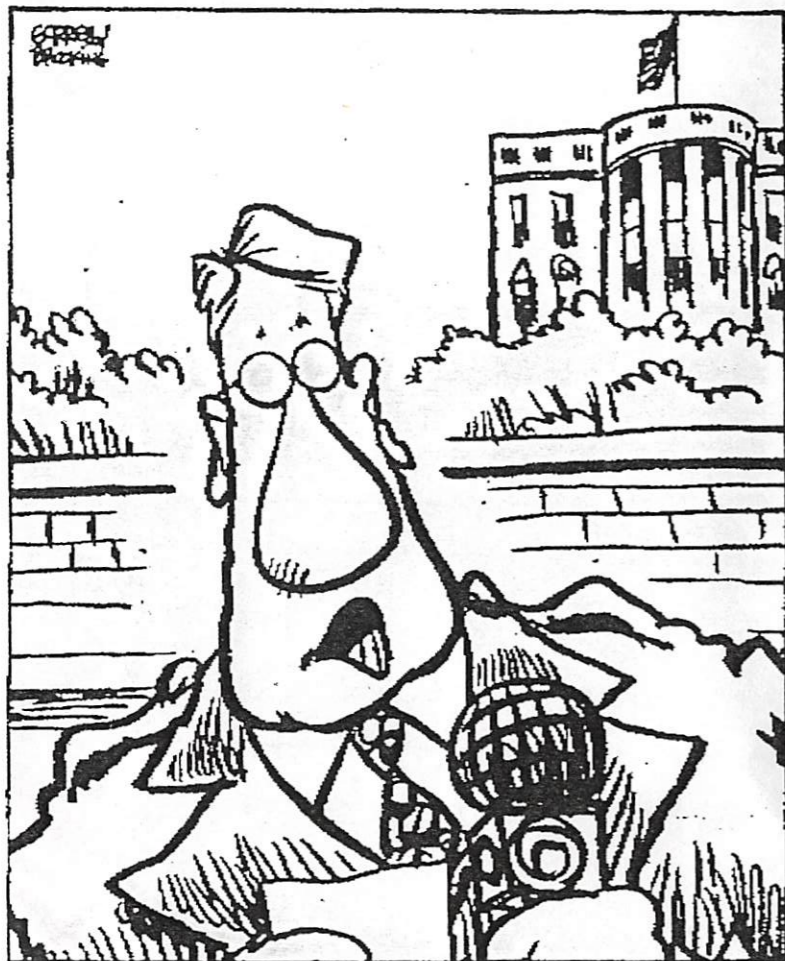


PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS



"More news from the White House . . .
Parents, please have your children
leave the room!"

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Cultural cultivation of tawdry fame

Monica Lewinsky's newly acquired sex star status is bringing her own boastful lovers out of the woodwork. The notoriety of sharing a woman with the president of the United States was too much for Andy Bleiler, a married high school drama teacher and theater technician, to pass up.

He has claimed an affair with Miss Lewinsky running from 1992, when she was a newly coined high school graduate, until the spring 1997. That overlaps him with Mr. Clinton as possessor of Miss Lewinsky's favors.

Mr. Bleiler apparently sees more gain to himself than harm from claiming the adulterous affair. Normally, the careers of educators aren't helped by affairs with young women, and wives usually feel humiliated by their husband's public boasting of unfaithfulness. On the other hand, maybe there are bragging rights, and even a book contract, in being the woman who shares the bed with the man who broke in the president's mistress.

It used to be that people confessed their transgressions. Now they boast of them. The TV talk shows and soaps have helped to turn sin into accomplishment. If Bill Clinton, Monica Lewinsky, and Andy Bleiler seem to confuse

promiscuity with a merit badge, they are no more mixed up than the average schoolchild who has been through an aggressive sex-ed course.

The sexual revolution began with Alfred Kinsey's unorthodox and apparently unscientific, unethical, and illegal sexual experimentations. Kinsey's "findings" make heterosexual teen-age sex and adulterous affairs seem pretty tame and well within bounds. According to his critics, Kinsey favored unrestrained sexuality and concluded that no sexual act, not even with infants or animals, was truly deviant.

Margaret Mead, the feminist anthropologist, is reported to have said Kinsey's work "suggests no way of choosing between a woman and a sheep" or between a man and a dog.

Kinsey's work is not standing the test of time. The more that is learned about it, the more outraged people become. In Indiana, the House of Representatives has passed a concurrent resolution to cut off the Kinsey Institute of Indiana University from public funding. The resolution denounces "Kinsey's ideology that all sexual contacts are legitimate" and condemns "research employing criminal acts to obtain data in the name of sci-

ence, especially sex crimes against children."

Polls show it is President Clinton's truthfulness, not his sexual behavior, that is at issue with the public. Mr. Clinton would be more an object of shame if Alfred Kinsey and his collaborators had been less successful in creating a culture in which indiscriminate sex is an achievement.

When cheating is legitimized, it breaks out everywhere. Rutgers University professor Donald L. McCabe says his surveys reveal that 87 percent of university students have cheated on written work and 70 percent on tests. More than one-quarter say they have plagiarized. When it becomes more important to be successful than honorable, society is imperiled.

If Mr. Clinton had spoken honestly at his State of the Union address, he would have said ours is an imperiled society. He would have used his own behavior as an example of what happens when the culture dispenses with the moral precepts that hold people accountable. A culture that has no standards higher than self-gratification must view honor as folly and cannot recognize heroism.

In the United States today, the remains of accountability have

been twisted into a weapon to break down the culture. Professors cannot confront cheating students without risking their own jobs. A cornered minority or female student can respond with racial discrimination or sexual harassment charges. University administrations are more fearful of civil rights lawsuits than of grades boosted by cheating.

Jere L. Crook recently lost a teaching job at Fordham University for no other reason than putting his foot down on a flagrant case of plagiarism. The university does not doubt the plagiarism, just the professor's judgment in making an issue of it. The breakdown of academic integrity is so advanced that 200 colleges and universities have found it necessary to form a consortium to foster honesty through the involvement of students, faculty and administrators.

It is going to get worse before it gets better. By collectivizing child care, Hillarycare takes away the last function of families. No longer responsible for old age retirement, medical bills, or the education and care of children, no impediments remain to self-gratification.

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