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IN MY OPINION**Caroline Porter**

Why pillory Hillary?

You hear both men and women indignantly proclaiming, "Isn't it just awful that Hillary stays with Bill? What a disgrace, to be treated that way. It can't be love. It's just a marriage of power and convenience."

My answer to that is — so what? How many women have we known that stay with poor, downtrodden slobs who beat them and abuse their children, are awful husbands and fathers. Or, women who stay with rich, publicly respected men, who abuse them and their children and are awful husbands and fathers. Or, women who are bored silly but simply like money and prestige. Men and women stay in marriages for all sorts of reasons. At the time of President Clinton's last escapade when people were protesting that Hillary should dump him, I thought to myself, "Oh, right. Just pack up a bag or two and march out of the White House. How dumb could a woman be?"

Frankly, I would love to live in the White House — bowl whenever I wanted, have a private swimming pool, watch free movies in my own theater, sunbathe on the Truman balcony, with servants to do just about everything. I would have my own staff and lovely offices, meet important people, make speeches (I love to make speeches) and be treated like royalty. Yeah, I could handle that kind of life, romping around the White House, surrounded by history, beautiful paintings, with plenty of space for me. Frankly, I would be a happy camper no matter what ridiculous things my husband was doing.

I'm not saying I condone Prez Bill's behavior, but he does have a few redeeming qualities — like good looks, good sense of humor, being a good and loving father,



intelligence, compatibility, being president of the United States — you know, stuff like that.

But wait. Hillary has done what many women do when they are ready to bolt. She's gone and gotten herself a job. She has her own income, a beautiful home of her own, important contacts and responsibilities aside from being first lady. She's done what every man dreads, become financially independent. I'm not sure what will become of this marriage, but it is stronger than most. Whatever keeps Bill and Hillary together is something many of us don't have and don't understand. Chelsea is one obvious reason. Maybe we should stop criticizing Hillary and be grateful the public isn't examining our marriages.

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