

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reaction to Jimmy Carter's Playboy Interview

After reading Jimmy Carter's remarks on sexual morality in his interview to be published by that eminent theological journal, "Playboy," one can readily understand why there is standing room only at Jimmy's Sunday School class. Wow!

One can only wonder. Is this pious Jimmy trying to talk like "one of the boys"—or has the real Jimmy Carter just been mouthing evangelistic jargon to polish his political image with church-going folks?

Shades of Richard Nixon! If Jimmy uses such gutter language for national publication, what will his tapes sound like? I hope we never find out. Who needs to be further disillusioned?

CHARLES O. STRICKLER

Baltimore

Regarding Richard Cohen's article "That Playboy Interview" of Sept. 22, I believe he has entirely missed the point of what most voting citizens are upset about. The language used and statements made by Mr. Carter were relatively tame. The point, however, is that Jimmy Carter is a presidential nominee who could have given an interview to any magazine he wanted and Playboy should not have even been considered as a selection. Regardless of the fact that we are all "only human," this candidate has made an error in judgment.

MARLENE MAIZEL

Silver Spring

If Jimmy Carter's approach to political problems is as nuanced as his moral views in a Playboy interview, we can take heart. Those who reacted negatively to his remarks are quite possibly unfamiliar with the transcript of the taped conversation, with the New Testament, or both.

Take his admission of adultery in the heart. Mr. Carter made this statement just after citing the text against ocular lust as one of Christ's "almost impossible standards." In context of his admission of fleshly desire is a careful exegesis of Gospel teaching that we often do the evil that we would like to avoid and need God's mercy. What Hugh Hefner's males do casually and without compunction, Jimmy does out of weakness and under God's judgment. His perception of Christian reality is theologically precise and orthodox.

I am not surprised that the southern churchmen missed the moral subtleties while choking on the candidate's colorful koine.

George McGovern on the Blunders of 1972

Having myself admitted many times that mistakes were made in my 1972 presidential campaign, I suppose I should not object to the continued references in the press four years later about the alleged blunders of that campaign. But I do hurt a little each time I read some reference, as per your editorial of Sept. 22, to "the process by which Mr. McGovern got himself hopelessly entangled in various ill-considered economic reforms" and again, your hopes that Carter will not make "some huge, fatal McGovernish blunder." There are days when I wonder if the McGovern effort of four years ago was not better than the press image which lingers on.

Item: We won the nomination against seemingly insurmountable odds despite the fact that the big party and labor figures were with other candidates.

Item: We opened up Democratic party participation to women, youth, and minorities in a manner that has enriched the whole political process.

Item: We raised \$30 million from largely ordinary citizens, publicly disclosed and accounted for it, and

Docherty, muffed Jimmy's easy distinction between sinner and sinning. Docherty came out in condemnation of any man guilty of "shacking down with another man's wife." Mr. Carter was careful to condemn adultery, but left judgment of the adulterer to God, after the fashion of Jesus who said to the adulteress dragged in front of him, "Neither do I condemn you."

Some people are uneasy about an exposition of distinctively Christian ideals in a skin slick like Playboy. But what a chance to reach the unwashed with such a flawless Christian moral viewpoint.

NICHOLAS J. CARROLL

Bowie

Jimmy Carter's language, as reported in Playboy, was received with a resounding "ho-hum" at this address, but that of the Rev. George M. Docherty opened new vistas of depravity. What is this "shacking down," Sir, and is it forgivable?

JANET V. KOCH

Chevy Chase

If all the men who have looked upon women with lust in their hearts will vote for Jimmy Carter, and all the women who have tried to make men look upon them with lust will vote for Jimmy Carter; and all those men and women who have not will vote for Gerald Ford, the Democrats will win this election in a landslide that will turn Chairman Mao green in his grave.

WESLEY PRUDEN JR.

Washington

Sex is normal and fun. It is not sin and lust. In my opinion, as a woman with a master's degree in psychology, any other attitude is sick, sick, sick.

If such a thing as a "sin" exists, it is supporting Hugh Hefner's empire based on the exploitation of females as bodies instead of feeling and thinking homo sapiens.

Instead of giving interviews to our American sultan-symbol's publication, a moral man aspiring to be our President would better devote his time to helping stop the exploitation of one sex by making plans to have a Secretary of Women in his cabinet, providing really adequate child care centers for employed mothers, and investigating why there is no union interest in organizing the female white collar worker—for a few examples.

Item: We confronted the major issues before the nation—Vietnam, the arms race, economic conversion, tax reform, amnesty, political corruption, etc.

Item: We inspired multitudes of people to enter the political process as active, dedicated participants. Many of these people now serve in Congress, state legislatures, city councils, and as party officials.

I am painfully aware of the mistakes, such as the vice presidential problem and my awkwardness in trying to explain why a thousand dollar demogrant would be a desirable substitute for the present \$750 income tax exemption and the existing welfare tangle.

But may I ask that on some future date when the news is a little slow that you might consider the possibility that the McGovern campaign of 1972 contained a few elements other than blunders?

GEORGE MCGOVERN,
United States Senator (D-S.D.)

Washington

As a political science student, I am well aware of the fact that, in many instances, people do not vote on politicians' stands on salient issues, but on candidates' personalities. Jimmy Carter may well win this year's presidential contest because of a good dentist, or Gerald Ford because of his love of football. I do get angry when people pick such issues as these, which are irrelevant to the job the candidate will have to perform in his or her elected post.

Similarly, the issue of sex has cropped up in this year's campaign. I do not think the question of Susan Ford's having an affair before she marries, or Jimmy Carter's sexual fantasies, should decide the winner on Nov. 2.

I hope the debates ignore these issues, as I hope the media will forget them. The more newspapers and television exploit them, the more likely these inconsequential issues will decide the '76 election.

MYRA OLTSIK

Washington

The Washington Post editorials always seem to hit the nail on the head. I refer to "Lust, Shmust" in your Sept. 23 issue. Indeed, "who cares"? However, I would like to add a comment on Mr. Carter's Playboy interview, which must be the hottest topic of conversation all over the country, nowadays. Personally, I found Mr. Carter's statement very refreshing. He said nothing that was not completely realistic and truthful. The shock waves that ensued are a sad commentary on a society that is so engrained in the double standard that it has lost its sense of perspective and, worse, has convinced itself of a false sense of righteousness. It is high time that a political candidate had enough candor and guts to state his views on all matters, whether they are relevant to the political scene or not.

SAMIRA B. BYRON

Arlington

Lust, Shmust, who cares? We care. Women young and old who find it incredibly insensitive when a man of supposed stature grants a lengthy interview to a publication whose *raison d'être* is the exploitation of hapless women with pea brains and oversized bosoms. How is it possible that men can still be so unaware?

I say "Amen" to your editorial, "Lust, Shmust," Sept. 23. What Mr. Carter and Mr. Ford and their respective families do "when the door is shut" does not concern me one iota. What Messers. Ford and Carter think about the continued progress of our country and its people, all the people, does concern me, so I, too, say, "Lust, Shmust," is about what it comes down to; and when, for God's sake, are the news broadcasters going to discuss the meaningful issues!

Right on!

GERTRUDE ROHRER

Washington