

**THE BLOG**

# An Inconvenient Resurrection

---

By Marty Kaplan

01/08/2008 11:37 pm ET | Updated May 25, 2011

A story:

Stalin was dead. He lay on a table, face ashen, eyes closed. The Kremlin inner circle was summoned and surrounded his body. At first, there was silence. Then, one after another, his top people began saying things impossible to imagine being expressed during his life. “He was a tyrant.” “He betrayed the Soviet people.” “A terrible time has finally ended.” There were some demurrals: “He was a great man.” “I loved him.” “No one can fill his shoes.” Then, again, silence.

And then Stalin opened his eyes. He had faked his own death in order to test the loyalty of his lieutenants.

I don’t know if this story is true or apocryphal, but I’m pretty sure I read it, something like 35 years ago, in a book by Harrison Salisbury, the *New York Times*’ longtime correspondent in Moscow.

No matter what you think about Hillary Clinton, no matter how this campaign turns out, there is undeniable satisfaction in watching the pundit class being forced to eat the words of its premature obituaries. The strategists who were called morons are suddenly geniuses again. The candidate and her husband, who were the subject of such undisguised journalistic venom just 24 hours ago, are suddenly worthy of awe again. The donors who dissed her are wondering whether they can retract with impunity. The White House staffers-in-waiting who danced on her grave are hoping they said nothing incriminating on the record.

In the Stalin story, the Kremlin firing squad was busy all night long.

In the Clinton story, if there were any justice, a number of chattering-class reputations would now be irrecoverable.

But even in an age of Google and YouTube, don’t count on it. Some of the very media wizards who declared Hillary dumb and dead are already chiding savants, pundits and gurus for getting it so wrong — as though they themselves were not the subjects and objects of their own amnesiac scorn.

To switch the metaphor, I wonder whether this humiliating turnabout, played out in real time over a very short period right in front of the American people, could be the MSM’s Katrina. Political media, you’ve done a heckuva job.

**Follow Marty Kaplan on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/martykaplan](http://www.twitter.com/martykaplan)**