

# In or out?



*Public should expect more from presidency*

**ERIN GIBSON is a senior news-editorial major and Daily Nebraskan editor in chief.**

Enough is enough. For the past eight months, the public, the media, Congress and the courts have been jerked along by leaked information and White House lies, while all Americans were burdened by a mounting bill for investigating and defending the indecent, immoral and illegal acts of the president of the United States. The time has come to say: Get

out. President Bill Clinton should step down before he further burdens Americans and the government with impeachment proceedings. The burden the president already has laid upon the American people is great enough. By lying, he broke the laws we trust his branch of government to enforce.

By lying, he cheapened the office of the presidency, an office that has been gasping for life-giving public trust and approval since President Richard Nixon. By lying, he brought more distrust into a political system where voters' apathy overrules their belief that leaders such as Clinton are empowered by the people to represent the people's interests.

Americans witnessed a leader who conveniently forgot how his actions affected the people when self-gratification was involved. They saw a leader who only acknowledged and regretted his unethical behavior when his secret got out and his ego was damaged. Many people believe the shame in this scandal lies not in the revelation of Clinton's actions but in an intrusive media and a gossiping public. Not so. An impeachment report provided to Congress by an independent counsel is rightfully news and should concern everyone governed by the president.

Others blame this scandal on Ken Starr, who has pursued his job as independent counsel with a relentless determination that has made him appear to have a personal vendetta against the president. Clinton's lawyers, in a preliminary rebuttal of Starr's report, seem to take this tack by dis-

missing the report as "nothing but the details of a private sexual relationship told in graphic details with the intent to embarrass."

It's an understandable spin on the news. As a longtime Clinton supporter, I was embarrassed to hear the explicit, X-rated details of his actions. Starr could have summarized the details of Clinton's adultery for the sake of the country and Clinton's family.

But the fact is he didn't. Starr did his job thoroughly, as required, and investigated every allegation of Clinton's behavior before releasing a graphic, disturbing report.

This history cannot be retrieved and remade. We must deal with the facts. And we must use the pertinent facts to determine whether Clinton upheld the duties of his office.

The facts presented show our president lied under oath about his adulterous acts that occurred in our most revered publicly funded building.

Those facts show Clinton tried to obstruct justice by launching a cover-up campaign during which he lied in order to save his own ego and political agenda.

He also abused his power by having sex with a subordinate employee and using White House resources to cover his missteps.

The president forgot he answers to the people; the president thought he was above the law.

His dishonest acts violated the trust of every American, and they corrupted his respect among congressmen and congresswomen to a point where he may no longer be able to lead effectively with the respect and trust of our highest leaders.

Ironically, several opinion polls show Clinton still carries a popular approval rating of well more than 60 percent. It seems the average American is willing to accept the president lied, because, hey, all presidents have lied. It also seems the average American doesn't want to prosecute him for lying about an affair, because, hey, anyone would lie about an affair.

Such beliefs only help further destroy the integrity of the Oval Office.

We, as Americans, must again demand our highest office uphold the values of our land as we define them today. Some claim we shouldn't care whether the president has affairs and lies about them, because some past presidents have had affairs without them being reported to the public.

Nonsense. Americans' votes and opinions on the presidency are not bound by historical convention.

With our votes, we can demand our president not lie, cheat, steal or break his covenants.

We can also demand he not champion women's rights, then have his spin doctors paint Monica Lewinsky - his consensual sex partner - as a lying, gossiping, chubby-cheeked girl enamored with his powerful office.

And, until the next election, we can demand with raised voices and pens that our president step down if he has broken the laws of our land and thus proven himself unfit for the presidency.

Adultery is not an impeachable offense; perjury, abuse of power, witness tampering and obstruction of justice are.

Were Clinton not a leader in the most wealthy, most elite power structure of our country, he would have abandoned his office months ago. If our own university president perjured himself after having an affair with a college-aged intern, an outcry would have demanded his immediate release.

Our leaders must obey our laws. To let Clinton slip by because his acts are so embarrassing we don't want to hear about or to discuss them anymore - or to grant him leniency with his high office - is foolishness.

He is human, but he also is our president, and, out of respect for our country and Constitution, we must hold him to the ideals of his office.

We cannot let him continue with injustice and debauchery while he is president. We must demand he step down and allow a more fit leader to continue.

Enough is enough.



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*Obsession with president's inside life should stop*

Enough is enough. The past eight months have become an absolute media horror show as we, the media, have overwhelmed the airwaves, printed pages and the Internet with a bombast of information regarding the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal, and, even by writing this column, I am contributing to the fire.

The time has come to say: Shut up. A lot of people have asked me if I am ashamed of the president. Not really. Am I embarrassed by what he's done? I'm embarrassed that he got caught, but it's his personal life, and it isn't affecting my paycheck. Is there anything I really regret about the whole issue? I regret that everyone can't let it go.

Both the media and the populace at large are responsible for this insane circus act.

We in the media are more ashamed of ourselves than we are of the president. Full-grown journalists have become schoolchildren, yelling at one another about what they might (or might not) have heard. Muckrakers like Matt Drudge are considered "cutting-edge journalists."

We're fighting for ratings and it's pathetic. All anyone wants is to try and top the competition. "Do we have the first scoop? Can you get it verified? Is it going to beat the rest?"

There's a reason journalists are doing this, of course: *You want to know.*

Whoever has the first news on the scandal is watched more than anyone else. If a paper's got quotes someone else doesn't, that paper will sell.

There is no second place.

When the report was released on the Internet, it was flooded with a deluge of attempts to try to get the absolutely indecent report. I've got strong tolerance and I'll confess, I read the whole thing, but if this had been anywhere else on the Web, it would be called pornography.

It's a stab of wicked irony that, had this report been put on the Web a year and a half ago, it would have put Congress in check with itself.

The Communications Decency Act, which was overturned not too long ago, made text such as the report obscene, but now that the CDA is no more, anyone can read what would have been deemed obscene not too long ago.

Newspapers have printed whole sections of the report with disclaimers like, "This contains graphic descriptions."

Well, no kidding. Then why would you print it at all, if you're that squeamish about it?

I've been debating the Clinton situation with friends for a long time, and I've come to the conclusion that this is not an impeachable offense and we *have* to let it drop.

Sex is not a high crime, in or out of wedlock. Lying about an affair is perjury, but who wouldn't lie about it?

I don't care who he slept with, or how ugly the intern is. It could have been a dog for all I care. It's none of my damn business what he does in his private life.

We the media can't keep track of everything, and we shouldn't have to. The public's right to know ends right about at the front door of a per-

son's house, even the White House. The intense amount of investigation we subject anyone in the public eye to is inhumane. "The Truman Show" isn't unfeasible; in fact, it's becoming reality. Fairly soon, people will want to see celebrities every minute of their lives.

Smile, your life is "Candid Camera." If you were to become famous, for whatever reason, would you want us to be able to watch you get up every morning?

I look like hell in the morning - how about you?

The bathroom wouldn't be safe, friends' houses wouldn't be safe - there would be no place safe from the evil eye of the cameras.

But maybe that's what you people want, and if so, that in itself is more disgusting than anything found in Starr's Harlequin-esque report.

Do you really want people under surveillance? Are you that untrusting of your civil leaders and celebrities? Do you enjoy having every iota of someone's life at your fingertips?

Do you care that much about someone else's life and so little about your own?

The 24-hour "President" Network. Oh boy.

You have an obligation to stop this: Turn it off.

Turn off the television showing the latest Ken Starr news.

Turn off the television with first-hand pictures of the infamous blue dress, with Bill's spills still on it.

Don't buy the paper that put Clinton on the front page. If you do, don't read the article about it.

Better yet, write 'em a letter and tell them there's more important things happening in the world than who slept with whom.

It's like high school, isn't it? When our president gets to second base, dammit, people want to be there with him.

But you can stop this.

You. You're the readers and the watchers, the audience and the client, the reason we're all here.

We're here to give you what you want, and right now, what we think you want is this.

Tell us we're wrong.

Lambaste CNN, NBC, CBS, ABC, The Washington Post, The New York Times, USA Today and everyone else who's beating this thing past death.

Turn off, put down and walk away.

We've already beaten this horse to the point of having glue.

If you don't, the barrage will continue, no matter how long it's important. What do you know now that you didn't six or seven months ago?

The sooner we let this go, the better off we'll be. Close this torrid novel we the media are forcing you to read, because you can.

Enough is enough.



MATT HANEY/DN