

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

HILLARY CLINTON INTERVIEW  
*MAKERS: WOMEN WHO MAKE AMERICA*  
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

**Hillary Clinton**  
**Former United States Secretary of State**  
**10/26/2011**  
**Interviewed by Betsy West**  
**Total Running Time: 21 minutes and 43 seconds**

START TC: 00:00:00:00

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Makers: Women Who Make America  
Kunhardt Film Foundation

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Hillary Clinton  
U.S. Politician

**Hillary Clinton**  
**Former United States Secretary of State**

00:00:10:00

BETSY WEST:

Madam Secretary, could you tell me a little bit about your childhood, your upbringing and your parents' expectations for you?

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

00:00:17:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

Well, I had what is now viewed as a pretty typical upbringing and family. My father was a World War II veteran.

ON SCREEN TEXT:

The Rodham Family

HILLARY CLINTON:

My mother had never gone to college but was devoted to raising us and I was given a great education in public schools in Park Ridge, Illinois. And I feel incredibly grateful to my parents—the way they raised me, their expectations for me.

00:00:45:00

My father had been a football player in college, a kind of rough and tumble sort of a guy, but he was just as supportive of my aspirations as of my brothers, and my mother in part because she was of the generation that felt like she wanted to see her daughter have every opportunity available, encouraged me to just go as far as I could go.

00:01:12:00

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Hillary Clinton With Her Mother  
1950s

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

BETSY WEST:

Your mother had faced some adversity, what did you learn from her?

00:01:16:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

My mother had a much tougher upbringing than nearly anybody I knew. It was quite difficult. But I just inherited her sense of resilience and hopefulness and enthusiasm for life—that no matter what happened to you, you couldn't maybe control that, but what you could try to control was how you responded to it.

00:01:40:00

BETSY WEST:

You said that your family, your father, treated you very equitably. What about in the inside world? Were you ever conscious that your opportunities might be limited?

00:01:49:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

Oh absolutely. I played a lot of sports when I was growing up and there was always the proving ground that you had to try to make it clear, you could compete on the playing field. When I was in junior high school, I was totally

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

entranced by the NASA program and wanted to go into space and wrote off a letter and NASA wrote back and said, "Sorry. We don't take women."

00:02:15:00

Which was the first time anybody had even said to me in a really official way, besides boys on the playground, "Sorry. You can't do something because you're a girl."

00:02:25:00

BETSY WEST:

You really... saw your future in a different way than the future of your mother's generation. Was there a point in which you thought, "Maybe politics might be in my future here?"

00:02:37:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

Not originally. I never thought of that. I liked working with people to solve problems. I was active in Student Council. I was the president of the college government at Wellesley and I was really someone who wanted to be part of helping to make things better, as maybe as simplistic as that sounds.

00:02:59:00

But I saw myself more in the role of an advocate like one of my great friends and mentors, Marian Wright Edelman. I went to work for her at the precursor to the Children's Defense Fund after my first year in law school. Or maybe working in government in some way, but I never thought of myself actually

running for office. And then in law school, when I met my future husband, it was clear that he was such a natural for that, and I thought I could pursue my interests plus support his political ambitions.

00:03:32:00

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Campaigning For Barry Goldwater  
Park Ridge, IL, 1964

BETSY WEST:

Taking you back just a little bit, some people who have seen the picture of you campaigning for Goldwater know that you didn't start off as a Democrat, but others may not know that. Could you tell me about your early interests in politics, and then what happened?

00:03:47:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

My father was a rock-ribbed, conservative Republican and one of the worst things that you could say in our house was anything positive about any Democrat. So we grew up talking about politics and arguing about politics, and I think, the gender gap started in families like mine. My father was a Republican. My mother didn't really talk much about politics but I think she kept canceling out his vote in nearly every reelection that was held.

00:04:16:00

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

And when I went to Wellesley, I initially was the President of the college Republicans and then I got to thinking, "You know, I'm not sure I really agree with what the Republican Party in 1969 was standing for." And so I just decided that I would begin a search to figure out what I did believe in. I had a very smart political science professor by the name of Alan Schechter—just recently retired—

00:04:44:00

Who ran a great program, an internship program, in Washington for Wellesley students after their junior year. And I applied for it and then the question was, "Okay, you're accepted. Where's your placement?" People were placed in the Executive Branch, in the Judicial Branch and of course, in the Congress. So he assigned me to the House Republican Conference, at that time headed by Gerald Ford, later President Ford.

00:05:10:00

And I went in to see him, and I said, "Professor Schechter, you know, I don't know that I want to be assigned there." And he goes, "I want you to really have to decide what... what your beliefs are. So you came into Wellesley thinking you were a Republican, you're going to do this internship." It was a great experience and it convinced me I was a Democrat.

00:05:30:00

BETSY WEST:

So tell me a little bit about Wellesley. I don't know that women today truly understand the transformation that took place when you were in college.

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

00:05:40:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

Oh, Betsy, it was astonishing what happened the four years I was in college.

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Wellesley College, 1969

HILLARY CLINTON:

Because my mother had never gone to college and because my father had gone to Penn State on a football scholarship, they really couldn't guide me very much. They wanted me to go to college but where... under what circumstances... I didn't know. I started attending events and I was really attracted by this team of young women teachers, who were in my high school teaching government.

00:06:11:00

And they had gone to women's colleges, so they began talking to me about it and they gave me a lot of information and they said, "Look. This is an opportunity for the women to run everything. You run the newspaper. You run the Student Government. You run all the clubs. You speak out in class." And I just never thought about that. I had been recruited by some very large co-ed universities for merit scholars and all that. But I thought, "Okay."

00:06:39:00

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

So I began going to these and I became really intrigued, and I chose Wellesley without ever having visited because I thought the campus in the pictures, as I saw it, were so beautiful. So I show up and everyone there seemed much more sophisticated, much more polished, much more educated than I certainly felt. But I found such a home. It was a welcoming, nurturing, challenging environment for me.

00:07:07:00

Now, during my time at Wellesley, Yale went co-ed in the last two years, I guess, that I was there and... No, right as I was graduating. And so some of my younger friends at Wellesley transferred to Yale to be part of that experience. I saw universities making the decision to go from single sex to co-ed. And I remember I was on my way to Yale Law School and I got a questionnaire from the Alumni Association of Wellesley,-

00:07:40:00

-and it was a questionnaire about whether Wellesley should stay all women. And I had complained, like so many of my friends, I mean, it was a pain going on dates and there were no men around—men meaning boys our age. It was just such a constant refrain about, “Why are we at this beautiful place that has only got women?” And then when I got this questionnaire, I found myself saying, “No. Keep Wellesley as special as it is. Keep it as a place where young women can feel as free as we felt to explore.”

00:08:15:00

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

Frankly, not to get dressed up everyday and try to look good for the guy that you hoped would ask you out, sitting a row over. So I really cherished the experience I had.

00:08:26:00

BETSY WEST:

So, at that time, the Women's Movement was in full swing, as you were graduating. And in what way did it have an impact on you?

00:08:34:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

I am thrilled that I came of age in the '60s. And I get a little annoyed when people denigrate the '60s and kind of characterize it as drugs, sex, and rock and roll. It was about human empowerment and freedom. Now does freedom sometimes lead some people to go to excess? Unfortunately, yes. And we see that not only in cultural movements, but in political revolutions.

00:09:03:00

That unfortunately does go with the territory. But does it also help each person have a firmer grip on the responsibilities he or she faces? That you can't pretend you're not a responsible individual that has to be held accountable for the life decisions you make? I really relished that opportunity and-

00:09:30:00

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

-I think that it laid the groundwork for the success of our Civil Rights Movement as we saw that decade come to an end, laid the groundwork for the continuing quality of women, and certainly the LGBT community and the people with disabilities. I mean, it really was a liberating phenomenon.

00:09:54:00

BETSY WEST:

Now, you faced a decision about relationships. The world was opening up to you, you had a great job in Washington, lots of possibilities, and then you decided you would go to Arkansas. How did you balance your career aspirations with your relationship?

00:10:10:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

I believed that I wanted to have both, that I wanted to have a meaningful relationship that I thought would benefit me as a person, that I certainly fell in love with an extraordinary, complex, dynamic human being,-

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Bill Clinton and Hillary Rodham

1969

HILLARY CLINTON:

-that really forced me to grow and I think, vice versa.

00:10:39:00

So, it really was a natural choice for me. Now there were many friends of mine, including a dear, dear friend of mine, Sara Ehrman, who helped me pack up and drove me to Arkansas, who, all along the way, saying, "You know what you're doing? You know what you're getting into?" I had no way of predicting that. I didn't know. I couldn't have sat there and said, "Oh yes. I'm going to go to Arkansas, and eventually I'm going to marry Bill Clinton, and eventually he's going to become President." No! I mean, I did it because it felt right for me.

00:11:09:00

It was, as been said before, kind of following my heart because I think you want to lead an integrated life, and I think people sadly sometimes live too much in their head or too much in their heart. You need a balance between your reason and your emotion, and I felt very comfortable in kind of taking this leap. So we did get married and I loved living in Arkansas.

00:11:34:00

I made some of the greatest friends in my life and it was also a good reminder that the fast track of meritocracy I had been on, coming from a middle class family into a high prestige college and law school, hanging out with high powered people first in the Congress, and the impeachment inquiry, and then in my advocacy work and so much... was a real gift. It was a blessing but it wasn't an end in itself.

00:12:04:00

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

It was a way of trying to acquire skills and experience that could then be put to work on behalf of other people. So working at the law schools, teaching there, practicing law, creating organizations like the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, I felt very much at home.

00:12:20:00

BETSY WEST:

How did you find your balance between the political and ceremonial aspects of being the First Lady?

00:12:26:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

I'd been a First Lady by that time for twelve years in Arkansas so I was intimately associated with and very supportive of all the ceremonial, hostess aspects of the role. I happened to personally value that, and relished doing it. But I'd also continued to work when I was the First Lady of Arkansas, and I had been my husband's partner on really significant policy efforts on education and health care and children's welfare and the like.

00:12:45:00

Lo and behold, how could I have thought that Washington D.C. and The White House were, in many ways, more politically unready than Arkansa. Because by that time, in the group of state First Lady's that I was part of, I saw women working, I saw women taking on big jobs...

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

00:13:06:00

BETSY WEST:

Unready for what?

00:13:08:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

Unready for the nation's First Lady to continue working, number one—so that I totally accepted and became a full time volunteer—but unready for a First Lady to be involved in the work of her husband on behalf of our country. So I had run this very big enterprise for my husband in Arkansas to reform education, and testified before the Arkansas Legislature, and done hundreds of meetings out in public and,-

00:13:40:00

-came up with a reform agenda which included raising taxes and, it had an incredibly positive effect on improving education.

00:13:50:00

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Speaking To The U.N.

Beijing, China, September 5, 1995

BETSY WEST:

Let's talk about, what some have called, finding your voice in the UN Conference in Beijing. Tell me about that speech and what prompted it.

00:13:57:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

Because I had always believed strongly in women's rights, I was interested in supporting our national presence in Beijing. And there was a lot of controversy about putting together a delegation, whether we should even go because of... Chinese detention of Chinese-Americans at the time.

00:14:21:00

BETSY WEST:

And when you made the speech, what was the impact?

00:14:24:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

It was far beyond anything I could ever have envisioned. And what seemed to me to be a common sense statement of values and purpose that, "Human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights," has become a rallying cry. I mean, I still have it recited back to me. I have people in countries around the world standing for hours to see me, to tell me how much it meant to them. And it became a real organizing principle of much of the rest of my time in the White House, my time in the Senate and now my time as Secretary.

00:14:59:00

BETSY WEST:

So, let's jump ahead to that. Can you tell me about the call from President Obama asking you to be Secretary of State, and your thinking behind your decision to accept that?

00:15:09:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

It was right after the election in early November, as I recall. I think it was the Sunday after the election, and my husband and I were on a long hike in a beautiful reserve near where we live, and one hour into the hike, the phone in his pocket rings. So he answers it and it's then President Elect Obama. And he says that he wants to talk to Bill and could... And Bill says, "Well we're kind of in the middle of a hike. It's not the best place for me to have a confidential conversation, so could we talk later?"

00:15:42:00

And he said, "Yes." He said, "Is Hillary with you?" And Bill said, "Yes." He said, "Will you tell her I want to talk to her too?" So this was the Sunday after the election. So we got back to the house and... and Bill, of course, immediately called back the President Elect and the President Elect ran by some names for high positions that he was considering and talked to Bill about some of the transition issues. And then said he wanted to talk to me and he asked me if I would come see him in Chicago later that week.

00:16:13:00

And I know it sounds almost hard to believe, but I really did not think he was asking me to come see him to offer me a job. I'd thought he was asking me to come see him to talk through some of the issues, both the transition issues, the political-congressional issues. And then I began to see little references in the press that maybe the President was going to ask me to take a job. At the time I did not want to.

00:16:42:00

I had ended my campaign in June. Both Bill and I had then campaigned very hard to elect President Obama. I really was looking forward to going back to the Senate. I loved, loved, loved representing New York. And so, I really told all my friends that were saying to me, "Oh he's gonna..." I said, "First of all, I do not believe that. And secondly, I do not want to do it and I will tell him that."

00:17:09:00

BETSY WEST:

What changed your mind?

00:17:10:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

He was very persuasive, Betsy, what can I tell you? He raised it with me that Thursday in Chicago and I said, "I really don't want to do it, Mr. President. Here are names of people that I think would be great to do the job." He said, "Well, I'm not taking that as a no. I want to keep talking to you about it." We

had several long conversations. I came up with every possible excuse and demand I could think of. He batted away the excuses. He agreed with the demands—

00:17:35:00

Who I got to hire, and access, and all the things you do in these positions. I talked to several close friends, and of course my husband, and my daughter.

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Swearing in as Secretary of State, 2009

HILLARY CLINTON:

They were supportive of my doing it and eventually I said, "Okay." And it's been a great experience.

00:17:52:00

BETSY WEST:

You're the first Secretary of State to put the rights of women and girls really front and center. Can you tell me about why?

00:17:58:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

First of all, I think, making the empowerment of women—their political and economic, social empowerment—as an integral, essential part of American foreign policy is the right thing to do. I think it is the moral imperative of the

twenty-first century. If the nineteenth century was about ending slavery and the twentieth century was about ending totalitarianism, the twenty-first century is about ending the pervasive discrimination and degradation of women and fulfilling their full rights.

00:18:32:00

BETSY WEST:

A lot of people think the gains for women come at the expense of men? How do you convince them otherwise?

00:18:36:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

I think it is self evident that both men and women, if they are empowered with their rights, then have to stand on their own, that they have to go to school, get educated, they have to take care of themselves and their families, they have to be active citizens and I would hope that in the United States, particularly right now with all the challenges we're facing, that both men and women are going to live up to their own potential as Americans.

00:19:06:00

BETSY WEST:

You are now widely popular around the world, which must be gratifying, especially with women. What do you symbolize for women?

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

00:19:13:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

I think women have seen me now in a very personal way for twenty years. I've been at the highest levels of American politics. It's amazing now what this instantaneous communication means so that people feel like you are in their living room, you are there with them. So I think women relate to what they see as my story. They often come up to me and ask me how I did what I did.

00:19:43:00

And there's a great hunger, it may be one of the reasons why you're doing this program, for women to look for examples, role models, mentors, even someone all the way across the ocean. The recent Nobel Prize winner from Yemen, this incredibly brave woman, had a picture of me on her mantel. And I cannot even tell you how honored I was-

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Hillary Clinton with Tawakkul Karman, 2011

00:20:12:00

HILLARY CLINTON

-that she would look to me to try to give her courage when she is on the front lines of, you know, bullets and clubs. And I think also women know I'm pulling for them. I want to see more of the reality of women's lives changed in

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

however much time I've got left on the earth so that I don't continue to cringe at women denied... the right to be whoever God meant them to be.

00:20:48:00

BETSY WEST:

Most meaningful piece of advice you've ever received?

00:20:50:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

I think my mother telling me that I had a choice everyday to be an actor, the lead actor in my own life, or just a reactor to whatever everyone around me did.

00:20:59:00

BETSY WEST:

We know what you wound up doing but what did you want to be when you grew up?

00:21:03:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

Oh my gosh. I wanted to be an astrophysicist and I wanted to be a doctor. I wanted to be a teacher. I went through a long list.

00:21:09:00

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

BETSY WEST:

Accomplishment you're most proud of?

00:21:11:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

My daughter.

00:21:13:00

BETSY WEST:

What's your first paying job?

00:21:15:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

Babysitting.

00:21:17:00

BETSY WEST:

What do you do for fun?

00:21:18:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

Oh my gosh. Long walks, catching up on sleep, going to the movies, going out to dinner. Really normal things that I don't get to do enough of when I'm traveling nonstop.

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

00:21:29:00

BETSY WEST:

Hoping for a grandchild?

00:21:31:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

Yes, but I can't say that because I do not want either jinx or put pressure on it.

00:21:37:00

INTERVIEWER:

Madam Secretary, thank you so very much, what an honor.

00:21:39:00

HILLARY CLINTON:

Thank you.

END TC: 00:21:43:00