

# Downsizing the family

## Casual treatment of divorce in America deprives children of security

King Henry chopped off Anne Boleyn's head, because he did not have it. Then he started his own arch, because he wanted it. Napoleon got rid of Josephine with it, because she never loved him a child. Now, Demi and I have resorted to it, because one man can never satisfy a man sexually. It is divorce. And American culture has seen fit to include divorce in its sacred canon of self-serving rights.



**MICHELLE VOSS**  
assistant opinion editor

Today, divorce is as much a part of American democracy as a right to trial by jury. Anyone who is willing to pay a lawyer's fees is entitled to a divorce. This democratization of divorce makes it too easy for couples to divide the child and crystal.

Yet, what should be of particular concern for America is the toll that skyrocketing divorce rates are taking on young children. When young children are involved in a divorce, it is not only a devastating tragedy, but a travesty of commitment.

However, America need not mourn the days of yore, of easy-bake ovens and aprons. The myth of the flawless, intact American family of the 1950s is a mere nostalgic impulse which is useless.

Still, there is the painful reality, divorce is harming America.

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead's book, *The Divorce Culture*, assesses the impact of dissolving marriages upon American culture.

She notes many economic and psychological problems associated with divorce, namely that "divorce has contributed to greater economic insecurity and poverty among women and children. It has also become a principal generator of unequal op-

portunities and outcomes for children."

The philosophy behind divorce is a mere correlative of American capitalism — the individual has the power to serve his or her best self-interest. But, as Whitehead implores, parents cannot ignore the altruistic love of children.

Children deserve stability and support; they never asked to be brought into this world. Parents took on a voluntary obligation when they decided to have a child, a voluntary obligation to give that child a secure and promising future.

Divorce is a near guarantee that a child will be at a disadvantage — and not just economically.

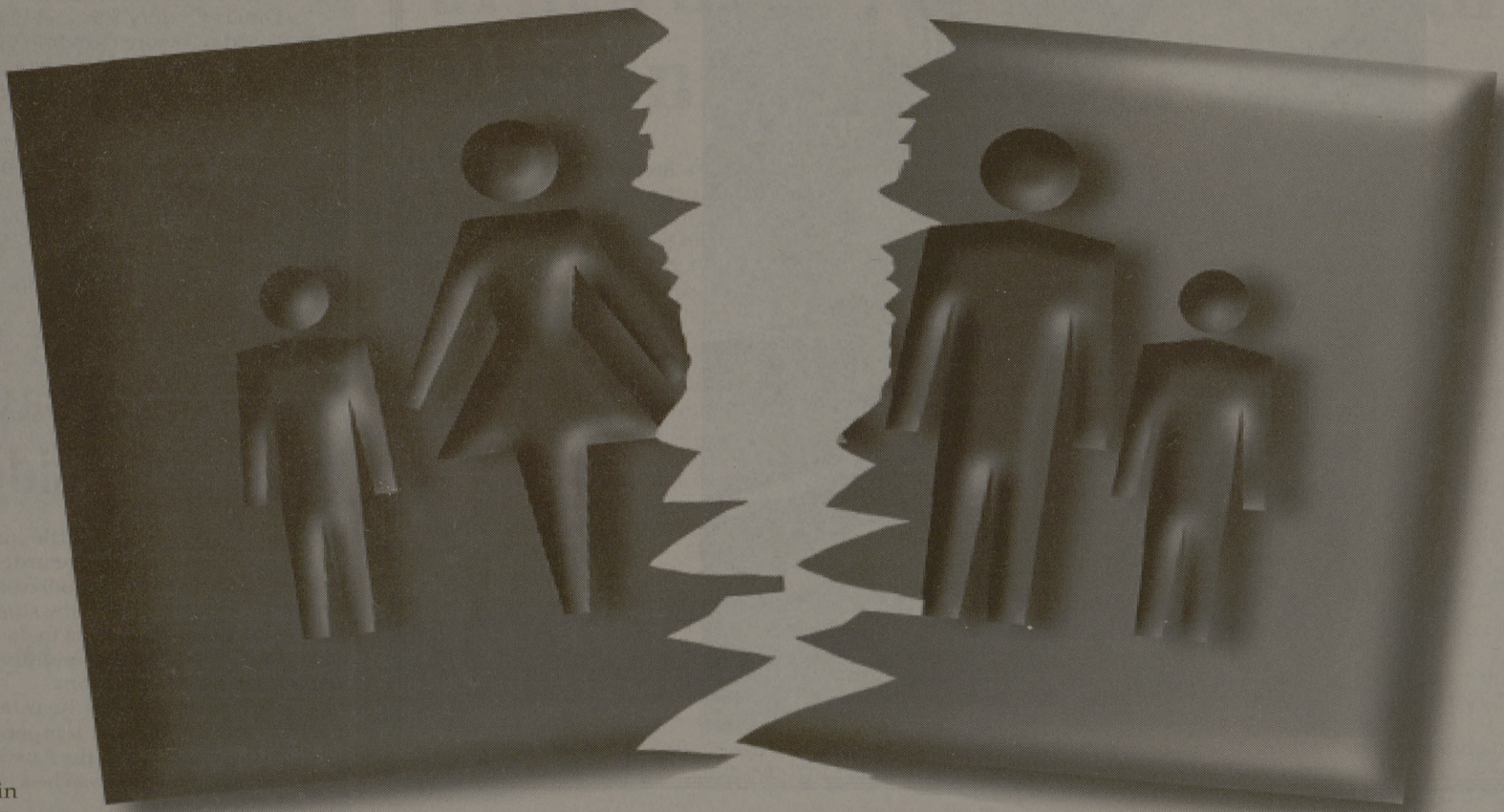
Divorce is disillusioning for children who are over-exposed to dysfunction. They begin to believe that relationships only end in abandonment.

Hopefully, the millions of Generation Xers will notice the devastation, despair and multiple prescriptions brought on by divorce. After all, they were the kids who spent multiple hours in therapy dealing with the sudden upsurge in splitting families.

An article entitled "Down the Aisle" from the July 20 issue of *Newsweek* notes that the years spanning the birth of "Generation X," 1965 to 1976, correspond precisely to a doubling of the annual American divorce rate from 2.5 to 5.0 per 1,000 population.

The divorce revolution slammed into Xers with a tremendous force that left many wary of marriage and relationships, in general.

With severe apprehension, Xers approach the altar, hoping their life will not



become a statistic. Yet, they seem to be more optimistic about their ability to handle commitment.

In a survey conducted in 1997 by the market-research firm Yankelovich Partners, 73 percent of Xers said they would favor a return to more traditional family life. In stark contrast, only 56 percent of boomers who were asked the same question in 1977 felt the same way.

Since they managed to live through the nightmare of watching parents leave,

Xers seem to realize the importance of having families that remain together while children are young. At least, the *Newsweek* article read, they appear to be willing to invest more of themselves into their marriage and children.

The point is, couples with children should not be so frivolous about choosing to divorce. This is not to say marriages of violence, infidelity and drug abuse should continue, but these tragedies are the exception, not the norm.

The norm is no-fault.

No change in divorce laws or fluctuation in tax brackets will remedy the flip-flop attitudes concerning divorce. No, Americans, especially young Americans, need to redefine how the self relates to marriage and family to show this generation understands the word responsibility.

Michelle Voss is a junior English major.



MIKE LUCKOVICH ATLANTA CONSTITUTION 1998

# Lewinsky's immunity deal causes nothing but trouble

As any fan of that creepy television series, "The X-Files," will tell you, the truth is out there. But as Monica Lewinsky knows, sometimes it takes an offer for immunity from prosecution to expose the truth.



**JOHN LEMONS**  
columnist

After six excruciating months of investigation, Lewinsky finally is going to tell her side of the story. Lewinsky has agreed to testify before a grand jury in return for immunity from prosecution for any crimes she might have committed in relation to Ken Starr's investigation of President Bill Clinton.

Too bad the truth isn't all it's cracked up to be. The truth behind the Clinton-Lewinsky affair will be more than Americans ever wanted to know.

In Tuesday's unusually short press conference, Lewinsky's lawyers, Plato Cacheris and Jacob Stein, announced their deal with the independent prosecutor.

"We, as counsel for Monica Lewinsky, have reached an agreement today that for her full and truthful testimony, she will receive transactional immunity in this case," Cacheris said.

The announcement signals a turning point in Starr's investigation — an investigation that has moved so slowly it appeared it wouldn't end until sometime in the fall of 2003.

But like a roller coaster, the long, slow ascent up the biggest hill is over. The real ride is about to begin. With Lewinsky's new-found cooperation, the bottom is about to drop out — from beneath the president, that is.

The White House's spin over

this potentially devastating development has been ludicrous. White House press secretary Mike McCurry said that the deal gives the president nothing to worry about, and the president is even happy Lewinsky is out of legal trouble. "He is pleased things are working out for [Lewinsky]," McCurry said.

Indeed, Clinton has nothing to fear from the deal, except perhaps a little thing called impeachment.

This immunity deal spinning Starr's investigation in a new direction, also is going to alter the news story surrounding the scandal. During the past six months, the Lewinsky story has been based mostly on

This immunity deal also means this whole affair is about to turn into a giant game of he said/she said. The Clinton administration's policy since the beginning of this scandal has been to deny and delay.

Thus far, the delaying has been quite effective. But like a deer trapped in headlights, the president is about to meet up with the Mack truck that is Monica Lewinsky. Lewinsky's testimony will incriminate the president, and all he will be able to do is say, "I didn't do it."

It is going to be like the worst "Jerry Springer Show" episode ever, except this time the big-haired woman on stage will be played by Lewinsky and the redneck will be Clinton.

Indeed, Clinton has nothing to fear from the deal, except perhaps a little thing called impeachment.

There is such a thing as too much information. And the American public is going to learn this lesson as the Lewinsky story progresses. Stories about sex and the president are going to get

old very, very quickly.

Moreover, the accusations of lying that will soon fly back and forth between the Clinton and Lewinsky camps are not going to be pleasant or entertaining.

Clinton is a president who has desperately searched for a legacy throughout his administration. With Lewinsky's forthcoming testimony, Clinton is about to get one.

He is the president who will be remembered for his sex life, rather than his policies.

And as a result, he has deflowered the entire nation.

John Lemons is a graduate student in electrical engineering.



### MAIL CALL

#### Activist neglects accurate details

Response to Beth Russell's letter, "Circus Story Neglects Facts"

I wanted to take this opportunity to apologize on behalf of all of us who are truly concerned about animal rights for the letter written by Beth Russell.

It was she, not *The Battalion's* Brandon Bollom, who failed to cover the whole story.

When Bollom arrived at Reed Arena a little after 6 p.m., people already were arriving for the "Three Ring Adventure," and I

was the only protester present.

In fact, I was the only protester present until almost 7 p.m., when the majority of the people going to the show already had entered the arena.

I was also the only protester who bothered to get permission from the officials at Reed Arena to have a demonstration.

If I hadn't had a demonstration area set up, Russell and her 20 or so fellow "activists" would have been kicked off the arena grounds before they got their first leaflet handed out.

And if she expected media coverage from *The Battalion*, she should have called *The Battalion*.

Despite what she might think, every member of *The Battalion* staff doesn't know her personal schedule.

You have to do a little planning if you want to get something done the way you'd like it.

The biggest thing Russell failed to realize, though, is the fact that the point of the story wasn't the size of the protest, but the facts that were being presented to the public,

facts the average circus-goer isn't aware of, facts that Bollom presented in his story.

If all Russel is interested in is why her picture wasn't in the paper, she's in the movement for the wrong reasons, and she might want to consider this before she writes any more commentaries that make not just her, but the movement as a whole, look stupid.

Jon Ridenour  
Class of '00

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