

OUR VIEW

Bryant Accuser Hurting Herself

The whole sordid affair over Kobe Bryant's admitted adultery and alleged crime of sexual assault continues to devolve to the point of lunacy. The twists and turns are becoming harder to follow. First, Kobe denies infidelity, then admits it shortly before his mugshot is beamed to news stations around the world, but later says it was consensual.

He's scared of the repercussions, then he's not—assuming a detached coolness and insisting he did nothing legally wrong (morally wrong is another story) and will be vindicated. Follow this up with the purchase of a \$4 million ring for his wife and a tearful press conference in which he tells the world that, yes, he committed adultery and, yes, he's ashamed.

Following along?

Next came all the legal maneuverings—attempts to suppress evidence damaging to Kobe; attempts to inject the victim's alleged promiscuity into evidence. At one point in time, you could surmise that the case could go either way—Kobe's star power (and money) securing his freedom, or, Kobe sent to prison for committing a crime he initially denied. Betwixt all of this was the fact that Kobe's life on the court went on—he played better on days when he attended court, then flew to games—while the 19-year-old woman's past became Media Topic No. 1. She received tons of death threats, Kobe (mostly) received adulation (though he was targeted with death threats and racist hate mail).

Still there?

Next, the alleged victim declines to pursue criminal charges. Kobe's relieved, and the wattage on his \$136 million smile (the amount of his new LA Lakers contract) returned. Who knows how the civil litigation will turn out, but it's effect is undisputed: By refusing to criminally punish a man she claims sexually violated her and instead relying on legal recourse, the woman further tarnishes her reputation.

In effect, she's saying that whatever pain the alleged crime caused, it wasn't enough to see her perpetrator behind bars. She didn't have a weak case. Intercourse occurred. She had a 50-50 chance of success. Instead, she chose the path of least resistance, essentially putting a price tag on her sanctity. The more she pursues a big payday, the less she appears as a victim.

Harry's Our Man

What a political ride it's been for the man from Searchlight. Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., capping a solid political career on Tuesday with his election as Senate minority leader. As the most powerful Democrat on Capitol Hill (and the most powerful lawmaker in Nevada history), Reid largely owns the task of reshaping the party in the wake of historic setbacks in both houses of Congress, as well as in the presidential race.

Judging from the comments of his peers, Reid might be the right guy for the times—a dogged fighter who's respected on both sides of the aisle and is unafraid to criticize and joust with President Bush or GOP leaders (he's gutted Yucca Mountain funding multiple times; last year, he led an 8-hour-plus filibuster that prevented Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist from hearing a slew of bills). In interviews, Reid has indicated that his newfound power will not compromise his role in championing Nevada causes. How Reid can best help Nevada is in procuring more funding for vital needs like social service infrastructure, roads, environmental protections and health care. Nevada doesn't need pork-barrel projects, as they take money away from other areas of need. What Nevada simply needs to get its fair share. Reid has a yeoman task ahead of him. Good luck.

P O I N T O F V I E W



Democrats: Time to nix identity crisis

By Louie Overstreet
Special to Sentinel-Voice

My friends, who are Democrats, please take my admonition to heart, "stop trying to be *Republican Light!*" Be what you have historically been, fair-minded people who champion the working class and support social justice.

Challenge the perception that the country has become too conservative to elect a progressive (liberal) as President. Since the beginning of WWII in 1941 up until 2004 twelve (12) men have occupied the Oval Room in the White House. Six (6) have been Democrats and six (6) have been Republicans. Democrats' total number of years of occupancy has been twenty-nine (29) and for Republicans the number is thirty-two (32).

If nothing else, this past election proved when there is no discernible difference in the parties' positions on domestic and foreign policy issues, then the public is not provided a viable option.

It is my belief, if Kerry had stated that he made a mistake in voting to give the President the power to start a war in Iraq and concentrated on how he would prosecute the war on terror, he might well have become the 44th President of the United States of America. While on the subject of war, as you know,



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I am on record as stating that it is only a matter of time before there will be mass demonstrations in American streets against the war in Iraq.

Democrats should consider a four-pronged approach for maintaining its vitality in American politics. (1) Position yourselves to be able to say with absolute clarity "I told you" about the current Administration's go it alone foreign policy strategy. (2) Do the same thing when it comes to the economy. (3) Remind the people what being a Democrat has meant in terms of what government programs have improved the quality of life for Americans. (4) Go negative, early and often.

The party of the people should, over the next two years, cite past events and current situations as proof positive that the go it alone in the world strategy has no chance of success. Clearly, America is the primary target of terrorists on a global basis.

Thus, if we have only a few selected countries willing to help us combat terrorism, we cannot succeed.

Talk about the economy in terms of a decreased standard of living for Americans. Steal the Republican refrain from years gone by. You know, the question about are you better off today than you were four years ago? Then tie this question in with the answer of "no" due to the Administration's support for out-sourcing jobs resulting in both half-trillion dollar trade and domestic budget deficits.

Remind the people that Democrats are responsible for government programs that have advanced the standard of living of Americans and have worked towards the noble goal of a color blind society. Let the people know it was the Democrats who

were responsible for creating Social Security, health care programs for the young and old, voting rights for minorities, and Title IX opportunities for women in collegiate sports.

Don't be too proud to borrow a page from the Republican play book by accepting as a lesson learned that negative campaigning works. Stop believing in the foolish notion that we of the public are intelligent enough to discern the truth. So, my recommendation is to go negative early and often as it takes. Accuse the Republicans of having sex with our country, if you get my drift. There you have it my friends of the Democratic Party. If you don't choose to take my admonitions to heart, then your only hope is that politics in America by its very nature remains cyclical.



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