

Post Politics

Within Clinton's circle, resentments against Obama persisted for years

By [Karen Tumulty](#) September 1 at 10:00 AM

This story has been updated.

Within Hillary Clinton's inner circle, resentment over her defeat by President Obama in the bitter 2008 Democratic primary festered well into his presidency, as evidenced by a string of e-mails from one of her most frequent correspondents, who often passed along unflattering reports about Obama.

In the latest trove of her emails, released late Monday night, Clinton confidant Sidney Blumenthal frequently makes subtle and not-so-subtle digs.

There was this one, the morning after the 2010 Academy Awards ceremony:

That is an apparent reference to the big winner of the evening -- the film "Hurt Locker" -- and the fact that Kathryn Bigelow had become the first woman ever to receive the award as Best Director. It beat out "Avatar," a splashy special-effect vehicle, which Blumenthal presumably saw as a metaphor for Obama. In 2008, Clinton's team had seen many of their expected backers from the entertainment industry defect to the Obama campaign.

Blumenthal was a longtime Clinton aide and ally known for his fixation on the couple's political enemies. His nickname within the Bill Clinton White House during the 1990s was "Grassy Knoll," a reference to a conspiracy theory surrounding the John F. Kennedy assassination. Hillary Clinton had tried to hire him for a post at the State Department, but the Obama White House blocked the appointment, because it considered Blumenthal untrustworthy and prone to starting rumors. Instead, Blumenthal went to work for the Clinton Foundation, where he was paid \$10,000 a month to work on promoting the former president's legacy.

But he was in near-constant contact with the secretary of state, as the batches of emails that are being released on a monthly basis by the State Department show.

In another message, he called her attention to unflattering things said about the Obama White House by John Podesta, now Clinton's campaign chairman, but at the time the head of the left-leaning Center for American Progress. Podesta would go on to be a senior adviser in Obama's White House:

Within five minutes, Clinton replied:

A few days later, Clinton was still interested enough to ask her staff for a copy of the interview, and not just the story about it:

In another exchange, Clinton and Blumenthal shared notes on [a critical March 20, 2010 Financial Times story](#) headlined "US Foreign Policy: Waiting on a sun king." The story suggested that decision-making was too centralized in the White House:

At another point, Blumenthal urged her to "rein in" his old antagonist David Axelrod, who had been Obama's chief 2008 political strategist and later became a top White House adviser. Blumenthal argued that Axelrod should not be allowed to speak on foreign policy, and said that many in the press believed Axelrod was "out of his lane":

If Clinton did engage Axelrod, it is unlikely to show up in the emails. In 2009, the president's strategist had asked for Clinton's e-mail address, and apparently was told he should use other channels -- and, unlike those closer to Clinton, to stick to business hours:

This story was updated to correct that John Podesta served in the Obama White house as senior adviser, not chief of staff.

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