

It was “Cheesy Listening” night at the Zodiac club in Oxford, and all the Sloanes were there. The Sloanes—so named for their resemblance to an affected set in London in the 80s—are the girls who run the Oxford University social scene, or at least think they do, because they are pretty and blonde and have families with vacation homes in places like Ibiza, which they pronounce “Ih-bee-tha.” They can easily be spotted by their pink pashminas.

There was another girl there that night—this was the fall of 2001, just after classes had begun for the year. The girl was not blonde, but her parents were two of the most powerful people in the world. She stood on the sideline watching her new classmates dance. It was a position she was unused to. She had spent most of her life at the center of things. She was Chelsea Clinton, and she wanted to get out on the dance floor.

She loved to dance. As a child, she had performed in *The Nutcracker* with the Washington School of Ballet. A wire service had declared her performance “graceful”; a president had sat in the audience, cheering her on. In North Africa, on a state visit, accompanying a First Lady, she had danced with the Bedouins, and a national magazine had commented on her spirited “leaping and shimmying.”

But here in Oxford the students seemed to be taking perverse delight in simply ignoring her, or maybe it was the presence of the two Secret Service men, posted nearby, that dissuaded anyone from asking her to go for a whirl. She watched as the Sloanes and their dates boogied down to the sounds of “Lady Marmalade” and “Stayin’ Alive.” American music, her music.

And then Chelsea decided to take matters into her own hands. She spotted a handsome boy in the crowd and let one of her guards know she would like to dance with him. The Secret Service man dutifully approached the boy, and Chelsea danced.

“It was a bit odd,” one of the boy’s friends said later, “because it was so sort of ‘Your presence is requested’ kind of thing ... as if he were being taken in front of the Queen.”

In the months since that lonely night in Oxford, Chelsea Clinton has indeed emerged as a kind of queen—a media queen. She was once known as a plain, studious girl given to wearing slogan T-shirts (DON’T LET THE FUTURE HAPPEN WITHOUT YOU was a favorite), but now her public image has been treated to the sort of glamour infusion publicists only dream about while delirious with fever.

The crowning moment came in January, when Chelsea turned up sitting in the front row of a Donatella Versace couture

show in Paris next to Gwyneth Paltrow and Madonna—the unlikeliest paparazzi shot to come along in years. Her usual Banana Republic cast aside for a black Versace pantsuit, Chelsea was beautiful. Her curly hair had been straightened in a Versace-masterminded pageboy almost universally deemed to be transforming. “I am a bit dazzled by it all,” Chelsea said, in between attempts to share observations with Paltrow.

But if the glare of the spotlight bothered her, Chelsea didn’t let on. In March, she jetted to Milan for Versace’s ready-to-wear show, this time hobnobbing with Heather Graham. As she sat watching the models, Chelsea’s hand rested on the thigh of her boyfriend, a mop-headed American Rhodes scholar at Oxford named Ian Klaus. The couple’s “dirty dancing” antics at the after-party prompted the New York *Daily News* to remark, “Chelsea Clinton has inherited her father’s lust gene.”

“The press is still all over me in London, but on the Continent

I can do what I want,” Chelsea told *Woman’s Wear Daily*. Since then, the passionate pair’s P.D.A.’s have become shark bait for tabloids all over the world. “I’ve been very good to you,” Chelsea recently told a busy Oxford paparazzo named Clive Postlethwaite, playfully slapping his hand. “I try not to thrust Ian into the limelight,” Chelsea told reporters at the London premiere of *The Shipping News*, going on to say she would have preferred to be in Oxford, studying, but she felt she had to come “because of Kevin”—Spacey. The British papers have faithfully covered Chelsea’s nearly weekly outings in the company of celebrities such as Paul McCartney and his fiancée, Heather Mills, Bianca Jagger, and model Sophie Dahl. Chelsea has been taken under the wing of society mavens Sally Greene, head of the Old Vic theater, and Nicky Haslam, a sexagenarian man-about-town known for his spiky hair and leather pants.

Tatler magazine voted Chelsea the fifth-most-eligible young woman in Britain, while the British men’s magazine *FHM* ranked her one of the 50 most eligible in the world, along with Oprah Winfrey.



A makeover, an internationally tracked love affair—now all that was needed was the whiff of scandal to make Chelsea’s refitted celebrity complete. SWAY TO GO, CHELSEA, said the *News of the World* in December, with shots of a red-faced Chelsea apparently stumbling from a car and having to be held up by friends. It was a memorable night in London, with her father in town for the holidays. They had taken 15 guests and 16 bodyguards out to Conrad Gallagher’s restaurant, where they reportedly rang up a £9,000 bill. Then it was on to the Groucho Club, CONTINUED ON PAGE 223

LEFT, BY DAVID FORNELL; RIGHT, BY BEIRNE

maybe it sits at the center of the human condition. . . . In Book Eight of Homer's *Odyssey*, where Odysseus, the man of sorrow, moans and groans as he hears the song sung by the blind boy Demodocus about the siege of Troy. He's saying something about each and every one of us. Or recall those moans and groans in those last six pages of Leo Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. He confronts himself and his history, wrestles with himself and his history. Du Bois says yes, that's where the discussion about race begins, with the struggle over the evil in us and in our society and in human history.

The message here isn't complicated. But the range and exactness of references gain dramatic force because of West's unscripted delivery; its pacing and inflections hint at improvisatory risk. The audience, never quite sure where this is all leading, is drawn into the performance. In one of his best-known essays, "The Dilemma of the Black Intellectual," written in 1985, West says, "There are two *organic* intellectual traditions in Afro-American life: the *black*

Christian tradition of preaching and the black musical tradition of performance." (Italics are West's.) Like other black artists, West unites both forms. And he adds the lecturer's equivalent of footnotes. The crowning irony is that West, "the rapping professor," is probably doing as much as any teacher of his generation to breathe new life into the pantheon of dead white guys, making them part of a "dialogue" that binds ancient and modern, European and American, white and black, male and female, king and slave.

This fusion also represents the best of black studies. Skeptics will never forgive the discipline its origins within the campus protests of the late 60s. To them it seems incurably separatist and thus at odds with the very idea of pure knowledge and the search for truth. They forget, perhaps, that American studies was seen as heretical in its day, too, as its own form of separatism, from the Continental tradition. Purists used to scorn American studies just as they now scorn what Gates and West and company have wrought.

But the quest for identity courses through all American history, no less in Whitman and Melville than in Frederick Douglass and Du Bois. Race matters because it is a prism through which the whole of American history can be filtered. Slavery and its aftermath were not simply a stain on the national character but, in some sense, an irreducible feature of the American experience, the "precondition," as West puts it, of the country we are. The black Everyman (or woman) has become—indeed always has been—the Ur-American.

So too with Cornel West, whose "public ministry" is not so very different from the religious ideals of Harvard's founders—17th-century Puritans for whom teaching was a form of spiritual communion. "He's actually a very old-fashioned scholar," says Anthony Appiah. "He spends huge amounts of his time reading, thinking, seminaring, and talking to students at midnight, a group of them gathered around working with a text." Just what Larry Summers once said Harvard needs more of. □

Chelsea Clinton

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 188 a private bar for the literary and show-business elite, where pal Bono of U2 played the piano for Bill.

"Bill had tea with lemon," says a Groucho Club waiter. "Bono was having pink champagne. Bill was going around offering to sign autographs and pose for photographs. He said, 'Would you like a picture with me?'"

In April, the supermarket tabloid the *Globe* tried to cause a stir with the headline CHELSEA ELOPES—but the cover photo would have been enough. Again there was Chelsea—or rather there was her tongue, springing into the mouth of Ian Klaus, in telephoto detail.

That shot, taken on a trip to Venice, can't be the kind of thing the Clintons envision as an ideal image for the daughter they always tried to portray as the epitome of a proper young lady—serious, smart, once the personal counselee of the Reverend Jesse Jackson. (When contacted for this article, the Clintons said that as a matter of policy they do not comment on Chelsea.)

But Chelsea is clearly no longer controlled by her parents. The stream of steamy photographs has done what no one would have thought possible years ago, when Chelsea was a girl with braces in billowing Laura Ashley dresses: Chelsea Clinton has become a sex symbol. She's the new J.F.K. Jr.

When Chelsea was a little girl, her father, then governor of Arkansas, kept a small desk in his office where she could do her "work." In the age of baby-boomer parenting, lots of dads like to include their

children in the workplace, but probably none with as heightened a sense of images as Bill Clinton. As a 16-year-old boy who already knew he wanted to be president, Bill made sure to have his photograph taken with President John F. Kennedy on a trip, with the Boys Nation group, to the Rose Garden in 1963—an image he would use to his political advantage later. He no doubt became aware of another shot, snapped that same year, of Kennedy with his son, John junior, scrambling beneath his desk in the Oval Office.

If Chelsea Clinton thinks of herself as a political legacy, it's no wonder. She has watched her mother go from First Lady to senator of New York amid speculation that Hillary Clinton will one day run for president. "Most presidents' children—they sink like stones once their parent leaves office," says Gil Troy, a presidential historian. "But this is a different age." A president's son currently occupies the White House; there are more women in the Senate than ever before—13. If the timing isn't right for Hillary, it just may be for Chelsea.

It was her mother who first compared their family to the Kennedys, in her 1996 best-seller, *It Takes a Village*. Just prior to moving into the White House, Hillary said, she spent time with Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, who offered advice on being the parent of a president's daughter. "She stressed the importance of giving children as normal a life as possible," Hillary wrote, "of granting them the chance to fight their private battles while protecting them from public exposure."

In the book, a tract on children's issues,

Hillary can be seen as a sort of sagacious mother figure in the communal Village, using many examples from the life of Chelsea to illustrate healthy methods of child rearing. The most vivid is one in which Bill hurls insults about himself to six-year-old Chelsea at the dinner table, so that the little girl can gain "mastery over her emotions" before encountering attacks on her father during his second campaign for governor of Arkansas.

"She was always obviously very interested in what her parents were doing and in global issues that the president was wrestling with," says P. J. Crowley, former national-security spokesman. At 15, Chelsea surprised her father by asking for a ticket to his State of the Union address. "She certainly is interested in the substance of politics," says former health secretary Donna Shalala.

Particularly in his last year in the White House, Bill Clinton seemed to be rather openly grooming his daughter for a career in politics—something perhaps encouraged by Chelsea herself. In March of 2000, she traveled with the president on a tour of Southeast Asia. That September he sent her as an official U.S. representative to the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. At the Olympics, the press—which for eight years had essentially honored the Clintons' insistence on Chelsea's privacy—began to chafe when the First Daughter continued to refuse to answer even the blandest sort of questions. (*Do you like the Opera House?* "I think we all love the Opera House," interjected Shalala, her traveling companion.) "This is all getting weird," said *The Washington Post*, adding that the Games were "financed with taxpayer dollars . . . so couldn't

Chelsea Clinton

she do more than stand there and smile?"

The sudden presence of Chelsea in a quasi-official position next to her father was attributed to the post-Monicagate chill between Bill and Hillary, who was now busy campaigning for senator of New York. In the fall of 2000, Chelsea took a semester off from school to campaign alongside her mother. Although she was veritably mute throughout the many stops around New York State, Chelsea's presence proved winning. *The New York Times* described her as a "quiet political force"—as always a support in Hillary's ongoing effort to portray herself as a warm human being.

In 1999, Bill included Chelsea at the table at Camp David for peace talks between Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak. The Israeli delegation reportedly complained to the president, asking what she was doing there.

When the world changed forever on September 11, so did the world of Chelsea Clinton. In the wake of the disaster, the so-called Greta Garbo of American politics spoke in the December issue of the now defunct *Talk* magazine.

While the fact of the piece was widely noted by the press, the actual content went largely unmentioned. No one picked up on Chelsea's emotional announcement that she was running for president—or something like it, someday.

"Before and After"—billed as a memoir of Chelsea's day in New York on the day the planes hit—reads like a coming-of-age story, an Oprahesque attempt to deal with feelings about terrorism's coming to America's shores, and a campaign speech, all rolled into one. It's very Clintonian.

"I don't know very much these days," Chelsea wrote. "Before September 11 I wouldn't have believed I had many innocences left. . . . I had mourned with the victims of the USS Cole, seen lives devastated by floods in the Midwest and wrecked by earthquakes in Turkey. . . ."

This melancholy "I," who never mentions the name of her famous mother and father, takes it for granted that we know which compassionate, globe-trotting public figure we are hearing from. But if we think we know her, she is clearly out to frame a new image. There are many electable Chelseas in the piece.

There is Chelsea, girl of the people: after seeing the news on television, Chelsea said, she ran into the streets (she was in town visiting a friend), where she became one of the tens of thousands of New Yorkers who feared they were running for their lives. "I was expounding on the detriments of Bush's tax cut as we approached Grand Central

Terminal and were met with hordes of people running out of the station. . . ."

There is Chelsea, champion of the September dead: days after the attacks, Chelsea said, she and her father "walked around and listened to people's stories," during which she started giving interviews, in order to let grieving relatives "stand behind me so that the cameras might light on their loved ones' pictures." There is Chelsea, a devoted daughter: "As he always does, my father made me extremely proud." She is a Christian ("I prayed for my country and my city"), a New Yorker ("I expect now that I'll always be one"), and a friend to the Jews ("That Monday I went to Rosh Hashanah services with family friends. . . .").

There is Chelsea, a patriot ("Should I quit [school] and enlist?"), a liberal ("I realize that not all Americans feel the way I do about our current engagement in Afghanistan"), and a closet conservative ("That day Giuliani became my captain").

There is Chelsea, the woman—"I am not immune to loneliness"—and a young lady who knows her fashion. To escape harm's way, she said, she and her friends headed up Madison Avenue. "After all," she asked, "how would blowing up a Roberto Cavalli store resonate across America, much less the world?"

And, finally, there was Chelsea, a future leader of her generation: "I. . . feel a new urgency to play a part in America's future. I do not know where my life will take me. . . . What I do know is that I will somehow serve my country."

With that statement, she stuck her flag in the memory of September 11. It was reminiscent of a speech made 32 years earlier by a Wellesley senior, Hillary Rodham. Hillary's commencement address to her graduating class was seen as a statement of purpose for her generation (and was, by contrast, anti-war). It got Hillary's picture in *Life* magazine. She arrived at Yale Law School already known as a leader.

"One false note to me [in Chelsea's piece] was the part about running with the crowds in the smoky haze of that awful day and ruminating about the tax cut," says Howard Kurtz, media writer for *The Washington Post*. "It had a level of political calculation reminiscent of her parents."

Chelsea Victoria Clinton was born on February 27, 1980, in Little Rock, not Hope like her father.

She was named, as has often been said, for the Joni Mitchell song "Chelsea Morning." Her father was overwhelmed with emotion holding the baby for the first time; he had never known his own father, William Jefferson Blythe III, who had been killed in a car accident in 1946, three months before he was born. By the time of Chelsea's arrival,

tensions were already surfacing in the Clinton marriage. In his 1995 Clinton biography, *First in His Class*, David Maraniss writes of how a longtime Clinton friend saw the future president singing his one-year-old daughter a lullaby, substituting the lyrics "I want a div-or-or-orce. I want a div-or-or-orce."

Chelsea's first home was the Governor's Mansion in Little Rock; at 32 her father was the youngest governor in Arkansas history. After he was voted out in 1981, she spent the only two years of her life (until now) in a private house, owned by the Clintons. This was apparently another dark period in their marriage, with Bill depressed and working as a lawyer while trying to get re-elected. He did, and in 1983 the Comeback Kid and his family packed up and moved back into the mansion.

Chelsea's mother was by then a high-powered attorney with the Rose Law Firm and the breadwinner in the family (Bill's salary as governor was \$35,000 a year). Chelsea was looked after by "a ready-made village of adults who were willing to pinch-hit when I needed extra help," Hillary wrote in *It Takes a Village*, stressing that her attentiveness to every detail of her daughter's life was unwavering. She refused, for example, to allow Chelsea to wear Velcro-fastened shoes—a gift from Chelsea's fun-loving, racetrack-going paternal grandma, Virginia Kelley (whom, in Kelley's youthful photographs, Chelsea resembles most of all)—because it would prevent her from learning how to tie her laces. But there were signs that Hillary, like many modern moms, found juggling work and motherhood taxing. On a 1987 business trip, she was overheard snapping on the phone, "Well, I don't know, Bill. Did you feel her forehead? I don't know if she has a fever. I'm in Chicago."

Chelsea thrived in Little Rock. She had a tree house, a cat named Socks; she played soccer and studied ballet. She skipped third grade. At four years old, asked what gift she would like to give to her mother, she replied, "Life insurance." "This tiny child wanted me to live forever," explained Hillary, affectionately.

Chelsea also took an early interest in the stock market. She liked to play cards, at which she was said to be devilishly good. "She tried to cheat, but her parents wouldn't let her," says a photographer who took the family's picture at the Governor's Mansion in 1992. Chelsea went to public school in Arkansas, which also proved favorable to her father's political image.

Bill always said that he made a point of having breakfast with Chelsea every day, but as he became more consumed by the demands of his career, he had difficulty finding time to spend with her. David Maraniss writes of how Clinton was crushed to find that Chelsea wasn't terribly upset to learn he

couldn't accompany her and her mother on a planned family trip in 1987 because he had decided to run for president. "Well," Chelsea said, "then Mom and I will go without you."

This anecdote was later played out in the press as a symbol of Chelsea's maturity. But her father found it troubling enough to cause him to delay his presidential run by four years. "I need some family time," he said in a statement (he was also battling the first reports of his extramarital dalliances).

When he finally did make his announcement, outside Little Rock's Old State House, in 1991, Chelsea held back tears. She was 11.

As a child, as a teenager, there were ways in which she reminded me of her father," says a former adviser to the president. "She was very unself-conscious, friendly, physically affectionate, quick to give people a hug. Very open to the world."

"She reminds me of a combination of the two," says Donna Shalala. "Bright, attractive, articulate, very comfortable in her own skin. She gravitated more towards history and political science."

"[She] has her mother's character and her father's energy," Bill Clinton told *The New York Times* in 2001.

Not much has been written about Chelsea's White House years, largely because of her parents' strenuous efforts to shield her. When the Clintons moved into the White House, the "family pool" of rotating reporters was reduced from 14 to 8. "They made it clear she was off-limits," says the former adviser. Even Chelsea's body language was off-limits. Even comments she made about what she had had for dinner were ordered off the record (like her dad, she liked fried chicken), with the unofficial threat that wayward reporters could be denied access to the president. "Everybody knew what it was," the former adviser says. "And the press agreed, O.K., we will leave her alone."

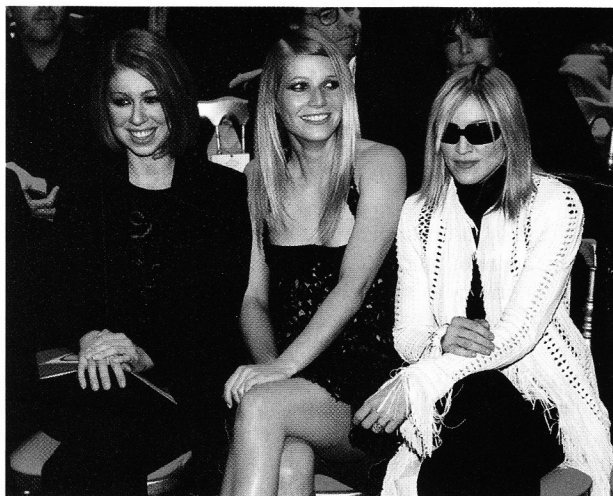
The Clintons had the painful experience of Amy Carter to guide them. Amy—nine years old when she moved into the White House in 1977—was mercilessly examined and often ridiculed by the media, the most tasteless example being a report in *The Washington Star* calling attention to her "beginning of a bosom, a hint of a waist."

When Bill was elected in 1992, there was fear that Chelsea—who, at 12, was going through what was described as an "awkward stage"—would meet with the same sort of treatment. Fear became panic when right-wing commentator Rush Limbaugh took his digs at the First Couple by going after their

child, referring to her as "the White House dog." *Saturday Night Live* also did a skit in which Chelsea, played by geek specialist Julia Sweeney, was compared unfavorably with the Ralph Lauren-ish Gore girls. Hillary was said to be furious, and she laid down the law, as far as coverage.

"I really find it hilarious when they make fun of me," Bill said in a post-election interview in *People* magazine. "But I think you gotta be pretty insensitive to make fun of an adolescent child."

But it seemed that the Clintons had a double standard when it came to Chelsea. "They did brilliantly deploy Chelsea when they needed to," says historian Gil Troy. When the news broke, during Bill's 1992 presidential campaign, of his relationship with Little Rock lounge singer Gennifer Flowers, Chelsea suddenly appeared as counterweight to her parents' seemingly



AFTER THE MAKEOVER
Chelsea Clinton, Gwyneth Paltrow,
and Madonna in the front
row at the Versace fashion show in
Paris in January.

rocky marriage. Bill and Hillary went on *60 Minutes* to talk about how they had dealt with the affair; afterward, the press was told that Chelsea had watched the broadcast with her mother and father and had remarked, "I think I'm glad that you're my parents."

But some of Hillary's comments on the show—"I'm not sitting here like some little woman standing by my man like Tammy Wynette"—hadn't helped the Clintons' image as a cold yuppie couple. Soon after, they appeared with Chelsea in a cozy family portrait on the cover of *People*. It was the eve of the Democratic convention. "There's no question they benefited from those *People*-magazine pictures," says Howard Kurtz. "There were people who didn't even know they had a child."

"What I would like America to know about my parents is that they're great people

and they're great parents," Chelsea said in the Linda Bloodworth-Thomason and Harry Thomason-produced campaign video that was shown at the convention. But as her parents walked triumphantly up Pennsylvania Avenue on the day of Bill's inauguration, Chelsea was nowhere in sight. She rode alone in the limousine. She didn't get out.

The Sidwell Friends School, where Chelsea matriculated as an eighth-grader in 1993, was a far cry from Little Rock's Forest Park Elementary School. At that time, Sidwell had three athletic fields, eight tennis courts, and two gymnasiums, and cost \$10,400 a year.

A photo taken at the time shows Chelsea, her famous curly top blowing about her face, being inspected by three lithe young Sidwell girls literally reaching out to touch her. Over her years at the school, Chelsea would come to resemble some of her more high-maintenance classmates. By her final year at Sidwell, Chelsea had become practically waiflike. "She had these little pin arms," says a Washington society hostess. "It was the whole overachiever, ballet-student thing." Bill Clinton seemed to be addressing a whole culture of women's negative body images when he delivered the commencement address to Chelsea's graduating class in 1997. He cited feminist author Deborah Tannen in exhorting the class not to be "put down" by the "culture of critique."

The president concluded his speech with an anecdote about his own eighth-grade science teacher, Vernon Dokey, who, "to put it charitably, was a very physically unattractive man. . . . He told us that every morning when he woke up he went to the bathroom and . . . looked at himself in the mirror and he said, 'Vernon, you're beautiful.' Well, class of '97, you're beautiful."

Chelsea had had a successful career at Sidwell, where she was known as a brain. She played goalie on the soccer team. After school, she went for snacks at Roy Rogers (she is, however, a vegetarian) and shopped at the Gap, trailed discreetly by Secret Service men. She had a gaggle of girlfriends, whom she often invited for sleepovers at the White House. When they watched movies in the screening room, Chelsea was responsible for sweeping up the popcorn.

Such details of her life were known only because the White House allowed them to be. Reports that came out while her father was in office portrayed Chelsea as almost saintly: "Chelsea has been exposed to the less picturesque side of life: the ravages of

Chelsea Clinton

the war in Bosnia and Kosovo, earthquake ruins in Turkey, and abandoned babies in Mother Teresa's orphanage," said *Ladies' Home Journal* (sounding a lot like the *Talk* piece Chelsea would later write).

Even the *Los Angeles Times* wrote: "Chelsea is intensely serious, keenly intelligent, socially conscious, self-assured, people-oriented. . . . Although she attended an elite private high school . . . she involved herself extensively in volunteer work in Washington."

By the time of her father's second inaugural, Chelsea had started to develop her own following. She'd had her first makeover—her hair smoothed and styled, her outfits now classically monochromatic—and was even put on Mr. Blackwell's best-dressed list along with her future fashion-show seat-mate Gwyneth Paltrow.

In 1997, Chelsea made the walk up Pennsylvania Avenue beside her parents, waving to cheering crowds. Her 17th-birthday celebration, in New York—where she got a "Happy Birthday" chorus from the cast of *Rent*—was her media coming-out party. A NEW MORNING FOR CHELSEA, gushed *Newsday*, in one of the many articles to note how the president's daughter had "blossomed." It didn't all seem so different, in a way, from the Amy Carter scrutiny, although put more kindly.

On a trip to Africa with her mother, just a few weeks later, Chelsea surprised reporters by making her first spontaneous public statements ever. In front of a group of African teens in Arusha, Tanzania, she spoke out about violence and drugs among American youth. "There is a lot of hopelessness," she said.

When a teenage girl asked how the United States was handling these concerns, Chelsea said, "I think . . . that [the solution] ultimately has to come from the young people themselves. I think that's something we have to work on. We've got to realize we are the future . . . and ultimately we have to do it for ourselves."

Hillary Clinton stood by, nodding.

The year Chelsea entered Stanford, her father's popularity was at an all-time high. Her parents—excepting a Whitewater investigation that was by then losing steam—were relatively free from scandal.

The Clintons had wanted Chelsea to attend college somewhere closer to home; they had counted on Georgetown, Bill's alma mater. When Chelsea left for Stanford, Hillary Clinton reportedly experienced an agonizing bout of empty-nest syndrome. "It was an extraordinarily difficult time," says Lisa Caputo, a former spokeswoman for the First Lady. Bill had helped Chelsea pack.

As if to somehow compensate for the

loss of their daughter, the Clintons had taken extreme security measures for Chelsea at Stanford. There was bulletproof glass in her dorm room, Secret Service agents living next door, cameras in the halls.

Two hundred and fifty journalists covered the Clintons' tearful farewell to Chelsea on the day they left her at school. And then after that there was the inevitable silence. The university had a strict policy of not commenting to the media about Chelsea, and students followed suit. A student on the *Stanford Daily*, Jesse Oxfeld, was fired from the paper after refusing to withdraw a piece that questioned the *Daily's* very policy of not covering her.

Chelsea seemed to love Stanford. With her Secret Service agents, dressed like students, trying to keep up with her on mountain bikes, she zoomed through the streets of Palo Alto, once crashing her bike.

Saying she wanted to become a pediatric cardiologist, Chelsea considered a pre-med major; she later declared history, writing a 150-page thesis on the 1998 Irish peace process that quoted from personal interviews with President Bill Clinton. (She got an A.)

She took swing dancing. Reportedly, a photograph of her with skirt flying up as she did a cartwheel circulated around the university at one time, but it never appeared elsewhere. Students seemed to take Chelsea's privacy as seriously as her parents did.

Life at college was as normal as possible for Chelsea—except for the occasional, conspicuous segue back into First Daughterdom, like her 18th-birthday party at Jeffrey Katzenberg's Utah ski retreat. And then there were her boyfriends, all of whom seemed to have a ready-for-90210-ish quality. The first was Matthew Pierce, a religion major and buff star of the Stanford swim team; Chelsea took him to church services when her parents came for a visit in early 1998, and Bill posed for a picture with the boy, affably draping an arm around him.

But Bill was perhaps less relaxed about the whole idea of Chelsea's being away at college, dating, than the image seemed to suggest. Another young man who happened to go out with Chelsea while she was at Stanford says that, prior to their one and only date, he actually heard from the president. Bill contacted the young man via E-mail, asking him to refrain from saying anything to the media about his (uneventful) evening with Chelsea. The young man agreed, even offering to sign something. But the president said that would not be necessary. "Bill doesn't like documentation," the young man explained.

Like the rest of America, Chelsea learned from the media that her father had been having a relationship (or, in Bill's version, not having a relationship) with a 22-year-old

White House intern named Monica Lewinsky. It was January of 1998, during Chelsea's second semester at Stanford. In addition to the many other issues the administration suddenly had to deal with in the new scandal, there was the thorny question of Chelsea. How was it all affecting Chelsea? "No one, however he feels about the president," intoned *The Washington Post*, "can forget that he is also the father of a teenage girl who adores him."

The White House issued reports of Chelsea's strength and well-being. "She's fine," said Marsha Berry, a spokeswoman for the First Lady. Jesse Jackson was called to the White House to attend a Super Bowl party, after which he prayed with Chelsea and Hillary (who are Methodists; Bill is a Baptist).

Jackson's *Newsweek* account of the prayer session is classic Chelsea spin. "Chelsea is both tough-minded and tender-hearted," Jackson wrote. "She has said, 'I love my dad. I understand. I can cope.'"

The *People*-magazine cover story on Chelsea that appeared in February 1998 told essentially the same story, that of a noble girl who "has kept her head high." But the Clintons were said to be so angry about the piece that they "went to the highest levels of Time Warner" to appeal for it to be killed, according to a former White House adviser. "It was not a good day" when the story broke, says Lisa Caputo.

The Clintons issued a joint statement—their first in years—condemning the story, again on the grounds that the media had no right to invade their daughter's privacy; but there was a rumor at the time, probably spread by Republican Party operatives, that the White House actually welcomed the positive coverage. "They had plausible deniability," says Lucienne Goldberg, the anti-Clinton power broker.

As the Lewinsky debacle spun out of control, so did White House control over media coverage of Chelsea. In November of 1998, Chelsea appeared on the cover of the *New York Post* with the headline CHELSEA'S HEARTACHE—ROMANCE ENDS FOR 'STRESSED' FIRST DAUGHTER. The tabloid reported that Chelsea had turned up at Stanford's medical center "complaining of shortness of breath and clutching her forehead." "I wouldn't consider the *New York Post* part of the media," White House spokesman Joe Lockhart responded.

It was reported elsewhere, however, that Chelsea had been treated for "stomach problems." The *Post* suggested that Chelsea had been overcome with stress because of her recent breakup with Matthew Pierce, who allegedly couldn't take the problems that went along with having a girlfriend whose father was facing impeachment. "[Chelsea] just kept saying, 'I'm not adjusting well,' over and over," said the paper.

But on August 18, 1998, the day after her

father's grand-jury testimony in the Lewinsky affair, Chelsea made what became the central gesture of her tenure as First Daughter. As her father and mother made their somber walk from the White House to a helicopter waiting to take them to Martha's Vineyard for a much-needed vacation, Chelsea, walking between them, grabbed their hands. She was seen as literally holding her parents together, the bridge that made them, whatever happened, a family.

The moment has been taken up as an example of her parents' seemingly cynical use of Chelsea in what conservative columnist George Will called "the grotesque pantomime of domesticity that the Clintons perform in public." But Chelsea's own political instincts were by now too sophisticated for that alone to satisfy as an explanation.

When the helicopter alighted on Martha's Vineyard that day, Chelsea lingered unusually long before the cameras. She smiled, chatting easily with well-wishers as her parents stood in the background, muted by scandal.

"The Monica thing hurt her relationship with Bill a lot," says a friend of the family's.

Both Bill's and Hillary's positions in the world had changed dramatically by the time Chelsea entered Oxford, in October of 2001, as a graduate student in international relations. Bill was no longer president. For the first time in his life, he had become intent on making money, traveling the world and delivering speeches—one almost every other day—at up to \$300,000 a shot.

Meanwhile, Hillary, who had always been intensely focused on Chelsea, was now preoccupied with learning the ropes of being the junior senator from New York. Hillary was enjoying a kind of midlife liberation, finally free from the shadow of her husband and the constrictions of her former ceremonial office. She and Bill were no longer living together, strictly speaking. (When not traveling, he spends most nights at home in Chappaqua, New York, and she in Washington, although they say they meet for dinner three to four times a week.)

Then September 11 came. It was a scary time in the world, and in its aftermath Chelsea was in a place where very little was familiar to her. "When [Chelsea] first got here," says an Oxford student, "she wore sunglasses—no one in Oxford wears sunglasses—and hats pulled down over her ears like she was a celebrity hiding out from the press, but no one noticed."

Far from her parents, released from the fanfare that had followed her most of her life, and finding it hard to find friends among her British classmates, Chelsea was miserable. Ensnared in the same lodgings in Oxford's University College where her father had reportedly lived as a Rhodes scholar

(between 1968 and 1970), she began to write her *Talk* piece. She had been at Oxford only a couple of weeks.

It's hard to be abroad right now, not only because of the inescapable sense of dislocation but also because of the protectiveness, defensiveness, and pride I feel for my country. Every day at some point I encounter some sort of anti-American feeling. Sometimes it's from other students, sometimes it's from a newspaper columnist, sometimes it's from "peace" demonstrators only a few blocks from where I live. Many question whether the evidence pointing to Osama bin Laden is accurate and conclusive. Others wonder whether America has any genuine concern for the plight of the Afghan people. I bristle at these suggestions.

It was strange to hear this characterization of British sentiment when Prime Minister Tony Blair was on the news nearly every day pledging his support, and British troops, to the American war effort. The British press reeled at Chelsea's comments; as international relations go, it was a disaster. "Turn down the volume," advised *The Times* of London.

Oxford students, for their part, were bewildered by what they saw as a misreading of what it had been like at the university in the weeks after the September attacks. "We thought the *Talk* piece was rather peculiar," says Marcus Edwards, former editor of *Cherwell*, a student newspaper. "There were people, not just Americans, who were very supportive of the war. [The protests] were a vocal minority."

"[The *Talk* piece] was a bit much, a bit showy," says Igor Toronyi-Lalic, a member of the Oxford Union, a debating society. "The general reaction [on campus] was not hugely anti-American. There was a debate going on, but it was very somber. There were a lot of arguments about what should happen . . . but that is as it should be at a university."

"People thought she was speaking rubbish," says Mark Hodgkinson, a former *Cherwell* editor who did campus reporting for London papers on Chelsea's article. "I must have talked to 100 people, and I didn't find one person who agreed with her."

Still, Chelsea found her way to an anti-war demonstration that took place in November at the medieval city's town hall. As a Labour M.P., Jeremy Corbyn, spoke, a group of American boys unfurled a large American flag. Chelsea was with them. "Remember the September dead!" one of them screamed. They were asked to leave.

One of the boys was Ian Klaus. It must have been a heady moment for the beginning of a romance. "Oxford is the capital of romance," Oscar Wilde, an alum, once said.

The town of Oxford gives every impression of being fully swept up in globalization; Cornmarket and High Streets—the main student drags—offer a Gap and two Star-

bucks within a block of one another. All around, however, there are the looming spires of the college, reminding students that for the better part of 1,100 years the place has churned out thinkers, prime ministers, and Kings. A 10-foot-high portrait of Henry VIII, who founded Christ Church College, glares down at students in its dazzlingly august dining hall (where scenes from *Harry Potter* were filmed).

So there wasn't much of a chance, when Chelsea Clinton came to Oxford, that her presence there was going to impress anyone, or at least not that anyone would let on. This was made abundantly clear one afternoon at the King's Arms, a snug bar with a rowing theme in the center of town.

There was a telltale pink pashmina thrown carelessly on the floor; the girls were Sloanes. The boys were nursing hangovers, having spent the night before at a party where someone had set a bamboo chair on fire; it's chic to be louche, among a certain set at Oxford. ("Everyone hates them," says one undergraduate about that crowd. "They're quite stupid," says another.)

The group was drinking Bloody Marys. Over the course of an hour-long free-for-all, they offered their thoughts on Chelsea Clinton and Americans in general:

"To be bluntly rude," said Sophie Crichton, 20, "[we] think Americans are quite uncouth."

"Not to be rude at all," said Erik Hanikainen, 22, "but here, Chelsea's just an American. She doesn't realize that. We have Percys and Howards—people whose families came over with the Conqueror, really. The whole of English society. O.K., she's a president's daughter—brilliant."

"He's not president anymore," Sophie said.

"And compared to people like the Duke of Northampton," said Erik.

"Or even an Astor," said Sophie.

Their friend Jake Astor was sitting nearby. I asked him whether he still had family in Manhattan. He laughed. "We own Manhattan," he said.

"It's not like, You're American, we're not going to talk to you," said Sophie. "It's like, You're American—but you have to slightly have the right attitude. . . . It was all over the Sunday papers Chelsea hates us."

"[The *Talk* piece] was fairly ill-advised," Erik said.

"She's a very nice girl, an incredibly nice girl," said another girl, Mouse Allen, 20. "I met her at a party. . . . I really liked her."

"She's been doing a lot of snogging lately," said Jake, using the British slang for kissing.

"No, she's really lively," said Mouse. "I don't know her boyfriend, but I'm sure he is, too."

"I think probably it's rather a trophy

Chelsea Clinton

thing, wouldn't you think?" said Erik. "It may or may not be. That's so harsh," said Sophie.

"I mean, good Lord," said Erik.

They regaled me with a bit of Oxford slang:

"M.P.S.I.A.: 'Minor public school, I'm afraid.'"

"N.Q.O.C.D.: 'Not quite our class, darling.'"

They laughed.

"I've got a very good American joke," said Mouse. "What's the difference between an American and a pot of yogurt? After a hundred years, the pot of yogurt will grow culture!"

They roared.

They continued:

"H.K.L.P.: 'Holds knife like pen.'"

"N.F.I.: 'Not fucking invited.'"

They said that Chelsea never showed up at their sort of party—at Oxford eating clubs and debutante affairs in London—which they couldn't understand because, after all, "she *would* be invited," Sophie admitted. On the other hand, none of them had partied with Puff Daddy in New York, as Chelsea did recently.

"It's a Henry James story," says Audrey Li, an American graduate student in religious studies. "Chelsea came here and had to confront her own Americanness. Everyone is miserable when they first get here. Suddenly, you don't know who you are."

"When Chelsea wrote she was miserable in *Talk*, I was like, Join the club," says Madhavi Nevader, an American graduate student of the Old Testament. "When you first get here, for six months you don't have anybody—and then something happens, and you have a social life."

For Chelsea, the "something" happened at a get-together of American Rhodes scholars who found themselves clinging to one another in the weeks after September 11. His name was Ian Klaus; add a touch of James Spader and he looked like her father.

Ian cut an impressive figure: At Washington University, in St. Louis, he had been the recipient of numerous awards, including one for an essay on homophobia in African-American literature. He had a commitment to public service, having organized on campus a group called Bears and Cubs that encouraged student athletes to become involved in tutoring young people from low-income neighborhoods in St. Louis. His father, Robin Klaus, a California fitness-equipment tycoon, was a prominent Republican; his mother, Patricia, owned a horse-breeding farm. Immediately on entering Oxford, where he is studying English literature, Ian was

signed up to play for "the Blues," the school's varsity soccer team.

"He has ridiculous, floppy hair," says an Oxford boy.

Despite his good looks and stunning record as an undergraduate, Ian, like Chelsea, seemed to have some trouble winning over his British classmates. His own Americanness took the form of a certain national swagger very unpopular at the university.

"He's a really loud character," says an undergraduate. "Very self-aware, shouting around in the sandwich shop like he rules the world."

He also lost points for his wardrobe, which tended toward conspicuous designer labels. "He wears Prada sports shoes," clucks another Oxford boy.

"He did seem a touch arrogant—but in fairness, he's entitled to be," says one of Klaus's soccer teammates. "He's a very good footballer. He works really hard, he runs around a lot. The other thing is he always helps you out, he always shouts to you, 'I'm here, I'm here!' He'll run so that you can pass to him if you're in trouble."

"But he does try and run the show a bit—he tries to be, like, quarterback. He tries to be the main man all the time."

Ian's American alpha-maleness proved popular with the ladies. "A lot of girls said he seemed like a very all-American guy. He's quite muscular, you know," says the teammate. "People who do his subject say, 'This guy is, like, very, very intelligent.' He's quite intellectual."

Chelsea has an estimated six or seven bodyguards living in Oxford. Presidents' children usually lose their Secret Service detail once their parents leave the White House; terrorism is said to be the reason for Chelsea's continued protection. (A Secret Service spokesman contacted for this story would say only that Chelsea has "Secret Service-type" protection.)

At the London premiere of *The Shipping News*, in March, Miramax chairman Harvey Weinstein marveled to the crowd about Chelsea's level of protection. "So I'm warning you," he told Ian Klaus. Then Weinstein led Chelsea around the after-party as he would a star.

Of late, Chelsea's bodyguards' job has involved watching, or perhaps trying not to watch, Chelsea's blossoming romance. Chelsea and Ian have been seen kissing in the Quod, a stylish restaurant in the center of town, in Merton's Bar, a favorite ale stop of Sloanes, and at "Code Red," a weekly party at the Bridge, a nightclub.

"She stands there snogging her boyfriend surrounded by her two bodyguards. The whole thing just looks absolutely ridiculous," says student reporter Mark Hodgkinson.

"They were getting down to it in a sink"

at a house party on Cowley Road, where many students live in private residences, says an Oxford undergraduate. "Someone opened the bathroom door. They had clothes on. They were snogging. Her bodyguards were standing under a streetlamp outside, and someone was going to call the police, saying, 'Who are these dodgy guys?'"

But if the displays of affection strike certain classmates as excessive, the romance seems like the real thing, most students agree. "They had their hands all over each other," says a student who saw Chelsea and Ian at Oxford's Garden of Eden Ball. "She seemed quite happy around him. She was dancing, screaming quite loudly with joy."

"I'm very happy . . . and really, I am so grateful to be at Oxford," Chelsea said at a charity benefit in London in November. "People have been coming up to me and saying 'I hear you're really unhappy here' and it's not true at all." It was the same month her *Talk* piece was on the newsstands, but it was as if she had never written it.

"I'm so incredibly happy," Chelsea told the London *Mirror*. "[Ian's] the nicest guy ever. He makes me laugh all the time."

According to people who have been around them, what Chelsea and Ian mostly do is talk about politics. The basis of their attraction seems to be very similar to what brought Bill Clinton and Hillary Rodham together, three decades earlier: political passion, social commitment, and ambition.

"Chelsea only likes to talk about politics. It's quite dull," says an Oxford student.

It was a birthday party for an Oxford graduate student at Du Liban, a Lebanese restaurant in Oxford. The graduate student was a black man in his 30s from Peckham, London's equivalent of Harlem. He had saved the seat next to him for Chelsea Clinton. She and Ian Klaus were late. When they finally came in, a ripple went through the group of about 60 people.

"It must have been hard for him," says someone who was there, seated next to Ian. "He had to deal with this succession of good-looking, charismatic Rhodes scholars and other people coming over to talk to Chelsea. He was visibly put out and competitive. He was sawing his food. He was the overprotective boyfriend, constantly touching her, marking her."

"[He said], 'So what degree are you going for?,' and I told him my degree, and he said, 'What are you going to do with that?' When I mentioned the name of the impressive bank I was going to, he suddenly became much more interested in me. But it was this constant tussle of wanting to talk to me and wanting to check on Chelsea. One moment of tension was when our host said, 'Perhaps people would like to swap

places.' Ian changed places with reluctance. Then Chelsea was full-on next to me—she was full-on. I thought, She's either quite keen or she's just someone who really makes it a point of looking you in the eye. There's a rumor she's political in the extreme and she's this great operator."

"She has a better grasp of the way the world functions than most graduate students in the world," says P. J. Crowley.

One day in Oxford, I went to a café called Georgina's, where I'd been told Chelsea and Ian hang out. There they were. Chelsea was dressed all in black and had her hair tied back in a ponytail. She had on large glasses with square, black frames. She looked serious, preoccupied by something. Ian Klaus was sitting beside her. The two of them looked so much like pictures of Bill and Hillary in their Yale Law School days it seemed almost impossible.

I sat down. I was waiting for a photographer from *Vanity Fair* to arrive so that he could talk to Chelsea. Ian never took his hands off her. He touched her hair, her face, stroked her shoulder, her leg. Chelsea was not reciprocating that morning, and Ian squirmed in his seat.

Harry Benson, the photographer, arrived and sat down. He wasn't sure what Chelsea was going to say, because her mother's office was against her doing a story just now. To Harry's surprise, and relief, Chelsea

agreed to pose for him. It was 12:30; she said she would meet him at 2. "If you tell Hillary, she'll tell you not to do it," Harry said in his Scottish accent.

"I'm a big girl now," Chelsea said, laughing.

Chelsea and Ian left the café and walked back to Chelsea's college. As they went down the street, Ian had his arm clutched around Chelsea's waist; it fluttered up to her hair, her neck, down to her back. He looked around a few times, in a protective way, or as if to see if anyone was watching. He was wearing purple-tinted sunglasses.

A little after two, Chelsea came out of University College to meet Harry. She had changed her clothes. She was now wearing a smart, blue jacket that looked like the kind of thing you would wear to a State of the Union address. She had put on makeup, especially around the eyes. It had the careful look of someone who has been watching makeup artists. Two bodyguards followed behind as we walked along, and their guns bulged from their backs (there had been controversy, when Chelsea came to Oxford, over whether they would be allowed to carry them).

Harry wanted to pose Chelsea by the elegant Christ Church College or in the Oxford meadows. But Chelsea said she would like to be photographed outside a library. She carried a large bag of books.

Some tourists from Spain—a group of

three young women and a man—passed by and started saying in Spanish, "There goes Chelsea Clinton." They got very excited and chased after her; Chelsea stopped and offered to pose for a picture with them. One of the girls ran away waving the camera like a trophy, screaming, "Chelsea Cleen-tone!"

Behind the Bodleian Library, the most famous library at Oxford (and favorite study hall of the Sloanes), Chelsea posed for Harry. When the camera was on her, her face was transformed. She tilted her chin up into the light; her eyes went expectant and blank. It was a naïve face. When she's relaxed, her expression is canny and intelligent. She posed for about half an hour.

"I need to go read," Chelsea finally told Harry.

I asked her if she would answer a few questions.

She sighed. "You've been told," she said, "by my mother's office, that I can't talk to you."

I said people wanted to know about her. "Yes," she said, "I grew up with everybody . . ."

I asked her if she planned on going into politics.

She wavered a moment.

But she begged off.

"I'm just trying to be a student," she said. And with that, she went into the library. □

David Letterman

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 195 then ABC's chief programmer, in the Team Disney building in Burbank—the one with the statues of the Seven Dwarfs on the façade—Braun first broached going after Letterman. "I think their jaws dropped a little," he recalls. "They thought, How can CBS possibly let this guy go out on the open market?" Iger, 51, was among the skeptics, largely because of his respect for Moonves. "Even though there are detractors in town who believe that Les has an ego that's larger than most of the studio lots," Iger says, "I actually believe that not only is Les talented but Les is very talented at managing talent."

But if Disney was ready to move Koppel off 11:35, another crucial player wasn't, or at least said he wasn't: Letterman. Long before Disney tied their fates together, Letterman and Koppel knew and liked each other; if Letterman brought out Koppel's latent wackiness (Koppel had appeared on the *Late Show* Rollerblading with Letterman down 53rd Street and having his aged dog do a "stupid pet trick"), Koppel appealed to Let-

terman's latent seriousness. Letterman, after all, is someone who gets his news from the BBC.

Letterman's representatives said he would move only if ABC independently decided to kill *Nightline*. And they got that assurance, they say. ABC maintains that it told them only that the show's status was under review, and that it would not be aired forever. There was unhappiness at ABC about *Nightline*, which some believed had lost its edge and was certainly not nearly as profitable as it had once been. But in December 2000 both Koppel and his executive producer Tom Bettag had signed up for an additional five years. Koppel's contract provided for three-day workweeks, prompting unflattering comparisons to Johnny Carson in his late-night dotage.

"I was told by Lloyd that we had to be careful here," Iger recalls, "that we were walking a fine line, that we didn't create the appearance that *Nightline's* death was solely due to David Letterman, and I kind of said, 'Well, good luck. How the hell do we do that?'" At one point, Iger says, the Letterman people asked for written assurances that Letterman wasn't killing *Nightline*. "I said, 'If that's the case, just let's forget it,'" Iger says. "And they backed away on that."

Knowing that their plan could succeed

only by stealth—that is, without alerting CBS to its interest—Braun and his colleagues proceeded clandestinely on what Iger code-named "Project Gap-Tooth." Discussions were confined to a handful of Disney executives. There was to be no paperwork, no E-mail, no conference calls, no cell-phone discussions. And, insulting as it might seem, nothing was to be said to the two people most directly affected—Koppel and his immediate boss, David Westin, head of ABC News—not because they are blabbermouths, Iger insists, but because each would feel bound, and rightly so, to tell his colleagues.

For Westin, being left out of the loop was the latest of several humiliations that compounded skepticism about his lack of news experience: not being consulted by his Disney superiors about scheduling changes favoring the entertainment division over his news division; being opposed by them in contractual matters involving the talent; being asked to fire veteran newsmen at a time when he was trying to establish trust among the staff. He had largely rebounded from these with his deft handling of the terrorist and anthrax attacks and support for investigative journalism. But not knowing about his bosses' pursuit of Letterman was a real setback. Still,