

Hillary Invokes Assassination

By [Prof. Marjorie Cohn](#)

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For weeks, pundits have speculated about why Hillary Clinton insists on remaining in the primary race when Barack Obama has all but clinched the Democratic presidential nomination. On Friday, Clinton answered that question. It appears she's waiting in the wings for something dreadful to befall Obama.

When asked by the editorial board of South Dakota's Sioux Falls Argus-Ledger why she is still running, Clinton replied, *"My husband did not wrap up the nomination in 1992 until he won the California primary somewhere in the middle of June, right? We all remember Bobby Kennedy was assassinated in June in California . I don't understand it."*

It's astounding that a presidential candidate could verbalize such a thing when the collective American psyche still aches from the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., and Robert F. Kennedy. Many of us remember where we were when these heroes were shot. The pain we felt is palpable. We still suffer from their absence.

Clinton , evidently surprised at the ferocity of the reaction to her statement, made a half-baked non-apology a few hours later. She expressed regret that anything she said could have offended the Kennedy family. But she uttered not a word of repentance for her suggestion that Barack Obama's death could inure to her benefit.

The response to Clinton 's invocation of the "A" word was swift and strong. The New York Times called it an "inexcusable outburst." Keith Olbermann characterized it as "crass and low and unfeeling and brutal." Noting that "the politics of this nation is steeped in blood," he admonished Clinton : "You cannot and must not invoke that imagery, anywhere, at any time."

Clinton 's remarks offer a look into her character. In Olbermann's words, they "open a door wide into the soul of somebody who seeks the highest office in this country and through that door shows something not merely troubling but frightening."

Before Friday, a groundswell of support for an Obama-Clinton ticket appeared to be building. But as New York state Sen. Bill Perkins, an Obama supporter, said when he heard Clinton 's comments, "My jaw just dropped — I think she just basically shattered her hopes of being named as vice president. To use the example of an assassination," Perkins added, "I think, leads one to believe that she may be talking about something unfortunate happening to Barack Obama. Couple that with the other remarks she made recently about winning the white vote and her husband's statements and I'd say something is seriously amiss."

How, after Clinton 's ominous remarks, could Obama ever turn his back on her if she became his vice-president?

Anyone who “*might be sticking around on the off-chance the other guy might get shot has no business being the president of the United States*,” Olbermann declared. As Newsweek’s Howard Fineman noted, Clinton ‘s is “a campaign that probably needs to be put out of its misery real soon.”

Representative James E. Clyburn of South Carolina , an uncommitted superdelegate, commented that Clinton ‘s remarks were “beyond the pale.” Indeed, the remaining uncommitted superdelegates should stop the bleeding now and allow us to move on with the election.

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