

# Secretary didn’t answer the senator’s question

Testifying before Congress last week, outgoing Secretary of State Hillary Clinton showed she’s mastered the artful lie.

Asked once again what happened at the consulate in Benghazi, Libya, the night of Sept. 11 when U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans died in a terrorist attack that apparently took her State Department by surprise, she exploded into indignation.

“With all due respect, the fact is we had four dead Americans,” Clinton responded, raising her voice at Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), who continued to interrupt her. “Was it because of a protest or was it because of guys out for a walk . . . who decided to kill some Americans? What difference at this point does it make? It is our job to figure out what happened and do everything we can to prevent it from ever happening again, senator.”

Well, the secretary might start by answering the question, but notice, she did not.

Guys out for a walk who decided to kill some Americans? Armed with the firepower to storm a U.S. consulate, kill the ambassador and his guards? And how did they know where the ambassador was, anyway?

Let’s get real, Madam Secretary.

Or should we say, Madam President?

For there’s little doubt that Ms. Clinton is quitting the State Department now so she’ll have plenty of time to get ready for the 2016 presidential race. Flying around the world for another couple of years might be fun, but presidential campaigns are not built in a day. And she must be presumed the front runner, well ahead of plodding old Joe Biden.

The secretary managed to be indignant enough, almost, to make herself look like the injured party in this sparring match. On the defensive for months, she tried to put the other party in a corner.

And she stuck to the administration’s line, which has been all along an effort to minimize the attack and make it look like less than it was.

The White House coordinated the story that night and the next day that the deaths resulted from a protest against an anti-Muslim video made by an American and posted on the Internet. Such a protest tied up the streets of Cairo that same day.

But it was apparent from news reports that night, no matter which source, that the incident had in fact resulted from a planned attack by trained terrorists who had in mind the death of an ambassador they and their friends blamed for the deaths of many of their ilk. And on the anniversary of the the Sept. 11 attacks in the U.S.

Still, Ambassador to the U.N. Susan Rice was sticking to the official line a week later on the Sunday interview shows. Her loyalty left her out on a limb and may have cost her a shot at replacing Ms. Clinton at State.

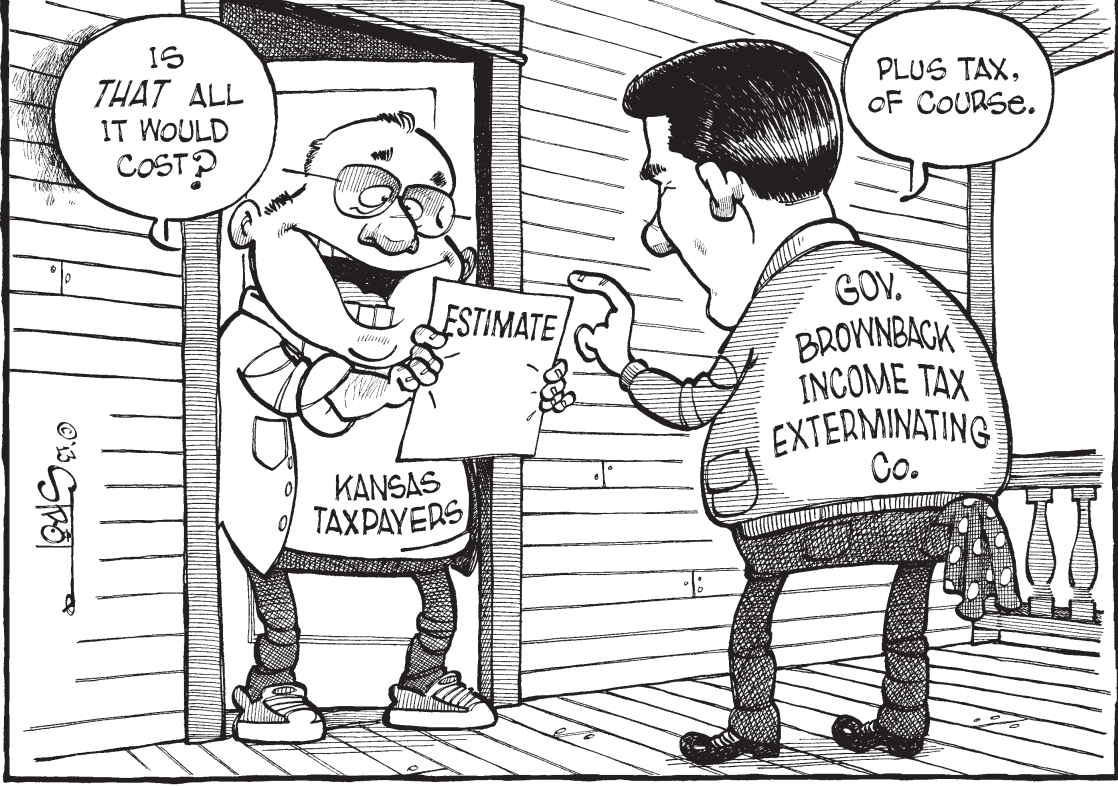
And then here was Hillary, telling us it was guys out for a walk, still clinging to the official version.

We all know better. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) may have said it best: “It’s been a coverup from the beginning.”

“It was theatrics,” Sen. Johnson said in a later interview. “She didn’t want to answer questions, so she makes a big show of it.”

Ms. Clinton carries a lot of baggage, but unless the Republicans come up with the kind of candidate they haven’t had in more than 20 years, she’ll be measuring the White House for drapes. Come to think of it, she may already have the window sizes. She used to live there.

— Steve Haynes



# Cat scent alerts drug dog

I really didn’t think much of it when the cat took up residence on my suitcase the night before I was planning to leave for a Mexican vacation.

I brought the partially filled case downstairs on Tuesday night so that I wouldn’t forget to pack my laptop computer in it the next morning. One more thing done before we had to leave at noon. I figured.

I’d have been better off if I had thought to close the suitcase, but that might not have made any difference if the cat had decided to sleep on top of the case instead of on all my neatly folded clothes.

I’m pretty sure she knew we were leaving, and that meant that she would have to go to the vet for the next week or so, and she was taking one last chance to get close to me. Or maybe she really knew that she could cause trouble by just hanging around and getting her fur and scent all over everything. Poor humans, they have such bad noses. They just never notice anything.

Whichever it was, she spent Tuesday night putting her stamp on my suitcase and I spent Thursday afternoon getting a good sniffing from a drug dog.

Wednesday, we drove to Denver. Thursday morning, we flew into San Jose del Cabo, on the tip of the Baja, with our carryons, a big suitcase and a cooler. We’ve been taking a cooler on our annual Mexican vacation for years in case we decide to go fishing. We weren’t planning to go fishing, but you never know, and the hard-sided cooler is great for hauling coffee and spices I want to use but can’t find in Mexico. I always make sure everything is sealed and that there is no fresh meat, milk, fruits or vegetables to run me afoul of the inspectors.

At the Cabo airport the drug dog came by. He was a cute little thing about the size of a small beagle but the color of a dachshund. He and his handler just sort of walked along among the luggage and all the people getting their checked items off the baggage conveyor.

He made one pass through and was on his second round when he became very interested in my cooler, which was duct tapped nine ways to Sunday. The dog didn’t bark or get real excited. He just sniffed and sniffed and sniffed at the cooler and the red carry-on suitcase next to it.

The handler asked me nicely if she could look in the cooler.

Like I’m going to say “no.” I untaped it and she checked the coffee, spices and assorted clean underwear used to keep stuff in place. She was satisfied, but the dog just kept checking both the cooler and suitcase. Something there smelled very interesting.

“Do you have pets?” the handler finally asked.

“Oh yes, cats and a dog.”

Come to think of it, that was the suitcase that Molly spent the night in, and the cooler was right next to it.

She waived us on, but I had to have the cooler checked again; an agricultural inspector looking for oranges before we escaped the airport. Coolers are just generally suspicious, I guess.

Oh well, I’m hoping the cat smell will wear off before we have to run the same gauntlet back in the U.S. But I’ll probably be asked what’s in the cooler.

It’s OK. Whatever is in there will be legal and a fun reminder of a week in the sun. Maybe some rum, but no Cuban cigars.



**Open Season**  
*By Cynthia Haynes*  
c.haynes@nwkansas.com

# Invest a little time in health

Let’s get serious for a minute.

Every new year, most of us make some sort of resolution to get healthier. Most of us don’t follow through. But here’s something everyone can do: Take a few moments and write down your personal health history.

My wise sister-in-law, Donna, urged me to do this and I’m glad I did. I started with a brief snapshot of my parents’ health and that of my siblings. It’s a good thing to come from a long line of healthy people. I kept my history brief, lumping it into 10-year increments.

Your health-care professional will be glad you did. Besides, if you do, there will be no more endless forms to fill out in the doctor’s office. You can just write “See Attached.” At your next appointment, give your history to your doctor to keep in your permanent file. Update periodically.

Next, make a separate list of medications, dosages and all over-the-counter medications you take. Keep this in your wallet. This is the one you’ll use most. Every doctor you see will want to know what you’re taking. Don’t trust your memory to remember complicated prescriptions and dosages.

Invest a little time into your own health. You’ll be glad you did.

-ob-

Since learning of our trip to Guatemala, we have been trying to find out everything we can about the area. I must tell you, I’m a little worried. We can’t find it on a map. Not Guatemala, but the town we’re going to, San Raimundo. It’s supposed to be north of Guatemala City. Others have gone and come back, so I know it exists, but if I can’t find it on an Internet search, I get nervous.

During our travels into Old Mexico, we always knew if we needed help, the good ol’ USA was a quick trip back across the border. This won’t be the case in Guatemala. Not to worry, though. Traveling with my husband is like having Daniel Boone as your trail guide. He has an uncanny sense of direction and I know he’ll take care of us. He’s also one of the few men I know who will ask for directions.

NewsFlash! Jim just yelled to me, “Found it.” OK, we’re good to go. Thank you, Google Earth.

-ob-

I’ve entered a few cooking contests in my day. My apple pies and crescent rolls have won a few blue ribbons and Jim gives my cinnamon rolls a thumbs up. Saturday night, however, I entered my first ever meatloaf contest. A decorated meatloaf at that.

It was a tongue-in-cheek contest sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce for its annual banquet and a clever way to have the main course provided for free.

There were some unique entries, including three blind (meatloaf) mice, a meatloaf fire engine, a meatloaf football in tribute to the Super Bowl, a meatloaf quilt, my entry (a meatloaf newspaper) and the grand-prize winner, meatloaf horse apples.

Yes. Meatloaf horse apples prepared, fittingly, by the ladies of the saddle club. It was all in good fun, and some mighty fine eatin’ too.



**Out Back**  
*By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts*  
cplots65@gmail.com

# They were just going to Mass

We were walking to church Saturday evening when the noise began to build behind us.

The caravan arrived, led by a single police motorcycle with flashing red and blue lights.

Behind the wheel man, as the cops would call him, came the first few bikes, three and four abreast. Then more and more and more, bikes clogging the narrow street, taking up all the lanes, revving their engines and sounding their horns, their sirens, their pipes.

Not a muffler among ’em, at least by the sound of it.

And on they came. Bikes with lone riders, bikes with couples, bikes with dads and kids. Yeah, kids.

I was pretty sure it wasn’t Hell’s Angels or one of the other notorious motorcycle clubs from American California. Not even Mexican bikers from some border town like Nogales or Tijuana, though their gear was typical: leather vests, blue jeans, studded belts and bracelets, Nazi-style helmets.

For one thing, the bikes were too nice. They had saddle bags, wide seats, trim and decoration, not the stripped-down “choppers” favored by outlaw bikers. All kinds of bikes, all sorts of colors.

Where were they going in the heart of Cabo San Lucas, a tourist town at the tip of the Baja California peninsula, with a police escort?

“Probably to church,” someone wisecracked.

Ah, but when we finally made our way through the stalled procession and across the town square to church, that was exactly where they were going. Saturday Mass.

They lined the bikes up in a row, tail-end to the sidewalk, 123 of them, one rider said. They filed into the little church, taking up two of three wings of the cross-shaped sanctuary. Bikers read the lessons and the psalm. Bikers took up the collection. It was a regular biker Mass.

It turned out to be an annual ride around the Baja. There were members from the local club, the Baja Bikers, at least two chapters, and several from the capital city, La Paz, up north. American bikers from the Harley Owners Group. Hangers on and riders of all descriptions, almost all wearing club “colors.”

They filled up the wings of the church, the spaces between the locals and the tourists, every bench and doorway and space. Someone said there were 254 of them, men, women and children. Give or take.

After Father said the Mass, everyone shook hands and exchanged the peace. Pleasantries were had. We went off to dinner.

And where were the bikers going?

“Probably to our place,” someone wisecracked.

And that was not far from wrong. When we got back, a loud, loud rock band was playing in the arroyo off the beach next door. All those bikers were out there dancing. The old folks were complaining it was past their bedtime. Heck, some of the youngsters were complaining. The fishermen like to get up at 5.

Wasn’t much could be done about it, however. The guitar player wasn’t bad, the songs American ’70s, the singer was, well, he was there, and all the intros were in Spanish. Apparently, the band had promised to stop playing at midnight. And they did, but then some guy got the mic and yelled at the crowd for half an hour. Then they played recorded music until 2.

I just went to sleep.

It was, in all, a more interesting day at church than most.



**Along the Sappa**  
*By Steve Haynes*  
s.haynes@nwkansas.com

USPS 401-600  
170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243

Published each Wednesday by Haynes Publishing Co., 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749. Periodicals postage paid at Oberlin, Kan. 67749.

*Steve and Cynthia Haynes, publishers*  
*Kimberly Davis, assistant publisher*

Official newspaper of Oberlin, Jennings, Norcatur, Dresden and Decatur County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, Colorado Press Association, Nebraska Press Association and Inland Press Association.

Subscriptions: One year, \$38 (tax included) in Decatur, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Thomas and Red Willow counties; \$42 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$48 elsewhere in the U.S. Foreign subscriptions, \$50-\$250 (in U.S. dollars only) extra per year (except APO/FPO). POSTMASTER: Send change of address to 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243.

Office hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

Phone: (785) 475-2206 Fax (785) 475-2800  
E-mail: oberlin.herald@nwkansas.com

**Nor’West Newspapers**

**STAFF**

Steve Haynes ..... editor  
Stephanie DeCamp ..... reporter  
Mary Lou Olson ..... society editor  
Carolyn Kelley-Plotts ..... proofreader, columnist  
Joan Betts ..... historian  
Cynthia Haynes ..... business manager  
Kimberly Davis ..... advertising manager  
Pat Cozad ..... want ads/circulation  
Crista Sauvage ..... advertising makeup