

Find yourself, not someone else

For the sake of my dear mother, yes, I plan on getting married and maybe — because grandchildren seem to be critical for her to have a fulfilling adult life — I can commit to a kid, most likely via adoption.

This, however, is positively a premature thought.

My hang-up currently lies in the utter uneasiness that comes across me when thinking about marriage. Why is it that so much discussion among college women (and men, though I more often fall privy to the typical girl-talk scenario) revolves around getting married?

Why are we in such a hurry?

If, statistically, we're getting married in the early to mid-20s and 50 percent of us are getting a divorce, doesn't it seem possible that age might be a large part of the problem?

It seems to me that the more independent years we have, the more time we have to figure out what we want and/or need in order to make a better ... well, a better decision. I know it sounds cold and unromantic, but it's the most logical choice considering the percentages we're facing.

Why can't women take their time and get their professions started, instead of feeling this social obligation to produce children right away? Why don't men focus on their careers instead of committing to a family or having to produce — money, that is — right away?

I'm simply endorsing the self-centered "Generation X" characteristic we've already given — it's OK to be a little self-oriented at our age. Figuring out our career goals is enough of a stress, not to mention grades, school, work and



Lara Duda

money. Why add these metaphysical, emotionally draining serious relationships with the intent of the M-word?

I mean, yes, I understand the beauty of love, or at least I can be categorized as one of the many confused, but nevertheless romantically passionate, magnets for the feeling. I can understand hanging out, having fun, getting to know the opposite sex (or for that matter, realizing the opposite sex isn't for you), but why not in a casual and less-pressured learning experience situation?

And then there's sex. Ah, how it makes me want to find the next guy I fall in love with, go get tested and cling to him until at least menopause.

Yes, our sexual world is definitely a contradicting force to my belief, but really, it shouldn't be. I'm not saying jump around from "love" to "love" until you find your sexual inner self. Although if I could disregard humans as a part of the animal kingdom, I would say that sex, too, is more of an emotional hassle and should be dealt with after we get our other emotional baggage sorted out. But notice how quickly I digress.

I'm saying that despite the physical aspect of a relationship and the precautions we're going to

take regardless, why make the rest of it so serious and permanent? Shouldn't we be talking about traveling the world instead of dress patterns and honeymoons?

I got scared when I heard myself ask my guy friend/confidant/physical partner (I'll call him anything but the ex-boyfriend), if he ever thought about us being married.

He laughed ... too long. Initially I was offended until I considered how out of character it was for me to ask. After he caught his breath, he explained that, of course, he had thought about it (maybe once) and proceeded to tell me about that sappy instance.

He then began to rehash his philosophy about life and his future when it dawned on me (thank God I went back to my old self) why I liked this guy in the first place. He accepted my independence, and I never felt that long-term-commitment feeling that eats away at every ounce of every moment in which silence exceeds its comfortable limits.

Isn't college supposed to be about getting yourself together? Talking about getting pearled, or promised, or any of this marriage sap, seems to defeat the purpose of having the "college experience."

However, I'm sure that by the time I'm out of college for a few years, my mom will probably be on my case again. By then, I'll probably be ready to get in touch with one of those prospective beaux from my past.

But as far as grandkids, no promises, Ma.

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Binding contracts equal legal blues

I'm thinking of conducting an unusual experiment.

My idea is to go to a new-car showroom, point at a vehicle and say: "How much is that buggy?"

The salesman will probably show me the sticker on the side window, and I'll say, "OK, give me your rock-bottom price and we'll have a deal."

Then I'll sign all the papers, shake hands with the happy fellow and drive away.

I'll drive the car for a few days, then I'll return to the agency and tell the salesman:

"You know, I've been thinking it over. I don't think I like this car after all. How about if you take it back and give me a complete refund?"

If the salesman hesitates, I'll say: "You want your customers to be happy, right? Well, I'm not happy. I have noticed that there are other cars on the road that are prettier than mine. And that makes me unhappy. Now if you don't want an unhappy customer, just give me my money and I will be happy again. Of course, I won't be your customer anymore, but we can't have everything, can we? I'll even throw in the price of a car wash. Is it a deal?"

What will the salesman say?

I suppose he might tell me, no, he won't refund my money because we have a legally binding contract. And that I had an opportunity to read the contract before I signed it, and we agreed on the price, so I now own the car and that's that.

In that case, I will respond: "Then I will call a press conference and tell the world that I am not happy and it is all your fault and that I hate you, I hate you, I really, really, hate you. So there."

If that doesn't sway him, then I will use my ace card.

I'll call the man who is apparently the owner or a partner in that agency.

See, I'm not going to walk in to just any car dealership. The one I have in mind bears the name of Scottie Pippen, the Chicago Bulls basketball star. Maybe you've heard him in the commercials, urging us to buy his product.

I chose Pippen's dealership because he, more than any other car dealer, would empathize with someone who suffers from unhappiness.

For quite some time, Pippen has been one of the most visibly unhappy people in Chicago.

His problem is that he really hates working for the people who own and operate the Bulls.

He didn't always hate them. Or if he did, he didn't say so when they won three straight



Mike Royko

National Basketball Association championships. He was just as giddy as everyone else.

But times change, and now he is obviously miserable with his working conditions and wants to go somewhere else, even if it means joining a lesser team.

Then why, you might ask, doesn't he just pack up and go somewhere else to work? That's what some people do when they find their jobs intolerable.

He surely would if he could, but he can't because of a legal technicality.

The technicality is that in 1991 he signed a five-year contract that requires him to play only for the Bulls until some time in 1996, unless he is traded.

So why, might you ask, would he sign himself into five years of bondage with an outfit he now detests?

I don't know. Maybe they drugged his Gatorade. Or held a pistol to his agent's head. Those management types will stop at nothing. Especially someone like Jerry Krause, the general manager. He's a real short guy, and you know how they are.

Of course, it might have been the paychecks — about \$18 million over the five years. A young man needs food and a roof over his head.

But that was way back in 1991. And as anyone who has been shopping lately knows, \$18 million ain't what it used to be. Especially under our harsh laws, which require sports superstars to pay taxes like the rest of us. Newt should do something about that inequity.

And now there are about four dozen other basketball players who earn more than Pippen, even though most of them aren't as good as he is.

So Pippen has been telling the world how much he hates his employers and how miserable they make him feel. Even when they win, his hatred and misery runneth over. I sometimes fear that a long losing streak would make him suicidal.

That's why I'm confident that Scottie's auto agency would be enlightened and sensitive and realize that a contract is just a piece of paper.

But happiness is a smile.
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Innocent's murder skews truth

Truth and justice have always ranked among the highest-held values for humanity. Truth was held by the Greeks in higher esteem than friendship; Socrates used to say, "Plato is my friend, but truth is a better friend of mine." So it has been for thousands of years. In every society, justice has been considered an inviolable value. This was true until Jan. 5.

For the first time, a man was legally executed while admitted innocent even by the prosecutor. Jesse Jacobs was executed Jan. 5 at the Huntsville penitentiary in Texas for a crime committed by his sister, who was found guilty and is serving a 10-year sentence.

The murder of Jesse Jacobs by the state takes humanity many centuries backwards, to a time when the term "justice" was loosely applied to justify lynching. In fact, Jacobs symbolizes a sacrificial lamb on the altar of a society in desperate search of a cure for crime.

Texas prosecutor Donald Morales argued that even if Jacobs did not commit the murder, he was involved enough to deserve the death penalty. This, however, proves only that the term "truth" means nothing to the Texas judiciary system, and that in its logic, who commits a certain crime does not matter as long as someone gets executed for it.

In synthesis, Morales' argument could be translated: "Sure he didn't kill her, but he deserved to die because he sure as hell wanted to kill her." The road to hell is paved with good intentions, but a bad



Simon Liverani

intention slips in once in a while.

Of course Jacobs was no saint — his criminal record took up entire file cabinets at the FBI — but the justice of a state cannot adopt the popular concept that, after all, nobody's innocent.

Sure there was the original sin and, for Jacobs, many after that, but this execution was carried out with the knowledge that the victim was put to death for an act he did not commit. How is this different from any other murder? Maybe the presence of a doctor to make Jacobs more at ease?

Ever since capital punishment was reintroduced, the most heated discussions concerned the possibility of an error that could result in the execution of an innocent. The ethical problems that this created prompted the system to use the death penalty only in cases where guilt was absolutely proven. The irreversibility of the punishment made it a tool to be used sparingly and only after a long series of careful revisions.

In the case of Jesse Jacobs, none of these guidelines applied. He was convicted once because of a false confession, which he later retracted. The prosecutor acknowl-

edged that the first confession had been fabricated in order to protect the real culprit: Jacobs' sister. Nevertheless, the first sentence, given at the time of the false confession, was never reversed.

A long sequence of fruitless appeals brought Jacobs to the Supreme Court. The latter found itself in a tight spot, since it had two contrasting guidelines that applied to this matter. The Supreme Court suggested the unconstitutionality of executing a person known to be innocent, but, on the other hand, it did not consider its sphere of influence to declare this person innocent. The final blow from the top court came with the 6-3 vote against the suspension of the sentence.

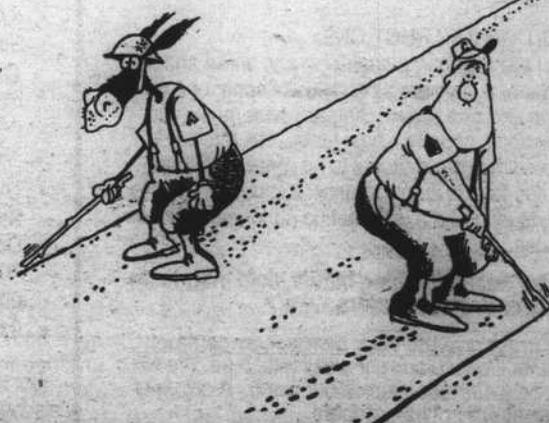
This incredible and sad story is only the latest drama that uncovers all the contradictions in today's American society. A government that crosses the globe to uphold the ideals of justice in Kuwait, then tramples on those same values within its system. A country where groups of anti-abortionists are so blind that they see no paradox in justifying murder in order to save lives. Finally, a country where a man can legally buy a gun, but cannot legally drink a beer.

The polemics do not revolve so much around the case of Jacobs, whose criminal record would have led him at least to life in prison, but it concerns a system where the will to administer punishment overshadows the evidence.

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The Democrats draw the line where they will battle the Republicans!!

Ed Gamble