

Babysitter unjustly curses nomination

Only two weeks after Zoe Baird withdrew from the U.S. attorney general race, President Bill Clinton's second choice dropped out of the running. The reason? Because her babysitter had been an illegal alien for seven years. (Insert *Twilight Zone* theme here.)

As it turns out, federal Judge Kimba Wood didn't actually do anything wrong. Unlike Baird, she hired her babysitter in 1986, before an immigration law was passed prohibiting employers from knowingly hiring undocumented workers. As she told Clinton administration officials, she "complied with all immigration laws" and paid "all required taxes."

In light of this, Clinton acted too quickly in dismissing Wood. Certainly he wanted to avoid additional embarrassment on the illegal alien issue. Reaction against Baird was strong from both Congress and the public, and asking a woman who knowingly broke the law to become attorney general was a mistake. This was, after all, a brand new administration looking to avoid screw-ups.

Saying she wasn't politically viable is understandable, but not excusable.

But Wood was not Zoe Baird. She was a qualified candidate with a solid legal background. Her only offense was following Baird.

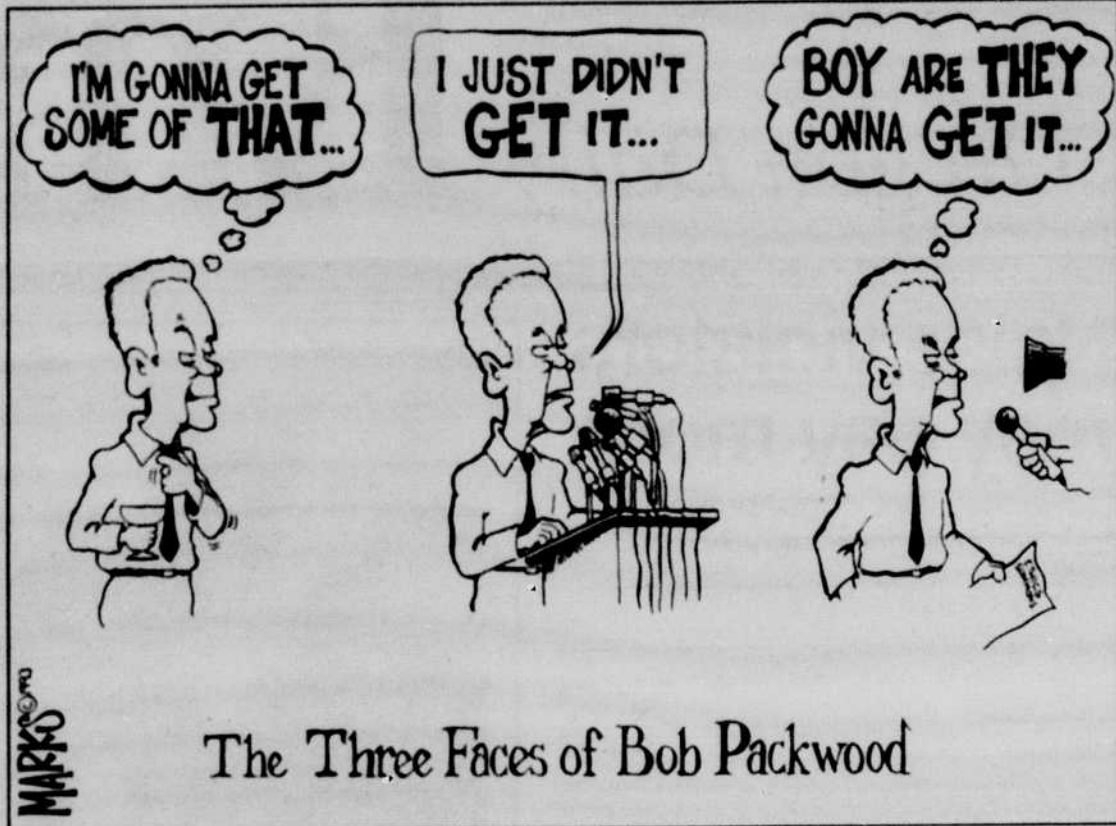
A Clinton aide admitted her dismissal was not a legal judgment, but a political one. The president has already taken enough heat in the early going to alter any judgment he makes. But Wood was a good candidate with a clean record. She deserved confirmation proceedings where Congress could have determined her ability. Saying she wasn't politically viable is understandable, but not excusable.

Even Congress criticized Clinton for his quick dismissal of Wood. Sen. Alan Simpson, one of the more conservative voices in the Senate, said Wood "was as honest and true as an arrow." Usually when Simpson likes a Democratic choice, she has an excellent chance of confirmation.

Another potential controversy surrounding Wood was her one-time training as a Playboy Club bunny in the 1960s. Though Clinton officials deny this was a factor in her dismissal, insiders say the administration wanted to avoid embarrassing jokes. The last thing Clinton needs is a Quayle.

The Clinton administration partially defends its action by claiming Wood didn't come clean when originally asked about employment records. She apparently denied three times that she had hired illegal aliens, thereby angering the administration when they discovered the truth.

But Wood's actions were excusable given Clinton's problems. Her babysitter was legal, making the term "illegal alien" a bit of a misnomer. Wood deserved more respect than to be dismissed while innocent.



The Three Faces of Bob Packwood

LETTERS

Knew Carson

Ed Carson and I lived in the same dorm our first year on campus, and though we were by no means close friends, he seemed then to possess an intelligence and rationality not always common in first-year college students.

My communication with Carson since then has been limited to his articles in the *Oregon Commentator*, a journal that I, as a liberal, frequently find myself at odds with (and there are times my summation of that relationship would be considerably less charitable).

Despite this, I cannot recall having read anything by Carson that was not infused with an insight and intelligence that enabled me to explore a viewpoint I may not have considered or agreed with.

I have never seen evidence of racism or homophobia in his writing, and I consider Carson to be one of the few "conservative" writers fulfilling the potential of rightist thought to contribute a balanced exchange of opposing ideas so key to our education.

To convict him through mere association with morons who produce tripe such as the "bulldoze" cartoon (*Commentator*, December 1992) is grossly unfair and goes against the ideals of personal liberty that we on the left claim to trumpet. I wish him luck in his new position.

Jamie Bakum
English

Strike two

Kudos to *Emerald* sports editor Dave Charbonneau. Although modesty must have prevented him from admitting it, Charbonneau scored a media coup by getting interviews with the 16-year-old "guests" of some Portland Trail Blazer players from the controversial night in Utah.

He found out, for example, that "these girls were looking to score just as much as the players were," that "you know they were looking for attention," and

that "they stayed when things got hot, and they consented" (*ODE*, Feb. 2).

Charbonneau has cleared up any possible confusion regarding one "girl's" statement that she felt frightened and intimidated into having sex, and the puzzling medical evidence of vaginal trauma.

I can appreciate Charbonneau not wanting to make the rest of the media feel bad, but next time why not be brave and acknowledge his sources? After all, some less astute *Emerald* readers might jump to the conclusion that Charbonneau is simply convicting the victims out of prejudice and promoting sexual stereotypes, and basing his article on an outdated rape myth — "She must have been asking for it."

It was only the *Emerald's* record of journalistic integrity that clued me in to the only possible explanation — Charbonneau was actually repeating what the "guests" had told him. Good job. Now they can call off the trial.

Steve Ramseur
Sociology

Not confirmed

This is in response to a Jan. 26 *Emerald* article, "University cites OPS officer with harassment violation," concerning a complaint of sexual harassment in the University Office of Public Safety.

This complaint has been the subject of a thorough investigation, in full compliance with all applicable University policies and procedures covering allegations of sexual harassment.

Although personnel matters must remain confidential and specifics on individual cases cannot be provided, we wish to note, significantly, that this investigation did not confirm all the details reported in the *Emerald* article.

The University is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment that is respectful of the rights of all members of our community. In the coming weeks, we and others will be making a renewed effort to

reach University students, faculty and staff with information on the array of resources that already exist on our campus to help those who feel they have been victimized by sexual harassment.

Linda King
Alison Baker
and five co-signers
University Affirmative Action
Administrative Council

Strike three

It seems that the foundation of this nation's legal system no longer exists. I once heard that those accused of a crime were innocent until proven guilty.

But according to the enlightened Dave Charbonneau, "Blazers go mall hopping for fun," and Rondine Niki Rouch, "Shed myths" (*ODE*, Feb. 2), this idea no longer applies.

Everyone has heard of the alleged Portland Trail Blazer scandal, yet Charbonneau and Rouch have already cracked the case for the Salt Lake City district attorney. It seems Charbonneau knows for a fact these girls did have sex with alleged Blazer players. Was he in Salt Lake? Did he party with the Blazers?

And Rouch has already determined these girls were gang raped. I was not there, and neither were Charbonneau and Rouch. Maybe the girls consented to sex, or maybe it's a big story. The only thing we do know for sure is that our legal system says anyone accused is innocent until proven guilty.

And come to think of it, none of the Blazers have officially been accused of any crime. Yet Charbonneau sees fit to assess guilt and at the same time demean the entire Blazer organization.

Just what we need is another journalist pointing fingers and deciding the truth for us. It is this thinking, as expressed by both Charbonneau and Rouch, that sends thousands of innocent people to prison every year. But, hey, those two know the real story, or at least they want us to believe so.

Jason Porter
Management

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