling, but she ran on experience in a “change” election. Now, to the dismay of some of her media fans, she’s weighing in very early, trying to rid the field of competitors before the race even starts. But soon we are reminded of the Clintons’ money-grubbing ways (then it was the Lincoln bedroom, now it is the Clinton Foundation) and penchant for mismanagement. The Anthony Weiner incident not only echoed the Clintons’ private dramas but also focused on the peculiar deal Clinton struck with , Weiner’s wife, Huma Abedin:*

*“Ms. Abedin, 37, a confidante of Mrs. Clinton’s, was made a “special government employee” in June 2012. That allowed her to continue her employment at State but also work for Teneo, a consulting firm, founded in part by a former aide to President Bill Clinton, that has a number of corporate clients, including Coca-Cola. In addition, Ms. Abedin worked privately for the Clinton Foundation and for Mrs. Clinton personally.”*

*Yes, the line between the taxpayers’ money and the Clintons’ own pecuniary interests has been as porous as President Obama’s red lines. ...*

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## **Real Clear Politics**

### **["The Obama Administration Is Holding No One Responsible" For Benghazi](#)**

by Jake Tapper

TAPPER: As of today, it's official, the Obama administration is holding no one responsible for what happened before the deadly attacks on the U.S. compound in Benghazi, Libya. Last fall, it was only a matter of days after those four Americans were killed in Benghazi before evidence started appearing indicating that State Department officials paid insufficient attention to requests from diplomats and security personnel in Libya desperately asking for additional security. Around that time, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton put four State Department officials on administrative leave. But, as of today, those four have been invited back to work. Secretary of State John Kerry decided that the four do not deserve any formal disciplinary action, and a State Department official tells me that there was no breach of duty for these officials and that they are not returning to their previous positions.

What's notable about this move is that those decisions to not provide additional security personnel and assets in Libya, that's one of the only parts of the Benghazi scandal that Obama administration officials will acknowledge was a real actual problem. You can go back and forth on talking points from the White House and whether U.S. military assets were in position to rescue the Americans being attacked, but the continual denials throughout 2011 and 2012 of additional security for Ambassador Chris Stevens and the others there in Libya, that part of the Benghazi controversy no one with any real knowledge or perspective on the tragedy can refute. How bad was it? Recall the testimony of the former regional security officer in Libya, Eric Nordstrom, who left his post less than two months before the attack. He described for Congress just how State Department officials continually shot down his requests for additional security.

NORDSTROM: You know what makes it most frustrating about this assignment? It's not the hardships, it's not the gunfire, it's not the threats. It's dealing and fighting against the people, programs and personnel who are supposed to be supporting me. And I added it by saying for me, the Taliban is on the inside of the building.

TAPPER: You heard that correctly. That's the regional security officer from Libya, the former one, describing State Department officials as the Taliban. An independent review of what happened in Benghazi noted that security was "grossly inadequate" and faulted systemic failures in leadership and management deficiencies at senior levels, though it was established that no one had been proven to have been breached his or her duty.

## Salon

### [Camille Paglia: "It remains baffling how anyone would think that Hillary Clinton is our party's best chance"](#)

*In Salon interview, the provocateur holds forth on Rihanna and gay porn, plus Hillary, Anthony Weiner and Benghazi*

by Tracy Clark



Camille Paglia

**... When Salon interviewed you last year, you were feeling inspired by Bravo's "Real Housewives." Are you a fan of any other TV series out there?**

No, I can't stand the bad lighting, tinny voices, snarky scripts and fake cool of today's TV shows.

Bravo's "Real Housewives" series isn't just entertainment for devoted fans like me — it's an entire all-absorbing universe of pride and passion. I can watch the same episode four or five times. The series descends from tear-jerker "women's pictures" during the Lana Turner era, which inspired TV soap operas from the 1950s on. The formula overflowed into blockbuster prime-time soaps like "Dynasty" and "Knots Landing" in the 1980s. But then daytime soap writers started to get uppity and craved respectability in the industry. They veered away from the flamboyant trash and flash that had once endeared them to their audience, and soaps committed slow suicide by boredom. It was really stupid — because by the 1990s, the mainstream audience was flocking to movies about over-the-top drag queens like "Priscilla, Queen of the Desert."

Andy Cohen, the executive producer of "Real Housewives," was a longtime ardent fan of Susan Lucci (Erica Kane on ABC's "All My Children"), and he has always understood the soul of soap opera as a female genre — its tender emotions, ruthless rivalries and theatrical sexual exhibitionism. Soaps are a major diva mode. But beyond that, Bravo's ace technical team has refined "Real Housewives" into a feast for the eyes. I have such admiration for the amazing camerawork and deft narrative editing — the rapid scene-setting, the revelatory reaction shots, the touches of realism in how people get out of cars or shop or order a cocktail. Too much film and TV in our digitized era has lost a sense of space. But "Real Housewives" has the old Hollywood flair for knowing how to situate bold, dynamic personalities in tangible four dimensions — from chic or glitzy interiors to exhilarating landscapes. This is contemporary cinematography at its sparkling best. ...

### **... Two words: Anthony Weiner. Your thoughts?**

Two words: pathetic dork. How sickeningly debased our politics have become that this jabbering cartoon weasel could be taken seriously for a second as a candidate for mayor of New York. But beyond that, I have been amazed by the almost total absence of psychological critique in news analyses of the silly Weiner saga. For heaven's sake, Weiner is no randy stud with a sophisticated sex life that we need to respect. The compulsion to exhibit and boast about one's penis is embarrassingly infantile — the obvious residue of some squalid family psychodrama in childhood that is now being replayed in public.

I assumed at first that Huma Abedin stayed married to Weiner out of noble concern for her unborn child, who deserved a father. But her subsequent behavior as Weiner's defender and enabler has made me lose respect for her. The Weiners should be permanently bundled off to the luxe Elba of Oscar de la Renta's villa in the Dominican Republic. I'm sure that Hillary (Huma's capo) can arrange that.

### **Any hopes, fears or predictions for the presidential elections in 2016?**

As a registered Democrat, I am praying for a credible presidential candidate to emerge from the younger tier of politicians in their late 40s. A governor with executive experience would be ideal. It's time to put my baby-boom generation out to pasture! We've had our day and managed to muck up a hell of a lot. It remains baffling how anyone would think that Hillary Clinton (born the same year as me) is our party's best chance. She has more sooty baggage than a 90-car freight train. And what exactly has she ever accomplished — beyond bullishly covering for her philandering husband? She's certainly busy, busy and ever on the move — with the tunnel-vision workaholicism of someone trying to blot out uncomfortable private thoughts.

I for one think it was a very big deal that our ambassador was murdered in Benghazi. In saying “I take responsibility” for it as secretary of state, Hillary should have resigned immediately. The weak response by the Obama administration to that tragedy has given a huge opening to Republicans in the next presidential election. The impression has been amply given that Benghazi was treated as a public relations matter to massage rather than as the major and outrageous attack on the U.S. that it was.

Throughout history, ambassadors have always been symbolic incarnations of the sovereignty of their nations and the dignity of their leaders. It’s even a key motif in “King Lear.” As far as I’m concerned, Hillary disqualified herself for the presidency in that fist-pounding moment at a congressional hearing when she said, “What difference does it make what we knew and when we knew it, Senator?” Democrats have got to shake off the Clinton albatross and find new blood. The escalating instability not just in Egypt but throughout the Mideast is very ominous. There is a clash of cultures brewing in the world that may take a century or more to resolve — and there is no guarantee that the secular West will win.

### **What do you make of contemporary feminism, especially as it’s manifested online?**

Oh, feminism is still alive? Thanks for the tip! It sure is invisible, except for the random whine from some maleducated product of the elite schools who’s found a plush berth in glossy magazines. It’s hard to remember those bad old days when paleofeminist pashas ruled the roost. In the late ‘80s, the media would routinely turn to Gloria Steinem or the head of NOW for “the women’s view” on every issue — when of course it was just the Manhattan/D.C. insider’s take, with a Democratic activist spin. Their shameless partisanship eventually doomed those Stalinist feminists, who were trampled by the pro-sex feminist stampede of the early ‘90s (in which I am proud to have played a vocal role). That insurgency began in San Francisco in the mid-‘80s and went national throughout the following decade. They keep dusting Steinem off and trotting her out to pin awards on her, but she’s the walking dead. Her anointed heirs (like Susan Faludi) sure didn’t pan out, did they?

While it’s a big relief not to have feminist bullies sermonizing from every news show anymore, the leadership vacuum is alarming. It’s very distressing, for example, that the atrocities against women in India — the shocking series of gang rapes, which seem never to end — have not been aggressively condemned in a sustained way by feminist organizations in the U.S. I wanted to hear someone going crazy about it in the media and not letting up, day after day, week after week. The true mission of feminism today is not to carp about the woes of affluent Western career women but to turn the spotlight on life-and-death issues affecting women in the Third World, particularly in rural areas where they have little protection against exploitation and injustice. ...

### **Right Turn**

#### **[Hillary Clinton — too often on a plane](#)**

by Jennifer Rubin

A former Bush national security figure had an interesting take on Hillary Clinton’s challenge, should she run for president in 2016, and her historical legacy, even if she doesn’t.

The observation has been made by numerous critics of the Obama administration that the real center of national security power has always been in the Oval Office, where political operatives played an inappropriately large role on national security matters. The former official says this is no excuse for Hillary: “She was perfectly happy to be an irrelevant secretary of state, racking up the frequent-flier miles, rather than engaging in a serious policy debate in Washington. A secretary of state has to do a lot of showing up, but that travel has to be restrained or one is never in Washington long enough to impact the important decisions.”

The ex-official attributes the Benghazi debacle in large part to Hillary’s globetrotting and lack of executive focus. He figures, “Perhaps if she had spent more time in Washington, she might have had time to ask some questions about the deteriorating security situation in Libya, and in Benghazi in particular. The excuse that she can’t be responsible for reading all the cables that come in to State is no excuse for her not paying enough attention to what’s happening in Libya — and it wouldn’t have taken much attention — to ask whether there was a security problem, and if so, what plans did we have to handle an emergency, particularly after the fiasco in early 2011 when it took forever to get Americans out of the country.” Needless to say, the failure to have a system in place for flagging critical memos is solely her fault.

Hillary’s famous [3 a.m. phone call](#) ad turned out to be prophetic. Obama was not prepared for the myriad of foreign policy challenges. But neither was she.

## Politico

### [Clinton dramas: Here we go again](#)

by Maggie Haberman

Tabloid headlines. Personal dramas. Organizational disarray. Score-settling between rival factions documented in news accounts like a soap opera.

Does this have a familiar ring?

No one — or mostly no one — truly believes the swirl of headlines surrounding Bill and Hillary Clinton in the summer of 2013 should lead to a grand conclusion about whether another iteration of a Clinton campaign can be run effectively, free of the internecine warfare and incessant drama that marked her 2008 bid.

But if Clinton and her supporters were hoping to allay those doubts well ahead of a possible 2016 run, the past few months have not been helpful.

Clinton supporters would point out, fairly, that much of what has happened to them this summer — the steady stream of unseemly stories about Anthony Weiner’s continued virtual liaisons, his wife and Clinton confidante Huma Abedin’s very public decision to stand by him, and reports of mismanagement at the Clinton Foundation — has been beyond their control.

But it has all still renewed the question that hangs over Hillary Clinton: Has she learned from the mistakes of the past, and can she finally break some recurring cycles in her public life? Can she manage a functional, and focused, national campaign?



That probably can't be fully answered unless and until Hillary Clinton clarifies whether she plans to run for president. Only then, when she assembles a new team and makes clear whether she is bringing on new blood amid the old Clinton hands, will it become clear what the latest iteration of a Clinton campaign looks like.

Unwanted coverage of the Clinton Foundation and the years leading up to Hillary Clinton's arrival at its office has converged with the messiness of the Weiner-Abedin story. There has also been an element to some of the details in both storylines — people taking sides in a semipublic way in media accounts — that left some recalling the airing of dirty laundry after her 2008 campaign.

Her supporters say it's not the Clintons' fault that the husband of one of the former secretary of state's closest aides had more private baggage dumped in the middle of his mayoral campaign. And the Clintons were only trying to fix the internal problems at the family foundation detailed in a New York Times piece last week that highlighted questions about lax oversight and conflicts of interest, those same backers argue. The story described budgetary concerns and Bill Clinton's own determination two years ago that things were "a mess" organizationally.

They also insist that the Clinton operation is stronger and leaner throughout than before. And the foundation has had some of the growing pains one would anticipate from what Clinton officials have called a "start-up."

The consensus among Clinton allies whose support dates back decades is some version of this: Bill Clinton and his wife have done enough good work to mitigate the periodic bouts of negativity from their world.

But the coverage of late has been a reminder to Democratic operatives, Clinton donors and even their allies of years past.

Asked his take on the latest round of headlines involving the Clintons over the past month, former Bill Clinton adviser James Carville said, "Thus it was, thus it is and thus it shall be."

"It's always gonna be," he added. "And if anybody thinks that it's gonna change, they're crazy."

Yet he added that the global charitable work Bill Clinton has done, combined with his wife's tenure at the State Department, are positives that often go overlooked.

"I think the Clinton-haters come out of the woodwork," he said. "And if anybody thinks that's not gonna happen they're crazy. And I think if we've learned anything through all of this you deal with it is as it is and things turn out pretty good. Yes, it's a little bit, 'Oh God. We went through that [in the 1990s]. If the Clintons come back we're just gonna have the viciousness and the anger of the '90s. ... [without anyone named Clinton] we'll get a fresh start.'

"Well that really worked out well, didn't it?"

What's more, a number of Democrats make a distinction between the worlds of Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton — suggesting she has historically tended to be a better overseer, notwithstanding 2008. Such divisions are less noticeable now, as their orbits become interlocked with Hillary Clinton joining her husband's foundation. Her team is trimmed down and primarily composed of

people who were with her at the State Department, where drama was mostly absent, people close to her say.

Still, the sighs of concern could be heard all along the Acela corridor after a month of stories that zeroed in on Abedin, the beleaguered wife of Weiner, and how Clintonland was handling the onslaught. The coverage of the foundation, which two years ago entered a new phase in its life, has also been intense, focusing largely on the battles between two factions of longtime Bill Clinton loyalists who were running it.

The nervousness among her supporters was palpable as the Clintons were forced to swat back at Weiner, who violated a certain code by joking that he had knowledge of how Abedin would be deployed for Clinton in 2016.

“It’s always drama,” said one longtime Clinton supporter who, like almost everyone interviewed for this story, asked not to be identified. But the person quickly added, “There’s a lot more good than bad.”

Still, there is another school of thought that there is a “direct line” between the current headlines — which have in many ways underscored the fact that Clinton efforts have tended to be stacked with a small coterie of aides — and the questions about mismanagement in Hillary Clinton’s 2008 campaign.

That campaign, in short, was viewed as a model of dysfunction. The Team of Rivals model meant separate teams of advisers sparring. When Clinton threw the first leadership team overboard as part of a reboot, she empowered a second faction.

“There’s just this division that constantly exists there,” said one senior Democrat, noting that other politicians’ staffs are marked by the same kind of internal tensions but don’t make news nearly as often.

Clinton insiders say the recent attention is just the latest round of media-driven nonsense.

The couple can’t control what Anthony Weiner does with his cellphone camera any more than they can control the weather. Their concern for Abedin is genuine, they point out, and there is a shelf life to the tabloid fodder Weiner presents — the New York City mayoral primary is on Sept. 10, and he is extremely unlikely to make the runoff.

“On every front, things are better, significantly better, than five years ago,” said one Clinton ally familiar with her operation.

If anything, Clinton allies argue, the intense interest in dissecting her every move — and, they argue, manufacturing controversies — is what is driving the circuslike atmosphere. (To that end, Media Matters for America, the liberal media-watching site founded by Hillary Clinton ally David Brock, has been condemning coverage everywhere, but especially at the Times, as overwrought.)

“This is the media having sport in the middle of summer,” said former Clinton White House spokesman Mike McCurry.

“The media obsession with the Clintons creates stories about the coverage of the coverage of the Clintons. ... The answer is simple: stop it, and [the issue] will go away.”

To that end, while Anthony Weiner has lunged wildly at the Clintons, they have not returned the favor. Bill Clinton has been rigorously on-message in talking — or, more precisely, not talking — about the mayoral race.

Nothing in 2013 is dispositive about whether Hillary Clinton has learned how to keep factionalism from taking over a campaign, these allies say. And given her name, people will perpetually be interested in covering her.

“I just think her situation in respect to the Democratic Party is that she has ubiquitous support and issues of this nature — the family foundation, any kind of stuff like that — I think people are going to shrug their shoulders and say they do an awful lot of good for an awful lot of people, “ said Democratic strategist Tad Devine.

## **NY Post**

### **[Bill Clinton foundation has spent more than \\$50M on travel expenses](#)**

by Goeff Earle

WASHINGTON – Bill Clinton’s foundation has spent more than \$50 million on travel expenses since 2003, an analysis of the non-profit’s tax forms reveal.

The web of foundations run by the former president spent an eye-opening \$12.1 million on travel in 2011 alone, according to an internal audit conducted by foundation accountants. That’s enough to buy 12,000 air tickets costing \$1,000 each, or 33 air tickets each day of the year.

That overall figure includes travel costs for the William J. Clinton Foundation (to which Hillary and Chelsea are now attached) of \$4.2 million on travel in 2011, the most recent year where figures are available.

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CHAI also spent \$2.9 million on meetings and training, according to the report, conducted by the Little Rock, Ark. Accounting firm BDK CPA’s and Advisors. All three entities have global reach, while CHAI has the most staff.

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Clinton sometimes uses Catsimatitis' Boeing 727, opting on other flights to use a smaller Gulfstream jet.

"I don't think it's necessarily their go-to plane, because the 727 is a pretty big plane. It all depends where they're going and what they're doing," said a Catsimatitis spokesman.

Sometimes Clinton uses the plane at a discount rate for the foundation, and sometimes Catsimatitis donates the flight time to the charitable foundation, which has a variety of programs to improve global health and improve conditions in Haiti and other far-flung locales.

According to previously undisclosed data provided by the Clinton Foundation, presidential trips accounted for 13 percent of the 2010 travel budget and 10 percent of the 2011 travel budget.

That puts Bill Clinton's single-year travel tab for 2011 at more than \$1 million. A foundation official wouldn't say how many presidential trips occurred in that time frame.

The remaining travel paid for an array of foundation travel, with nearly 60 percent soaked up by the health access initiative, and about 5 percent going to the Clinton global health initiative, including flying students to attend Clinton Global Initiative University.

A Climate Change Initiative took up 12 percent of travel in 2010 and 11 percent in 2011, although the program accounts for a much smaller fraction of foundation revenues. A foundation official said that's because the program employs many overseas staff and domestic staff doing transcontinental travel.

Clinton made reference to foundation overhead in an "open letter" posted on his foundation's web site – mentioning an outside review that called for "stronger management staff" and blaming his own efforts to keep costs down.

"The review told us that my passion to keep overhead costs down – at about a low

8 percent for most of the last decade, rising only to above 11 percent in 2012 as we invested to support our growth – had gone on too long and that the Foundation needed better coordination without dampening the entrepreneurial spirit that infuses all our initiatives," he wrote.

The sky-high travel costs come after a report revealed some of the foundation's high-flying ways, including letting actress Natalie Portman fly first class with her pooch to a foundation event.

## Power Line

### [Dowd's Stopped Clock Gets It Right](#)

by Steve Hayward

You know the old saying about how even stopped clocks are right twice a day. The *New York Times* op-ed columnist version of this would be that one of the Krugman-Friedman-Collins-Dowd foursome will get something right about once a year. (I'll take once a decade from Friedman or Krugman.)

Today is Maureen Dowd's turn to get something right, reminding us of why she was a popular political news journalist before the *Times* ruined her by making her an self-indulgent, faux-introspective op-ed columnist. She trains her snarky eye on a worthy target: [the Clintons](#). A couple of samples:

Why is it that America's roil family always seems better in abstract than in concrete? The closer it gets to running the world once more, the more you are reminded of all the things that bugged you the last time around.

The Clintons' neediness, their sense of what they are owed in material terms for their public service, their assumption that they're entitled to everyone's money.

Are we about to put the "For Rent" sign back on the Lincoln Bedroom?

If Americans are worried about money in politics, there is no larger concern than the Clintons, who are cosseted in a world where rich people endlessly scratch the backs of rich people.

They have a Wile E. Coyote problem; something is always blowing up. Just when the Clintons are supposed to be floating above it all, on a dignified cloud of do-gooding leading into 2016, pop-pop-pop, little explosions go off everywhere, reminding us of the troubling connections and values they drag around. . .

We are supposed to believe that every dollar given to a Clinton is a dollar that improves the world. But is it? Clintonworld is a galaxy where personal enrichment and political advancement blend seamlessly, and where a cast of jarringly familiar characters pad their pockets every which way to Sunday. . .

There's more, but this is enough

## Right Turn

### [The Clintons never change](#)

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You can see how Hillary Clinton lost in 2008. She comes in with an air of entitlement. The chattering class declares her the prohibitive favorite. She runs a campaign with questionable political judgments based on her own inevitably. The cloud of controversies that follow the Clintons like [Pig Pen's dust](#) comes blowing in. The pundits and then the voters are reminded

what an ordeal the Clintons can be while Hillary Clinton's innate caution and lack of accomplishment make her less than stirring as a presidential candidate. Enter someone to her left to remind primary voters that they are forever being cheated of a "real" standard bearer.

With the exception of a rival to her left, you can easily fit 2016 into the same sequence. In 2008 Clinton was 30 or more points ahead in early polling, but she ran on experience in a "change" election. Now, to the dismay of some of her media fans, she's weighing in very early, trying to rid the field of competitors before the race even starts. But soon we are reminded of the Clintons' [money-grubbing ways](#) (then it was the Lincoln bedroom, now it is the [Clinton Foundation](#)) and penchant for mismanagement. The Anthony Weiner incident not only echoed the Clintons' private dramas but also focused on the peculiar deal [Clinton struck with , Weiner's wife, Huma Abedin](#):

"Ms. Abedin, 37, a confidante of Mrs. Clinton's, was made a "special government employee" in June 2012. That allowed her to continue her employment at State but also work for Teneo, a consulting firm, founded in part by a former aide to President Bill Clinton, that has a number of corporate clients, including Coca-Cola. In addition, Ms. Abedin worked privately for the Clinton Foundation and for Mrs. Clinton personally."

Yes, the line between the taxpayers' money and the Clintons' own pecuniary interests has been as porous as President Obama's red lines. Conflicts of interest and the Clintons go hand in glove. ("The arrangement set off concern among some government watchdog groups and a senior Republican in Congress, who questioned whether a person in a sensitive State Department position should be working for clients in the private sector at the same time.")

In 2008 Clinton was a former first lady and the sitting junior New York senator with a thin track record (who can forget [bullets over Bosnia](#)?) and failed Hillarycare; now she is a former secretary of state who left in her wake the Benghazi mess, a discredited Russian reset and no discernible policy for the Middle East's serial upheavals. For all her talk of women's rights, she did [comparatively little](#) in office on behalf of the world's oppressed girls and women. [Executive management](#) has never been her strong suit.

It is noteworthy that the stories of her current travails on the foundation and Abedin come from the New York Times, a sign that perhaps the liberal media won't treat her with kid gloves this time around.

What may save Clinton this time is a dearth of young Democratic talent. [Vice President Joe Biden](#) is making noises about a run. ("While Mr. Biden has made no decision about his future, people familiar with his thinking say, he hasn't ruled out a bid for the White House. If he runs, that could set up a titanic battle between two of the party's most prominent figures.") That probably does not send chills down the spines of the loyalists in Hillaryland. (He's older than she and has been in D.C. since first elected as a senator in 1973.)

She may have an easier road than in 2008 to the nomination absent a "historic" opponent. But as a general-election candidate she would have more baggage than just about any major presidential candidate in recent memory. It is a good thing for the GOP that electability has never been much of a concern for the Democrats; Clinton may be the candidate against whom a Republican outside the Beltway governor or fresh D.C. face stacks up nicely.







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