The frustrating thing about Clinton's scandals is that the press focuses on two-bit scandals of little importance, such as internal oral sex, Whitewater and the ridiculous travel office "scandal", while ignoring much more significant dirt, such as the Hillary's $100,000 commodity profit from a $1,000 investment, and murky but more substantial affairs such as the Mena, Arkansas contra supply and drug operation.

And no one (save a few voices on the left) are protesting Clinton's hugely successful fundraising and favors for people who have provided it, including the Tyson Chicken empire. Running against Bob Dole, this isn't likely to be an issue, but it is a major fault of the President.

White House Suppresses Skeleton Closet

In a shocking blunder, the White House successfully put pressure on Hotwired Magazine to stop linking President Clinton's name to this very web page. This was all done behind the scenes -- we had no idea until we read Brock Meek's Netizen column of April 30th.

The White House official involved, David Lytel, was in charge of creating the popular Clinton White House web site. He recently left the White House, and is working for a private web page consultant. At a conference, he attacked Netizen for being cynical and unfair, citing the Skeleton Closet link. Meeks, in response, noted that Hotwired had removed the link after receiving official pressure from the White House. In Hotwired's "Threads" discussion, another Hotwired employee admitted that they had been "intimidated" by receiving email from the "whitehouse.gov" domain early in Netizen's infancy, and said she regretted that they caved in.

Lytel's argument -- that it was "dishonest" to link Clinton's name to a page criticizing him -- is silly of course. Apparently, he thinks the only "honest" link is one that goes to a person's own web page, no matter how self-serving it is. More to the point, this is a terrible precedent. As far as we know, it is the first attempt by any American government to squelch part of the Internet for nakedly political reasons. (The attack on adult material online, while obviously political, has legitimate issues -- or at least a reasonable excuse -- behind it.) And doing it privately, behind closed doors, makes it even worse.

If we were simply seeking publicity, we'd run to Republican politicians (who desperately need an issue) and hope they try to use it. But that would be hypocritical. It's exactly that kind of partisan misuse of legitimate scandals that we are trying to make obsolete here -- because it muddles legitimate issues (like White House censorship of critics) in stupid, partisan manipulation. We're trying to contact the White House directly, to get them to disavow Lytel's actions. We'll let you know what happens.

Update: White House Backs Down, Sort Of.

We challenged the White House to confirm or deny that Lytel pressured Hotwired, to disavow his actions if
true, and commit to a policy of avoiding this type of censorship.

Within two days, they replied as follows:

"Date: Fri, 03 May 1996 17:06:49 -0400 (EDT)
From: WEBMASTER (WEBMASTER@a1.eop.gov)
Subject: RE: White House WWW Comments
To: webmaster (webmaster@realchange.org)
Posting-Date: Fri, 03 May 1996 17:09:00 -0400 (EDT)

It is our policy not to interfere with the content of other WEB sites."

We'll take that as an admission that Lytel was out of line, and a solid commitment to doing the right thing in the future. Of course, they didn't live up to that policy before, and words are cheap.

And now, on with the Clinton's Skeleton Closet page.

What can we say about Bill and Hillary that hasn't been said before? Clinton's scandals are covered in such loving detail by his enemies that we are providing you with links to various Clinton scandal pages. At one point I thought I would have time to sift through ALL of the stuff on Clinton and scandals and sort out the solid stuff from partisan attacks. HA! It would take years. So enjoy the links, take them with a grain of salt, and email us any better links you know of.

**Mena, Arkansas: Contra & Drug Smuggling Center?**

Even though this issue has been adopted by the conspiracy nuts, there does really seem to be something behind it. Unlike almost every other Clinton scandal, this one in non-partisan -- it actually began with Bush and Oliver North, and still seems to implicate them much more than the President.

In a nutshell, it's pretty well established that both weapons for the Contras and cocaine were smuggled through the small, obscure airport in Mena, Arkansas during the 1980s and late 1970s. But other than the fact that Clinton was governor during part of this time, there really isn't much of a link to him. There is a lot of drug smuggling in Florida, but no one assumes that Florida Governor Jeb Bush is connected to it. The Contra operation of course was run by the Reagan/Bush White House.

So when you read about Barry Seal or Kevin Ives and Don Henry (two teens apparently killed because they knew about drug deals), the charges are partly true but mostly unconnected. Yes, these guys all were killed because they got too close to drug smugglers, but there is no evidence connecting any of it to Clinton. Clinton-haters try to make hay out of his brother’s personal cocaine habit, or Bill’s admitted pot smoking, but that's ridiculous.

We sure haven't unraveled the whole mess, and I don’t think anyone really has. Smugglers don't keep very good records. The best we can do is give you links to as many of the respectable sources (ie newspaper articles) on the subject as possible.

Dave Feustel used to provide a great resource of newspaper article reprints, many from the Arkansas Gazette which is not in that many libraries around the country. Unfortunately, he has removed them from his web site, which also moved to Netcom; not because of the CIA or whatever your favorite conspirator is, according to email he sent us, but because of copyright problems. It's a shame. Here is the list of articles anyway, in case you can look them up:
Clinton's Body Count:

Almost everyone on the Internet has received an email listing various dead folks under the heading "Clinton's Body Count." The number of dead has varied considerably over the years we've seen this; it's actually lower than it used it be, more often around 60 compared to 80 in some versions a couple of years ago. There is never any documentation or proof, just a lot of suspicious sounding coincidences.

We're pretty skeptical about the list as a whole, mostly because Clinton just doesn't seem that competent. If the guy can't cover up 10 blowjobs from a girl who loves him, how could he cover up scores of political murders while being investigated by Ken Starr and several other hostile, well-funded prosecutors and committees? Starr himself ruled Vincent Foster's death a suicide, and Starr had custody of James McDougal, who died of a heart attack in prison. So unless you think Ken Starr is in on Clinton's murderous conspiracy, these deaths don't make sense.

Some of the entries are even more absurd. One version of the list includes someone who died in a one-man skiing accident. So what is Clinton supposed to have done, planted the tree 20 years earlier? And the list has grown to include random deaths popular among conspiracy fans, such as Danny Casolaro (an investigative reporter who targeted George Bush much more than Clinton) and William Colby (CIA director under Nixon and Ford). Only the most tenuous of threads connect either to Clinton, while each had much more obvious (and effective) enemies.

On the other hand, there are some legitimately questionable deaths of people with at least some connection to Clinton. The best known would be Ron Brown, Clinton's Commerce Secretary who was under active investigation at the time of his death. The official version of his plane crash is reasonable and
could well be true, but you don't have to be a conspiracy nut to want to know more. There are also a couple of murders of people on the list that are not solved; while there's nothing particular pointing to Clinton, there are some questions worth looking at.

Even in these cases, though, the "Body Count" lists twist the truth. Take the case of Mary Mahoney, a former White House Intern who was working at a Washington Starbucks when she and two co-workers were shot by unknown attackers. The case is unsolved, but Michael Rivero's version of the story claims that she was killed because Michael Isikoff (the Newsweek reporter who broke the Lewinsky story) had dropped hints about a "former White House intern whose name begins with 'M." The story is stupid anyway, but now in hindsight we know it's ridiculous. If Clinton was behind the murder, how could he have killed the wrong "M" intern? I think it's safe to say he knew which one he was having sex with, even without hints from Michael Isikoff.

So here are some links to versions of the list, and at least one attempt to actually research these cases and see if any are reasonable. (All but a couple weren't, it turns out.)

A list of "Dead Clinton Friends" lists
An investigation of the list, with dates, facts and hotlinks, from Barbara Mikkelson's Urban Legends page.

The report is fair and admits when a death might be questionable.

Political Favors for Campaign Contributors

Though his administration floundered at first, Clinton has quickly learned one aspect of Washington -- how to raise money from business interests. He has set records in fund-raising, eclipsing even Dole's huge haul (though not by much.) Of course, if Dole was President he would no doubt regain the lead.

And some contributors seem to think their money is well spent. For example, Clinton raised over a quarter million dollars from ADM, Bob Dole's major benefactor, and pushed through a regulation benefiting them mightily.

On the other hand, 2 Arkansas firms that formerly bankrolled Clinton (and received help from his administration) have switched their support to Dole -- both Tyson Chicken and Stephens investment brokers apparently figure Dole gives a better return per contribution dollar, or is more likely to win.

Money and Favors: Archer Daniels Midland

For example, he has received at least $270,000 from Archer Daniels Midland corporation, the agricultural giant famous for spreading money among various influential people, from Bob Dole to National Public Radio. Just days after Clinton received a $100,000 check in June 1994, his administration ordered that 30% of gasoline sold in America's 9 most polluted cities contain ethanol based additives by 1996 (as opposed to cheaper methanol.)

Archer Daniels makes 60% of US ethanol for gas, and none of the methanol. Bob Dole, who receives even more money from Archer Daniels and its president, actually supported the Clinton Administration's mandate, even while arguing against Clinton's health care proposal for nearly identical federal mandates. (Courts have block Clinton's 30% rule, saying he lacked power to favor ethanol over methanol.)

$100,000 for Hillary from an Educational Foundation

This allegation just came out January 10, so bear with us on it's sketchiness. New York state's new Attorney General Dennis Vacco (a Republican) is investigating a $100,000 in payments to Hillary or the
Rose Law Firm from the National Center on Education and the Economy, a charity that was in Rochester New York and has since moved to Washington, DC

Hillary was on their board, as were Mario Cuomo and Ira Magaziner, but no other board members were paid. The justification is that Hillary was paid to carry out some programs. When this story came out a month ago, Vacco announced he was asking for contracts with Hillary or the Rose Law Firm and a description of any work she actually did. Nothing more has come of it, which -- in an election year - indicates that nothing substantial has turned up.

Try these links, but use a grain of salt; some of the sources are pretty marginal, and most are openly partisan.

The Unofficial Clinton Page This is an excellent, nonpartisan page.  
Arkansas Times newspaper's Whitewater archive Scroll down a little to "WhiteWater Chronicles."  
Yahoo's Whitewater Scandal Page  
Prosecutor Starr has some scandals of his own

Quotes

"I'm someone who has a deep emotional attachment to 'Starsky and Hutch.' " -- Bill Clinton, 1996

"I don't think [Bill Clinton] is fooling around anymore. Nor do I think he will. I read that Hillary threw a lamp at him. ... You know something? I think she did." -- Ann Landers

Sources

"Primary Colors", by 'Anonymous', 1996

Wall Street Journal, in general, and in particular:
....January 12, 1996 pA14
....January 8, 1996 pA1
....December 18, 1995 pA16
....December 29, 1995 pA1
....March 23, 1995 p A1
....February 22, 1995 p A1
....January 13, 1995 p A12


"The Real Cost of Ethanol" and "Dwayne's World", Dan Carney, Mother Jones, January, 1995


"Ann Landers Repents For Slurring The Pope", Associated Press, December 1, 1995

"Blocking the Box", Rick Marin, Newsweek, March 11, 1996

"NY Official Probes Payment to Mrs. Clinton", Associated Press, January 12, 1996

BACK TO SKELETON CLOSET
Paid for by Real People For Real Change PAC and not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee.

Real People For Real Change is registered with the Federal Election Commission as a non-affiliated, independent political action committee.

Copyright 1996 Real People For Real Change PAC