

Crisis of Character - A White House Secret Service Officer Discloses His Firsthand Experience with Hillary, Bill, and How They Operate.

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Read this review quickly before Hillary's troll army forces it off of Amazon. [too late. I'm blown off of Amazon myself]

The last Hillary book I reviewed, I thought quite fairly, was blown off of the Internet by her troll army's negative reviews. I expect the same again. As documented two decades ago in Primary Colors and Blood Sport, this woman plays for keeps. By the way, my review of Hard Choices is back up, no longer the first but the two thousandth. I didn't change it. You can judge whether it deserved the troll army attack. In its second incarnation the one-star review has two helpful votes out of four.

I don't think she'll bother to send the Vince Foster squad clear to Ukraine, but you never can tell. Anyhow, here goes with a review of "Crisis of Character." If this review disappears, please make a note to that effect in your reviews and comments on other reviews.

The only book about the Clintons I have reviewed in my 15 years with Amazon was the left-wing Christopher Hitchens' No One Left to Lie to. Understandably, this year there is a plethora of new books. The message about character remains the same.

This review follows the chapter organization of the book itself.

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18. Cyprus

books about the Clintons

blood sport

primary colors

no one left to lie to

http://www.amazon.com/Blood-Sport-Behind-Sca.../.../ref=sr_1_11...

http://www.amazon.com/Primary-Colors-Novel-Po.../.../ref=sr_1_3...

http://www.amazon.com/One-Left-Lie-Triangulat.../.../ref=sr_1_1...

http://www.amazon.com/The-Truth-About-H.../.../ref=pd_sim_351_1...

http://www.amazon.com/Clinton-Inc-Audac.../.../ref=pd_sim_351_3...

http://www.amazon.com/The-Case-Against-.../.../ref=pd_sim_351_4...

http://www.amazon.com/Clinton-Cash-Fore.../.../ref=pd_sim_351_5...

http://www.amazon.com/The-Clinton-Wars-.../.../ref=pd_sim_351_6...

http://www.amazon.com/Hillary-And-Bill-.../.../ref=pd_sim_351_7...

http://www.amazon.com/Den-Thieves-James-.../.../ref=pd_sim_351_8...

Hard Choices.

These are my chapter notes on Crisis of Character

This is a book about character. This review covers it chapter by chapter, but Chapter One, the next six paragraphs, gives the reader a feeling for the whole book. It is about two ruthless and unprincipled people and the chaos they caused.

Chapter 1 – The Vase

This is the prelude, a chapter taken out of historical sequence to illustrate what it was like within the Clinton White House. This is the chapter that was released sometime ago in the prepublication buildup.

The vase in question was a White House antique that Hillary through at Bill. It is a metaphor for the whole Clinton story.

Bill was reckless with his womanizing and his other peccadilloes. He did not hide them well at all, and he certainly did not have the self restraint to avoid embarrassing situations.

Hillary is a truly nasty piece of work. She is ruthlessly ambitious and uses intimidation to force her will on all those around her. She was witheringly profane in her speech to political aides, government functionaries, and especially the staff such as the Secret Service who because of their very positions are not allowed to defend themselves. She is a tyrant, a bully.

They do not understand planning and budgets. They are careless with the public money in their own. They are careless with their plans, making dramatic changes on a whim, keeping their staffs constantly off-balance.

They have no self-restraint, even with each other. That's what the vase is about. Hillary threw a registered piece of White House property, and antique vase, at Bill. It broke. What a potential catastrophe for the Secret Service if she happened to hit him and did him damage! They are there to protect him. As it was, the Clintons' greatest concern seems to have been to concoct an adequate lie to explain why the vase was no longer on the White House inventory.

Chapter 2 The Air Force Security Police

Byrne starts out with his personal history. He comes from an old American line with Irish roots. He spent time in the South, and the sense of honor and morality was inborn.

The sense of responsibility was reinforced by a tour in the Air Force. As those of us of who served in the military in those times will testify, they were not afraid to push us hard and turn us into men. That's what Byrne became.

His 13 month tour in Turkey gave him an appreciation that the Turks were different. He writes that he learned "allies are not friends, nor are they ever to be trusted farther than can be verified."

He was involved in some derring-do with the military police back in the United States at the time of

the Grenada invasion in 1982. He recounts in a very matter-of-fact way that he was commanded to have not seen things he had just witnessed, and to deal with a catastrophe brought on by the Air Force's recent commitment to diversity – in this case a woman who folded under pressure and left items for which she was responsible on the tarmac where some got sucked into a jet engine, and there could have been a catastrophe had he not lain down to cover the remainder with his body, getting injured in the process.

Chapter 3 – Club Fed

Byrne got married and needed a steady job. His wife saw an employment ad for the Secret Service. It required passing a test which was grueling for a guy with dyslexia. It was a tough decision, but he left his job as an assembler at Boeing and went to work for the government. There was another grueling interrogation delving into his character, history, anything untoward in his past.

The training was rigorous, simulating every kind of threat that a president might face. Byrne had a high respect for the level of training and for his fellow Secret Service agents.

Chapter 4 – To the White House

Rookies in the White House Secret Service detail guard the perimeter of the grounds for fence jumpers and the like. The White House is a magnet for crazy people. He routinely dealt with bums urinating in public, dicky wavers and the like. In doing so he developed the camaraderie with his fellow Secret Service agents and at least an appreciation for the Washington Metropolitan police force.

Byrne gives an account of the dangers in the split-second decisions that an officer must make, and that kind of second-guessing that the echelons above him will apply. You not only have to do your job, you have to be concerned for how it will look to others.

Byrne met First Lady Barbara Bush. He was trained not to talk to the people he was protecting – the protectees - so he didn't reply when she said "Good morning." He was relieved to learn that good manners were okay with the Bushes. George H.W. Bush had a rapport with the Secret Service that came of having been in combat himself, putting his own life on the line against the Japanese. The Secret Service respected him. George H.W. Bush was gracious – when he had barbecues, he let the Secret Service join in despite their policy against mingling with the people they protected.

Byrne was very pleased serving George H.W. Bush. Neither he nor anybody in the country had any idea what was coming from the next election cycle, 1992.

Chapter 5. Meet the New Boss.

The Secret Service is stretched thin protecting candidates during presidential elections. Byrne's first encounter with the Clinton people was not a pleasant one – being dressed down by some Arkansas lawmen for not screening attendees at a political rally for guns... a task that would have been impossible, especially with an out-of-control protectee such as Bill Clinton.

Some of the Arkansas people were more forthright. "When I asked [an Arkansas Sheriff] about the Clinton's latest rumors, he gave me 1000 yard stare." "Let me tell you something, Gary. Everything – everything they say about them is true. The Clintons are ruthless. And [the media] don't know even the half of it."

Byrne also gives accounts of the Clintons' inability to appreciate the problems of protecting a candidate. They would thoughtlessly put up banners obstructing the ability of counter snipers to protect the president, or bleachers where Air Force One would blow them over with its jet blast. Everything was political, with little appreciation for the practical concerns of everyday people.

Chapter 6. The Boy from Hope, Arkansas

The Clinton entourage arrived from Arkansas with a chip on its shoulder. The Secret Service had to deal with the "don't you know who I am?" kind of question all the time. They were accused of many things, among them being homophobic if it was a gay person that they happen to stop.

Byrne writes "Unlike their predecessors, this administration didn't focus, pace themselves, or even delegate. Staff wore jeans and T-shirts and faced each problem with grand ideological bull sessions. Rival foreign powers could influence the situation and change it before the Clinton administration could mold a plan and implement it. Their helter-skelter approach had deadly consequences abroad."

He describes the conversation about Mogadishu, Somalia, and the incredible ignorance of the political people – George Stephanopoulos, Rahm Emanuel and others – on how one wages war. The decision was made that the Americans who had been sent to quell the trouble there did not need tanks, armored personnel carriers, AC-130 gunships or any of that sort of equipment. "We don't want to look to militant," Army Rangers paid a heavy price for not looking "too intimidating" or "like invaders," valiantly fighting while stripped of the equipment they had requested. They died.

Byrne does not say as much, but to this reviewer it looks like a preview of our screw-ups in Serbia, Benghazi and elsewhere.

Chapter 7 – Billary

There are numerous anecdotes about the Clintons' total disregard for budgets with regard to such things as catered affairs at the White House, repairing the damage lawns, rewiring the White House and so on. He goes on to recount how Hillary used her famous temper to simply blow through these issues, refusing to accept no for an answer. Hillary vented on everybody. Byrne says that George Stephanopoulos is surprisingly candid on this count in his memoir ""All Too Human."

The gay issue came to the fore when Barney Frank led a group to the White House to demand fulfillment of promises that Bill had made during the campaign. The Secret Service, per protocol, had to examine the personal effects of all of people coming in. Many in the Frank party were HIV-positive and they took umbrage as the Secret Service followed their customary procedure and wore protective gloves in going through personal effects. There was a news story to that effect, embarrassing the Secret Service. Hillary Clinton compounded the problem by making it a huge issue and inadvertently letting the world know about the HIV status of the group.

Hillary berated Vince Foster mercilessly. Byrne says that he is not convinced of the thoroughness of the investigation into his suicide, and says with authority that the materials that were taken out of Foster's office after his death have never reappeared. That said, [\[\[ASIN:B0092PKKLS Blood Sport: The Truth Behind the Scandals in the Clinton White House\]\]](#) and other accounts agree that Foster was a man out of place in the White House.

Byrne became friends with Gary Aldrich, the FBI agent who has written his own book, [\[\[ASIN:0895264064 Unlimited Access : An FBI Agent Inside the Clinton White House\]\]](#). Aldrich was frustrated because the Clintons would ask for background investigations on people to gain political information, not for security reasons.

Byrne quotes Aldrich: "Mrs. Clinton [used] security agencies as a hammer to attack and punish those who stood in her way. The FBI, the Secret Service and the Internal Revenue Service hounded and then prosecuted seven innocent men who worked for the White House travel office simply because they were standing in the way of Mrs. Clinton's political interests and ambitions. She knew federal investigations would destroy those good men, but she wanted her friends in those slots, and that was all that mattered. James Stewart covers this well in "Blood Sport," above.

Byrne cites instances in which he had to say no to Hillary rather than ignore his duties. She cursed at

him, she berated him, but she finally had to accept no for an answer.

Chapter Eight. Clinton World

Clinton's young staff had no manners, no decorum. First Chief of Staff Mack McLarty, an Arkansas boy, was simply unable to manage them. Leon Panetta came in and restored order. In a telling incident, President Clinton walked in on a group of his staff who were sitting around with their feet on the table and just gabbing. Panetta was the only one to stand up. He later read them all the riot act, that they had to show some respect to the boss.

This chapter includes brief accounts of the bimbo eruptions and Whitewater scandal that are so well covered in "Blood Sport"

Chapter 9 Oklahoma City

This chapter is a bit of an aside, a commentary on how lax and contradictory procedures invite disaster, which sometimes pays a call.

Chapter 10 Mole

Monica Lewinsky came as a White House intern, and was more than obvious in her campaign to get close to the president. This was at the time of the government shutdown when most staffers were not at work. Clinton figured out what she wanted, and he wanted it also. Soon they were having trysts as he was supposedly "mentoring" her.

Monica used the Secret Service, hanging around their station so she could hear via radio where the President might be. Though nobody is supposed to have a free run of the White House, Lewinsky had no work to keep her busy and infinite time to probe the avenues that might get her to the President.

It was a game of cat and mouse. Monica probed everywhere she could, and was usually politely rejected by the Secret Service who did not accept her story of having to use the bathroom, deliver a note or whatever. But time was on her side – she did penetrate.

Monica used the top-secret White House communication agency telephone, intended for high level military brass, to call Clinton to see if the coast was clear to come to his office.

Byrne stepped out on a limb. On behalf of a group of Secret Service agents, he approached Evelyn Lieberman, the head of personnel, and a woman he respected, with the message that although it would be inappropriate to tell her why, the intern Monica Lewinsky had to be transferred out of the West Wing. Lieberman read between the lines and transferred her to the East Wing, Hillary's territory.

Chapter 11. Wild Bill.

But Monica came back! She had a badge as a paid presidential staffer. She was a mistress paid with taxpayer funds. This was a new low for a president.

A White House steward, a guy named Nel, found himself constantly coming across semen and lipstick stained towels. He was distraught – and one day showed some to Byrne. Nel was a Navy chief petty officer reduced to washing the president's incriminatingly soiled towels by hand to protect the President from embarrassment.

It wasn't just Monica. They knew the women in the White House by the lipstick that they were, and there were several colors.

Byrne took some incriminating materials that Nel had given him and put them in a burn bag. He then

managed to get the burn bag into his car with the intent of destroying it personally, to protect the president. By the way, at this point in history special prosecutor Kenneth Starr had already started to investigate the Arkansas scandals concerning Whitewater and Paula Jones.

But this was ridiculous! He was risking his career to protect a President who wouldn't protect himself.

Chapter 12. USSS Work Environment

Byrne's sense of loyalty to the presidency was never in question, but his loyalty to Bill Clinton the man was certainly frayed and his commitment to the United States Secret Service was diminishing. His colleagues remain his closest friends. However, at the top the Clintons were trying to change the structure of the Secret Service.

Hillary brought a diversity policy to the White House, and a Diversity Club was formed, limited to nonwhite males. Byrne was incensed. He told his boss that he was a non-white male and wanted to join. He was the only Irish – Lebanese person of Arabic descent in the White House. And he was allowed to attend!

The topics under discussion were discrimination in promotions and the use of the Spanish language. Byrne, though he had not felt welcome at the meeting, had witnessed with his own eyes a lieutenant who should not have had access to Secret Service promotion test sheets actually changing them. The Black officers' charges were probably correct! He could not testify as to what they changed, but he could confirm that the Lieutenant was writing on papers he should not have had access to.

Here was an irony. He had thought that the Diversity Club was something that was counterproductive and not needed, but yet he was stepping forward to defend the integrity of two highly qualified black officers. Taking their side against the Secret Service.

Chapter 13 Tours and JJRTC

The White House hosts public tours. I, the reviewer, have been on them. They are tightly controlled of course, but anyone can see the White House. Byrne wanted to join the Secret Service Special Operations Section which runs the tours, both for promotion and to get away from the Oval Office.

Joining required that Byrne master a vast amount of White House trivia so he could be an informed host. It was a daunting task for a man with dyslexia. However, with the help of his wife Genny he managed it – after several tries. He joined in autumn 1997.

Still, Monica Lewinsky comes back. Even though she had been transferred to the Pentagon, she showed up at the White House demanding see the president. Awkwardly, however, the president was tied up on this Friday afternoon with another mistress, Elinore Mondale. His secretary Betty Curry had the unenviable task of keeping the mistresses apart.

At this point the pressure from Ken Starr continued to build. Clinton would simply not give up his reckless behavior. Byrne asked for another transfer, this time to the Secret Service's James J Rowley training Center (JJRTC). It was quickly approved and he was out of the White House to suburban Maryland. The calm did not last.

The Drudge Report broke the Monica Lewinsky story in January 17, 1998. The Howard Stern show talked about the intern turned White House employee who had been having an affair, oral sex, the Oval Office, and the Secret Service. Michael Isikoff had had the story but Newsweek didn't have the courage to publish it. Everybody knew that the Drudge Report was right.

Ken Starr had his entrée. Bill Clinton had sworn under oath that he had not had any sexual relations with Paula Jones and moreover had never had any relationship with Monica Lewinsky. He said that they had never been in the same room together, and claimed that others could corroborate his claim.

Monica Lewinsky had signed a similar affidavit.

Starr was frustrated. In every scandal he pursued, the commonsense evidence of the Clintons' guilt was overwhelming, but there was not enough to put together a court case. Watergate, Trooper Gate, the Foster suicide, the bimbo eruptions and so forth were met with denial, denial and denial.

Starr needed to prove that Clinton was a liar and a perjurer. He needed evidence. And Byrne was on the White House logbook. The Secret Service had Byrne get in touch with their lawyers.

Chapter 14. Mud Drag

It was well known that Byrne had seen a great deal in his time at the White House. A retired Secret Service agent, Larry Fox, no longer sworn to confidentiality told the media quite a bit about what had gone on and furthermore that Byrne was the guy who was really in the know.

Ken Starr sent subpoenas to the Secret Service legal counsel, among which was one for Byrne. At issue was whether or not the "secret" in Secret Service would stand up to Starr's inquisition. Eventually the Secret Service would fight the question all the way to the Supreme Court, where it lost, meaning that agents could be asked to testify against their protectees. But the issue was in limbo for some time, with Byrne caught in the middle.

The Secret Service legal team resisted Starr's subpoenas. Byrne was briefed by the heavyweights on their team. It was a battle between two organs of the Justice Department. Starr had been appointed by Atty. Gen. Janet Reno, who had also appointed Gary Grindler to represent the Secret Service.

The Secret Service lawyers told Byrne that they had no fiduciary duty to him. He was not protected by the attorney – client relationship. Their job was to represent the Secret Service, not Byrne himself. They cautioned that it was going to be a long drawn out process, and they told him of his rights. That his own employer would take this arm's-length stance was daunting and frightening.

They told him that he could not release information that would be damaging to the security and safety of the president. That would be nonnegotiable. They told him not to buckle under pressure from Starr.

But within those caveats, there was a great deal of wiggle room. He was not allowed to perjure himself either or withhold information. He was in a double bind.

Within those constraints, Byrne told the Secret Service just about everything. Not much of what they would want to know was protected by security clearance. On the other hand, he didn't have to tell them everything. Since whatever he shared with the Secret Service would be available to Ken Starr in the discovery process, he was free not to talk.

Byrne was dragged in because Larry Fox had told them of his meeting with Evelyn Lieberman, the one that led to Monica's being transferred out of the West Wing. To protect herself, Lieberman had conveniently developed amnesia. She didn't remember.

Byrne called a lawyer friend of his, Mark, who immediately appreciated the gravity of the situation and was in a position to offer his counsel on a pro bono basis. That was an amazing piece of luck. It would turn out later that many of Byrne's Secret Service colleagues were destroyed by the Clintons callous use of lawyers to exhaust their funds.

Byrne's inclination was not to talk – to protect the President despite all of the scandalous behavior he had seen. However, it turned out that Linda Tripp, Monica Lewinsky's confidant in the Pentagon, would not protect the President. Rather, as she was talking to Monica on the one hand, she was talking to Newsweek on the other. Her sense of morality was gravely offended by what she knew of the President.

Byrne was being grilled by the Secret Service agents in a very hostile way. They accused him of corruption. He reflected, this is what Vince Foster must have felt before he committed suicide. However, with a supportive wife and a baby on the way he could not afford to fold. With his friend, his godsend Mark and a constitutional lawyer from Mark's firm covering his back, he could stand up.

The lawyers played rough. The FBI associates threatened to arrest Byrne and intimated that things might not go well for his pregnant wife. They cursed at him – and Byrne cursed back. Finally Grindler, the top guy on the case, told the FBI to back off. After all, they were all police and they had to retain a little professionalism. Byrne recounts that once again he was in a better position than some of his Secret Service colleagues. The government rode roughshod over those who were not as well positioned to protect themselves.

Then, with the pressure at the most intense, Byrne managed to get away to an inaccessible retreat where only his boss and the tour office knew how to contact him. However, at this time Monica's blue dress made its public debut. Byrne got a call that he had to return.

Chapter 15. Mud Drag Part Two

He had to return to answer a subpoena. Six subpoenas, actually, compelling him to testify by a videotape to a grand jury. The testimony was taken in a simple room.

Starr's lawyer reminded him of his rights against self-incrimination. She added that he could not lie by saying "I don't remember." They would not, however, ask about secret or privileged matters of the White House. Though they promised the tapes would not be made public, there was no promise that Congress would not see them. A Congressman leaked them and C-SPAN later broadcast the video of the interrogation, with the private information redacted out.

Byrne told the truth. He testified to the numerous times he had discovered Monica where she didn't belong, shared his opinion of her, told about how she manipulated friendships, how distraught Nel, the petty officer who washed Clinton's soiled towels had been. He could not legally mention semen - that belonged to the President.

He made it clear that he never considered that he was committing crimes. He was protecting the President from rumors, especially true rumors. The lawyers asked if he had associated the lipstick with Monica. Byrne had never revealed his thoughts on the matter. He considered that he was in a trap – his oath prevented him from responding honestly, but he did not want to lie

"I did not connect the lipstick to Monica at that time."

However, Starr's team pressed on. "Did you connect the lipstick to anybody?"

"Without revealing any privileged information on the advice of my counsel yes I did."

And so Byrne went on to reveal that he associated it with a woman who was still employed in the White House, and gave her name.

Between a rock and a hard place, Byrne writes that he tried to insinuate that the President was an unabashed cheater and womanizer, without revealing confidential information.

This chapter became so gripping that I did not take time to write about it. It is so sleazy, so undignified, so smarmy.

This gives an overpowering lie to the concept that the Clinton scandals are "just about sex." This scandal destroyed many people, and came close to destroying Byrne. No wonder people are so angry!

It is my hope that the reader will give Byrne his due, buy this book, and become as incensed as I the reviewer am.

The chapter ends with a short account of the impeachment, the acquittal, and the end of Clinton's presidency.

Chapter 16 "Commence Firing"

Byrne still hope to become an instructor at the Secret Service agency. He failed the written test due to his dyslexia. But friends came through for him – he was allowed to retake the test orally. And he passed.

The chapter presents a cop's perspective on the cop's job. You have to be the best – if you aren't, you may not live, and you may not be able to protect the people who hire you.

Byrne completed probation after only six months whereas it usually takes a year. It was enjoyable duty.

He continued to serve under the George W Bush administration. Then came the twin towers catastrophe in New York. Byrne volunteered to go there to protect against whatever further terrorism might be in the works.

Pres. Bush was there at Ground Zero, addressing emergency workers in rallying the nation.

He concludes with a summary of the situation in the civil service. They are overworked and underpaid and definitely underappreciated. When the air marshals program was put in place in 2003, 300 Secret Service personnel left to join it. Byrne was one of them.

Chapter 17. New skies.

The Secret Service didn't want Byrne to quit, even after all they had put him through.

This chapter has nothing to do with the Clintons – it is about the bureaucracy of the Air Marshals service. Byrne is too intelligent a guy to take too much nonsense from anybody.

Chapter 18. Cyprus.

This chapter likewise has nothing to do with the Clintons. The Air Marshal Service got involved in the Middle East wars in order to protect Americans, in this case Americans who had found refuge in Cyprus from the fighting between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The air marshals would be escorting a home a mixed bag of Americans from both sides, who most likely sympathized with the people whose countries they had just fled.