

COMMENTARY

Clinton stokes fire of scrutiny, but witch hunt possible

By Earl Ofari Hutchinson
Special to Sentinel-Voice

When Monica Lewinsky gives her much-awaited testimony to a grand jury about her relationship with Bill Clinton, it still will not answer one question: Why Clinton?

Depending on whom you believe, he has been mercilessly hammered by the media and Republicans because he is a crook, liar, sexual philander, liberal Democrat out of political step with the conservative times, the target of a vast right wing conspiracy, the victim of a gossip crazed, freaky sex scandal chasing media. So who is right? It seems there's a little truth in all of these reasons. Let's look at each one:

Dishonesty. Clinton has admitted that he caused "pain" in his marriage, smoked marijuana and protested the Vietnam War. This was enough for his enemies to hoist the moral flag of indignation and permanently smear him as a draft-dodging, dope-smoking, sex fiend. The avalanche of accusations quickly followed including sexual affairs with Jennifer Flowers

and Paula Jones, travel expense and campaign finance cheating, crooked Whitewater dealings and White House sexual romps.

The case against Clinton rests on a mountain of leaks, gossip, innuendo and hearsay. There's no tangible evidence that any of it is true — yet. Even if some of it is, Clinton would be in good company. American presidents have routinely lied, cheated, had sexual affairs, engaged in shady financial dealings and turned political favoritism and cronyism into a state of the art enterprise.

A liberal democrat. Clinton has somewhat resembled a traditional Democratic by supporting more spending on education, health care, the minimum wage and affirmative action. The resemblance ends there. He has out-Republicaned the GOP in downsizing government, beefing up military spending, taking a hard line on crime, erecting a get-tough foreign policy, creating corporate giveaway trade policies and hacking up many social programs.

Right wing conspiracy. Conservative

rightists hate Clinton not because of what he is but what they think he is. They believe he's a lover of gays, abortion and minorities. But Clinton has kept his support for these issues on a tight political leash. He's waffled on gays in the military, put limits on abortion and narrowly defined affirmative action.

An unscrupulous media. The gaggle of right-wing talk shock jocks have spent a decade trying to sell the public on the notion that the media is riddled with liberal bias. This is a fiction. The media is controlled by wealthy white men and corporations such as Rupert Murdoch, Ted Turner, GE, Westinghouse, and Disney-Cap Cities. They generously gorge the Republican Party, while tossing a few crumbs to the Democrats. The news networks have jealously watched the tabloids and trash talk shows rake in the cash and audience off of cops, car chases, murder, freaky sex and celebrity peeping tomism. They want to do the same and have obliterated the lines between news and entertainment.

The O.J.'s, Princess Di's, and yes, Clinton will always be ripe for their tabloid pickings. The media hopes to turn "the White House sex scandal" into a ratings bonanza, by continuing to pawn off gossip, rumors and innuendo as news.

The Republicans hope to turn Clinton into a political dead man, grab more seats in Congress and state and local offices, scare voters away from Gore's presidential bid, and snatch the White House in the year 2000.

The risk for the media is that many Americans, fed up with the garbage that passes for news, will turn the television off, and ratings will fall. The risk for the Republicans is that by spending so much time digging up smut on Clinton they will have no credible candidate or program of their own to offer. But that's a risk they apparently feel is worth taking.

Dr. Earl Ofari Hutchinson is the author of the "Black Male Image" and the forthcoming, "The Crisis in Black and Black." Email: ehutchi344@aol.com.

War, scandal clouding real issues

By George A. Wilson
Special to Sentinel-Voice

I recently saw a movie called "Wag the Dog." It is about the President of the United States being accused of an inappropriate sexual relationship and the effort to divert attention from him by starting a war. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

Maybe it's a coincidence, but it seems that the showdown with Iraq fits perfectly into the same scenario that was posed in the movie.

Only a few years ago, the nation's attention was focused on the Persian Gulf, Sadaam Hussein and the so-called liberation of Kuwait. A massive mobilization of nations joined to militarily defeat Iraq. Cheers erupted from supporters who felt that Sadaam had been taught a lesson. You would think that the war was about one man instead of oil and money.

Many who watched television accounts of so-called "smart bombs" hitting their targets were convinced that this war did minimal damage other than to selected targets. Only later did we learn that the bombs weren't as smart as we were told, but that scores of children and others lost their lives after the uranium-tipped bombs exploded near them. It was also under-reported that hospitals continue to be without medical supplies, such as incubators, because of sanctions against the country.

In spite of the grisly results of the last confrontation, there are many who want to do it again in order to get Sadaam to comply with the United Nations resolution banning the

construction or possession of weapons of mass destruction.

Secretary of State Madeline Albright, Defense Secretary William Cohen and UN Ambassador Bill Richardson have been flying back and forth seeking support for an U.S.-led attack. So far, the other members of the earlier coalition don't seem anxious to support what would be an attack on the Iraqi people. The notable exceptions are Britain, Australia and France. These three countries share a common thread — a general antipathy toward people of color and a willingness to follow the lead of their American cousins.

American military personnel will once again find themselves in harm's way for reasons that can only be described as questionable. Imagine the deaths of thousands and the potential exposure of military personnel to biological warfare, because Sadaam is alleged to have nuclear weapons stored in one of his houses. This rather absurd notion implies that Iraqis are clever enough to hide from spies on the ground and satellite surveillance and move nuclear weapons across borders into Sadaam Hussein's home.

All of this "saber rattling" appears to be nothing more than a thinly veiled attempt to divert attention from President Clinton's troubles. Perhaps, the hope is that a wave of sloganeering and patriotism will overshadow common sense. Some are calling for war, but the message is garbled because politics seems to be transcending reason.

are experiencing what I have experienced to look inside of themselves and find that unique and admirable thing that can give them hope.

Currently, I am in the early planning stages of my version of welfare reform which I call, "Becoming You." I aim to establish a nonprofit corporation named, "The Becoming Network," to provide a progressive solution to the problems addressed in the article.

If the Welfare-to-Work program could be redesigned to truly help ex-recipients and not exist as a political lighting rod topic used to sway voters or as a "job well done" compliment to corporate america and the government, then it may have a chance for success.

For more information about the Becoming Network and its mission, call (702) 227-7495, e-mail: becomingyou@hotmail.com, or visit this web site: <http://www.freeyellow.com/members2/Becoming/TBN.html>

Carl Rowan's Commentary

Americans repulsed at Starr's McCarthy-like tactics

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Monica Lewinsky's lawyer, William H. Ginsburg, dropped some juicy tidbits on us during this blitzkrieg of the TV talk shows about President Clinton's alleged affair with the former White House intern.

His most interesting — and most overlooked — comment

came when he was asked to describe the real relationship between the former White House intern and the president.

"Colleagues," he said.

That surely is not the word a lawyer would use if his client is on the verge of bringing down the president of the United States by telling the grand jury that she was telling the truth in lurid tape recordings in which she claimed an 18-month sexual affair with Bill Clinton.

Ginsburg's use of the word "colleagues" struck me as the reason why he said flatly that this scandal "will go away; it'll pass ... The president will remain in office ... Everything's going to be fine."

There are, of course, other reasons Ginsburg could cite to justify his prediction that the president and the country will emerge from this mess okay.

First, there's the overwhelming evidence that most Americans recoil at the notion of Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr literally overthrowing Clinton by hiding under his bed. Clinton's job approval and his popularity have soared to record highs as millions of Americans have shouted that they don't care



CARL ROWAN

about the president's sex life. They care about the president producing a budget with a surplus for the first time in 30 years. They care about schools, Social Security, health care and the other issues that this president is emphasizing.

But what about honesty and integrity? What if the president

lied in his deposition in the Paula Jones case in which he denied having sex with Monica Lewinsky?

I have been amazed at the number of people, especially women, who are saying in effect that "Gentlemen don't kiss and tell," and that even a president is "honor-bound" to protect a woman who has gone to bed with him. They say it's not really perjury to protect a woman from venal sex-life Peeping Toms.

Then there's the unpopularity of Kenneth Starr, whose reign as inquisitor-at-large is grating on millions of Americans. Some citizens resent Starr's spending \$40 million in what they think is a vendetta to "get" the Clintons. They are outraged by the way Starr has flaunted his Republican conservatism. They profess to be frightened by Starr's use of the FBI and his subpoena powers to intimidate and threaten those who don't leap to try to incriminate this president. They are repulsed by Starr's efforts to make Secret Service agents sexual tattletales on Clinton.

If Monica does say "We were just colleagues," the pressure will be overwhelming for Starr to fold his tent and go to that cushy job he's been offered in California.

Welfare

(Continued from Page 10)

training than someone who has only received government-subsidized aid for one year?

And corporate America may not even be the best place for ex-welfare recipients to be placed. These people are being set up for discouragement and failure. Yes, we all have a right to work, but we work best when we feel our best. Our right to work should not put us in a place where we feel inadequate and unable to do the job. That's why intense pre-training is important.

Each person created has a talent that makes them unique and can be tapped into. I believe there is a place in the business landscape for ex-welfare recipients, it's called the land of entrepreneurship. These people could use their special talent to add to the growing number of self-employed Americans. I looked inside of myself and found someone I admire. Me! I want to teach other low-income, single moms who

SPEAK OUT!

We accept letters to the editor

Send your letters to:

LAS VEGAS SENTINEL-VOICE

900 E. Charleston • Las Vegas, NV 89104 or fax to 380-8102

All letters must be signed and contain a daytime phone to be verified for your protection.

