

sally hodgkinson

even editors get the blues

It was — and is — easy to hate the Iranians who held the 52 Americans for 14½ months.

They stomped on our pride. The Iranians flicked their middle finger at us for 444 days and we didn't like it.

Pride, not the lives of the Americans, was the reason we rallied 'round the flag, tied yellow ribbons and generally wallowed in self-pity for the 14½-month "crisis."

We became enraged patriots, quick to wag fingers at Jimmy Carter for being wishy-washy and compromising. "Blow the hell out of Iran," we screamed. "Damn terrorists. Teach them a lesson."

We were reduced to the hate that we hated the Iranians for displaying.

In the black-and-white Iranian world of the 444-day standoff, all of the hostages were CIA spies, all Americans imperialist pigs and Carter

was a sneak.

And in the black-and-white American world of the hostage standoff, the Ayatollah Khomeini was a religious madman and all Iranians were flag burners and kidnapers.

When people are dehumanized and crammed into boxes marked "terrorists," "spies" or "murderers," hate reigns. It's easier to see all Americans as capitalist imperialist pigs and all Iranians as revolutionary bloodthirsty terrorists than to see the gray areas.

Fortunately Carter wasn't color blind. While not ignoring the Iranian insult, he wasn't swayed by the national hysteria.

But his patience and restraint was labeled as incompetence and the biggest strength of the Carter presidency cost him re-election.

We wanted a Happy Ending — fast. We wanted revenge. But we got 52 live Americans after 14½ months.

We wanted perfection in a president. But we got a president with human weaknesses who found that issues aren't as simple as they looked outside the White House.

It was easy to hate Carter and blame him for the ills of the country. So in our continuing quest for instant everything, we hired an ex-movie star who promised to grab the reins of the nation, renew our "determination, courage, strength, faith and hope" and gallop off into the sunset of "heroic dreams."

And when Ronald Reagan discovers that complex problems can't be resolved by simple campaign promises and he screws up, we'll feel cheated.

And, again, it will be easy to hate.

yours

Egalitarianism

Jean Lorraine's letter "Feminists will win," which demands that men accept feminism, has certainly stimulated a great deal of harshly defensive responses from men. Men should, however, welcome the egalitarianism of all people, regardless of sex.

If a man does not want equal rights and justice for women, he should at least support feminism for his own good, since the termination of today's stifling male and female sex roles will ultimately liberate both women and men. The restrictive obligations that masculinity demands of us men truly are boring and dangerous. Our patriarchal society teaches men to live each day with insensitivity and aggression, and to display appallingly little patience, responsibility, and concern for our world. We are also constantly encouraged to accept and enjoy pornography.

Feminists despise pornography because it reinforces the tragic misconception that women live for sex alone and are passive, giddy and defenseless against violent physical domination.

Unfortunately, our shallow male sex role requires that we "prove" our manli-

ness to ourselves and others through the systematic suppression of our emotions, and by the hostile domination of women.

This is why feminists object to pornography — not because they want to deny Americans their Constitutional rights, but because pornography cleverly legitimizes the physical abuse of women. Pornography does, in fact, promote beating, mutilation, and rape.

Sexual democracy offers a refreshing alternative to this present dominant-submissive relationship. Egalitarianism will allow women to be respected as strong individuals, and will also help to deter sexual violence. Men should not, therefore, feel threatened by feminism. Rather, we men should accept our new role in society, since it will permit us to lead more fulfilling and whole lives. Men will be able to openly share instead of consume, offer support instead of cynical criticism, and contribute understanding, acceptance and peace.

Richard Fowler
Freshman, humanities

On hostages, shah

We are all justifiably pleased at the return of the American hostages from Iran. Their captivity by the Iranian government was a serious crime which I

do not intend to condone. However I think that we should remember the tens of thousands of Iranian people who were tortured by the Shah's secret police with the support of the American government. These people will never return to their homes and families.

Tom Lynch
Graduate, English

More on abortion

Regarding the letter from Marty Heiser and Kelly Hogan ("On abortion," Wednesday) I would like to make a few comments.

The situation was given of the parents of Beethoven. "The father has syphilis and the mother has tuberculosis. They have had four children, the first one was blind, the second one died, the third one was deaf and dumb and the fourth had tuberculosis." Mr. Heiser and Mr. Hogan then state "the mother is now pregnant with her fifth child but is willing to have an abortion if you determine that she should."

The whole issue of abortion is that women should be able to control their own lives and bodies. The whole idea (even hypothetical) of a woman who is *willing* to have an abortion but needs someone else to make the decision is abhorrent. Women are not indifferent to

abortion. It is something that most people should and do weigh very carefully before making the decision they feel is best for those involved. In the situation above, if that poor woman decided that it was all she could do to care for her three handicapped children and that to have a fourth (handicapped or genius) would make it impossible to give her three existing children adequate care, who could blame her for having an abortion?

I am also confused that the authors, who claim to be Christians, seem to value the life of a potential Beethoven more than the life of a child with tuberculosis. They make it sound as if abortion would be fine in their eyes as long as it didn't affect potential "contributors to society."

Using their reasoning, one can easily justify abortion. What if Beethoven had been a woman, had gotten pregnant when she was 13 and died in childbirth nine months later?

Pregnancy and childbirth are a risk to life and health and to the quality of life of many people other than the actual woman involved. They should never be undertaken lightly or unwillingly.

Susan Beebe
Senior, biology

Flag or mat?

Like many vets, I was outraged and humiliated by Ron Phillips' desecration of our flag. Our flag, his door mat, symbolizes far more than just one soiled page in our national history. It is the symbol of our people and our home. It was and still is a beautiful banner of hope in an increasingly hopeless world. Ask the Cuban refugees, the Vietnamese boat people or the 52 returnees. Their response will have more meaning than that of one embittered man.

David Wellsfry
Junior, accounting

letters policy

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Letters must be signed, the author's field of study or faculty status noted and must include address and phone number for verification.

