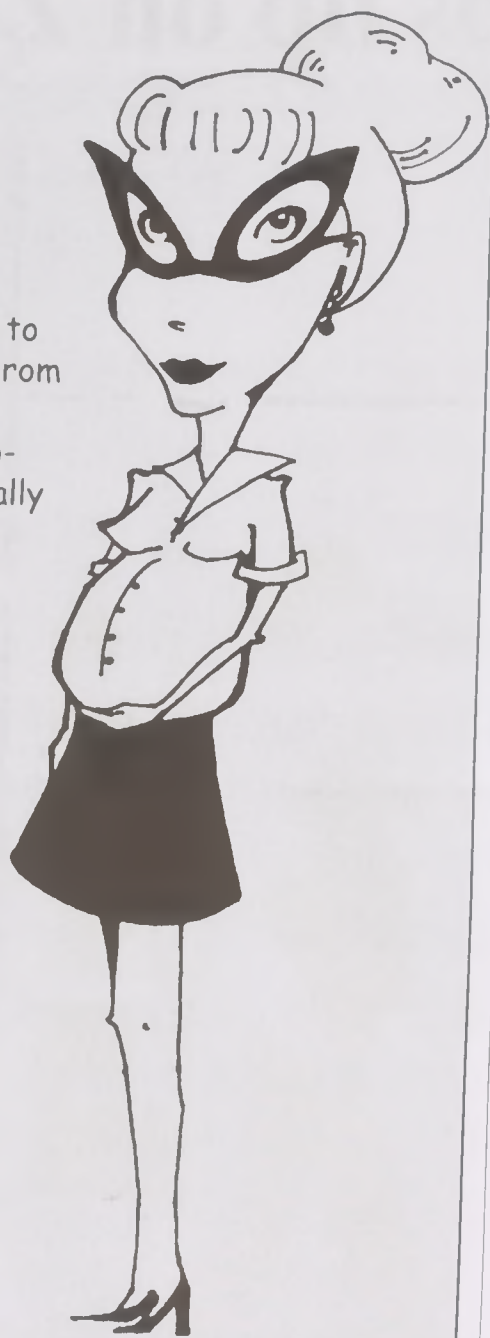


Sarah Palin managed to hide her pregnancy from America for months with nothing but a podium and a strategically tucked-in blouse.



The War on Hypocrisy

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Those of us who were bewildered by John McCain's selection of Sarah Palin for his running mate found ourselves disappointed with the announcement of 17-year-old Bristol Palin's pregnancy Monday morning.

The announcement put to rest rumors that Trig, Sarah Palin's four-month-old son, was actually her grandson. Rumors that Palin had faked her pregnancy in order to cover up her daughter's teenage pregnancy circulated blogs and gossip Web sites all over the Internet.

These rumors were not unfounded. Several factors were at play, and they were not all related to the fact that Palin did not appear to be pregnant when she announced her pregnancy in March. The most troubling part of the rumors is what Palin did after her amniotic fluid began leaking the day of a Republican Governor's Convention in Dallas on April 18.

She gave a keynote address on energy policy.

Then, even though she was in labor a full month prematurely and leaked amniotic fluid for hours, she boarded an eight-hour flight to Alaska, which included an additional stop

in Seattle. Most doctors strongly discourage their patients to fly during the third trimester of pregnancy, let alone while they are in labor.

But it did not stop there. Once she landed in Anchorage, rather than going to a medical center in Alaska's most equipped city, Palin drove another 45 minutes to Mat-Su Regional Medical Center in the small village of Wasilla to deliver her child.

She returned to work three days later.

We know now that this bizarre behavior does not indicate that Palin faked her pregnancy.

It does, however, suggest extremely questionable judgment. Rather than going straight to the hospital, Palin delivered a speech.

Rather than staying in Dallas, a city with extensive medical facilities that could accommodate her high-risk pregnancy and delivery, Palin boarded an eight-hour flight.

She repeated the same faulty logic upon arrival in Anchorage, choosing to deliver in a tiny town. Palin's actions on the day she gave birth to her son were careless, unorthodox and just plain dangerous.

This is the woman who John McCain thinks is a good choice to potentially run our country in

the event of his death during his term as President. Putting aside her extreme lack of experience, we need only examine Palin's response to her premature labor to see the danger of selecting her to be Vice President of the United States.

If these are the choices she made regarding her health and the health of her child, what choices will she make affecting the health of our country?

At the root of this pregnancy scandal is blatant irony.

Palin, strictly conservative in both religion and politics, is a strong proponent of abstinence-only sex education. She believes this should be the standard, and the teaching of safe sex practices in schools should be abolished.

Palin, who opposes premarital sex, now finds herself the mother of a pregnant teenager. We cannot blame poor Bristol for being raised in an environment that refuses to accept the fact that teenagers will be teenagers and teach them how to avoid situations like this one.

Perhaps if Bristol had been taught the benefits of birth control, her mother would not be in the midst of a potentially career-destroying scandal.

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