BILL CLINTON

FORGIVE HIM?

MANISHA PAREKH

No one is defending Bill Clinton the husband. No one really can.

Here is a man who has repeatedly broken his marriage vows, betraying both his wife and his daughter. Here is a man who has allowed his wife, the one person most affected by his many liaisons, to defend him, while he stood quietly in the background. Here is a man who let his wife go on national television to proclaim his innocence and her faith in him, when he was in fact guilty.

It is impossible to defend Bill Clinton the husband because there is no defense for his infidelities. Bill Clinton the husband is not the kind of man a wife could trust. Bill Clinton the husband is not the kind of a man a woman would want to marry. In fact, Bill Clinton the husband is the kind of man who would quickly become Bill Clinton the ex-husband.

However, those decisions are for Hillary Clinton to make. Hillary Clinton married Bill. America only elected him president.

It is important to emphasize that fact, because as more politicians clamor for Clinton's resignation or for impeachment proceedings, they forget that infidelity is a problem between a man and his wife, not a president and his country. We did not marry Bill Clinton; Hillary did, for better or for worse.

We did not elect Bill Clinton the husband; we elected Bill Clinton the politician, Bill Clinton the governor of Arkansas and Bill Clinton the president.

We elected Bill Clinton, a man who has admitted, time and time again, that he has been unfaithful to his wife. The electorate knew that fact in 1992. The electorate knew that fact in 1996. And the electorate knows that fact now.

So what has changed?

Clinton's detractors continuously point out that Clinton lied under oath about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky during the Paula Jones investigation, thus committing perjury. They claim that according to the Constitution, Clinton must resign or be impeached because he has broken the law.

However, in their haste to judge, they overlook several facts.

First, it is not clear whether Clinton actually lied. While it might be a question of semantics (exactly how "sexual relations" was defined in the Jones lawsuit), the question remains. Clinton's critics claim it *does not matter that he may not have broken the letter* of the law; he broke the spirit of the law.

Yet when it comes to defining the spirit of the law, American juries are the definers, not lawmakers. So, imagine a panel of 12 unbiased Americans.

The prosecution, Clinton's critics, has presented its case: Clinton misled the American people in such a way that it was as if he lied. Therefore, according to the spirit of the law, he has committed perjury.

The defense presents its case: here is a man whose marriage has survived a number of rocky years and problems. He loves his wife very much, but he has a problem with fidelity, a problem that is not all that uncommon in the United States. During a lengthy deposition, that man is asked whether he had sexual relations with a young woman at his office. The man, fearing for his marriage and family, says no.

How many people on that jury would convict the man? How many people on that jury would decide that the defendant should lose his job because he was unfaithful and after the affair was over, he tried to keep his wife and daughter from knowing about it?

Some of Clinton's critics accept this explanation. They admit that in that position they might do the same thing. However, they feel Clinton should have apologized to the American public for his actions.

Why?

Clinton is not the one who took a marital problem and turned it into the scandal du jour. That was Kenneth Starr's doing. Clinton owes an apology to only two people: his wife and his daughter. The American people have no place in the Clinton marriage and the American people do not deserve any apology for Clinton's marital problems.

America did not marry Bill Clinton, Hillary did.

However, there are still those who want Clinton to resign or to be impeached. For them, it is a simple case of a president who committed perjury and must leave office, according to the terms of the Constitution. Apparently those critics are not familiar with the Constitution.

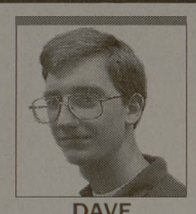
According to a CNN analysis, impeachment is not a legal question. Hence impeachment is under the control of the House of Representatives, not the courts. Therefore, impeachment is only a question of what the American people want. This concept of impeachment is further supported by the Constitution's vague definition of impeachable offenses.

According to a Newsweek poll, 62 percent of Americans approve of Clinton's performance as president. Only 24 percent of Americans believe that impeachment proceedings should begin. It sounds as if the critics that truly matter, the American people, have made their decision. They may not like Bill Clinton the husband, but they want to keep Bill Clinton the president.

Any other decisions about Bill Clinton are up to Hillary.

Manisha Parekh is a junior psychology and journalism major.

FORGET HIM?



DAVE JOHNSTON

In 1992 Bill Clinton told America it was time to fire the president because George Bush, the incumbent commander-in-chief, had lied to the American people. Bill Clinton won election by constantly playing Bush's "read my lips" pledge.

Now Bill Clinton admits he misled the American people, and what's good for the goose is good for the gander.

It is time for Bill Clinton to resign. At this point, even an impeachment would be better for the country than allowing Clinton to continue as president.

When the secretary of defense and the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff have to suffer through questions about the similarities between recent air strikes and the popular film *Wag The Dog*, it is past time for Clinton to move on.

This is not a "private matter." Normal citizens have to reveal details of their sex lives for many reasons; divorce hearings, cases concerning abuse and cases concerning sexual harassment.

In one of these settings, Clinton felt he was not held by the same constraints as a normal citizen.

His actions cannot be defended because "it was a private matter," rather they must be condemned as contrary to the laws and courts defined by the constitution he swore to preserve, protect and defend. Or perhaps that oath was misleading as well.

The issue is not sex. In fact, the issue is not illegal land deals, drug use in the White House, perusing over one hundred FBI files, perjury or even obstruction of justice. The issue is trust.

Clinton has admitted a string of deceit; "I did not have relations with that women," "I did not have an affair with Gennifer Flowers," and his fallacious testimony regarding gifts he gave Monica Lewinsky. Clinton was elected because the public no longer trusted George Bush; now they have no reason to trust the words or actions of Clinton.

Public reaction to the recent air strikes proves the lack of trust in Clinton.

Some polls suggest two out of three citizens were suspicious of the timing of the attack. When a world leader erases 600 lives and the majority of the American people doubt his actions, something is wrong.

Clinton has gone from serving as the nation's leader to becoming the national misleader. He has squandered the public's trust.

Americans are raised believing in assumed innocence, so the nation was willing to wait for the final outcome of the Ken Starr investigation. Even after Starr's unparalleled success, citizens were not yet ready to toss Clinton out on his ear.

Now, it is a different story. Clinton admitted he lied to each and every citizen in the country. His cabinet, his supporters and a United States grand jury were all deceived by the nation's highest official.

When he admitted his deception, Clinton lost any credibility he had with the public. It does not matter whether he lied about sex, international terrorism or taking the last of the ice cream — the fact is he intentionally misled the courts, he lied to his friends, he lied to the country and the world.

Ken Starr has quietly accepted more unfounded slander than anyone since Richard Jewell. Starr is markedly nonpartisan. This is the same man who helped remove Republican Bob Packwood from office.

Starr has been very thorough in his investigation. He has compiled an impressive stack of Supreme Court victories while the high court handed him only one defeat. His record is outstanding for any lawyer, especially one going up against the leader of the free world.

Starr has been forced to draw out his investigation because of the huge obstacles Starr has had no maneuver.

Clinton could have save the American people millions of dollars. He could have told the truth seven months ago. The grand jury members would love to go home and return to their jobs, but Clinton has forced them to spend months sifting though whatever information they can glean.

Clinton has not been forthcoming with information. Starr has had witnesses skip the country, commit suicide and choose jail time rather than testify before the grand jury. Starr has done an amazing job considering what he has to work with.

No one should buy Clinton's defense of "technical accuracy." The allegations run much deeper than trysts on the Oval Office carpet. Clinton also told the jury he never gave Lewinsky gifts. Gifts that the FBI handed over to Starr. Clinton urged Lewinsky to turn the gifts over to White House staff so they could not be subpoenaed. Facts which reek of both perjury and obstruction of justice.

Grand jury leaks report about one-tenth of Starr's questioning of Clinton related to Monica Lewinsky. This is not about sex.

This whole scandal proves that character does matter. Now that Clinton lacks credibility, he cannot lead effectively. This is not about sex, lies, money, drugs or Ken Starr. This is about the 600 people killed in recent air strikes. This is about Saddam Hussein, welfare, Social Security and the business of running the country.

No matter what Clinton does, his actions will not be viewed as those of a president, but as those of a dishonest man looking out for himself. His actions and motivations will always be called into question. And they should be.

Clinton should do the nation a favor, do Al Gore a favor and he should preserve, protect and defend the constitution by stepping down from office.

Dave Johnston is a senior mathematics major.

Washington political antics still tame by comparison

LISA FOOX

While Americans obsess over the inappropriate actions of their president and his tendency to mislead those around him, the rest of the world is having a good laugh at "the leader of the free world's" expense.

Even New Zealand, a country famous for beautiful scenery, cheesy actresses like Lucy Lawless (Xena, of course) and semi-pornographic films like *The Piano*, can't contain its humor.

Due to the entertaining nature of a country with 30 billion sheep and two million people, they really should not point fingers. In fact, about three weeks ago it was election time, and New Zealand politics makes Bill Clinton look tame in comparison.

First, there is the Natural Party, hell-bent on legalizing marijuana. Their politicians not only inhaled, but actually inhaled whole forests of this free-growing drug. They accuse anyone who denies using marijuana as outright liars.

Another popular party's main platform is electing a cat as their prime minister. The only problem is Socks, while perhaps an adequate politician, might be too clean for the often dirty game of running for office.

The most amusing party supports the admirable goal of a peaceful country. To ensure people are in harmony, they plan to fly a plane continuously around the northern part of the nation, filled with people practicing yoga. Supposedly this will allow the country to reach a state of goodwill.

Apparently, the southern regions, filled only with farmers and skiers, do not need the added karma.

One final note: New Zealand is located just off the coast of Australia. While it is often assumed by naive Texans to be in Europe, it is not. It cannot be, because the Europeans have the European Union. Their karma is complete.

New Zealand antics are reminiscent of the pranks of American college students. These campus politics are often more bizarre than anywhere else.

A prime example is the Pail and Shovel Party that took over the University of Wisconsin student government in 1978.

The group's name originated from its idea of taking the university's budget and changing it all into pennies. They then wanted to give students shovels and pails, dump the coins on the local mall and let everyone help themselves.

The party's other ideas included spending hundreds of dollars on toys for students to play with during registration and changing all students' names to Joe Smith to help professors who have trouble remembering names.

The Pail and Shovel Party's most notable accomplishment came when they spent $5,000 to create a partial replica of the Statue of Liberty to place on their frozen lake.

So while Bill Clinton is having a bit of a rough time with his public image, there still remain two options. He could convert the U.S. budget into pennies or start renting planes. Although there just don't seem to be enough yoga masters available to combat his little problem.

Lisa Foox is a senior journalism major.

MAIL CALL

Renters should take precautions

I would like for every student at Texas A&M University to know my situation so they can avoid the same scenario.

I just got back from small claims court in Bryan, where my roommates and I were suing our former landlord for our security deposit.

He won in court because the judge did not believe three college students, and we lost our deposit.

Do not let this happen to you. Fill out a move-in inventory and take pictures before you move in to rental property.

Talk to previous tenants to find out if your landlords are honest. We, as students, enter another world when moving to the Bryan-College Station area, so make sure you know what you are getting into before you throw your money away.

Jason Fuchs
Class of '99