

**STATE OF THE UNION**

# Public relations

*Presidential scandals fall prey to scrutiny by media, citizens in information age*

President Clinton is nervous. One cannot blame him. He is a man obsessed with securing a heroic standing in his name. He has a few things to worry about. Whitewater. Travelgate. Paula Jones. Campaign finance violations. The list goes on. Clinton, whether he had anything to do with these things or not, will fight their fight for the rest of his presidency, doubtfully making "Any publicity is good publicity" the White House motto. The sad state of affairs for the president. Poor Bill must ask himself every day why the media watches him more closely than Oprah Winfrey watches her fan intake.

There are many reasons Clinton, or any other president, can never escape the scouring gaze of the media. Just for Clinton's sake, here are the highlights:

Number one: Timing is everything. Frankly, Bill Clinton was just born too late to escape heavy duty scrutiny. Or the reporting of it, at least. "Tricky Dick" ruined it for all politicians with the Watergate scandal. Suddenly, the little faith people had in politics was gone.

From the moment the story of Watergate broke, Richard Nixon and Bernstein changed the way people thought of politicians, and the political climate in general. And it wasn't just because people liked the idea of informants called "Deepthroat."

Number two: Better you than us. From the media's viewpoint, it is much easier to say that the president, or any other high ranking official for that matter, has



**BEVERLY MIRELES**  
columnist

made a mockery of his office than it is to admit that the media has a tendency to make a mockery of itself.

Basically, a story about fallen officials makes better headlines than one about declining readership in newspapers does.

Especially when the supposed wrong doings have catchy names like "Travelgate" or "Nannygate." Perhaps the

most recent scandal should be called "Fondlegate." In other words, reporting on the president reduces the chance that the media will have to report on themselves.

Plus, it is our job to report on the lazy bums in office, good and bad.

Number three: Scandals are fun. In the same way that Puritans secretly enjoyed and encouraged witch hunts, Americans like their televised court hearings and special prosecutors. Most of all, people love sex scandals.



There is just something cheap, disgusting and ultimately satisfying about a big-haired girl from Arkansas claiming that the president has distinguishing marks on his penis. It is very Jerry Springer.

Whitewater, one of the larger scandals that has surfaced while Clinton is in office, is boring compared to

the shock value of Paula Jones. I mean, the woman talks about the most powerful man in the world's penis on national television. She will make the evening news a lot quicker than a story about genocide in Bosnia or Somalia or Rwanda, any day of the week. It is just public preference, no matter what they claim they want.

Number four: It is hard to not report the president getting caught with his pants down — literally. He is one, two, three times a ladies man.

First it was Jennifer Flowers. That was scandalous, but the American public got over it because she did not seem to have any credibility. She could not even spell "Jennifer" correctly.

Then, Paula Jones. When that broke, people started paying attention, but with a grain of salt. She did willingly go to that hotel room in 1991.

Now, two more names surface: Katherine Willey and Monica Lewinsky. Willey, a White House part-timer has testified that she was kissed and fondled by Clinton when she went to see the president about obtaining a full-time job, a troubling bit of evidence for the White House. However, Lewinsky, and her possibly perjured testimony, is by far the most damaging to Clinton.

Reportedly, Lewinsky admitted to an acquaintance that she had an affair with Clinton, was told to lie about it by the president and then testified under oath that she did not have sexual relations with Clinton.

If Clinton did tell Lewinsky to lie, he is simply in a whole lot of trouble. This scandal, more so than any of the others, has the power to make a lasting and derogatory impression upon Clinton's place in American politics.

President Clinton should not expect the barrage of media-exploited scandals to end anytime soon. If guilty of any wrong doing, he could consider this the beginning of his punishment. If innocent, he should realize that having every action reported is in the job description.

And remember, by running for the office, he asked for it.

*Beverly Mireles is a freshman microbiology major.*

**STATE OF THE UNION**

# Day care tax cut masquerades as triumph for family; misses mark

There is a monster loose on Capitol Hill — a monster released by the Clinton administration. However, there is something peculiar about this monster. While it looks friendly, it will devour entire families.

In his State of the Union address, President Clinton laid out his budget proposals for the next year. The President's budget includes tax breaks for families who keep children in child care. These tax credits are sort of an evil twin of pro family legislation — they look family friendly, but they are not. The Clinton administration should be offering tax credits for families with parents who stay home with their children.

Amazingly, the Clinton administration intends to use the tax code to en-



**JOHN LEMONS**  
columnist

courage parents to pay other people to care for their children.

It is an abuse of a system that is intended to generate revenue, not experiment with nationwide social engineering.

What is inconceivable about these proposals is that they ignore the millions of families who have a parent that stays home with their children.

These families courageously forego extra income, because they understand that the care of a loving parent is always superior to that of a stranger. They hold a full-time job, with the title of Mommy or Daddy, instead of butcher, baker or candlestick maker.

This move is consistent with the Clinton administration's skewed view of big government and child rearing. It is no surprise that the administration intends to slip government's meddling hands into the family itself.

Furthermore, this proposal begs the question of how the Clinton's believe children should be raised. After all, if you are Hillary Clinton, you believe "it takes a village" to raise a child.

By the looks of its proposals, the Clinton

administration believes it takes a village, a day-care center or just about anybody but a child's own parent, to raise a child.

Yes, child care is expensive, but not working is also expensive. Stay-at-home parents sacrifice income and career to care for their children. Certainly, these families could benefit from a tax credit.

Perhaps the most insulting result of this snub by the Clinton administration, is the implication that being a homemaker is not a legitimate career choice for parents.

It is disgusting that by refusing to recognize these parent's noble and legitimate career choice, the administration would belittle their actions. They are actions taken in the best interest of children.

During his Jan. 7 press conference announcing these proposals, Clinton said, "There is no more important job than raising a child."

There is no more important responsibility than to create the conditions and give people the tools to succeed at raising their children.

Indeed, the president claims that gov-

ernment should be providing families with the tools to succeed at child raising, but he refuses to bolster a whole section of society who are successfully raising their children.

In most cases, keeping children at home is superior to day care, but day care can benefit children.

Scott Johnson, an assistant professor of psychology at Texas A&M, said the quality of day care depends on several factors, including the caregiver's training, turnover of day care staff, the day care facilities and educational experiences provided.

Unfortunately, the quality of day care in the United States is suspect.

"I think the majority of day care in this country is not very good," Johnson said, "I don't think anybody is going to argue with that."

Clinton's budget does include some proposals to improve the quality of child care. Yet, it is interesting that the administration would choose to espouse the virtues of child care rather than promote stay-at-home parenting. After all, child advocacy has been the hallmark of the

Clinton's presidency.

Clinton often claims that he acts "to protect the children." It has been his explanation for his stances on Internet pornography, regulating tobacco companies and drug abuse.

Perhaps, the president has drawn from the "let's protect the children" well so many times that it has become a political reflex — a cheap excuse to justify any cockeyed idea the Clinton administration devises.

Encouraging families to use child care and ignoring stay-at-home parents is not pro-family legislation. Maybe the country will luck out, and the President's troubles with Monica Lewinsky will cost him enough credibility to sink this legislation. Or maybe, Clinton will come to his senses and promote stable environments for raising children.

These days, the Clinton administration is desperately looking for legacy. Will its legacy be a generation of children raised by strangers?

*John Lemons is an electrical engineering graduate student.*



**MAIL CALL**

**Safety policies lacking at campus functions**

After Saturday night, I think that the University needs to take a long look at its guidelines and policies for special events held by various organizations on campus. Two university police officers for a dance in which over 1,500 people attended is outrageous.

This figure does not include the 100 or so angry people who were outside unable to get in. The dance I am referring to took place at the Rollie White Coliseum Saturday night and was part of a conference being held here at Texas A & M University this past weekend.

I do not know what the current policy is for uniformed police at a university approved function, but 20 officers for almost 2,000 people is not a ratio that I would want

to be part of, unfortunately I had no choice.

The two officers assigned to the dance ... were running (literally) from one door to the other trying to control the angry crowd outside while also keeping an eye on the 1,500 inside the coliseum. At one point about 50 or so people from outside broke open a locked door and ran into the coliseum.

After two calls to 911, extra university police arrived followed by a couple of College Station police. Needless to say, the dance ended well before it was scheduled to end.

A party of this size required at least a dozen police officers, yet only two were assigned.

A dance like this should have been cancelled or postponed until proper security was available. To my understanding this was not the only dance on campus Saturday night and the other dance also had inadequate officers and encountered similar problems.

I think that the University should take a look at its current policies and not approve such special events if it is unable to properly staff them with a proportionate number of officers.

It makes the sponsors look bad and more importantly it makes Texas A & M University look bad.

*Al Guarnieri  
Class of '98*

**Conference sponsors owe University apology**

On Saturday night, Jan. 24, an accident occurred at the intersection of FM 2818 and Highway 60. An apparently inebriated individual had "slammed" into a light pole, sending the pole into an automobile driven by an elderly couple returning from dinner. Some friends of mine and I stopped to help the couple, and also alerted someone to call the police.

The call was made, and approximately ten minutes later, a Brazos County sheriff stopped to ensure that an injury did not occur. However, the officer informed us that a "huge" fight had occurred at Texas A&M, and that he was needed to control the "riot." He said that he would send the next available officer to the scene. Thirty minutes later, a College Station police officer arrived to file a report.

I was suddenly curious as to what kind of riot could have occurred at the school that prides itself on "Howdy" and being an Aggie. I found the cause of the riot to be the Southwestern Black Student "Leadership" Conference that occurred this weekend. I called the University Police Department, and they informed me of the events that took place that night.

Thirty police officers (BPD,

CSPD and UPD), along with six security guards were required to control the anarchy that occurred late that night by individuals under the misguided impression that their actions reflect leadership development.

This is not the first time that incidents such as these have happened. Yet, nothing is reported, nothing is done. One officer I talked to informed me that such actions "make the police force virtually naked" in all jurisdictions. Is that the message that A&M wants to send to the surrounding community?

As a student, I am appalled at the apparent apathy toward this matter by the University and the organizations which sponsor this event. Channel 3 reported this matter on Sunday, but *The Battalion*, by choice or neglect, hasn't reported anything. In my personal opinion, a sincere written apology is owed to the community and to the students by the University and the organizations responsible for this "leadership" conference. In reality, both parties justify anarchy, immaturity and illegality.

To the elderly couple who waited patiently for an officer to arrive, I am sorry that my school continually sponsors events in its quest for multiculturalism that end in riots requiring every available officer to subdue.

A school so rich in tradition and pride should seriously consider an

apology to the students and to the community. It should also consider a proposal that regulates the organizations that sponsor the event. Obviously, they are not capable of controlling the conference. Perhaps someone else should.

*Allen Gardner  
Class of '99*

**Actions displayed do not display leadership**

This letter is in response to the utter disrespect which I was subjected to by students apparently involved in The Southwestern Black Student Leadership Conference. On Saturday evening, as I was driving through campus, traffic was disrupted by an apparent "march" through the streets.

The students involved refused to allow vehicles to pass, when they did try to pass, the "marchers" yelled obscenities and threats at the drivers. Subsequently, when even this failed to bring individual vehicles to a halt, they proceeded to jump on top of the "offending" cars in addition to throwing objects at them.

If this is a leadership conference, then why would students involved desire to display such a blatant example of unruly and indeed illegal behavior? In my opinion, the best way to gain the respect necessary to any successful leader is to extend

respect to those around you. The behavior that I witnessed illustrated a lack of respect for not only the occupants of the cars involved, but also to this University.

In the future, I hope that when the Multicultural Department decides to allow organizations to visit our campus and hold their conferences here, they will attempt to ensure that the students involved are more respectful.

Next time something gets thrown at me or my vehicle, I might not be so charitable, as the conduct which I witnessed was without a doubt in violation of a multiplicity of criminal statutes.

*Sheri Teinert  
Class of '98  
Accompanied by 3 signatures.*

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