

Lieberman delivers “the most unkindest cut of all”

David North
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Hypocrisy, it has been said, is the tribute vice pays to virtue. In the deepening political crisis in Washington, gross hypocrisy—in the form of sanctimonious moralizing—is the tribute paid by the Democratic Party to rampaging political reaction.

The speech delivered by Sen. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, condemning Clinton’s “sexual promiscuity,” has been hailed by the media as an act of courage and statesmanship. One would imagine from these encomiums that Lieberman had thrown down the gauntlet to the powers that be—in other words, that he had attacked Kenneth Starr and the sex-obsessed scoundrels in the media. Of course, it was nothing of the sort. Rather, his speech was a cowardly and cynically contrived event that had been staged to satisfy the media’s demand for Democratic criticism of Clinton.

Lieberman has enjoyed a long association with the president, dating back to 1970; and even owes to Clinton his earliest political successes. Indeed, the media has stressed that the depth of the Honorable Senator’s convictions is demonstrated by willingness, in the service of morality, to slip a knife between the ribs of his old and dear friend.

As for the content of the speech, one can only imagine how Twain, Mencken or Sinclair Lewis would have satirized Lieberman and his fatuous blather. After all, is there a more fitting target for contempt and derision than a politician who poses—from the floor of that house of ill-repute known as the US Senate—as a guardian of morality?

Adopting his most polished funereal tone, which was intended to suggest the depth of his moral anguish, Lieberman condemned “sexual promiscuity,” warning that it threatened “the stability and integrity of the family, which continues to be the most important unit

of civilized society.”

There are many things that threaten the beleaguered American family, but Mr. Clinton’s personal relations with Ms. Lewinsky are not among them. How, when and where Clinton had sex with Lewinsky has nothing to do with the fact that the family life of working class Americans is strained to the breaking point by the unrelenting pressure of economic uncertainty, or that a decent education has become a luxury that only the wealthy can afford, or that millions of American families are without health care or that more than a third of all children in the United States live in poverty.

These real life problems were not addressed by Lieberman. Rather, he bemoaned the fact that he “cannot watch the news on television with my 10-year-old daughter any more.” Strictly speaking, Kenneth Starr and the moguls of the media bear far greater responsibility for this situation than Clinton. But that matter aside, can it really be that it was not until the exposure of the president’s affair with Lewinsky that the senator became concerned about what his daughter saw and heard on the evening news?

In a similar vein, Lieberman declared, “It is much more difficult to convince our sons and daughters of the importance of telling the truth when the most powerful man in the nation evades it.”

Excuse me while I blow my nose.

One can only feel sorry for little Miss Lieberman, who actually must live with a father capable of uttering such false and sanctimonious platitudes.



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