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OPINION

HIS

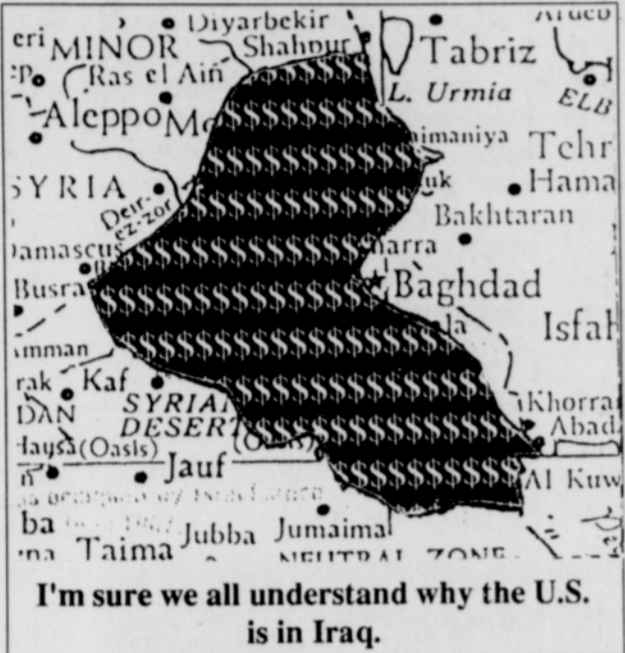


The "Hers" side of the His/Hers Opinion Page has been temporarily suspended while the Observer seeks a new writer

...And Justice For All
by Angelique Sanders

Is our government providing for us properly? I feel that the status quo of politics needs some alterations, but I'm questioning--Bush's success over Jackson seems to affirm this--whether American citizens ARE dissatisfied (or perhaps we're afraid of change). What price are we paying for our American lifestyles of freedom: should we fear any governmental structure? I feel let down by what our government fails to provide. Do you, as an American citizen, want: a comprehensive health plan? A welfare plan that provides yet does not overprovide (how about a welfare-work program that would not interfere with the American paid labor force, with recipients earning their welfare by accomplishing such tasks as collecting litter or planting gardens for the homeless in vacant governmentally-owned property? Persons with disabilities could supervise for their pay.)? a comprehensive plan for the homeless, focused on finding them permanent jobs and shelters rather than temporary? I'm seeing some efforts in this direction, such as Section 8 as well as various job programs, but our homeless count is still tremendous...this problem should be a tax priority. a more comprehensive, governmentally-funded employment program? It seems unfair that persons can be "gypped" by our American system, stepped on by others hustling to climb "the ladder". There is certainly something wrong with a system that, at tax

time, gives benefits and breaks to the rich and shuns the downtrodden. Our way of life seems shaky when I see homeless children huddling against the cold. Many of those at the hypothetical "bottom" have in-bred hostility towards society in general due to the variety of reasons they've ended



medical care, guaranteed to every citizen (in need), but the United States does not even try. "Radical idealism", the political leaders dub it, and are afraid of being tagged radicals. Is it that they are afraid of raising people's hopes, then inadvertently dashing them to the ground in the event the proposed change doesn't work? Or are they truly of, by, and for the people, yet our citizens don't truly seek change? More people on "the upper rungs" vote; obviously, those who aren't having trouble with the system don't generally opt to change it. Incorporating the realism of each of my proposed benefits costing--you guessed it, taxpayers' dollars--wouldn't it be worth it? I would like to see a guaranteed medical plan with my hard-earned money more than I would appreciate seeing us at war with Iraq... ***** My item this week is simply a complaint I have with the manager at Lloyd's cinemas. Last Thursday, I went to see *Ghost* (which, by the way, is worth seeing for more reasons than Whoopi Goldberg's absolutely flawless performance); and, at the onslaught of a crucial scene, the film projector experienced difficulties. I can understand this type of problem occurring from time to time; but, first of all, they did not rewind the film (and, as it was the last showing of the evening, it would not have interfered with time) nor did the manager apologize to the audience in any way. This show of disrespect towards the consumers makes me think twice about where to take my business in the future.

No One Should Tolerate Emotional/Physical Abuse

BY ULLYSSES TUCKER, JR.

"Last night I heard the screaming, loud voices behind the wall. Another sleepless night for me. It won't do no good to call the police. Always come late if they come at all and when they arrive, they say they can't interfere with domestic affairs between a man and his wife...and as they walk out the door, the tears well up in her eyes. Last night I heard the screaming, then a silence that chilled my soul. I prayed that I was dreaming when I saw the ambulance in the road...and the policeman said, "I'm here to keep the peace, will the crowd disperse-I think we could all use some sleep." -Tracy Chapman, Fast Car 1988, "Behind The Walls"

The song made popular by recording artist Tracy Chapman is a sad, very sad commentary about a problem that exists in our country, state, neighborhood, and in many families. Domestic violence is a very serious problem and in my opinion, No one should have to tolerate physical violence from anyone. It is immoral, inhumane, and wrong to physically abuse another person. Be it psychological, emotional, or physical abuse, no one should have to be subjected to this type of behavior. Good or bad, our parents have a tremendous effect on our attitudes, behavior patterns, values, beliefs, and actions. How each of us as people express our love or hate in relationships is a direct reflection of what was established or instilled in us long ago. The influence of parents on offsprings is particularly strong in a society like the one we live in where extended families, close neighborhoods, rituals, which once dominated impact, have broken down or disappeared. Growing up in an isolated environment or family, apart from a larger kinship/support network, does not provide enough space from parents or variety of healthy role models to learn positive behavior. Relationships between parents and children seem to be either too close or too distant, both cause communication problems in future relationships or possible even motivate an individual to not be like their parents.

Like many readers, I grew up in a household where fighting or violence was as common as the roaches and rodents that stalked the neighborhood.

Though painful to admit, my mother fought with my father and boyfriends. She was a very physical individual, who did not tolerate abuse from anyone. It's possible that her attitude or frustration developed from raising seven children almost alone, or from dreams or goals never realized. I will never know the reason because my mother is no longer living. I can recall several incidents as a child, where my mother was the target of many jokes by other children in the neighborhood. There seemed to always be some domestic violence in our apartment or just outside of it. On the other hand, fighting between mates was most common in the housing projects I lived in, and an every day part of life.

Unfortunately, many children grow up thinking that domestic violence is a natural part of life and develop a high level of tolerance towards it because it seems so normal. As a result of this tolerance or acceptance, many people grow up with the attitude that they can abuse their mate or ultimately accept abuse from their mate. No one should tolerate abuse. Some people accept or tolerate abuse because they watched a parent inflict or endure abuse. They perceive the behavior as normal, which is dysfunctional and a person with this perception should talk to their pastor or consult a professional for help.

As a result of growing up in a violent household that left emotional scars, that have since healed, I now know what type of household I do not want to be a part of in the future. More importantly, I learned that my parents were not great models, and to repeat the mistakes they made would only contribute to another generation of domestic violence. Someone had to break the cycle. Thank God for education, finding healthy models, and maturity.

In addition to physical abuse, there is also psychological and emotional abuse. This type of abuse includes criticizing,

blaming, making put-downs, breaking promises, fault-finding, name calling, giving double messages, making demands that are highly unreasonable, creating tension or extended periods of silence, invading privacy, and a host of other negatives that do not promote positive/healthy interaction in relationships.

A relationship or marriage should be established or built on open, honest, and healthy communications. In many ways, people endure these types of relationships because it allows them to avoid intimacy. If someone is with a person who is not emotionally available for them, there is little risk of becoming vulnerable, rejected, abandoned, or too attached. Still, the relationship is not a healthy one and needs some serious re-evaluation.

Before considering a relationship with someone, check out their history, get a good feel for their attitude towards men or women. Find out what past experiences influence current behavior, check out the dynamics of the family that you have in common or do not have in common, and which shame-based family rules dominate each of your families interaction. These are all important elements that will determine how much growth will come in your relationship. Do not be blinded by the romance, wine and dining, etc...find out who you are really going to spend time with before you regret it later on. By the same token, when you meet someone who has been through emotional and physical trauma, try being sensitive, supportive, a good listener, and understanding. Patience is very important.

In closing, learn to understand how your family history has impacted your current attitudes and beliefs, only then will you be able to see where you are today. You are what you were when...

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