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## Money and Sex

“When they say it’s not about money, it is about money; when they say it is not about sex, it is about sex.” Remember the good old Bill Clinton days? That was the era when Republicans spent over \$40 million on special prosecutor Ken Starr to investigate Bill Clinton’s sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky. Dean Ken Gormley, in his encyclopedic work, *Starr v. Clinton*, recalled that Monica Lewinsky’s mother was called before the Grand Jury investigating President Clinton to determine the term that Monica used endearingly about her grandmother. The Yiddish term was *Bubbe*, which means grandmother. Apparently Monica had used the term *Bubbe* with respect to Bill Clinton. The energetic prosecutor wanted to determine if the use of the term could imply a sexual relationship with Bill Clinton! Yes, folks, and we paid for that with taxpayer money.

Now the spotlight is on Herman Cain. Regardless of whether the pizza man is vindicated, the real question is whether we will debate his funky tax plan or investigate what inappropriate comments he may have made to women while he was head of a big lobbying group in Washington DC. Forget that Cain’s plan would impose a national sales tax, one of the most regressive ideas ever contemplated. Ignore that Cain’s plan will benefit the wealthiest Americans at the expense of everyone else. Instead, let us focus on sex. This must be why, according to studies, people like to watch pornography on the internet. The experts tell us that porn and the internet go hand-in-hand for purposes of titillation, salaciousness, and tasting the forbidden fruit. A viewer cannot contract a social disease watching something on the internet.

Poor Mr. Cain will now have to face the same fate as Clinton and his numerous women; Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe; Eisenhower with his supposed mistress in England during World War II; Alexander Hamilton when he wrote about his affair with Mariah Reynolds in order to explain why he was paying “hush money” to his mistress’s husband rather than stealing money from the treasury; Anthony and Cleopatra, and even King David and Bathsheba. King David was not allowed to build the temple in Jerusalem because he sent a man off to war in order to be killed so that King David could take the man’s wife for his own.

It is unlikely that Mr. Cain did all of the bad things attributed to other powerful men who spent lots of time with women other than their wives, but the public appetite for matters of sex and money has not diminished over the millennia. Cain opponents, no doubt the source of the lurid stories, historically are not alone in jockeying for position.

The airways are filled already with ads run by the Association of Retired Persons, gas companies, the AMA and the Coalition to Protect Health Care fighting to prevent Medicaid and Medicare cuts, each seeking to protect their constituency from cuts in congress. Seniors are running wonderful ads, threatening that there are 55 million of them and congress better not cut their entitlements one penny. The big corporations and industries are lining up against any proposals to cut their subsidies or eliminate their tax breaks. It seems as though we are going to have to balance the budget and eliminate trillions of dollars in spending on some fiction not yet invented. All of these important issues become irrelevant in a world where we are more interested in Mitt Romney’s attempts to please both, the left and the right, Herman Cain’s remarks about his wife’s height, Barack Obama’s parentage, and you name it. Let us talk about everything else except the issues. Race is disgustingly used by both parties to elevate their own candidate and subtly undermine the opponent. We are not yet passed race as an electoral too. Who does that serve?

Unfortunately, political advisors say that negativity works. What they mean is that voters respond to bad things they hear about other people rather than examining issues. The reason for this is simple; it is easier to dislike somebody on a quick sound bite than to take the time to study the significance of their proposals. It is human biology to possess a short attention span in a society that overloads us with stimulation of every kind.

It is hard enough for most of us to earn a living, raise a family, attend to our friends and relatives. Everyone around the water cooler is talking about whether Herman Cain really did anything bad and not whether his microeconomic solutions represent a Keynesian, as opposed to a Friedman, approach to proper economic policy.

What the Herman Cain story can remind us of, however, is our own obligation to work harder and learn more. Maybe the candidates who seem to be most disliked by both the left and the right should be the standard bearers of each party. Who are those people? In the Democratic party, it is Barack Obama who has disappointed his most liberal fans, and in the Republican party it is Mitt Romney who has suffered the label of “boring moderate.” In a presidential contest with two very intelligent, thoughtful “boring moderates,” we may get the president we need rather than the president we sometimes seem to deserve. As the great social commentator Mick Jagger once wrote, “You can’t always get what you want, but sometimes you get what you need.”

It is amusing to hear both political parties attack the other for racism when their candidate is criticized and then to try to utilize race to advance the cause of their own candidate. At times it sounds like hypocrisy of a Biblical proportion.

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