

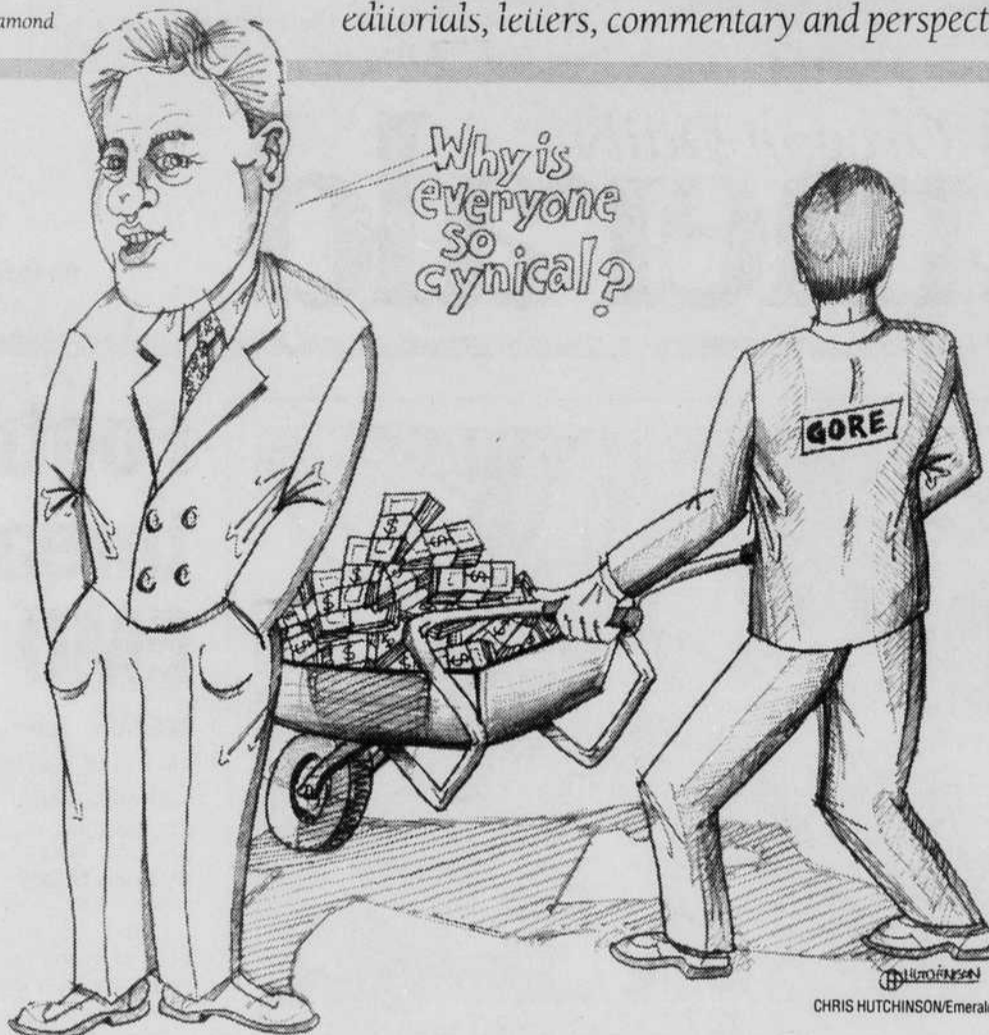
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OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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EDITORIAL



Politics as Usual?

OUR OPINION: President Clinton's recent fund-raising violations are another reason why people are so cynical today.

Soon after President Clinton earned a second term in office, he asked the American people an important question: Why are we so cynical these days? Little did the American people know how quickly he would answer his own question.

Clinton is currently under deep public scrutiny for his questionable fund-raising tactics. The problems started with charges that Clinton accepted illegal contributions from foreign investors, but it has since grown into an intricate web of possible finance violations.

The bizarre story of Clinton's fund-raising activities flooded the public spotlight over the last few weeks. First it was reported that Clinton allowed top donors to spend the night in the Lincoln bedroom. The idea that the White House could be rented out was only the beginning of the story. As it turns out, contributing money to the President's campaign could yield a wide variety of benefits.

For instance, for \$12,500 donors received dinner and a picture with the President. For a \$50,000 contribution, a donor could have coffee with Clinton and other top administrators. And for \$250,000, a prospective donor could spend the whole day at the White House, swimming in the pool, touring the Oval Office and even watching a movie in the President's private theater.

That still wasn't the end of it. Recently it was revealed that Vice President Al Gore actually asked for donations over the phone directly from the White House. Clinton followed by admitting that he too may have asked for money over the phone from donors, though he pointed out that he couldn't remember any specific incidents.

None of these actions are technically illegal, but they certainly raise serious ethical questions about the integrity of our leaders. The idea that, for a fee, a person can have a direct influence on the leader of the United States is certainly frightening. Even if no laws were broken in the process, our trust in our leaders certainly has been damaged. As Clinton himself said, "I think we should be held to a higher standard than just: 'It is legal.'"

The irony of this whole fund-raising scandal is that Clinton originally ran for of-

fice on a "reform the system" platform. Many people were attracted by Clinton's promise for campaign finance reform. Not only has Clinton not reformed campaign finance rules, but he has also taken the abuse of them to a new level.

It would be a mistake, however, to see Clinton's misconduct as an isolated incident. If there's one mistake he's made that other politicians have avoided, it's that he got caught. Who knows how many former presidents made similar shady deals and how many current politicians are making even more questionable deals? And furthermore, who wants to know?

It shouldn't surprise anyone, least of all Clinton, that people are cynical today. When our own leaders fragrantly break their promises and a new "scandal" is uncovered every day, it's hard not to be a little mistrustful of politics.

Today's youth have been especially criticized for having a cynical outlook. Perhaps the blame should fall, not on the cynics, but on the leaders whose actions continue to justify such an outlook. Until our leaders give us reason to trust them, being cynical is a rational reaction to an unfortunate reality.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.

Overheard

"I'm not one of the rescuers. I need to be rescued."

Conan Wachsnicht, lost snowboarder on Mt. Hood, after searchers mistook him for one of their own last weekend.



"You have people today who are called 'nice' talk-show hosts and they get applauded. When I did it, I was kissing ass. It's bull."

Former talk-show host and new sitcom star **Arsenio Hall**, in *Newsweek*.

"We're actually trying to make a kind of music that doesn't exist yet. That is a terrifying place to be."

U2 singer Bono, on the band's new album, *Pop, in Spin*.

"You don't have to go to Mexico. You don't have to transport it from Columbia. This is something you can make with stuff you can buy from the local hardware store."

Missouri Sheriff Bill Ferrell, on the dangers of methamphetamines in the area.

L. A. police detective **Raymond Futami**, on the assumed link between the shootings of gangsta rappers **Notorious B.I.G.** and **Tupac Shakur**.



"No reasonable person will deny that friendly nations are also spying on us. That includes tricks by American intelligence."

Willfried Penner, German intelligence committee member, after a CIA official was expelled from the country after accusations of spying.

"It's awesome it's awesome it's awesome. Keep smiling keep smiling you gotta keep smiling. Image image image image image."

Australian pianist **David Helfgott** and the subject of the film "Shine," referring to who-knows-what, in *Newsweek*.

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LETTERS

Still an evil

I would like to acknowledge faculty/staff of color who remain at the University despite the overwhelming burdens of maintaining their job, acting as resources for students of color and acting as representatives of their ethnic/racial communities (whether they choose to or not) in the face of discrimination and racism that runs rampant through this institution.

The history (or lack thereof) of faculty/staff of color at the University is a prime example of how this institution has done a poor job in recruiting ethnic minorities. Even now, when

the University is finally ready to acknowledge that a reputable University should have an ethnic studies major, it can't attract quality candidates in this field.

Many students of color thought things might improve with the implementation of the ethnic studies department. For years we fought for this major and were lead with the impression that we would be given what we asked for.

However, this is not the case. Because the University has such an ugly reputation for hiring and keeping people of color on this campus (not

to mention the good faculty/staff of color who have been terminated for political reasons), many good candidates avoided applying for this position.

Students met with one of the candidates who recently came to campus. We were appalled to find out that he was one of the only choices we would have to select from in light of all the effort we put into getting an ethnic studies major on campus.

So what are the options? According to the ethnic studies hiring committee, we can accept this candidate, or we can wait another year and hope that a new candidate will surface. In

effect, students are being asked to settle for the lesser of two evils. Either we push ethnic studies off for another year or we compromise our principles.

If University administration wants to claim that they are serious about an ethnic studies department, maybe they should offer more incentives to recruit applicants (e.g. better pay with automatic tenure). The recruitment process has exposed one of the University's deepest and darkest secrets. There is a lot of institutionalized racism at the University.

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