

SHOULD PAULA JONES BE ALLOWED TO SUE PRESIDENT CLINTON?

Paula Jones recently accused President Clinton of making unwanted sexual advances towards her on May 8, 1991. She contends that while Clinton was Arkansas' governor, a state trooper approached and asked her to meet Clinton.

When she arrived at Clinton's hotel room she alleges that he made advances and exposed himself to her, requesting that she perform oral sex. She claims she left immediately, distraught. The White House responded that Clinton "does not recall meeting her."

Yes- The most powerful man in America is involved in a sexual harassment scandal. But sex has always been about power. It's about a bunch of other stuff too, but power seems to attract sex and things sexual at least as much as physical attraction or emotion.

FRANK STANFORD
Columnist



Few Americans would be shocked to learn of any public figure's infidelities. There are really three issues surrounding the decision concerning Paula Jones and her legal ability to file a lawsuit: Did she and President Clinton really have some sort of sexual encounter whether or not her rendition is completely true? If the allegations are true does it really matter? And if it does matter, should she be able to sue him?

As far as the interaction between Clinton and Jones is concerned, no one will ever know the whole truth except those two parties. Unfortunately, this is one of those legal cases where it's basically one person's word against another. Because of the nature of our justice system - with the exception of out-of-court settlements - a trial never ends in a tie. Either the "good guy" wins the case or the victim gets shafted. All too often, particularly in sexual assault or harassment cases, a guilty individual gets off scot-free simply because of a lack of evidence. On the other hand, an innocent defendant's name is almost always irreparably damaged when wrongly brought up on charges.

Although we might assume at least SOMETHING marginally unethical occurred at that motel in Arkansas - because of a state trooper's testimony - any evidence short of a lurid video tape is difficult to use.

If, hypothetically, we know that

Clinton is guilty of everything Paula Jones is charging, we have to decide if a non-violent incident with Jones' questionable motives is worth taking down the most powerful leader in the world. Even though exposing oneself and propositioning an employee who willingly comes to a motel room is a crime, it should hardly be made to affect the entire world.

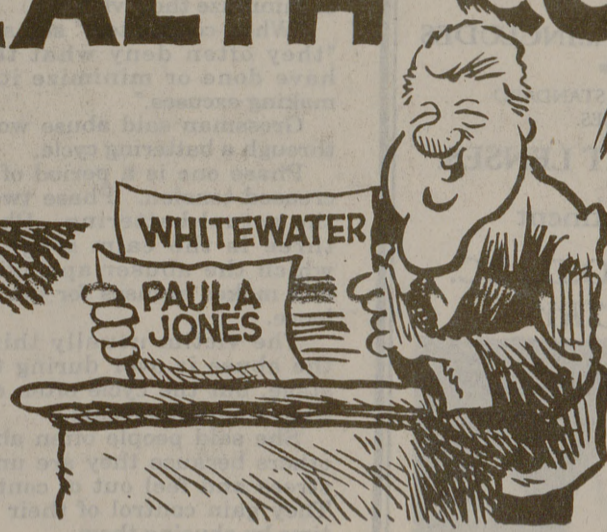
This allegation is extremely important from a humanist perspective, and according to our justice system's credo: "No one is above the law." A person who is treated wrongly should be vindicated - at the very least by seeing that justice is served. If Jones was your sister or grandmother you might see this powerful leader in a different light ... as a common pervert.

Regardless of Jones' possible ulterior motives in this case - fame, financial gain or political sabotage - she is just as American as the president and therefore due legal consideration just like anyone else. Our country was founded on the principle of all men being equal and the law working for everyone regardless of wealth, connections or political power.

Jones deserves not only to be heard and taken seriously in this issue but also a day in court under the same laws that apply to you and me.

Frank Stanford is a graduate philosophy student

UNIVERSAL COVERAGE FOR HEALTH COSTS



...But I'd compromise and settle for universal coverage of **LEGAL** costs...

MARGULIES
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NEW JERSEY

No- Whether or not President Clinton made sexual advances to Paula Jones is a moot point. The question we should be answering is what are the boundaries of the office of the President of the United States.

ELIZABETH PRESTON
Columnist



Bill Clinton is responsible for the foreign and domestic policies of the most powerful country in the global community at this time. He does not have time to deal with personal problems of little or no importance to this country's well-being.

An incident that supposedly occurred over three years ago should not be allowed to tie up our president's time, energy, and money. Jones' lawyer will argue that any American should be allowed to sue any other American, which is true in principle. However, the reality is if the president conducted himself in an unethical or even illegal manner before he even was elected, the time to call him on it is not while he is in office.

The appropriate time for Jones to react was immediately, or even while he was campaigning in 1992. Because she has chosen to wait until she can get the most publicity, fame and "No Excuses" Jeans contracts, she is doing more to harm the office of the presidency than good for the pursuit of justice. In an interview with Harold Johnson in National Review, Jones stated that she only wants to clear her name, but her actions belie those fiercely spoken words.

One consequence of this lawsuit is that the United States

is losing face in the international community. In France or Italy, people don't care who their leaders are sleeping with. America's obsession with the Jones case is beginning to look ridiculous. Clinton's legal defense fund looks to the world as if our president is not only spending precious time worrying about lawsuits, but also that he is desperately poor.

This case could set a dangerous precedent, encouraging people to file suit against a president merely for publicity and fame. As Clinton's lawyer, Robert Bennett, was quoted in Time, "one can readily imagine [further claims], especially involving unwitnessed one-on-one encounters that are exceedingly difficult to prove."

The president cannot be above the law, but he should have the right to be free from responsibility while in office for his actions before he was in office.

In the presidential race, opportunities to point out flaws in the candidates abound. The press is always eager to follow any dirt that may come up about the potentials, and any claim is reported exhaustively. The public was given a chance to judge for themselves before electing him. The presidency cannot be made into a farce where Americans whittle away the time and resources of the office with various lawsuits, and distract officials from important issues.

As Michael Kramer aptly stated in Time, "Clinton himself may not deserve the break he seeks, but the presidency does."

Elizabeth Preston is a junior English major

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Vegetarian tired of food jokes

Decision not to eat meat shouldn't matter to others

When I decided to become a vegetarian, I thought that it was a personal decision, affecting only myself. This idea has been disproved again and again. At every dinner or party I attend, the topic comes up. People feel an instant need to express their feelings on the subject, and to defend themselves against my expected attempts to convert them.

ELIZABETH PRESTON
Columnist



involves a T-shirt with a picture of a cow which is saying, "Eat your vegetables." The problem with the joke is that most non-vegetarians have to have it explained to them. I have faith that in the land of 10,000 Aggie jokes we can create some original vegetarian humor.

The worst Vegetarian Joke is the "Oh my gosh! Didn't you know there is a meat by-product in that _____ (fill in with whatever the vegetarian is eating at that moment)." This usually gets an immediate response, especially if what I am eating is something that might have meat in it. If the person really thinks there might be meat by-products in the food, the vegetarian does

appreciate the warning. This is how I discovered there were meat by-products in gelatin, certain candies, and other foods. However, when done in jest this causes alarm - not to mention indigestion - and it is still not funny. We can do better.

Another popular response is the angry/you must be an idiot one. When vegetarianism comes up, invariably someone will turn to me, glare, and say, "Oh please, tell me your dumb reasons for being vegetarian. I'm just dying to hear another bleeding-heart

liberal." This is a hard one to react to. Some of the best jokes I have heard are bleeding-heart-liberal jokes. They abound at reunions where my family, a large group of conservative t-sips, can humorously put down almost anything I believe in. However, the assumption that as a vegetarian I am automatically interested in a political discussion is mistaken. When the person realizes this, they usually switch themselves to the people-who-tell-bad-vegetarian-jokes category. What a vicious cycle.

People also seem uncomfortable eating meat in front of a vegetarian. When I eat with friends, I usually must listen dutifully to the excuses of those around me. "I would eat vegetarian, but I really like this chicken." "I sure am sorry to eat this in front of you. Would you prefer that I move?" It is not necessary to explain your reasons for eating meat to vegetarians unless they express curiosity. Since we know that we are right to do what we do, we are not interested anyway. No need to whine or apologize.

While we may appear superior and smug, vegetarians are generally not out to convert, lecture, bore or otherwise disturb you. It is a personal choice that we have made and live with on a day-to-day basis. When you have to make special allowances for me, I apologize. I usually try to provide my own food at functions, or eat before I go. So the next time someone mentions they are a vegetarian, please refrain from explaining, joking, cajoling, or yelling. Try nodding your head, saying "hmm," or, if you are interested, asking them why they made that choice. You might even be surprised by what you discover.

Elizabeth Preston is a junior English major

My father's favorite joke - the one he has told at every meal we have shared in the past five years - is to point to the meat dish on the table and say, laughing jovially, "Of course, this is vegetarian turkey!"

When I was a new vegetarian, I was defensive and missed the opportunity to laugh at these perfectly good jokes. Now that I can see some potential humor in a good Vegetarian Joke, I regret that people use the same ones over and over. What we really need is better jokes. My favorite at this point



MAIL CALL

Ignore Elchanan's view of women in movies

Well, it finally happened. Josef Elchanan's June 27 column on sex in films has done something miraculous; angered me enough to write to The Battalion, and this is some accomplishment, believe me. Could Elchanan explain why the only women in films today that he could respect are those that would be subservient "props" for the "big macho man" to rescue, or the opposite women who would only emulate a man? If Elchanan thinks that a film like "The Piano," which uses beautiful symbolism and images of compassion to convey a woman's discovery of her true sexual identity is "lowering" the standards of America, and bloody action flicks aren't, then I'm proud to be a low-life. I hope that many Aggies do not share Elchanan's vision of the "perfect" film society in which "Pretty Woman" would have been elevated to greatness had Richard Gere pulled out a .45 and pumped Julia full of lead for leading him to a (gasp!) sexual encounter, the sicko! I've heard that Hollywood may make a film with Elchanan's superior film taste and compassion in mind. It contains "bodies piled to the skies and filled with lead." It's called "Rwanda: Witness the Massacre." Enjoy!

Todd M. Rennels
Class of '96

National defense rests on ability, not 'image'

In a letter appearing in the June 28 Battalion, Jim Fyffe states that the central problem in the issue of homosexuals

in the military is one of image. He states that homosexuals should not be allowed to serve because of the "images associated with them." He goes on to say "In defense, image is everything."

While I agree that image is important in a wide range of instances - in the promotion and marketing of beer for instance - what is truly vital in national defense is nothing more than ability. Besides, what image is associated with Alexander the Great, one of the greatest military leaders in history and a homosexual. By Fyffe's faulty reasoning we could easily ban blondes from entering the military because of the "dumb blonde" stereotype.

The absurd example of the toy poodle and pit bull has no value. ANYONE with a weapon and the ABILITY to use it presents an aggressive and threatening image.

Actually, the main point in this issue is that uninformed people are afraid of the homosexual serviceman "who takes a submissive position". It is traditionally acceptable for a male to stare at and objectify a female because women have been repeatedly viewed as the submissive sex to be dominated by men. The true fear in allowing gay personal (they are already serving whether you "allow" them to or not) to be recognized as homosexual is that now men are quite possibly the object in the submissive position or to be overpowered.

The only image that disturbs me is one of our government issuing weapons to people so tragically ignorant as to believe that homosexuals are not capable or deserving of serving in the U.S. armed forces.

David M. Hamada
Class of '95

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The Battalion
Mail Call
013 Reed McDonald
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX
77843-1111
Fax: (409) 845-2647