

[My Thoughts On Bill Clinton's Talk](#)

Thursday, November 27, 2008 at 5:14pm

After having slept on it for a couple of nights I can now say that I have mixed feelings about Bill Clinton's talk, and subsequent Q&A with Frank McKenna at the coliseum. I will explain why, but I cannot do so without a bit of background.

First of all, I almost idolize Clinton and McKenna, just because of admitted personal and illogical bias. Second, Bill and Frank have been very, very good friends for many years now; Let's just say that Frank probably knows more about some of the shit that's happened in the White House that Sarah Palin wouldn't have a clue about (not that that's difficult).

As Mathieu and I arrived at the coliseum, we were weaving through a crowd of very well dressed adults, from seemingly all sorts of businesses. It was like going to a cathedral on a Sunday, but with more expensive suits and shoes. This is something I want to emphasize, many attendees were wearing *really* fancy digs, even the ones my age, who couldn't afford them.

Taking a seat with my parents, who were just as eager as I go see the event, we couldn't help but notice all the BlackBerry and cellphone texting action that was going on. Dad said, at one point, that **every single** person seated around us was hunched over their mobile device. I chuckled, not yet addicted to a CrackBerry (you will later notice that I succumbed to my need for my cell by taking a crappy photo). Then they started - the conversations between guests seated around us. Warning to the easily offended, I'm going to judge, paint with broad strokes, stereotype and everything in between when I say this: I was surrounded by insecure, babbling douchebags in nice suits.

“We at (company I wont name here) have done incredibly well in the last quarter. I sincerely think that we can strive for another 140 in the next. I know it's shooting for the moon, but I think we have reason to be optimistic in the near future, with all the potential we have for growth. We're going places.”

That's sensational, Tom! I really admire you guys for doing so well in this difficult period. But I'm wondering where you guys have had to lean out to make it all happen?

I have a name for this kind of conversation: "Ego masturbation". I have a hard time imagining Warren Buffet speaking like this to someone he actually gives a fuck about. Nobody speaks like that when they're *not* bullshitting someone. I see it all as making yourself feel as important as you can with the little you have, to justify your trip to the tailor. It's all about making yourself look good to others, who care as much about you as you do them. Matt was sitting elsewhere, and told me about a couple of bankers who were one-upping each other in their knowledge of quantum mechanics. Matt is completing his degree in physics this year, and the poor bugger wanted to slap the ignoramuses for being completely off with pretty much every statement they made. But as Heather Mallick [suggests](#), he kept his lid on.

The host of the event was TD Bank, hosted by The Power Within, which is a company that does all sorts of motivational speeches. The stage was set up with TD Bank's signature green leather chairs at center. For those who don't know, Frank McKenna is the deputy CEO of TD Bank. I hope that resonates somewhere.



The stage.

At noon, the Premier of NB, Shawn Graham, came up to the podium. He introduced Bill and Frank, who would re-introduce Bill, with bad French and a touch of overenthusiasm. Ah well, he's really young and was probably nervous. I was one of the few who clapped. Enter Frank. Thanks everone, tells us how awesome we are and how awesome Bill is. Enter Bill Clinton.

He spoke for almost an hour on how the economy got to be as bad as it is, how Bush fucked up, his and Hillary's experience with the latest the election, his take on Obama. He spoke on what kind of policy is needed to fix things, his take on the auto industry, and how Canada is affected by it all, he *really* emphasized interdependency.

Unfortunately, I didn't really learn much here, but that's my own fault—I read the news about as much as I think of sex. His proposed solutions for the everyday businessperson (ie. every person in the room who identified themselves as important...which was everyone, as I had mentioned), for dealing with the economic crisis: not panicking, having confidence and instilling said confidence in others. Everyone has frozen with their spending, so the banks are illiquid, they won't even lend out money given to them in the bailout, for fear of not knowing the actual value of what's being purchased. So the mission is to get the money moving again.

With all that said, here's why I feel [meh](#) about the whole event: Basically, the chorus was "the more we spend, the better off we are, but we have to be careful not get too much further into debt". Then Frank came on stage. he and Bill sat on the chairs and had a very staged Q&A. "Who's your favorite hockey team?" asks Frank. "That would have to be the Moncton Wildcats." answers the Rhodes Scholar. I know it was a joke, but give me a break.

Frank: "Ok Bill, everyone is wondering this: Is your wife going to be Secretary of State or what?" to cheers.

Bill: "You know I can't answer that, Frank! Now I have to figure out a way to dodge this one." to more laughter. Charismatic guys, I tell ya =). I think it's this part that made me realize that this whole show was more than I thought. Frank already knew the answer to

this, along with stuff we haven't even thought of asking yet. Ok, so it's an act. So what?

Then it hit me. TD Bank, *have confidence, you can't be afraid to spend!*, Frank McKenna is Deputy CEO of TD, Bill would definitely pull a favor for Frank, while pocketing some cash...and I get this in the mail:



With my TD Visa statement

Wow. It's a great way to get a bunch of insecure people, who are easily influenced to do things that make themselves feel important, to take TD's money to pay off the rest of your suit, along with everything else you will buy to make your insecure self feel better. If there's one thing I know, it's banks are **not** my friend. I feel a bit played, but I definitely learned something.

Damn, Frank and Bill are even smarter than I thought. I look up to them even more now.

Cheers!

PS: Yes, I'm being a hypocrite, bashing people I call self-important while making prissy statements. Feel free to remind me about it in the comments section.



[Jolène LeBlanc](#) at 10:00pm November 27
Interesant! ... as if I'd expect anything else!



[Valerie Arseneau](#) at 10:15pm November 27
[insert smart snappy comment here]

Yeah sorry love, I got nothing. But man, your writting is awesome now. I always enjoy reading you articles. Especialy when I'm done with my day and I can click all your

references and read articles after article and go to bed feeling less dumb. heheh

yeille andy!



Thandi Sithole at 12:56am November 28

I also like reading your articles Andrew :) they're quite interesting. Question: is it really McKenna and Clinton who are smart, or are they just the faces to an unseen brainforce behind them? I can't understand why you admire them so much and like them more when you figure out their faults. That personal and illogical bias u admitted to really goes a long way, huh? :) Had it been anybody else, say Bush for example, i'd imagine you'd have a completely different response to the whole experience. I guess we all have to be a fan of something right? We can't be to logical and unbiased everyday of our lives... like I would find a way of justifying whatever Oprah does.lol.



[Robert Cooling](#) at 1:54am November 28

Fuck man have ya ever tried being a journalist, cause this is a good read and im not all that interested in politics.



[Michael Leukert](#) at 7:03am November 28

"share the power" is emblazoned on my room door at dorm. people keep thinking im a commie from east germany or something. dont stop writing.



[Michael Leukert](#) at 7:15am November 28

this august i attended a rotary club lunch in lame-duck pei. they were supposed to be handing out scholarships. but really, they were using it as a venue to sweet talk each other and get their names known. it was the first time in years i wore a suit, it was real lame. anyways, i made a quick guess at the cost of my meal, and counted how many people had this meal (paid for by the club). i decided the club spent 3 times as much money on that one meal than the sum of those scholarships. this was televised across the province, people phoned me because they saw me on tv.

i dont need these people, andrew. this is why i want to help make businessmen, politicians and 90% of paperworkers obsolete. no more middlemen, no more unshared redundant information aquired wastefully, no more interdependence than is beneficial, no more economic problems. permanently.

life is a role playing game:

you have a gift for writing, ESPECIALLY when you are passionate about the subject and have had significant experiences. i read that stuff from that heather mallick person.

maybe writing IS easy, if youre good at life. we all share responsibility for this society. lets hope more people aquire the power to question.

your ability to communicate these "complex" concepts that you have realised, in a manner so that we may share insights and come to our own conclusions is astonishing and inspiring. i hope more people aquire the power to share.

what i like about what you are doing, is that you are sharing the power.

and that you brought up insecurity, probably the only elementary particle of psychology.

and that you brought up ego masturbation. thanks.



[Andrew Manderson](#) at 10:11am November 28

Thandi,

I am convinced that the current statuses of both Frank and Bill are results of their own hard work. Bill won a Rhodes Scholarship was was the youngest man to be a governor (Arkansas). What they both have in common is networking ability, and a will to be powerful.

I don't necessarily feel that what they did was a "fault" per se. I'm just admiring them for they're intelligent play, like I'd admire someone who made a really good move at chess against me.

Why I'm biased. I have been interested in politics inse about age 8. At that time, Frank and Bill were in power in their respective roles. Both were kicking ass (economically and on social issues), so that was te standard to be set for my young self as I ventured on. It's nothing different than sharing the values of your household as you grow up.

Fortunately, I have learned to think a little bit more for myself, and have shed most initial bias, and only reaquirng what I find suitable. If I'm unsure, I'll bring it down to the common denominator of bias, as I have in this case.



[Andrew Manderson](#) at 10:13am November 28

I want to thank you all for your comments, it really, really means a lot. I just wishj I could find a way to write more, and have a wider audience...

Cheers!



[Ysabelle Vautour](#) at 1:29am November 29

arent you surrounded by flatters. what i dont understand is that you did not see that coming before you attended the event. It's just public relations. I think Leukert gave you an solution to your wish.