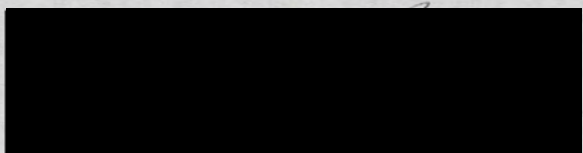


To whom it may concern:

Please find enclosed
a column by Mike Rayko
that I think you all
should read. Then step
back and take a look
at yourselves.

Thank you,



Montgomery, Tx.

77356

Are the media trying to set a president?

WHEN I sat down next to Slats Grobnik, he picked up his drink and moved down the bar to another stool.

I followed and asked if something was bothering him — possibly my deodorant?

"I don't drink with no peeping Toms," he said.

I resent that. Not only do I resent it, but I also have no idea what you are talking about.

"You're in the news business, right? Then that makes you a peeper."

I have never peeped at anyone. Actually, I'm too lazy to go through the effort. I just throw goofy opinions around and hope that my fellow goofs will agree.

"Yeah, that's true. But what's going on in your business?"

You mean the news media?

"Yeah. It's like one big eye, looking in everybody's bedroom, then telling us stuff we really don't want to know about."

Such as?

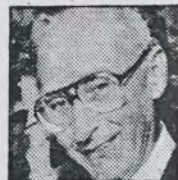
"Well, now we got stories that President Clinton was a sex freak when he was governor of Arkansas."

Yes, those are sordid disclosures. But don't you think that the public has a right to know?

"Know what?"

That there are allegations that the president of the United States — the most powerful man in the world — has been accused of having an unbridled sexual appetite when he was governor of Arkansas.

"Who says so?"



Mike Royko

The allegations come from two Arkansas state troopers who were part of his bodyguard-flunky team. They say he was constantly visiting a bevy of mistresses and asking the troopers to arrange quickies. Shocking, shocking, shocking.

"What's his wife, Hillary, say?"

She says it is a pack of lies.

"Uh-huh. And all these dolls who were his mistresses and one-night quickies? What do they say?"

Well, the journalist who reported these allegations did not use the names of these women. He wanted to spare their feelings and those of their loved ones.

"A real gent, that writer. So we got a president who is supposed to be a chaser but his wife says she don't believe it. And the babes he is supposed to have jumped in the sack with, we don't know who they are. And even if we knew who they were, they ain't talking."

Yes, I suppose that's accurate.

"So this right-wing magazine prints the story. Then CNN interviews these state troopers."

That's right.

"Then some wire service puts out a story about what these two state troopers say on CNN because if they said it on CNN, that makes it bigger news."

Correct.

"Then the ABC network puts it on a news show because if a wire service wrote about what the state troopers said on CNN, that makes it news that's even bigger."

Yes, it did.

"Then the big papers use it because if ABC used it because the wire service used it because CNN used it because the right-wing paper used it because two state troopers said it, that's news."

Something like that.

"Then it is on all the local radio talk shows, which are run by dimwits who got jobs because they don't stutter or lisp."

An inevitable reaction.

"So two guys say something. And it starts out small. But then it keeps growing. And in a couple of days, it's big news. But what we're talking about is what two guys who are Arkansas state troopers — and that ain't exactly FBI or CIA — who are looking to make a big buck with a book, had to say."

Basically, that is true. But it is the public's right to know what they have to say.

"Sure. But the guy who wrote this thing, he's a right-winger, right?"

He's viewed that way, yes.

"And the magazine that printed this stuff, it's real right-wing, huh?"

Sort of.

"So what if they said Clinton liked to

bite off the heads off live chickens?"

That's ridiculous.

"Yeah, but if some Arkansas bozo said it, would the networks and papers make a big news story out of it?"

Of course not.

"Why not? What if some state trooper in Arkansas wants to make money from a book. So he says: 'Boy, every time the manager of the McDonald's wasn't lookin', Big Bill would make me drive him to a chicken farm and he'd sneak in the coop and bite the head off a chicken.' Wouldn't it be my right to know? I mean, do I want a president who bites the heads off live chickens?"

We would require verifiable confirmation. Obviously the chickens couldn't speak for themselves, but at the very least we'd want a chicken farmer to back up the allegations. Produce the chicken's corpse or something.

"But the media don't have no confirmation about Clinton and all those girties. Just the word of those state troopers."

That's different.

"How's it different?"

I'm not sure, but somehow it is. If I were a journalism professor, I could probably explain it.

"How about if I told you that Abe Lincoln used to dress up in women's underwear and walk around the White House at night singing *I Gotta Be Me*?"

Can you get two state troopers to say it?

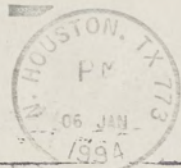
"Sure, if it would be a best seller."

Well, I always thought Abe was a little strange.

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