

# talk

FEBRUARY 2001

**EXCLUSIVE!**

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# Sister Power

The new Senate boasts 13 women, an all-time high. They're going to get a lot of attention—especially now that Hillary Clinton has joined the show.

By Clara Bingham

Photo by Jason Schmidt







The women of the 107th Senate, photographed in the Senate Appropriations Committee room, December 5, 2000. Back row from left: Hillary Clinton, Deborah Stabenow, Barbara Boxer, Olympia Snowe, Susan Collins. Middle: Maria Cantwell, Patty Murray, Kay Bailey Hutchison. Front: Jean Carnahan, Mary Landrieu (with daughter Mary Shannon), Blanche Lincoln, Barbara Mikulski, and Dianne Feinstein.



It's the first night of the 2000 Democratic Convention in Los Angeles. Senator Barbara Mikulski has just introduced Hillary Clinton to the cheering throng. The first lady strides onto the stage, opening her arms wide to the six women senators standing at the podium. Each comes forward for a hug: Mikulski of Maryland, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer of California, Patty Murray of Washington, Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas, and Mary Landrieu of Louisiana. The excitement of the moment is supercharged by the idea that these, the most powerful women in government, are welcoming into their coterie a candidate who is not yet a peer in power—but who is already a more formidable, and possibly more presidential, political figure than anyone else onstage.

It was a fleeting moment, captured on film and transformed into a popular computer screen saver at Clinton's Senate campaign headquarters. Its promise is being fulfilled in January, though, with the first lady officially joining the women of the Senate—a group now 13 members strong. Will her reception be as warm as it was that summer night?

**“Because Clinton is viewed as being very partisan,” says Senator Collins, “it may be a challenge for her to reach across the aisle.”**

Will the sisterhood of the Senate embrace its latest arrival, whose star power far outshines her institutional status as a lowly freshman? Will the first lady, accustomed to being the center of attention, show deference toward her more senior colleagues? Or will the junior senator from New York become a scene-stealing turf rival in one of the most competitive legislative bodies in the world?

“As a practical reality, Senator Clinton is a historic figure, and her arrival will create a media buzz, because it's history,” says Mikulski, whose 14-year tenure makes her the “dean” of the Senate women. But Mikulski staunchly denies having any apprehension about being suffocated. “Let's just accept it and move on. We do not have klieg-light quotas.”

Other members sound a more cautionary note. “From my perspective I certainly didn't *want* Mrs. Clinton to win, but I respect that she worked hard, ran a good campaign, and won by a significant margin,” says Republican Senator Susan Collins of Maine. “Because Senator Clinton is viewed as being very partisan, it may be a challenge for her to reach across the aisle.”

The way she handles the challenge—and the way her colleagues respond—could prove critical to the balance of power in the 107th Congress. With the Senate evenly split along party lines, and partisan rancor further fueled by the protracted battle over the presidency, politics are in a tenuous state, and Hillary is a potential lightning rod. Memories of her foray into health care policy as first lady—a campaign criticized as high-handed and insufficiently collaborative—have not faded. And the wounds from the 1998 impeachment, during which a sizable number of her new colleagues voted to expel her husband from the White House, will not heal overnight.

Says one adviser to Clinton's Senate campaign: “There's going to be an enormous amount of focus on how she handles herself. I've advised her to be cautious and circumspect—to go slow. She has six years. If she makes a big splash at the beginning, people will congratulate her, then stab her in the back.”

Says Senator Clinton, “I respect the rules. I will learn them

and follow them.... I will work any way I can imagine to find common ground on issues that are particular to women senators.”

The Senate's seniority system works like a ladder: What you can do as a member of the “world's most exclusive club” depends on where you stand. On January 3, 2001, when Hillary is sworn in, her status as a former first lady will earn her no rank whatsoever in her new job. She stands on the 97th rung. Senate rules give preference in the pecking order to those who once served in the Senate, as vice president, in the House of Representatives, in the cabinet, or as governors. After those factors are accounted for, rank is determined on the basis of the size of the senators' states' populations and, lastly, the alphabetical order of their surnames. Hillary, even with the strength of the Empire State behind her, outranks only three others: a New Jersey junior senator who has never held office (number 98), a Minnesota department-store heir (number 99), and the widow of the late governor of Missouri, elected to the Senate as a dead man (number 100).

And yet Senator Clinton arrives with far more clout than any of her peers. As Robert Kennedy, whose seat she now occupies, did in 1965, Hillary comes to the chamber not only as a seasoned Washington insider but as a central figure in her party, a presidential possibility, a prolific fund-raiser (\$26 million for her own campaign), a media star, and the only senator bringing a Secret Service detail to Capitol Hill. She has the power to galvanize national attention on any issue—the power, as Truman Capote once put it, to “make people jump.” New York has a rich tradition of female officeholders—U.S. representatives Geraldine Ferraro, Elizabeth Holtzman, and Bella Abzug, and Lieutenant Governor Mary Anne Krupsak—but Hillary Clinton is the first woman in state history to claim a U.S. Senate seat.

For all that, the Senate with its strict rules and seniority structures has no pigeonhole in which to place a political anomaly like Hillary. Even before the full extent of her victory had sunk in on election night, the Republican majority leader took to the airwaves to give her a brass-knuckle warning. “I tell you one thing,” Trent Lott growled. “When this Hillary gets to the Senate, if she does—maybe lightning will strike and she won't—she will be one of 100, and we won't let her forget it.”

And they haven't. She is picking her desk on the Senate floor, her office suite, and her committees after 96 of her colleagues have already made their choices. The “dog suites” are in Dirksen, the least desirable Senate office building, but some junior senators learn to love the dogs and don't give them up. It could take six months to get assigned a permanent office suite, because of the start-of-session shuffle. Meanwhile, she dwells in a windowless transition office in a basement while she waits for more senior members to make their choices. But if she is given any preferential treatment—and the word is the Secret Service has already asked for extra office space—Democratic leader Tom Daschle may well face mayhem among his ranks.

At committee hearings senators ask questions in order of seniority, putting Hillary at the tail end of the line. That practice tested the patience of one of her predecessors, Robert Kennedy. Once, during a hearing, Kennedy whispered to his brother, Senator Edward Kennedy, “Is this the way I become a good senator—sitting here and waiting my turn?” “Yes,”



Edward replied. But RFK had to be in New York for an appointment. "How many hours do I have to sit here to be a good senator?" he asked his higher-ranking brother. The answer: "As long as necessary, Robbie."

Hillary may not have to wait as long to take her place among her sisters in the Senate—a close-knit group who pride themselves on their efforts to bury their political differences and work to restore a measure of collegiality to an increasingly fractious body of lawmakers.

Once a month for the last three years, the Senate women have gotten together for dinners at various Capitol Hill restaurants. Organized by Mikulski and Republican Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas, the dinners are "for us to foster collegial relationships in a very prickly partisan environment," Mikulski says. "Let's spend time getting to know each other as people, not just amendments." The ground rules for these gatherings: no memos, no staff, no leaks. "At the dinners we check our partisan hats at the door," says Democrat Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas. "We talk about legislation and our children and grandchildren. Someone will say that they were asked for a recipe, and everyone will laugh and say, 'When was the last time you cooked something?' There is a lot of fellowship and camaraderie."

These bonds have, at times, brought bipartisan legislative results. The senators teamed up to force the Department of Health and Human Services to revise its guidelines and recommend mammograms for women over 40 every year instead of every two years. Republican Olympia Snowe of Maine and Democrat Mikulski cosponsored the Senate's bill to require Medicaid to pay for the treatment of women diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer. Snowe and Washington Democrat Patty Murray worked together to allow military women to pay for their own abortions in military hospitals.

Last summer the group published *Nine and Counting: The Women of the Senate*, a joint political autobiography that they also promoted together. Along the way an unusual pact was made: During an appearance on *Larry King Live* the women agreed not to campaign against each other. Afterward, Senator Hutchison's phones "lit up like Christmas trees," according to a former aide, as angry callers rushed to protest her refusal to work against her more liberal colleagues. Hutchison, the most con-

**The Senate women hold regular dinners. "Let's get to know each other as people, not just amendments," Senator Mikulski says.**

servative of the Senate women, has had her share of disagreements with liberal Democrat Barbara Boxer—most notably on oil royalties. But the Texan has also worked closely with Boxer's fellow Californian, the equally liberal Senator Feinstein, on legislation to fund breast cancer research. Boxer insists the two leave their differences on the Senate floor. "We feel that as women we should set an example when it comes to civility," says Boxer.

Hillary's arrival will test those bonds anew—particularly for the Republicans. "There will probably be some delicate stepping around for a while with the Republican women," says one GOP aide. "I don't expect it to be a quick process."

Snowe, one of the Senate's most liberal Republicans, picked up the phone and called Hillary to congratulate her the day after the election. The two met in 1989 at a National Governors Association meeting for spouses. Bill Clinton was running Arkansas, while Snowe's husband, John McKernan, was governor of Maine. The two women exchanged notes on how to balance their roles

as first spouses with their careers. "How things change," marvels Snowe. "Now both of our husbands are the spouses."

The road may be rockier for Hutchison, who will be hard pressed to support a liberal icon whose role in controversies ranging from Whitewater to the White House travel office mess has made her red meat to the Republican Party's right wing. As for the prospect of working with Hillary, Hutchison would say only that "every senator will be treated with the respect that the representative of each state is due."

Despite the emphasis on camaraderie, Hillary and the three other freshman women taking office this month (Jean Carnahan, the widow of the late Missouri governor, and former representatives Deborah Stabenow of Michigan and Maria Cantwell of Washington) are entering a world in which egos are formidable and deference is due. How they get along with the other women in the Senate may hinge on how well they learn the group's unwritten rules.

Rule one: Mind the dean. Mikulski, a four-foot-11-inch former grassroots organizer whose outspoken style earned her the nickname "the Mouth," was the first Democratic woman ever elected to the Senate in her own right—i.e., not as a seat-warmer for a late husband. She has made it her mission to mentor incoming freshman women, holding "power workshops" to school them in everything from setting up an office and hiring staff to landing choice committee assignments. (She got a glimpse of what life with the new senator from New York will be like during her first post-2000 election coffee on December 6. The usually sedate affair was mobbed by the press; a line of some 48 cameras was trained on her as she made her entrance. One veteran Capitol Hill policeman called it the biggest stakeout since John Travolta came to Congress to testify on freedom of religion three years ago.)

Seniority has its privileges, and Mikulski is not shy about claiming them. When the women hold a press conference, the protocol never varies: Mikulski takes the microphone first, followed by the others in an order determined by their length of service. Wise candidates seek her counsel, and Hillary is no exception. She called Mikulski when she was pondering her Senate run and recruited her to help with the campaign in Buffalo, a place well suited to Mikulski's earthy, blue-collar appeal. But some observers see potential for friction. "Turf is a large word in

Mikulski's vocabulary," remarks one former Senate aide. "I'd like to see Hillary Clinton try to bigfoot Barbara Mikulski."

Others wonder aloud about how patient the outgoing first lady will be when she's waiting behind so many other speakers for her shot at the microphone. "The Senate is an unusual place," says Feinstein. "It will be a difficult transition from first lady to freshman senator. When you're a freshman and everything is done on seniority, the key will be her adjustment to that and her willingness to work within the system."

It helps that Hillary has plenty of friends in the chamber.

She is closest to Boxer, whose daughter Nicole married Hillary's brother, Tony Rodham. Although the couple is separated, Senators Clinton and Boxer are the aunt and grandmother, respectively, of young Zachary Rodham. Boxer was one of the first to urge Hillary to run for the Senate, upon learning

*Continued on page 127*



## BARAK

[hardly left] his room for four days, because he really thought Arafat would just accept the offer that he had made.

**SHLOMO BEN-AMI** is *Israel's foreign minister*: I followed closely his state of mind and was shocked to see how flexible he was in regard to the most crucial issues of the conflict between us and the Palestinians. There was no fixed idea for him. He was ready to change his mind when he thought it necessary. He really believed we could reach an agreement with the Palestinians in order to put an end to the conflict, but Arafat was not ripe for it during the Camp David summit. He failed to match Barak's boldness. No Israeli prime minister has offered the Palestinians more than he has.

**BRUCE RIEDEL** is *special assistant to President Clinton and senior director for Near East and South Asian affairs*: Barak, for a break from the intensity of the negotiations, asked to go and see two Civil War battlefields. He was extremely interested in the American Civil War, why the war had happened, the weapons that we used, the divisions that it caused, the casualties. He looked at it through the eyes of a professional soldier. This was not Shimon Peres talking about building a future of love and peace. This was a hard-edged soldier looking at a famous battlefield and trying to understand what had happened there, and yet at the same time seeing the parallels for his own country today.

**MURPHY**: At Camp David, Barak went beyond where the Americans had expected him to go. Barak pushed for the Camp David summit. I think he pushed the American side hard to hold the summit. Clinton may well have been hoping it would work for the sake of his own legacy, but no one would have criticized him for that had the talks succeeded. In any event Barak, by again breaking the mold on a number of Israeli positions—this time on Jerusalem, borders, and settlements—further raised the respect that Clinton and [U.S. envoy Dennis] Ross had for him. He gave the White House and our experts the hope that a comprehen-

sive deal just might be within reach. Unfortunately, Barak didn't need an agreement with Washington but one with Damascus and Arafat.

**SAVIR**: He saw us optimists about Oslo as dreamers. I think he saw Oslo as giving away too much, too many cards. For us the freedom of the Palestinians really meant something.

Barak had a more courageous approach to the Palestinian's interests than many of us. He had a courageous view of their interest in Jerusalem. So he puts more on the table. But he does it in a take-it-or-leave-it way.

I think Barak was ready to come out of Camp David with Arafat saying yes to the whole package. But with Arafat, there are no shortcuts. Arafat is prepared to go to the brink and a little bit beyond. Barak is a man of the pressure cooker. Arafat is much more a person of struggle and patience.

## THE DAYS OF RAGE

**EDGAR BRONFMAN** is *president of the World Jewish Congress*: I was over there just after [violence erupted in late September]. And that's when we talked. That was probably two weeks into it. You know, he was sitting at the table—it was a full table. But you would not have thought that there was anything wrong. I mean, he is Mr. Cool. He does not display his emotions. He didn't look frustrated, he didn't look angry: He had a job to do. He was doing it. But I mean, the question is, What does he show? He's a great poker player—reveals very little of his hand.

**BARAM**: I must confess one thing: Being a Laborite and one of the leaders of the peace camp in Israel, I hate to think that a prime minister from my party would lose in the elections. But this time I feel that I wouldn't grieve much if Barak were replaced by somebody else, even from the right-wing party. Anybody would be better than Barak.

I say if you have an electrical problem at home you call for an electrician. If you have a medical problem, you call for a doctor. Why, for God's sake, when we have a politi-

cal problem, do we call for an army general? Why don't we call for a real politician?

**EREKAT**: If I could take a tape recorder and record any one of the meetings between Barak and Arafat I could just play it back at all the rest, because it's always the same: "Peace of the brave; we have to make courageous decisions..." In Barak's time—and nobody really knows this—he has not ever agreed to transfer one inch of land to us. He transferred the land that Netanyahu committed to transfer. But he has not himself committed to the transfer of one inch of land. I think he is the only Israeli prime minister since the time of the agreements with Egypt in the 1970s who has not conceded to transfer one inch of land under Israeli military occupation.

Barak believes he is the savior. He got 56 percent of the popular vote, so he owed nobody anything. He can look Israelis in the eye and say, "What the hell are these people talking about? I was in the military; I know what is needed." And he can say, as he did publicly the other day, "If it takes 2,000 Palestinians to die to get what we want, we'll do it."

**RABBI MICHAEL MELCHIOR** is *minister for Israeli Society and the World Jewish Community*: He has difficulty in personal relationships, creating a warmth around him—including in relationships with Arafat. But he has gone so far in order to find a real, decent compromise—a win-win compromise, which would give the Palestinians their self-determination and their own state—this they could have got. This is what Barak gave them. They didn't need to have all this bloodshed for that. And he just can't accept...that just because you haven't kissed Arafat the right way, or you haven't created that kind of relationship, that that's a justification for starting off a whole intifada with hundreds of people killed and endangering really the whole future of the Middle East.

It's a tragedy. And I think he feels also this is a tragedy. And he is now caught between the necessity to defend our country and our citizens and [the imperative] not to give up the hope of peace so that everything falls apart. Israel will pay a very dear price. ■

*Additional reporting by Nancy Beiles*

## SISTER POWER

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of Daniel Patrick Moynihan's plan to retire. Boxer raised money for her campaign and defended her against allegations of anti-Semitism raised by one of her husband's former staffers. The two also worked together to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

Hillary also has working relationships with Louisiana's Mary Landrieu (adoption legislation), Washington's Patty Murray (education reform), California's Feinstein (the rights of women in Afghanistan), and Mikulski (breast

and cervical cancer treatment). "For all of these women she has done many, many fundraisers and campaign trips," says Melanne Verveer, Hillary's White House chief of staff. "We've been in Sacramento for Barbara Boxer, San Francisco for Dianne Feinstein, Seattle for Patty Murray, Arkansas for Blanche Lincoln. She's been there for all of them."

Hillary will benefit further from being a member of the largest group of freshman Senate women since 1992, when five women swept into Washington in the wake of Anita

Hill's allegations against Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas. "We will be 13 percent of the senators, and there will be 10 Democratic women," says Mikulski, noting that women will comprise fully one-fifth of the Senate Democratic Caucus. Ellen Malcolm, president of EMILY's List (for Early Money Is Like Yeast), which backs pro-choice Democratic women candidates for office, is especially excited about the "giant killers"—Stabenow and Cantwell, who are the first women ever to defeat Senate incumbents.



## SISTER POWER

Hillary's star power will help draw attention to issues of interest to all of them. "She will add a lot of luster to the issues that the women think are important," says one Senate aide. "On the other hand, will she get more attention than they will? Sure. But she will bring a certain heft to causes that will help them: children, family, choice. She'll have a bully pulpit."

Further, her reputation as a hard worker and policy wonk may help defuse the tensions built up over the last eight years. "They have plenty of personal reasons to hate her," says Lawrence O'Donnell, former chief of staff for Moynihan. But "personal reasons for hating people never hold in the Senate."

In the end Hillary's success will depend on what kind of senator she decides to be: "a grandstander or a legislator," as one veteran adviser puts it.

"There are a lot of senators who have been here for 30 to 40 years and who have a very strong sense of territory, and they happen

to all be men," says Feinstein. "They aren't going to have some young woman who happened to be first lady come in and tell them what to do."

Senator Collins agrees. "We newcomers have found it's up to us to prove ourselves, and it will be no different for her," the Maine Republican warns. "You have to show you're willing to do the hard work and not just grab headlines."

But Senator Clinton can't stop attracting the spotlight. She made waves just days after the election, when she announced plans to introduce legislation to abolish the Electoral College—hardly a humble freshman move. And whether she likes it or not, she will be dogged by speculation that she'll waste no time launching her candidacy for the presidency in 2004. "When you're a freshman and you're a presidential candidate, as was Gore's case," recalls O'Donnell, "you really are a little bit more ineffectual than other freshmen, because each party tries to

get in the way of the other party's presidential candidates—and there will probably be some roadblocks set up specifically for Hillary."

Senator Clinton can take some comfort in the knowledge that she won't be the only member of the family adjusting to a new role. It's fun to think of the former president meeting once a month for Bible study with the Senate Spouses Club, an institution that as recently as the 1960s and '70s concerned itself with rolling bandages and similar good works. The bipartisan club is currently run by Joyce Bennett, wife of the Republican senator from Utah. But she may soon face competition. "I know that you've heard me say I hope to join the Senate Spouses Club," Bill Clinton told the Radio and Television Correspondents Association dinner at the Washington Hilton last spring. "But I've been thinking, I don't really want to be a member of the Senate Spouses Club. I want to be president of the Senate Spouses Club." ■

## BRYAN

*Continued from page 89*

brunet and a marital therapist, is said by people close to her to have remained a confidante of Bryan despite their impending divorce and his highly publicized affair with Wintour. Bryan is a devoted and generous father to his four children. To support the family's lifestyle, including maintaining their stable of homes, the children's educations, and their active shopping and travel schedules, the Bryans run up annual bills of about \$4 million, much of it financed by the sizable credit lines Bryan maintains with three large banks. Bryan is said by one source with direct knowledge of his finances to currently owe the banks about \$6 million. Because he has pledged ICG and Millicom stock as collateral against those credit lines—and apparently keeps little cash on hand in the U.S.—he has been forced on occasion to meet margin calls on the debt, including one instance in which he had to quickly refinance a \$2.7 million mortgage on his East Hampton home to meet creditors' demands.

Bryan left Millicom in 1994, burned out by a grueling travel schedule that had him circling the globe twice a year, a routine that took a toll on his family life. A year later a group of Millicom investors recruited him to run ICG Communications, a tiny firm in Colorado that initially sought a niche selling local phone service to small businesses. Later ICG changed course, specializing in selling blocks of local service and high-speed Internet access to large corporations such as Microsoft.

ICG already had operational woes when Bryan joined, but he was intrigued by the chance to turn the company around and by

the excitement surrounding the future of the telecom business. Bryan believed that ICG, if correctly positioned, could play a leading role in one of the country's most dynamic industries.

Until recently telecom companies enjoyed almost as much cachet on Wall Street as high-flying Internet concerns, and both industries have come crashing back to earth in recent months. Many small telcos—some with scant business prospects—received ample backing from investors and bankers, much of it through risky high-yield debt. ICG alone managed to issue \$2 billion in these so-called "junk" bonds. And though ICG's bond default has drawn wide attention, several other small telecom companies have issued huge amounts of junk debt and face similarly grim futures. "ICG is very high-profile because of the investors involved," explains Lehman Brothers telecom analyst Timothy Luke. "But there are a lot of troubled telcos out there."

What makes ICG exceptional is that none of the other telco failures of recent months has been greeted with as much raw animosity as ICG's downfall, nor with prominent investors making such pointed accusations of duplicity.

From the time Bryan joined ICG in 1995 until he was forced out of the company in August 2000, ICG had absolutely no profits; the company was, in fact, hemorrhaging hundreds of millions of dollars a year. The company's losses totaled about \$1.4 billion over Bryan's tenure as CEO. Of course, most small telcos were losing a lot of money because of the heavy investments needed to make their networks viable. Wall Street

responded by valuing the group according to cash flow, or how much free cash is generated before paying interest, taxes, and other expenses. On that scale ICG sized up favorably against competitors. But its cash flow deteriorated rapidly last year. In April the company projected annual cash flow of \$150 million. By September its projected cash flow had fallen to \$17 million—an 89 percent drop.

Nonetheless ICG spent money freely. Bryan hired architect Stephen Wood (his old fraternity brother) to build ICG a \$34 million glass and granite headquarters in the Denver suburb of Englewood, Colorado, with in-house dry cleaning services and decor that included expensive antique maps and photographs. Bryan's compensation, which was about \$300,000 in 1996, ballooned to \$1.6 million in 1999.

Bryan was rarely at ICG's headquarters. Analysts say that he was only there three or four days a month, leading some of them to question his credibility when making earnings projections to Wall Street. Two senior ICG officials say that Bryan's absences from ICG's headquarters were not evidence of neglect. They say he was often on the road raising money or lobbying for the company in Washington. Still, critics were aggravated that Bryan spent as much time as he did on the political and social circuits.

After President Clinton's 1996 reelection, rumors spread that Bryan would be tapped for an ambassadorship, and ICG's board of directors queried Bryan about his intentions. Bryan told the board that he had no plans to leave the company. A person close to Bryan says that he never thought of swap-



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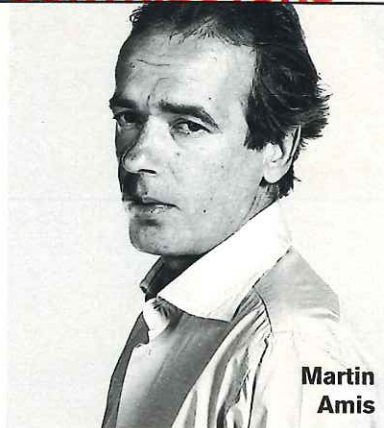
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## CONTRIBUTORS



**Martin Amis**



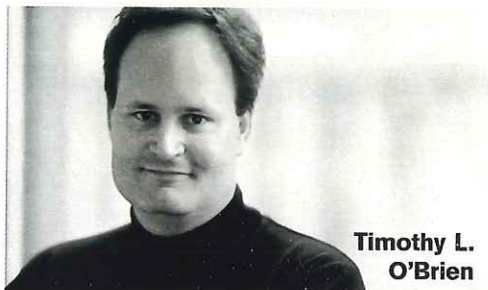
**Laura Hillenbrand**



**Elfie Semotan**



**Clara Bingham**



**Timothy L. O'Brien**

**Martin Amis** is the author of 15 books, including his recently published memoir *Experience*, in which he explored his relationship with his father, the late novelist Kingsley Amis. On page 98 Amis looks into the business of pornography, journeying to the San Fernando Valley in order to deliver a bleak and funny account of its denizens. "The average American spends three hours and 51 minutes of every day watching porn," Amis jokes. He adds, "But the true figures are similarly wild, similarly through-the-roof."

**Clara Bingham's** book *Women on the Hill: Challenging the Culture of Congress* followed the women of the 103rd Congress in the wake of the 1991 Clarence Thomas hearings. On page 82 Bingham deconstructs the rank and file of the current Senate and explores how Hillary Rodham Clinton might navigate a restrictive seniority system that dates back almost 200 years. "Hillary is already so steeped in the policy issues that she's going to hit the ground running," says Bingham. "It's going to be fascinating to see her operate with her own legitimate political power base already in place."

**Laura Hillenbrand** is a contributor at *Equus* magazine. A winner of the Eclipse Award for magazine writing, Hillenbrand shares an excerpt from her forthcoming book *Seabiscuit: An American Legend*, on page 108, where she re-creates the legendary 1938 race between War Admiral and Seabiscuit—whose unexpected victory thrilled a nation. "The Depression played a big role in Seabiscuit's popularity," says Hillenbrand. "This was a rags-to-riches horse coming along at a time when people needed affirmation. He provided that and became a real cult hero in America." For more on "The Horse that Was All Heart," visit [www.seabiscuitonline.com](http://www.seabiscuitonline.com).

**Timothy L. O'Brien** joins *Talk* as a senior features writer. A former reporter for *The New York Times*, he was part of the team that received the Gerald Loeb Award for business and financial journalism for coverage of the near-collapse of hedge-fund giant Long-Term Capital Management. Having covered Wall Street for nearly a decade, O'Brien charts the rise and fall of high-flying financier Shelby Bryan, on page 86. "Bryan's business story is a window into how things really work on Wall Street," says O'Brien, "and the long knives that come out when things go wrong."

**Elfie Semotan's** photography has appeared in numerous magazines and in advertising campaigns for Gap, Ann Taylor, and Helmut Lang. For this issue Semotan photographed Joan Allen (page 40) and Benicio Del Toro (page 44). "Benicio is very good-looking and approachable. There is something so normal about him," she says. "Allen knows the way she wants to appear. It's intense work. You find a common interest, and they open up and let you in, let you show them how they look."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MICHAEL BIRT, LAUREN CHELEC, ELFIE SEMOTAN, GREG ALLEN, MOLLY BINGHAM