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Palin: Don't Underestimate the Babe Factor

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I would have thought by now that, days after Sarah Palin's star turn at the otherwise flaccid and predictable Republican Convention, people would be reacting the way they do walking out a performance of *Cats*: "I sat there for three hours, and there was only one good song."

Yet, the polls are up and the buzz continues.

If it is being generated by women who agree that we should have guns in our cars, creationism in our schools, gay discrimination in our laws and government control over our bodies -- then America is becoming a truly scary place.

I think there is something different going on here. And it troubles me -- mainly because it does not seem to be troubling many other women, especially Democratic women.

The Republicans have found themselves an alpha female (the ones who run the high school and date the quarterback) to Hillary's beta female (the ones who run the student council and win the scholarships.) As Rush Limbaugh put it in full hubba hubba voice, "We've got a baaaaaabe on our ticket."

Palin quickly picked up the fallen standard of those Hillary voters who put "18 million cracks" in the glass ceiling. She didn't crack anything. John McCain helicoptered her to the roof, and they led her down the back stairs.

And why?

Because of her sterling record? Because of the synchronicity of their beliefs? Because months of intense vetting found a background as unblemished as the driven Alaskan snow?

Hardly.

He picked her because a campaign as stiff and tired as a McCain ad lib needed a "baaaabe on the ticket."

Sexist? If the female governor of Alaska had a uni-brow and wore mukluks instead of stilettos -- and had the same skimpy qualifications and apparent ethical baggage as Palin - - would she be on the ticket?

Face it:

Palin's hot, and McCain's not. And all of a sudden, there are steamed up windows at the RNC.

Especially curious to me is the eerie quiet from Democratic women.

Hillary Clinton -- the woman who included the possibility of Obama's assassination as a reason for her to stay in the race and declared herself the choice of hardworking white people -- has limited her attack on Palin to mutterings about policy differences.

It's enough to make one wonder if she doesn't really want Obama to win.

Clintonian ambivalence aside, other Democratic women have also been slow to engage.

Said Karen O'Connor, director of American University's Center for Women and Politics: "The Obama people seem to be handling Sarah Palin with kid gloves, while Sarah Palin has already taken the gloves off."

Good point.

Anita Dunn, senior policy advisor for the Obama campaign recently let loose with this killer line: "Ms. Palin is obviously a skilled performer and a talented politician. But the McCain/Palin ticket doesn't have one policy that is different from George Bush." Brutal.

Democratic women: where are you? This is a woman who is against most of what we believe in and believes in most of what we are against.

McCain has thrown us some raw meat here. Come getcha some.