

Turning tricks in D.C.

Jessica Cutler's exploits don't merit heavy media coverage

Move out of the way, Monica Lewinsky — Washington, D.C., has a new intern with questionable morals.

The story of sexually-indiscreet Jessica Cutler, who calls herself "Washingtonienne" in her now-infamous Web log, was first broken by Wonkette.com, a site consisting of mostly gossip from the Washington, D.C., area. At the time of the story, Cutler worked for Sen. Mike DeWine, R-Ohio, doing secretarial work. However, she was fired once the office learned that she was using her office computer to chronicle her sexual exploits, according to Newsweek.

"I just took a long lunch with F and made a quick \$400," Cutler wrote casually in one entry, identifying each of the six men she was purportedly sleeping with only by initials. In a past entry, Cutler explained that "F (is a) married man who pays me for sex. Chief of Staff at one of the gov agencies, appointed by Bush."

Indeed, according to another of Cutler's entries, "Most of my living expenses are thankfully subsidized by a few generous older gentlemen."

While Cutler's blasé attitude about the sanctity of her body, the institution of marriage and what can be seen as nothing other than prostitution may be appalling to many, it remains unclear why her Web log has generated such a media frenzy.

In her own words, Cutler said, "It's amazing to me that people have any interest in such a low-level sex scandal. If I were sleeping with a congressman, maybe, but I'm a nobody and the people I'm writing about are nobodies."

Her sexually-promiscuous lifestyle doesn't merit the intense media coverage it has generated.

Yet, Cutler was given a feature in The Washington Post's Sunday, May 23 issue, and follow-up stories on Cutler have appeared in respected newspapers nationwide, including the Houston Chronicle. Cutler has since appeared on several major news stations, notably CNN and Fox News.

The Post's frivolous article puts its nose to the grindstone and asks the tough questions: "Who is this wicked woman that calls herself 'Washingtonienne'?" Was she really bedding six different men or making it all up? And who is the married, high-level federal employee she claims paid her \$400 for a lunch hour tryst?"

The days until the Iraqi people are handed a democracy and asked to maintain it are becoming fewer. A crucial



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election nears where two roads diverge, when each candidate would enact markedly different policies and thus lead America to distinctly different futures, and the American people must choose one or the other. And the Post expects the entire nation to wait breathlessly to discover if one intern could actually be sleeping with six men!

At least in the workplace, women who use their sexuality to get ahead are ultimately doing themselves, as well as their peers and a generation of girls on the brink of womanhood, a huge disservice. Women who use their bodies as a fast track to fame and prosperity are telling young girls that their minds are not enough.

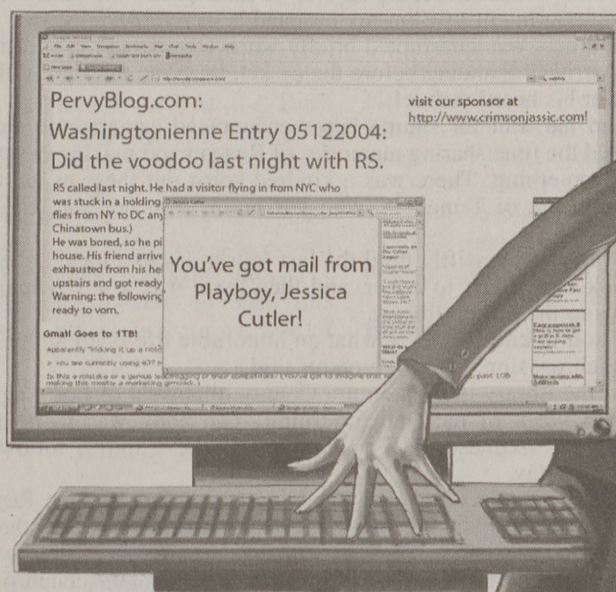
In the words of columnist Michelle Malkin, the glorification of stories like Cutler's "harm our own daughters, who will be forced to fight harder to protect their dignity and credibility in a 'Girls Gone Wild' culture."

And if it can be said that Cutler and her ilk are doing their part to rob a generation of aspiring women professionals of a fair chance at success, then the newspapers that glorify these women and their antics are abettors. This type of brazen sensationalism is worthy of a tabloid, but not of a Pulitzer-prize winning newspaper.

Among The Washington Post's seven principles written by its erstwhile owner Eugene Myers is "The newspaper's duty is to its readers and to the public at large, and not to the private interests of its owners." Running a feature on Cutler was a direct violation of this principle. It is not news that there are women in D.C. willing to sell their bodies and men who are willing to pay for them.

After all, stories like Cutler's appeal to many people and can potentially be very lucrative, as is evinced by the numerous tabloids, gossip newspapers and magazines currently in circulation. However, these papers do not offer their readers what the Post ostensibly does: credibility and journalistic integrity.

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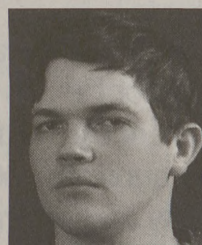


U.S. pressure is not at work in Venezuela

The years since 2001 have been rough for Venezuela. The country has had to deal with a nationwide general strike, crippling currency destabilization and political conflict over the policies of President Hugo Chavez. These problems have led to serious instability and attempted coups, accusations of court packing and violent riots.

But it seems the stress there may soon come to a head, as Chavez's opponents have gathered enough signatures to force a recall referendum on his presidency, the BBC said. A quick look at Chavez's political record indicates that, despite his accusations, it is his own politics — not pressure from the United States — which have led to his downfall.

After election officials said that the almost 2.5 million signatures were valid and sufficient, Chavez said that the event was a victory for democracy. But just weeks before, he had called the first submission of the petition against him a "mega fraud," the BBC said. Chavez may not



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have the opportunity for this kind of doublespeak much longer.

Chavez is in this situation because during the course of his presidency, the political gap between the rich and poor has widened. Many business owners blame Chavez's left-leaning policies for the collapse of the Venezuelan currency, the Bolivar.

Chavez's policies have also crossed not only the Catholic Church, but the United States as well. His friendship with Cuba's Fidel Castro and ties with countries on the fringe of the international community, like Libya, quickly annoyed the United States.

But American displeasure with his rule became a key part of his rhetoric after he was deposed for 48 hours in a coup in April 2002. Although he was restored by street protests and loyal troops, he saw the hand of the United States as being responsible for his temporary ouster. Ever since, he has increasingly tried to accuse outside parties like the United States of plotting his overthrow.

This new track, if it continues, could develop into a troubling trend.

Frequently, when national leaders are in trouble at home, they will try to find an external enemy to consolidate their power base. In Chavez's case, this will not work.

Argentina's generals did something similar in 1982 when they thought a quick war to seize the Falkland Islands would distract their citizens from problems at home. Instead, they started a series of events that led to their downfall. The lesson is that an external enemy, real or imagined, will not forestall problems at home.

And Chavez has not missed a chance to try to link his opponents with other countries and particularly the United States. In fact, when Secretary of State Colin Powell urged Venezuela to ensure that the process of verifying signatures on the recall petition was fair, Chavez lashed out at these and other comments, the BBC reported. Venezuela, he said, was ready to "defend its sovereignty against the empire." One of his deputies even called the Bush administration "a bunch of madmen." And even more, his government claimed to have

arrested Colombian paramilitaries who were to be used against him.

In an article from the BBC, Chavez claimed that the paramilitaries are clear evidence that his opponents were out to assassinate him. Although his opponents may have brought the paramilitaries into the country, it is also possible that their capture was staged to harm the image of his opposition.

But in the end, it is very unlikely that other countries have to do much to create discontent with Chavez and his policies. He has already alienated enough of his own people for them to want to get rid of him without help from outside. He has faced a coup, and now his opponents are trying to remove him peacefully.

The real problem is that Chavez is ignoring the fact that his policies are alienating a large part of the population. Perhaps, then, he should turn his attention inward, instead of looking for phantom threats internationally.

David Shoemaker is a senior management major.

MAIL CALL

Today's generation still benefits from Reagan

I went to work today at my humble little job at a College Station engineering firm, on a humble day when the media is filled with both tribute and slander of the 40th president of the United States, Ronald Reagan.

Although I am too young to remember the Reagan presidency, I have had the opportunity to learn much about the "Great Communicator" through a number of different media: my father, Peggy Noonan (Reagan's speechwriter) and, of course, the vast coverage he is currently receiving.

This afternoon, however, I learned about how President Reagan really affected the lives of Americans and the people of the great state of Texas in particular. One of my bosses started the company I am currently employed with during the Reagan presidency. He was able to do this during a recessionary period in our economy because of Reaganomics and the accompanying tax cuts.

More specifically, the cuts made it

possible for my boss to open the firm without the burden of ridiculous taxation on both his own income and that of his young business. This made all the necessary overhead expenses required to start ones own business a little easier to come by, and it made financing the upstart significantly easier via lower interest rates.

I do not mean to impose on the readers of this anecdote a political ideology or agenda; however, in the words of my boss, and some obvious parallels to the current economic circumstance, I believe one cannot be avoided.

My boss told me today that "President Reagan was a great man, and without his work, none of [me and my coworkers] would have jobs." Obviously this shows me a very personal reason to be grateful for the work of President Reagan and for his vast resolve against those who sought increased taxation and larger government.

Moreover, one can easily see the not-so-subtle resemblance between the policies of Reagan and those of the current administration. Lower taxes and lower interest rates allow for investment and greater

return on that investment, thus encouraging the startup of a long sought-after small business or the expansion of an existing one. This same economic trend is occurring under our very noses today.

The tax cuts so diligently pursued by the Bush administration have created more than 1 million new jobs since the beginning of the year and will undoubtedly continue to do so until the opposition party finds the majority needed to repeal them and thus stop the growth.

If this does not paint an obvious picture of the potential economic successes that lie in fewer taxes and smaller government, then the work of Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush has been of little effect.

If the American people cannot see this simple connection and follow those leaders who would choose to see our economy flourish, then we are most certainly doomed to see the work of passionate patriots such as Ronald Reagan torn apart again by those who seek to make the American people completely reliant on government for subsistence.

All Americans, conservative or liberal, Democrat or Republican, should take time

this week to honor the passing of one of our greatest leaders and to silently thank him for so eloquently communicating his vision that we have been able to see it passed on to the leaders of today.

John Walker
Class of 2006



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