

March 31, 2008

DON'T BLAME HILLARY AND ME: WE JUST NEED OUR SLEEP

Okay everybody, give me a break. If I have done something wrong, it is not my fault. I'm not trying to make excuses for irritating the bejeezus out of you, but I just can help myself. If you must know, I am sleep-deprived. Me and Hillary.

Sen. Hillary Clinton, whose presidential aspirations are sinking faster than a truck tire in the Ogeechee River, didn't help her case to become our commander in chief and field those pesky 3 a.m. calls to the hotline when she told a whopper about dodging bullets on her trip to Bosnia as First Lady in 1996. "I remember landing under sniper fire," she gravely told the editorial board at the Philadelphia Daily News recently. "There was supposed to be some kind of a greeting ceremony at the airport, but instead we just ran with our heads down to get into the vehicles to get to our base." Good story, but not true. In fact, she was greeted on the tarmac at the airport by a little girl with flowers in her hand. But let's give our heroine the benefit of the doubt. Maybe the kid was packing heat in her hyacinths.

Ms. Clinton's flacks tried to put the best face on the fib by saying that, well okay, maybe she didn't get shot at when she landed, but Bosnia was a dangerous place to be under any circumstance and there was shooting in the hills around the airport that day. That dog doesn't hunt either, because nobody remembers hearing any shooting anywhere when she arrived. Had her handlers been a little more nimble of thought, they could have mentioned that maybe Bosnia was a little white lie, but that the senator showed a lot of courage by coming to Philadelphia to talk to the editorial board, given that Philadelphia is a lot more dangerous than Bosnia ... particularly when the Eagles are in town. On second thought, I don't think the editorial board would have wanted to hear that. Editors don't have much of a sense of humor.

Now she admits she was sleep-deprived when she told that story. That makes perfect sense to me. Those of us who are sleep-deprived can sometimes act in ways that may seem inappropriate to others. As I have tried to explain to the Woman Who Shares My Name, if I belch in church, it is not that I don't have manners; it is that I missed my eight hours of log-sawing the night before because I stayed up late watching a rerun of "Animal House." The arts are an important part of my life.

In addition to milking the sleep-deprivation cow dry, I am seriously considering adopting the Clinton theory of revisionist history and modifying the details of my trip to Iraq a couple of years ago when I was embedded with Georgia's 48th Brigade Combat Team. In getting off the military transport in Al Asad on the Turkish border, I fell down and hurt my knees. Or at least that is what I reported back home at the time. Now that I think about it, I seem to remember that we were pinned down on all sides by a thousand terrorists with bazookas. Quickly gauging the seriousness of the situation, I took a broomstick and single-handedly routed the bad guys, who decided they would rather go home and tend to their goats than mess with me. I took a couple of Scud missiles to the knees, but nobody ever said being a modest and much beloved columnist — or a presidential candidate — was a piece of cake. Sen. Clinton, I feel your pain.

So cut Hillary a little slack. Maybe things didn't happen in Bosnia exactly as she claimed, but when you have lost as much sleep as she has living with a guy who will hit on anything that moves, including Socks the cat, details can get a little murky. As for me, I blame my sleep deprivation on broccoli. I lie awake at night wondering if I am going to have to eat it for breakfast. Don't scoff. My story makes more sense than the one about dodging bullets in Bosnia.