
Not to vilify but to praise him

BY WENDY DENNIS

LAST week, many pundits believed that Bill Clinton, who may or may not have had sex with Monica Lewinsky and who may or may not have lied about it, had sullied the office of the president. Some argued for impeachment. The Oval Office should be inhabited by a paragon of virtue, the thinking went; and if Mr. Clinton inflicted knee burns on a pretty White House intern with a sensuous mouth and the hots for the President, then off with his head.

We were supposed to swallow this idiocy despite the fact that in a fairly typical working week U.S. presidents have to unseat democratically elected Latin American governments, drop atom bombs on innocent people and have foreign leaders murdered. That's before lunch. They should be nice people too?

By this week, however, all the Clinton jokes had been told. Ms. Lewinsky's lawyer was back-peddalling like mad (you know how girls that age tend to exaggerate), the President's popularity was soaring in the polls and he was preparing to do what Americans do even better than the nasty — go to war.

In one short week journalists had gone from feeding frenzy to fatigue and the scandal had vanished from the front pages. And I'm supposed to question the *President's* morals? Oh, please. Watching this story explode and then dribble away was like going out with a guy who promises you the world, then gets his jollies, falls asleep and sneaks out the door before morning.

Last week I channel-surfed in vain hoping

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to find just one commentator willing to admit the truth. Every CEO, every Hollywood studio executive, every Japanese businessman knows that a little pango comes with the territory. Mr. Clinton runs the world's most powerful nation. If *he* can't get oral sex, then what chance do the rest of us have?

Then there was moral dilemma No. 2: What if it turned out that he not only had sex with Monica, but lied about it too? *So what if he lied?* He's a politician, for God's sake. Politicians lie for a living.

The point isn't that they lie, it's what they lie about. Ponder for a moment what some other presidents have lied about. Does Vietnam ring a bell? How about Iran-Contra, the Pentagon Papers, and Read My Lips: No New Taxes? Then again, what honourable paragon promised to get rid of the GST? Nixon said he wasn't a crook but ordered Watergate covered up. Now *there's* a moral cretin worth beating with a stick.

But getting some nooky and asking the girl who willingly indulged you to keep her mouth shut afterward? Who among us hasn't some sexual indiscretion in our past we'd prefer weren't broadcast on CNN?

Furthermore, the same week that all the pompous windbags screamed for impeachment, he was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize and was preparing the first balanced

budget since the sixties. Whether he can keep his dinkle in his pants or not, this Arkansas boy has more class and courage than all the smarmy, two-faced Cassiuses trying to bring him down.

He has taken on the tobacco industry and many of the country's most powerful, polluting industrialists. He has reduced unemployment and crime and spearheaded programs to reform the welfare system and improve education and child care. He has tried to ensure that Americans have some form of universal medicare.

And allegedly he's still got the energy for sex. This man never deserved to be vilified. He deserves to be held in awe. If an occasional midday pick-me-up is what it takes to keep his engine running, I'll live with it. I'll even do my part. In fact, with our dollar heading toward par with the Polish zloty and Confederation imploding, has anybody considered that maybe what *this* country needs is a few more boinks in high places? Any takers for Jean Chrétien? Trust me. You'd be doing a public service.

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