

Suggestion

June 23, 1994

Mr. Brian Lamm
C-SPAN
400 N. Capitol
Suite 650
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Lamm:

Thank you for your wonderful programs -
for C-SPAN!

I have a suggestion for Booknotes for July 17th. Since July 20th is the 25th anniversary of the first moon landing, I suggest an interview with Michael Collins, the astronaut who circled the moon while his comrades landed on it. His autobiographical account of the event is "Carrying The Fire". Just reading Charles Lindbergh's Forward is recommendation enough.

I would really look forward to hearing him talk about the experience, 25 years later.

Again, thank you for your endeavors.

Sincerely yours,

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Address]
Knoxville, TN 37923

FYI- Mrs. Hughs also has published a collection of her columns over the years entitled "A Sense of Human"

A2 • The Knoxville News-Sentinel, Saturday, June

Cards in deck of life are stacked in fathers' favor

Tomorrow is Father's Day — which might be a good time to ask a dangerous question:

How come fathers don't play by the same rules when it comes to bringing children into the world and being responsible to and for them?

When an unmarried woman or careless teenager gets pregnant, she's a slut. When a man has irresponsible sex, he's sowing oats.

Only it isn't oats. It's half of what it takes to make a real live baby that comes into the world, ready or not.

I well remember reading "The Scarlet Letter" back in 10th grade English and discussing how *she* got publicly branded and *he* got left to his own conscience. Although it deals with all those



**INA
HUGHS**

Jesse Helms no-no's, "The Scarlet Letter" is seldom on anybody's hit list as an example of smut being read in public schools. Maybe the reason is because it preaches the subtle lesson that boys will be boys, but girls pay the price, not only by bearing the "burden" of irresponsible sex but by being held morally responsible in a way her sexual partner is not.

I realize this is an uncomfortably odd Father's

Day question, but how can a civilized society — one that at least gives lip service and constitutional validity to the concept that men and women are equal members of the same species — allow different rules to apply to what happens when two people get together and the tango ends up in a lullaby?

In 1984, a lawyer arguing on behalf of a woman seeking "rights" to sperm deposited at a sperm bank by her husband prior to his death made this claim: "A deceased man has the right to breathe life into the womb of his wife and prove that love is stronger than death."

What about a live man? And is having a baby a right — or a responsibility? The lawyer put it in poetic terms, and it's easy to get sentimental over the fact that medical technology can enable a woman to be inseminated with her dead husband's blast-frozen "oats" and carry his love child. But what about the not-so-sentimental and the not-so-technologically-complex results of plain, old-fashioned heavy breathing?

Nobody needs a Gallup Poll or Harvard research grant to know who gets blamed and who gets "stuck" with the baby or the decision to not bring yet another unwanted child into an insensitive world and a non-existent family.

William H. Rehnquist gave this Supreme Court minority report back in 1976: "A father's interest in having a child — perhaps his only child — may be unmatched by any other interest in his life. It is truly surprising that the state must assign a greater value to a mother's decision to cut off a potential human life by abortion than to a father's decision to let it mature into a live child." The ruling — by a 6-3 vote — prohibited states from requiring women to obtain their husband's consent for abortion... which at first glance seems grossly unfair, but stacked up against the realities of what happens when fathers renig and the startling percentage of men who don't consider fatherhood a responsibility and leave mamma to fend for herself and his children... it is a more just ruling. You get what you pay for.

And men don't. Ask around among the many, many, many left-behind mothers trying to get child support — even support granted by the courts. Just ask.

Of course you cannot blame the breakdown of the family on fathers any more than you can on mothers, but fathers get away with irresponsibility in a way women do not, and not only our legal system but our moral code reinforce that absurdity.

The tragedy of this is that a good father can have more power and influence in a child's life than an OK or even a good mother.

It is one thing for boys to be boys, but too many fathers are made of snakes and snails and puppy dog tails — which leaves mama holding the diaper bag.

News-Sentinel columnist Ina Hughs writes this column for Monday, Wednesday and Saturday editions.