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Re: How Many Questions Are Worth Asking?

Gentlemen:

This morning's C-SPAN dialog gravitated repeatedly to personal conduct of Bill Clinton, with brief excursions into behavior by Hillary Clinton, Nancy Reagan, and Frank Sinatra; each one's alleged tryst(s) earned your attention along with a world of viewers. Despite periodic hesitations at pursuing the topic, particularly when challenges to media motivations were raised, all four of you were unshakable in your curious exploration of human sexuality.

Certainly your profession's interest predates Masters and Johnson by many decades. But have you noticed that Hugh Hefner so exploited the prurience market that it now has shrunk to that minority banned from publicly admitting any knowledge of Playboy's content? To be sure, a concerted campaign has been waged to restore them to a majority in recent years, to bring back the good old days when titillation was sufficient for holding the public's attention; it's more instinctual, much easier than intelligent debate. Yet your professional avowals persist in portraying your objective purpose even as interspersed phrases disclose (expose?) your preoccupation with everyone's favorite subject. This dichotomous conduct warrants a bit of inquiry all its own.

So I would pose a few questions which probably would have earned Mr. Lamb's speedy finger on the disconnect button. For example, why were the questions put to Ms. Flowers, those at the recent press conference which Mr. Russert disparaged, more tasteless than inquiries being put to the Clinton clan? Why is Ms. Flowers' sexual behavior less suited to front page disclosure (exposure?) than Bill Clinton's mythical adventures? Alright, I'll simply concede that professional judgement led you to discern a distinction between standards required of accuser and defendant.

Due to similar insensitivity, I'm also ignorant of the reasons you don't inquire into callers' sexual practices. Shouldn't C-SPAN's audio participants be accorded like opportunity for titillating the nation and the world with their exploits, however fantastic? Think of the new openness on C-SPAN this idea offers! It's like dialing 900/GET-PORN in reverse; what more could be fairer? Ratings would

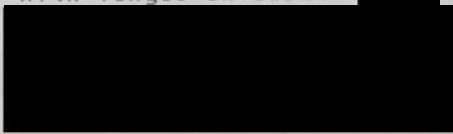
rocket briefly, then follow Playboy's example as thrill-seekers search out another roller coaster to ride. Mr. Lamb's self-respect would survive ten weeks after impressing it on his enterprise for the past ten years. What a crowning reward for the jewel of his career!

Of course, you've agreed on the special importance of carefully testing the personal standards which a potential President will apply in public office; it's an especially knotty question when he (or she) will be virtually immune from popular challenge for four years. Just look at how closely voters scrutinize Senate candidates before affirming them to six years of protection from polling booth wrath. Thanks to a vigilant few, many senators have been tested in the fire, with most passing the ancient purity rite, although some only barely. But again a certain incongruity surfaces as I chance to recall our two most recent Supreme Court appointees; each denied that Senator Biden or his henchmen had any right of personal inquiry as surrogates for the electorate. Evidently a degree of partisan priority for prurient interest is at work.

Closer consideration of the recurrent spate of doubts raised against Democratic contenders for the Oval Office confirms that discovery. No GOP contender has been suspected publicly -- and probably not privately, if equal disclosure standards are in effect -- of misbehavior or even excessive prowess; this calls out for further explanation. So I'd urge your various news organizations compete in answering these questions and others which aren't too offensive to your genteel audiences: Are Democrats more potent than Republicans? Are they merely better salesmen/women? Is that talent a consequence of their lower social standing or a necessary adaptation mandated by their base and lusty instincts? If they are more susceptible to sexual dalliance, does Republican occupancy of the White House signal American voters' preference for cleansing the nation of sinful guilt on behalf of all who vote Democratic in other elections? Could Pat Buchanan purify more than Democrats? Could Pat also absolve us all for the acts and thoughts of socialists, even former communists? Is he even less potent than George Bush? Than Richard Nixon? Can there be any end or benefit in any of these idle inquiries?

Your professional standing affords you far better opportunity for exploring (to say nothing of exploiting) these burning questions of our time. I trust you'll try answering one of them and, if it's the latter, that you'll be able to publicly account for overlooking all the rest. If you can't, American voters will find satisfaction for their curiosity about their elected officials in the Star.

With Tongue In Guess Where



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