

**SAM KEPFIELD**

# Clinton's hedging on promises no surprise

I could have told you that this was going to happen. The 43 million Americans who voted for Clinton have been played for the biggest suckers in recent political history. The 57 million who voted for Bush or Perot will have to pay for it.



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The amazing thing is not that Clinton is turning out to be a fraud, but the amazing rapidity it is occurring. He wasn't even sworn in when talk of backsliding on promises began. Senator Daniel Moynihan (D-NY) noted that the "clatter of promises being thrown out the window" resounded throughout the capital last week.

The long litany of betrayal began with Clinton's economic team — Bentsen of Treasury and Panetta of OMB — calling for a rethinking of the middle-class tax cut. Panetta, a critic of Clinton's economic proposals in the campaign, even hinted at a tax hike for the middle class. All this despite Clinton's promise in the East Lansing debate not to do so.

Clinton himself told reporters in Little Rock, Ark. that he would submit a "revised" package to Congress. All those who voted for Clinton because they thought he would give them more money can kiss it goodbye.

Closely related to taxes is the promise to halve the budget deficit by 1996. Figures from the White House last week showed a deficit in 1998 at

cut the White House staff by 25 percent.

Clinton's promise to hold his Cabinet appointments to the highest standard of ethics possible is also in shambles. Commerce Secretary-designate Ron Brown faces conflict-of-interest charges stemming from his law firm's representation of "Baby Doc" Duvalier of Haiti and BCCI.

Warren Christopher, Secretary of State-designate, has been accused of lying to Congress in 1977 about his knowledge of the Johnson Administration's spying on radical protest groups in the late '60s. Lying to Congress was what the Iran-Contra scandal was all about, wasn't it? So where are the cries for a special prosecutor?

Zoe Baird, Clinton's choice for Attorney General, hired illegal Peruvian immigrants as nannies and failed to pay their Social Security taxes. She settled with the government only weeks ago. Her actions came after the immigration reform law, which requires employers to check the immigration status of prospective employees.

Again, where are the calls for a special prosecutor? Nowhere to be found, although House Minority Whip Newt Gingrich has called for Baird to withdraw her name from consideration.

What little Clinton said about foreign policy suffers as well. He deplored the Bush Administration's policy of repatriating Haitians and promised to change it if elected.

After reading the election results, thousands of Haitians began building boats; 400 reportedly died when their boat sank. Clinton now has said he will continue Bush's policy "temporarily."

The press that elected Clinton is beginning to smell a rat, with newspaper analyses and Sunday-morning talking-head shows all reflecting the beginnings of a massive disillusionment.

I am not surprised, nor am I disillusioned. I expected this. To those who say "Well, all politicians break promises," I reply "You're right." The thing with Clinton was his incessant repetition of how change would do away with politics as usual, and how his detailed policies would be implemented swiftly and speedily. He raised America's expectations, only to dash them on the rocky shoals of reality.

It sets a disturbing pattern, one which will paralyze his presidency sooner than most — I give him until Labor Day. The end result may well be that four years from this day, on Jan. 20, 1997, Bill Clinton will be an onlooker at the next inauguration.

Kepfield is a graduate student in history, an alumnus of the UNL College of Law, and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.



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