

opinion

Lawyers confuse love and money

by Art Buchwald

The prenuptial contract is getting more and more prevalent as the divorce rate rises in the country. Since getting married in many cases is not one of those things you do forever, lawyers are advising their clients to make out a contract, specifying who gets what when love flies out the window and recrimination knocks down the door.

I was the best man at a prenuptial legal contract ceremony the other day. The groom to be, Horace Pipeline, was attended by the famed divorce lawyer Roy Bone, and the bride-to-be, the lovely Grace Willow, was being given away by Stephanie Tuff of the firm Rock, Sock & Needham.

The bride and groom sat in the love seat in Mr. Bone's palatial office, which, for the occasion, had been decorated with magnolias and white roses.

Mr. Bone, reading from a yellow legal pad, said, "Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to bring this man and this woman together in a happy prenuptial contract, spelling out the property claims of both parties in case, for reasons we shall not go into here, this marriage is broken asunder. Do you, Horace Pipeline, agree that, in case you do not choose to continue in wedlock, you will bestow on your lovely bride a lump sum equal to 5 percent of your present assets, excluding your boat, your penthouse, and your house in Southampton?"

"Wait a minute," said Miss Tuff. "Who said anything about a lump sum, and who said anything about excluding Mr. Pipeline's boat, penthouse and home in Southampton? My client, under law, is entitled to 50 percent of all of her husband's property. But we don't want to be greedy about this. We'll settle for \$10,000 a month until she gets married again."

"Alimony is out of the question," Mr. Bone said. "I cannot permit my client to enter the sacred institution of matrimony unless he can get out of it by paying off a lump sum at the dissolution of the marriage. How can we be sure when and if Miss Willow will get married again?"

"How do you feel about it, Grace?" Miss Tuff asked.

"I love Horace very much and if he wants to provide me with a lump sum, I don't have any objection. But I want to know what numbers we're talking about before I say 'I do.'"

Mr. Bone smiled, "You're a very reasonable young lady. Would \$500,000 satisfy you?"

Miss Tuff said, "No, it wouldn't, Roy, and you know before we came here we researched Horace's assets down to the last nickel. Now let's be serious or call of this prenuptial legal contract ceremony right now."

Mr. Bone scowled, "As Horace's lawyer I can't go over \$500,000, but if he wants to be more generous I'll leave it to him. Horace, what do you think?"

"Grace is the only woman I've ever loved," Horace said. "I can't imagine anything but death parting us. But just in case something did happen, I'm willing to give her a cool million — the same as I gave my second wife."

Miss Tuff said, "Horace's second wife was much older than Grace, and the million he settled on her was before inflation set in. We want one million five and the house in Southampton."

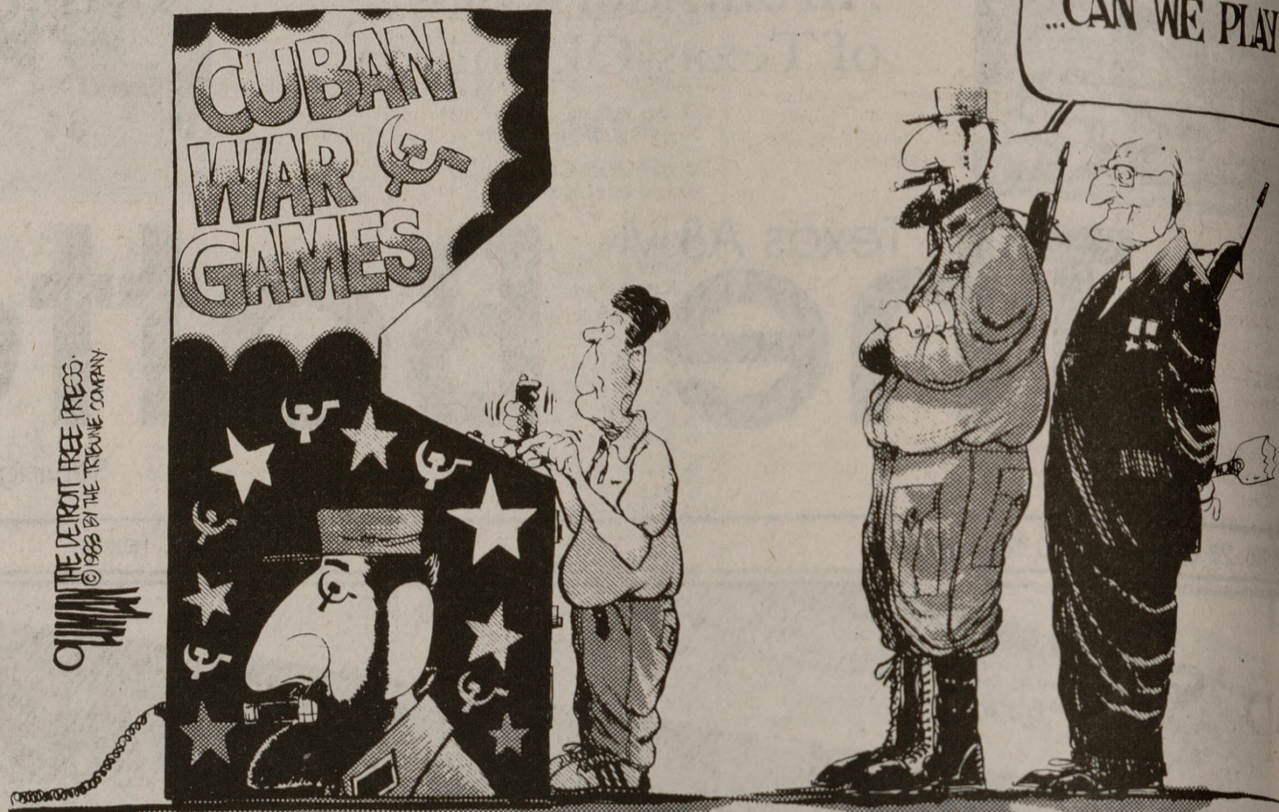
"Out of the question," Mr. Bone said angrily. "These people hope to live happily ever after. My client would not have a day of happiness if he knew it would cost him a million five plus the house in Southampton to get out of the marriage."

Miss Tuff said, "How do you think my client would feel if she knew she could be tossed out in the street for a lousy million dollars?"

Grace became upset. "This talk is so sordid it's destroying our love for each other. I'll take a million, two hundred thousand, and the penthouse in New York. But that's the bottom line."

Horace said, "Don't be angry, darling. You're asking for more than I planned to give you, but I want you to be happy. Give it to her, Roy, providing we have it in writing she doesn't go to court and try to sock it to me for anything more."

"All right, Horace, it's your money. I'll have this typed up while we open a bottle of champagne and drink a toast to the happy couple. Please excuse my tears. Prenuptial marriage contract ceremonies always make me cry."



Reagan's sense of humor has been in top form

by Helen Thomas

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Backstairs at the White House:

President Reagan was good for a barrel of laughs when he addressed the conservative Heritage Foundation dinner, and the crowd responded.

Teasing one of his key conservative backers, beer baron Joseph Coors, who introduced him, Reagan said: "There's a little coolness between Joe and me tonight — I guess maybe that's my fault. When I arrived at the reception here I said, 'Joe, it's been a long, hard, day in the Oval Office, but now it's Miller time.'"

"That's when he showed me his Mondale button."

Reagan then asked: "Where are those Democratic candidates with their grandiose solutions now that we need them? The America's Cup race, for example. Now, there was a problem that could have been solved with more money and a lot of wind."

Reagan told the gathering, "I remember the days when a conservative intellectual was considered a contradiction in terms — you know, like 'thrifty liberal,' 'modest government,' and 'penny-pinching congressman.'" He said he was tempted to use former Justice Potter Ste-

wart's definition of pornography when asked to define "the conservative intellectual movement." The definition was, "I know it when I see it."

The 72-year-old president still likes to joke about his age. When he inaugurated the new job-training program he lambasted the Democratic presidential candidates, most of whom, he said, "are younger than I am." Then he added, "Everybody is."

One day last week, deputy chief of staff Michael Deaver was on the telephone insisting to reporters that President Reagan would visit the Philippines and there would be no changes in the itinerary on his Asian trip.

But in a world where no one should ever say never, the following day Deaver was on a secret mission to the Far East, delivering messages to officials in three capitals — Manila, Jakarta and Bangkok — that Reagan would be unable to visit their countries as planned but might come later.

What happened? The president became outraged at any suggestion that fears for his security prompted the postponement of the visit to the Philippines, where there has been intermittent turmoil since the assassination of opposition

leader Benigno Aquino in Manila. Reagan insists the only reason he is postponing the visit is that Congress will still be in session and his presence in Washington is needed. Nevertheless, there were sighs of relief when the better part of the year prevailed.

And it's clear that Nancy Reagan's friends say she was worried about her husband's safety, was breathing easier.

The president is running out of time to decide whether he will run again.

He already has an organization to go. Some White House officials including chief political adviser Robert Rollins, will leave Oct. 15 to join the election committee. The job of liaison will be taken over by chief of staff Jim Baker's executive assistant, Martin Tutwiler. Reagan has touched base with his constituencies and made positive moves that seem designed to position him to run for re-election.

He also has not lost an opportunity to take a swipe at the Democratic candidate at every opportunity. Meantime, press secretary Larry Speakes' statements have been bolstered and some of the old from the 1980 campaign are beginning to show up around the White House, apparently lured back once more to help breach to help re-elect the president.

Our 'amazing' times not without perversities

by Dick West

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The cover of Time magazine's special anniversary issue this month salutes "the most amazing 60 years in history."

It is easy to see why Time was awed by all that happened in the past half-century, plus 10. That period, after all, included the flights of both the Spirit of St. Louis and the space shuttle Columbia. But most of us regard our own epochs with a high degree of amazement. And

labeling an era as, say, "the most boring 60 years in history" would be a poor way to sell magazines.

I remind you that we may have different ideas of what is astonishing. An event that dumfounds you may be only a cause for raised eyebrows for me. And vice versa. Moreover, history has been going on for quite long time.

"Each age has its peculiar folly; some scheme, project or fantasy into which it plunges, spurred on by the love of gain, the necessity of excitement or the mere

force of imitation," says historian Charles Mackay.

In support of his thesis, Mackay cites "tulipomania," which gripped western Europe in the 16th Century, perhaps presaging our own stock market. At one point, "nobles, citizens, farmers, mechanics, seamen, footmen, maid-servants, even chimney-sweeps and old clotheswomen" were speculating in tulips, he writes.

All true enough, if you insist on looking backwards. But it is equally valid to

observe that as our understanding of what we are up against comes into sharper focus, we are better able to predict the behavior of opposing forces.

Entire books codifying the natural laws of perversity have been published in the last 60 years. Such collections range from Murphy's First Law ("If anything can go wrong, it will.") to such richly diverse discernments as "The meek shall inherit the earth, but not its mineral rights."

During the next 60 years, I predict, we

shall see countless validations of that "If a person is smart enough, he can pick himself up to the seat of the chair and throw himself down the stairs." Already, we are seeing signs of this "high technology" arena.

"The trivialization of technology and of the embarrassments of the electronic revolution," one observer has observed.

For the good of the country, I fervently hope the electronic revolution will out better than the sexual revolution which either ended in a scoreless tie with both sides losing.

Congressman determined to stop non-compliance with draft laws

by Maxwell Glen and Cody Shearer

WASHINGTON — Rep. Gerald B.H. Solomon, Republican of New York, seems to be a man possessed.

A fiscal and social conservative whose crusades have usually been Quixotic, Solomon has emerged during his third term as a formidable legislator consumed by one issue: males who haven't registered with the Selective Service System. What Solomon fails to recognize, however, is that his battles may already be won.

After several years of championing such controversial causes as the CIA, the Taiwanese and nuclear power, Solomon attracted widespread support last year for his amendment to a Defense Department authorization bill linking federal financial aid dollars to draft registration. Solomon was dissatisfied with the Selective Service System's compliance efforts, which he had worked to bolster earlier in 1982. At the time an estimated 20 percent of eligible young men had, for whatever reason, ignored the law.

"It seemed to me that the majority of young men who were registering...were being discriminated against," Solomon told us last week. "They stood a better

chance of being drafted in an emergency because the number of potential draftees would have been smaller."

Solomon has no patience with those who don't cooperate. Asked how he'd respond if his son Jeffrey, 20, refused to register, he said, "Frankly, I'd disown him...As much as I love him, I'd have to do it as a matter of principle."

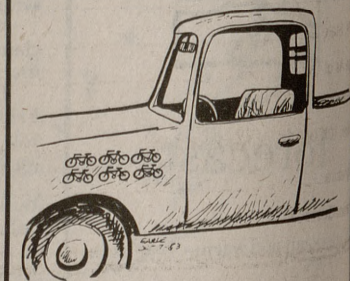
To Solomon's credit, non-compliance has dropped dramatically since both houses adopted his amendment. More than 96 percent of all 18-year-old males have now registered.

But Solomon, a bulldog of a man who describes himself as a "miniature John Wayne," remains unsatisfied. On Oct. 1, anyone seeking employment under the 1982 Job Training and Partnership Act will have to verify their registration with the Department of Labor — a rule adopted last year at Solomon's behest to bolster registration among eligible minorities. (A proposal to require defense industry workers to register passed the House but never drew the Senate's attention.)

Now Solomon is stalking even bigger game. A new bill, House Resolution 2950, takes aim at colleges and universities that have responded to the Solomon

amendment by promising needy registrants alternative forms of financial aid. H.R. 2950 would bar federal contracts with these renegades, which include such prestigious institutions as Pennsylvania State University and Pennsylvania's Swarthmore College. "I'm not sure I want schools that are Yale University supported by federal funds if they are going to mold the best of these young people to break the law of the U.S.," Solomon, an ex-military aviator, reasoned.

Slouch by Jim Egan



The Battalion

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Columns and guest editorials also are welcome, and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843, or phone (409) 845-2611.

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