

The media event of the year, now the new hit mini-series

By Dan Zehr
Editor

You just can't make up stories better than those already occurring in politics.

The impeachment saga has it all: sex, political violence and intrigue. Throw in a few good characters, a ton of evil characters and an innocent bystander and it makes for a great NBC mini-series. Look out Shogun and Thorn Birds, here comes El Presidente.

Bill The Lecher: He held the greatest power in the world in his hands. Yet, he couldn't control his own passion. He needed attention, he needed to have his ego stroked, he needed a little nookie on the side. When caught, he displayed his incredible talent for twisting the English language around his finger. Much like he tried to do to . . .

Monica The Starry-Eyed Damsel: How could anyone possibly resist an intimate relationship with the most powerful man in the world? He had everything she wanted: fame, fortune, power and a big house on the hill. But now, she was alone. If only he weren't such a creep, if only she never called . . .

Linda The B-, uh, Snitch: She craved what she could not have, but she forced order upon the lives around her to make sure she'd always have her shot, her taste of power. With a tape recorder and a

phone, she cast shame on the entire American government. Shame that some were only too happy to perpetuate, men like . . .

Ken The Piranha: He smelled blood in the Whitewater, and couldn't resist pulling down the wounded prey. And why not? He had a whole pack of piranha with him in the form of endless funds and personnel.

It was too easy to attack, and it was too easy to find prey. He'll always be searching for more, never mind the fact he's left car- rion for . . .

Henry The Grumpy Old Man: He had a l w a y s

searched for chinks in Bill's armor, and now he had the perfect opportunity. Here, he could take the moral high ground and bellow on about the stain on the blue dress and the presidency. Here he could attack, overwhelming public opinion be damned, claiming superior ethics. But a little hypocritical something happened on the way to impeachment . . .

Bob The Georgian Weasel and Bob The Wuss: Men do stupid things, but reactions define the man. The Wuss curled up and died when

his hypocrisy was shoved in his face, backing away from the power his cohorts had handed him. Still, he could say he did the "right" thing as he faded into an unknown and pitiful afterlife. The Weasel ignored his exposure as a second-rate lecher. Then he exposed himself as a first-rate lecher when he skipped Bill's big speech, only to show up and

wasn't a hypocrite like . . .

Trent The Closet Bigot: He now handled the case brought to him by the Weasel, Wuss and Grumpy Old Man. He was in charge, but realized after the public outcry against the partisan rhetoric he must take a moderate road. But behind his rational but friendly demeanor lay his writings for an often racist maga- zine. When ex- posed, he de- n o u n c e d charges of rac- ism but, curi- ously enough, could not bring himself to de- nounce that same maga- zine. All the more fodder for his political foes . . .

The Asses:

make his waves in the media pool afterwards. Even so, the effects of previous affairs were wearing down the party. Affairs brought to light by . . .

Larry, The First-Rate Lecher: He fought for the right to say what- ever he wanted, even though it was crude, prurient and exploitative. He mangled the ethics of journalism by offering money for information, and it worked — just ask The Wuss. Yet, throughout his campaign of slime and slinging, he never pre- tended to be anything more. He

The ignominious donkey as their sign, they fervently fought for the honor of the president leading their party. The evil elephant must be defeated, they thought as they blindly voted along party lines. An odd pall fell upon the chambers as so few from either side could pos- sibly bring themselves to cross party lines. The Asses put their heads in their asses and couldn't see that the people were fed up with partisan politics. The elephants couldn't remember who they were there to serve. But there was hope

brewing, and a new duo was com- ing to save the day . . .

Hillary The Jilted but Faithful Lover and Elizabeth The Char- ismatic Leader Everyone Could Love: They stood by their men through battles and defeat, but ev- eryone knew they were the stron- ger of the pair. Hillary with a sharp mind and insatiable drive, Elizabeth with Cabinet experience and an engaging personality only too nec- essary in today's mediated world. Could it be they who rise up and take power? Could it be they who would lead this country away from the back stabbing and political rhetoric that was killing the coun- try? Find out in the sequel. But the protagonist of this saga remains . . .

El Presidente: He was born in a field in the Dominican Republic. He toiled through the soil, eventu- ally growing strong and healthy. He was hand picked for a special mis- sion, a mission for the president of the United States. And as she stroked him, he realized he had fi- nally made the big time. He had become what everyone in this twisted tale had always wanted. He had become the center of a nation's attention.

And he stood in the warm Wash- ington breeze, watching the sun set in shades of red across the white clouds dotting the blue sky over Capitol Hill. It was then he knew — he had fulfilled his dream. He was the victory cigar.

The impeachment saga has it all: sex, political violence and intrigue. Throw in a few good characters, a ton of evil characters and an innocent bystander and it makes for a great NBC mini-series.

Will the real moral hypocrits please stand up

By Crispin Sartwell
CapTimes Adviser

The intervention of Larry Flynt in Ameri- can politics is delightful. It shows as clearly as anything possibly could exactly where we are.

Larry Flynt is Ken Starr without the hy- pocrisy. Larry Flynt is MSNBC without the perfectly coifed anchor people. Larry Flynt is the Washington Post without the patina of journalistic respectability. Larry Flynt is the Republicans on the House judiciary commit- tee without the blah blah blah yackety smackety.

Flynt — paraplegic, pornographer, provo- cateur offered up to a million dollars to any- one who could prove that she or he had sex with a member of Congress or other high gov- ernment official. It seems, not surprisingly, that there was a bit of a stampede. Bob Livingston, speaker designate of the House, was the first victim: he fell in the midst of the impeachment debate. Bob Barr, the at- tack-dog moralist who wanted Clinton im- peached even before the Lewinsky scandal broke, got a well-deserved thrashing. Flynt

What Larry Flynt is doing to anyone he can is exactly what Ken Starr did to Clinton. The difference is that Flynt does not hide behind a facade of sanctimony. For my money, Flynt is Starr's moral superior.

promises more.

The mainstream press waxes indignant. The following, from an editorial in the San Fran- cisco Examiner, is typical: "Flynt is going beyond journalism. He's not just telling a good story or trying to influence opinion by the force of his arguments. He's attempting to alter events by 'outing' the sexual escapades of political leaders. We think that's wrong. Flynt should stop if he has any pretensions of being a journalist."

First of all, Larry Flynt has never had any pretensions to be a journalist. But second, The Examiner, like every other newspaper in the country, has featured the lurid details of the sex life of Bill Clinton every day for a year. As the story unfolded last spring, the Wash- ington Post found a way to retail every single

nasty rumor, usually by reporting in Howard Kurtz's media column that someone else had said it. MSNBC, the twenty-four hour oral sex network, has talked about almost noth- ing else since the thing broke. These organi- zations have also duly dished the nasty about Henry Hyde, Bob Livingston, and anyone else they could get their paws on. A main- stream publishing house is paying Monica Lewinsky \$600,000 in advance for her story. By the standard so boldly set and ignored by the Examiner, all of these folks should stop if they have any pretensions to journalism.

What Larry Flynt is doing to anyone he can is exactly what Ken Starr did to Clinton. The difference is that Flynt does not hide behind a facade of sanctimony. For my money, Flynt is Starr's moral superior.

It seems that Flynt will publish his revela- tions in a stand-alone magazine. It will be a best seller. That is exactly what Congress did when they published the Starr report.

There was a time when Larry Flynt repre- sented the sleaziest, nastiest, most prurient side of American culture. He was a figure on the fringe. But American culture has caught up, and Flynt occupies the political and moral center. The Republican party and the main- stream American press have joined Larry to create a politics of pornography.

Agree or disagree with Bill Clinton, he has undergone the most extraordinary imaginable invasion of privacy all the time in all media for a year. It is hard not to be gleeful at the discomfiture of some of those who have in- flicted this suffering on the Clintons and on the rest of us. What Larry Flynt is feeding the Republican establishment is an all-they- can-eat buffet of their own medicine.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to Flynt for showing us exactly who we are. If the media and Ken Starr and the Republican pols want to stay smug and self-righteous, they need to avoid the mirror. Larry Flynt is waiting for them there.