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OPINION | BEST OF THE WEB

Unfrozen Caveman Clinton

“I don’t understand. . . . It just doesn’t make sense.”



Mrs. Clinton in Lexington, Ky. PHOTO: ASSOCIATED PRESS

By **JAMES TARANTO**

May 11, 2016 1:11 p.m. ET

The inevitable Democratic presidential nominee got trounced in yesterday’s West Virginia primary. Bernie Sanders outpolled Hillary Clinton in every one of the state’s counties—a feat Mrs. Clinton managed against Barack Obama eight years ago. Yesterday’s results were perhaps foreshadowed by a Monday headline at WVMetroNews.com: “Fall Turkey Season Set for All 55 Counties.” On the Republican side, “Dangerous Donald” Trump won with 77% of the vote. He is fast approaching his ceiling.

The Hill suggests that Mrs. Clinton paid a price for her “coal gaffe”—to wit, her pledge that “we’re going to put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of business.” Sanders, a fanatical global warmist, is no

friend of the coal industry either, but at least he was savvy enough not to express himself so bluntly. Mrs. Clinton picked an odd time and manner to try being honest.

It's not the only recent utterance of Mrs. Clinton's that seems confused and out of touch. "It just doesn't make sense," she exclaimed yesterday in Kentucky, referring, as The Wall Street Journal notes in an editorial, to "the 'really expensive' cost of day care."

One might say in her defense that she's not expressing confusion but describing the current state of affairs, and promising that everything will make sense when she gets done with it. As Max Boot claims in his latest endorsement: "Say what you will about Hillary Clinton, but she is at least rational."

We're not so sure. The Journal editorial continues:

Her solution is for the feds to cap the share of a family's income that goes toward care at 10%, with the rest of the tab covered by various tax benefits, direct cash payments and scholarships.

The auditors at the Government Accountability Office report that there are currently 45 federal programs dedicated to supporting care "from birth through age five," spread across multiple agencies. The Agriculture Department runs a nursery division, for some reason.

"Administering similar programs in different agencies can create an environment in which programs may not serve children and families as efficiently and effectively as possible," GAO dryly notes. Parents can also claim five separate child-care tax credits.

Mrs. Clinton also feels that caregivers are paid "less than the value of their worth," and she promises to increase their compensation. How? Why, another program of course.

If you think day care is expensive now, just wait till it's free! And in a conversation on health insurance, described by the Weekly Standard's Jenna Liffhits, she was unambiguously confused:

Hillary Clinton was stunned Monday when a small business owner told her that the cost of her health insurance had increased nearly two fold.

"A \$400 increase, assuming you didn't have some terrible

healthcare event, which it doesn't sound like you did," Clinton said at a campaign event in Virginia. "I don't understand."

The increase was actually \$500, but the difference is pocket change to someone who is paid that sum thousands of times over for a single speech. She continued:

"What you're saying is one of the real worries that we're facing with the cost of health insurance because the costs are going up in a lot of markets. Not all, but many markets," [Mrs.] Clinton said. "I think that the Affordable Care Act is a big step forward for the vast majority of Americans, but we have to look at out of pocket costs, copays, deductibles, premiums."

Mrs. Clinton's supporters portray her as having deep knowledge of policy—"Clinton's Wonky Policies of Fine-Grained Complexity Contrast With Rivals' Grandiose Ideas," as a recent Washington Post headline had it—but to our mind there is something of the Unfrozen Caveman Lawyer about her. In her discussions of both day care and health care, she seems utterly clueless about the unintended consequences of well-intended policies.

Or, for that matter, of the deliberate consequences of not-so-well-intended policies. NewsBusters.org has video of a trio of former speechwriters for President Obama—David Litt, Jon Favreau and Jon Lovett—yukking it up on PBS's "Charlie Rose" show over Obama's infamous lie that "if you like your plan, you can keep your plan."

We suppose Mrs. Clinton is politically constrained to assert "that the Affordable Care Act is a big step forward for the vast majority of Americans." But it's also possible she really doesn't know better.

In a CNN.com op-ed, Raul Reyes tries manfully to spin Mrs. Clinton's loss in West Virginia, and Sanders's unexpectedly strong challenge to her, as a sign of *her* strength:

Had she wrapped up the nomination with a series of early, big wins, she would likely never have had a shot at bringing Sanders' passionate supporters into her camp. Instead, as things are playing out, this race gives Sanders supporters time to go through the "five stages of grief"—denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance—before they face the reality that it's time to unite behind [Mrs.] Clinton for the good of the party and the country.

At least in West Virginia, that's probably hoping for too much. The Hill:

Nearly half of the voters in the West Virginia Democratic primary who backed Bernie Sanders say they would vote for Republican Donald Trump in the fall presidential election, according to exit polls reported by CBS News.

Forty-four percent of Sanders supporters surveyed said they would rather back the presumptive GOP nominee in November, with only 23 percent saying they'd support Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton. And 31 percent said [they] would support neither candidate in the likely general election match-up.

Something tells us George Will is not going to get his 50-state Trump defeat.

Reyes also offers some advice for the fall campaign:

The general election campaign between Trump and [Mrs.] Clinton will be unpredictable, but for sure it will get ugly. Just this week, Trump attacked [Mrs.] Clinton by bringing up the Monica Lewinsky scandal from 1998. Trump called [Mrs.] Clinton an “unbelievably nasty, mean enabler” of her husband’s alleged affairs, adding that, “what she did to a lot of those women is disgraceful.” He called Bill Clinton “the biggest abuser of women, as a politician, in the history of our country.”

[Mrs.] Clinton’s response was genius: “I have nothing to say about him and how he’s running his campaign.” This is the way to win in November, by taking the high road.

No matter what attacks Trump throws her way, [Mrs.] Clinton should not follow him into the gutter. . . . From here on out, she must stay focused on the issues, and let Trump do himself in with his childish and unpresidential antics.

“I have nothing to say” seems subgenius to us, but perhaps it’s a less bad response than anything else she could say. The strategy of focusing her fire on the issues, however, may not be as easily executed as Reyes thinks. Commentary’s Noah Rothman has an example:

On Monday, Hillary Clinton advisors Jake Sullivan and Gene Sperling telegraphed the former first lady’s pivot away from the

zombie Democratic Primary and toward the general election. In a conference call with reporters, the two Clinton loyalists announced their intention to target Donald Trump's tax plan. The two advisors revealed their focus would be on attacking Trump's plan to push for "tax cuts for the hyper-wealthy [while] leaving most behind," reported The Atlantic's Steve Clemons. "We frankly think that Mr. Trump's economic plans have not received the scrutiny they've deserved," Sullivan said. He assured reporters on the call that Team Clinton will be pounding the drum over Trump's "eye-poppingly massive" tax cuts for the rich "every day between now and the election."

This boilerplate Democratic campaign strategy would be fine—perhaps even compelling—if deployed against a vanilla Republican candidate. . . . [But] as Team Clinton was revealing its intention to attack Trump for his proposal to ease the tax burden on the rich, the news cycle was already dominated by Trump's decision to buck Republican orthodoxy on taxes in an interview with NBC's Chuck Todd.

You can fault Trump for lacking principles or credit him with being flexible. Either way, there is considerable question whether Mrs. Clinton has the requisite skill to hit a moving target. To be sure, at least she's rational. Then again, as Scott Adams observes, "I can think of 16 Republican candidates who were rational too."

Fox Butterfield, Is That You?

"New Yorkers Flock to Chick-Fil-A, Despite De Blasio Urging Them Not To"—headline, FoxNews.com, May 10

We Blame George W. Bush

"Don't Blame Bad Creative on Your Client"—headline, AdAge.com, May 11

We Blame Global Warming

"Cicadas' 17-Year Sleep Likely to Last Another Week or Two; Cool Spring to Blame for Delay"—headline, Plain Dealer (Cleveland), May 11

The Soft Bigotry of Low Expectations

"Biden: 'I Would Have Been the Best President'"—headline, CNN.com, May 11

Problem and Solution—I

- “Shock Poll: Donald Trump ‘Dead Even’ With Hillary Clinton in Key Swing States”—headline, Salon (http://www.salon.com/2016/05/10/shock_poll_donald_trump_dead_even_with_hillary_clinton_in_key_swing_states/) , May 10
- “The November Freakout Begins: It’s May, So Let’s All Go Crazy Over a Few Good Polls for Trump”—headline, Salon (http://www.salon.com/2016/05/10/the_november_freakout_begins_its_may_so_lets_all_go_crazy_over_a_few_good_polls_for_trump/) , May 10

Problem and Solution—II

- “Morning Spin: New London Mayor Wants Sit-Down With Emanuel”—headline, Chicago Tribune (<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/politics/ct-emanuel-rauner-20160511-story.html>) , May 11
- “Sit Down, Sarah Palin, You’re Not Relevant in This Election”—headline, Chicago Tribune (<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/commentary/ct-sarah-palin-paul-ryan-republican-party-mcqueary-0511-20160510-story.html>) , May 10

World Ends, Etc.

“Cox: Why Brexit Would Be a Boon for Donald Trump”—headline, Reuters.com, May 10

Make That 7

- “Cruise News: 6 Things to Avoid on a Ship”—headline, Newsmax.com (<http://www.newsmax.com/FastFeatures/cruise-things-avoid-ship/2016/05/09/id/727834/>) , May 9
- “Cruz Returns to Washington, Warns of ‘Volcanic Anger’ ”—headline, Reuters (<https://www.yahoo.com/news/cruz-leaves-door-open-entering-white-house-race-164033313.html>) , May 10

Make That 13

- “Lice on the Road: Beating Lice in 12 Easy Steps”—headline, HalfTheClothes.com (<http://halftheclothes.com/travel-tips/lice-on-the-road-beating-lice-in-12-easy-steps/>) , Feb. 15, 2015
- “Poll: Americans Pick Lice, Nickelback Over Donald Trump”—headline, Washington Examiner (<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/poll-americans-pick-lice-nickelback-over-donald-trump/article/2590977>) , May 10, 2016

Make That 1,293

- “NASA Speaks Out About ‘Planet 9’ Discovery—and It’s Bad News for Everyone”—headline, Daily Mirror (<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/technology-science/science/nasa-speaks-out-planet-9-7223625>) (London), Jan. 22
- “NASA’s Kepler Telescope Confirms a Record-Breaking 1,284 New Planets”—headline, Washington Post (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/speaking-of-science/wp/2016/05/10/nasas-kepler-telescope-confirms-a-record-breaking-1284-new-planets/?hpid=hp_hp-more-top-stories-2_sos-planets-355pm) website, May 10

Hypothesis and Proof

- “Facebook’s Bias Is Built-In, and Bears Watching”—headline, New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/12/technology/facebooks-bias-is-built-in-and-bears-watching.html>) website, May 11, 2016
- “Man Shares Story, Graphic Photos on Facebook After Surviving Grizzly Bear Attack”—headline, WGHP-TV (<http://myfox8.com/2015/12/01/man-shares-story-graphic-photos-on-facebook-after->

surviving-grizzly-bear-attack/) website (High Point, N.C.), Dec. 1, 2015

With DNC in Mind, City Bans Carrying Urine, Feces

“Meghan Trainor Fights Back Against Toxic Body Standards: ‘They Photoshopped the Crap Out of Me and I’m So Sick of It’ ”—headline, Salon, May 10

Questions Nobody Is Asking

“Will Luxembourg Lead the Race for Space Mining?”—headline, Smithsonian.com, May 9

Question and Answer—I

- “Did Donald Trump Add a Touch of Gray to His Hair?”—headline, Daily Beast (<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/04/19/donald-trump-debuts-a-white-shade-of-orange-votes-for-donald-trump.html>) , April 19
- “Donald Trump Has Another Brush With a White Nationalist”—headline, New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2016/05/10/donald-trump-has-another-brush-with-a-white-nationalist/>) website, May 10

Question and Answer—II

- “What We Lose When We Lose Anonymity”—headline, Salon (http://www.salon.com/2011/08/12/death_of_internet_anonymity/) , Aug. 12, 2011
- “Entitled, Racist, Bigoted, Thugs: It Is Time to Call Donald Trump Supporters by Their Real Names”—headline, Salon (http://www.salon.com/2016/05/11/entitled_racist_bigoted_thugs_it_is_time_to_call_donald_trump_supporters_by_their_real_names/) , May 11, 2016

Question and Answer—III

- “Why So Many Gay Men Are So Hot for Hillary Clinton”—headline, TheWrap.com (<https://www.thewrap.com/hillary-clinton-gay-men-support/>) , May 10, 2016
- “All Clinton Has to Do Is Prove Her Femininity. And Her Hypermachismo”—headline, Guardian (<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/nov/12/comment.gender>) (London), Nov. 11, 2007

Question and Answer—IV

- “Why Hispanics Should Be Suspicious About Hillary Clinton”—headline, Counterpunch.org (<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/05/11/why-hispanics-should-be-suspicious-about-hillary-clinton/>) , May 11
- “Hillary Clinton Wants More Transparency (About Aliens)”—headline, FiveThirtyEight (<http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/hillary-clinton-wants-more-transparency-about-aliens/>) , May 10

Question and Answer—V

- “How Mad Cow Disease ‘Can Be Spread Through Air’ ”—headline, Daily Mail (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1347003/How-mad-cow-disease-spread-air.html>) website (London), Jan. 14, 2011
- “Pro Hockey Players Take Insane Beef to Twitter”—headline, Daily Caller (<http://dailycaller.com/2016/05/10/pro-hockey-players-take-insane-beef-to-twitter/>) , May 10, 2016

It’s Always in the Last Place You Look

“Hillary Clinton May Find Campaign’s Rationale in Donald Trump”—headline, NBCNews.com, May 10

Too Much Information

“A Challenge to Clinton: Show More Than Your ‘Woman Card’ ”—headline, New York Observer, May 11

Everything Seemingly Is Spinning Out of Control

“Animation Shows How Global Warming Is Spiralling Out of Control”—headline, NewsEveryday.com, May 11

News You Can Use

“This New Dating Site Will Help You Marry a Canadian to Escape Trump”—headline, Vice.com, May 10

Bottom Story of the Day

“Joe Biden Predicts Hillary Clinton Will Be Next President”—headline, WSJ.com, May 10

#NeverTom

The New York Times’s Thomas Friedman unleashes his sarcasm on Donald Trump:

O.K., it’s easy to pick on Donald Trump’s foreign policy. But just because he recently referred to the attack on the World Trade Center as happening on “7/11”—which is a convenience store—instead of 9/11, and just because he claimed that “I know Russia well” because he held a “major event in Russia two or three years ago—[the] Miss Universe contest, which was a big, big, incredible event”—doesn’t make him unqualified.

I’m sure you can learn a lot schmoozing with Miss Argentina. You can also learn a lot eating at the International House of Pancakes. I never fully understood Arab politics until I ate hummus—or was it Hamas?

He goes on in this vein before making a serious point: “No, if I were critiquing Trump’s foreign policy views it would not be on inconsistency, hypocrisy or lying. It would be that he shows no sign of having asked the most important question: What are the real foreign policy challenges the next president will face? I don’t think he has a clue.”

So Friedman opposes Trump because he’s glib, superficial and clueless and bases his foreign-policy views on inane personal anecdotes.

We guess he's afraid he can't handle the competition.

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