

THE PLAYBOY FORUM

*an interchange of ideas between reader and editor
on subjects raised by "the playboy philosophy"*

MARITAL SODOMY

My hat's off to you in the matter of Charles O. Cotner (*The Playboy Forum*, July). You couldn't be more blessed than you already are, but I'll guarantee that fate has to be more than kind to you for your intervention. The original verdict in this case was absolutely astounding.

Rudy Vallée
Hollywood, California

SEX LAWS

Recently, *Time* magazine, in its section on "The Law," recounted the Charles O. Cotner case. *Time* described Cotner's arrest, conviction and two-to-fourteen-year sentence for having had anal intercourse with his wife, and it pointed out that "the same thing could have happened to Cotner in most other states." The Playboy Foundation was credited with helping underwrite Cotner's habeas-corpus petition.

I am pleased to see this coverage of the Cotner case, because it indicates not only that PLAYBOY is making a dent in such undesirable laws as the sodomy statutes but also that other major U.S. publications are discovering this area, where PLAYBOY led the way. Another hopeful sign of the times is a recent discussion in *The Wall Street Journal* of the inequitable, archaic and downright silly persecution of individuals under ancient statutes governing sexual behavior. The front-page story prominently refers to an article by Hugh Hefner—"The Legal Enforcement of Sexual Morality"—in the *Colorado Law Review*. Thus, the public beyond PLAYBOY's enlightened readership is being made aware of the way antiquated sex laws invade personal liberty. In addition, it's a sign of increasing intelligence in American attitudes toward sexual subjects when such relatively conservative periodicals feel they can discuss sodomy with their readers. Today, *Time* and the *Journal* march on. Tomorrow, *Reader's Digest*?

Lee Rubini
New York, New York

LASCIVIOUS CARRIAGE

I can testify from personal experience that Hugh Hefner is correct in describing the sex laws of many of our states as ludicrous and archaic. About two years ago, my boyfriend and I were arrested in New Haven, Connecticut. The police burst into the room about

one minute after we had finished sexual intercourse and demanded to see our marriage license. Having none, we were driven to the police station, where we were charged with "lascivious carriage." (At first, I thought the policeman said "lascivious characters.") Two Yale law students got us out on bail and—since we were technically guilty of the crime in question—we forfeited our bond.

After escaping, we concluded that the only way the detectives could have caught us was for them to have been on their hands and knees looking under the window shade while we made love.

I wonder how many New Haven taxpayers realize that they are paying to have these men wander the streets at night and snoop into bedrooms. Also, since my boyfriend and I were not dressed as hippies and were not drunk or boisterous on the street but, rather, looked and behaved very circumspectly, I wonder how and why we were singled out as victims. Is it possible that the fuzz up there make random fishing expeditions into random windows? Or was it just that the rooming house we went to was "on the wrong side of the tracks"?

By the way, what is "lascivious carriage"? I never did find out.

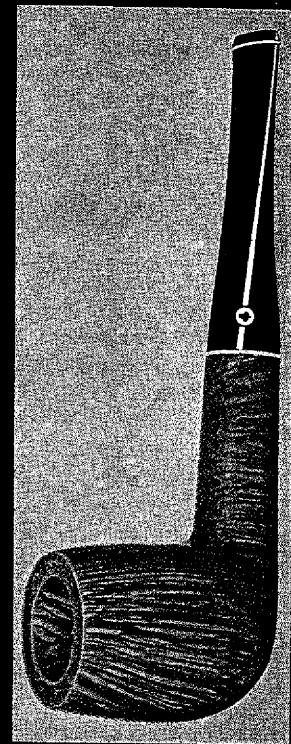
T. Britton
Los Angeles, California

According to Connecticut Statute 53-219, "lascivious carriage" is "carriage or behavior between persons of different sexes" when such conduct "is wanton, lewd, lustful and tending to produce voluptuous or lewd emotions and includes wanton acts between persons of different sexes flowing from lustful passions, which are grossly indecent and unchaste, which are lewd and lustful and which tend to produce lustful emotions and desires." The penalty is a fine of no more than \$100 or imprisonment for not more than six months, or both.

We reported in "Forum Newsfront" last month that the Connecticut legislature is considering a revision of the state's criminal code, including those laws that forbid "private sexual behavior between consenting adults." With statutes such as this on the books, the reform is obviously long overdue.

PRURIENT INTEREST


PLAYBOY has printed some good discussions of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that obscenity must appeal to "prurient



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interest," but no one has asked what's wrong with prurient interest.

The dictionary defines prurient as "inclined to or characterized by lascivious thought." It defines lascivious as "inclined to lust, wanton or lewd." The last three, when defined, lead one in a circle—back to prurience. When disentangled, the Court's language merely seems to condemn sex and the pleasure it affords.

I think that those who don't, or can't, think pruriently when the occasion calls for it are sick. Instead of encouraging these up-tight characters to legislate their own illness into a law for the rest of us, the Government should try to cure them. The size of the job calls for a large effort, possibly under the Health, Education and Welfare Department. The mildly disabled who are under 30 would probably respond to re-education. Hard-core cases, with more complex hang-ups, would probably need a full range of psychiatric services. We treat paraplegics humanely; why not do the same for the sexual basket cases?

R. M. Bentley
Signal Hill, California

SIN IN ST. PAUL

Your readers might be amused, and appalled, by the outbreak of morality that our city government has been undergoing for more than a year. According to St. Paul's Assistant Corporation Counsel Daniel Klas, it began when he received a complaint from a woman about alleged pornography for sale at the local Wabasha bookstore. That was in April 1967. In July, the police raided the store and carried away eight large bags full of books and magazines. The store's co-owner, Robert Carlson, was subsequently indicted for selling six obscene photographs to a plainclothesman two days before the raid. Carlson's trial was set for August 21; but without waiting for the trial, the police raided the store again on August 3, once more seizing eight bags of literary matter. When the trial on the original obscene-photo charge came to a close in October, the judge ruled that the photos were not obscene by U. S. Supreme Court standards; therefore, Carlson was found not guilty. A few weeks later, his second trial again ended in victory for the bookstore, when the court ruled that police had entered the premises illegally. The police thereupon arrested Carlson's partner, Joseph S. Lee, for selling an obscene book to a detective. And so it has gone: arrest after arrest, court dismissal after court dismissal. Finally, after no fewer than nine such arrests, the city scored four obscenity convictions (two currently being appealed).

God knows how many tons of books and magazines have been seized in these raids, how much money in legal fees this has cost the store's owners and how many man-hours of policework and

FORUM NEWSFRONT

a survey of events related to issues raised by "the playboy philosophy"

JAIL FOR BLASPHEMY

WESTMINSTER, MARYLAND—A 20-year-old Army veteran with a wife and infant daughter served a 30-day jail term for "taking the Lord's name in vain in a public place." Police officers testified that when they approached the young man after a scuffle to arrest him for disorderly conduct, he yelled, "Take your goddamn hands off me." He was charged with "shouting profanities and using the Lord's name in vain." The sentence was meted out under a Maryland blasphemy law that predates the U. S. Constitution, having been enacted by the Lord Proprietor of Maryland in 1723. Originally the law called for a first offender to be "bored through the tongue," a second offender to be branded on the forehead with the letter "B" and a third offender to be "put to death without benefit of clergy." In 1819, the Maryland legislature softened the penalties but let the law stand. Offering a justification even more obscure than the statute itself, the judge said: "Sometimes an obscure law like this is the only way we have to solve some of these problems."

TAKE A GIANT STEP

ROME—The Roman Catholic Church is considering a reversal of its condemnation of the astronomer Galileo Galilei, found guilty of heresy by the Holy Inquisition in 1633. Although Galileo's teachings were specifically declared false in the strongest language possible—the Inquisitors stating that "the first proposition, that the sun is the center and does not revolve about the earth, is foolish, absurd, false in theology and heretical, because expressly contrary to Holy Scripture" and that "the second proposition, that the earth is not the center but revolves about the sun, is absurd, false in philosophy and, from a theological point of view at least, opposed to the true faith"—the Church recanted in 1820 and accepted the new astronomy. Galileo himself, however, has remained under a cloud for his sins of arrogance and disobedience. A new trial for the archheretic will take place soon, and hints dropped by the Vatican indicate that the stubborn old scientist might finally be forgiven for believing what he saw in his telescope rather than what he read in the Holy Scripture.

WORDCRIME

WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS—English anthropologist Sir James Frazer—who once explained the belief in magic spells and curses by asserting that "savages" are "unable to discriminate clearly between words and things"—would have

been amused, and perhaps amazed, at the uproar in Wellesley when high school officials and the Wellesley Committee on Racism staged "The Slave," a drama of racial tensions by black poet LeRoi Jones. Eight faculty members were arrested by the police after the performance of the play, which contained several words under taboo by local shamans; and a school meeting, called to discuss the case, broke up in shambles when a 17-year-old student who uttered one of the forbidden words in a speech opposing censorship was promptly busted himself. A subsequent attempt to restage the play at the Wellesley library was prevented by the board of selectmen, who voted unanimously to ban the production or reading of the drama in any Wellesley public building. The selectmen said they acted in the interest of "public safety and welfare."

UP WITH MINISKIRTS

That short shift, the miniskirt, is giving short shrift to a pair of highly dissimilar laws. In Britain, girls who buy minis don't have to pay a 12½ percent purchase tax imposed on skirts by British law. The regulations define a skirt less than 24 inches in length as a child's garment, not taxable; and as anyone with an eye for measurements can see, the anything-but-childish minis fall into that tax-free category. In New Jersey, a county court judge ruled unconstitutional an ordinance under which a man was arrested for wearing a miniskirt on the main street of an oceanside resort town. The law prohibited a person's wearing clothing "not belonging to his or her sex," but the judge agreed with the defense lawyer's contention that "the city cannot dictate what a person can or cannot wear. . . . There are a substantial [number] of women wearing men's clothes and dungarees."

STRIP TEACH

FLINT, MICHIGAN—The board of education of a Flint suburb ruled that it would not fire a young lady who reportedly removed all her clothing before an all-girl junior high school sex-education class. The action, intended to illustrate a point under discussion, provoked some parents to demand that the girl and her principal be fired. However, the school-board president declared that the teacher's intentions were "in the best interests of her students," and the case, not the teacher, was dismissed.

NUDISM VS. PRUDISM

NEW YORK—Anthropologist Margaret Mead has endorsed limited nudism as a possible antidote to the shame and anx-

ity that characterize American attitudes toward the body. In an article in Redbook, Miss Mead suggests that the acceptance of nudity in appropriate social situations such as swimming and sunbathing might be a means by which "everyone could learn relaxed acceptance of the human body as it really is." She said that "this could mean a reduction in puritanism and prudery that would ultimately lead to a decrease in neuroses and certain kinds of crime."

At the same time, Miss Mead noted that nudism as "officially" practiced in this country generally involves very explicit rules and taboos; e.g., against touching and body contact; thus, freedom is purchased at the expense of the ability to express affection in public. She also pointed out that in place of Victorian obsessive prudery, today's culture has substituted an emphasis on exhibitionism and transparency that goes beyond dress to such manifestations as picture windows, transparent office-building walls, plastic chairs and the view of inner organs given us in museum-exhibit transparent women. In her opinion, the ideal society would be one in which the body was neither hidden nor flaunted, simply accepted, and in which we had "both freedom from prudery and the freedom to express our feelings."

FAILURE OF FORCED MARRIAGES

LOS ANGELES—Psychiatrist B. T. Mead urges that single girls who get pregnant should not marry the father, on the grounds that such marriages usually fail. Quoted in the New York Post, Dr. Mead states that forced marriages seldom last longer than "two or three or four years" and that the baby has a much better chance of happiness if the mother bears him out of wedlock and offers him for adoption. "A family that wants a child," Mead stated, "is much more likely to give it what it needs than a family that was created just because the baby was on the way." Since the onus of having a child out of wedlock has decreased in recent decades, Dr. Mead suggests that young women "in trouble" should seriously consider this alternative.

POLICE WITHOUT GUNS

BOSTON—Sheriff John Sears of Suffolk County has ordered his 200 deputies to lay down their guns in the hope of creating an American "prototype of a peacekeeping force that relies on anything but weapons." Following the practice of the English police, Sheriff Sears says that his men will be allowed to go armed only on "rare" occasions. "Frankly, I don't believe that weapons are necessary," he told the press, adding that the deputies will spend enough time on the shooting range to be expert marksmen in the special cases when they need pistols.

VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

WASHINGTON, D. C.—The United States ranks 40th in the world on a collective violence scale developed by Dr. Ted R. Gurr, an assistant professor of politics at Princeton University. Dr. Gurr's scale measures such variables as the proportion of the population taking part in the violence, the number of casualties and the relative duration of the conflict. The nations of Latin America, Asia and Africa lead the world in all these respects; the United States does, however, rank first in collective violence among the world's most economically advanced nations. Dr. Gurr added that a common factor in violence-prone nations "is the existence of minority groups or the presence of a class society."

ALCOHOL AND ACCIDENTS

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY—Rutgers University's Center of Alcohol Studies has published a report on drinking and driving that indicates that a person who drinks moderately is no more likely to get involved in an accident than is a sober driver. The real danger of accidents caused by drinking, the report states, arises in the case of alcoholics. A five-year study of drinking and highway accidents showed that liquor causes accidents only when it reaches a concentration in the blood of one tenth of one percent—a level that would require at least one drink every ten minutes for an hour. These facts suggest, the report concluded, that campaigns to end alcohol-caused accidents should be aimed at the "problem" rather than the social drinker.

ROCKY VETOES POT BILL

ALBANY, NEW YORK—Reversing his previous tendency to escalate the penalties for use of marijuana, Governor Nelson Rockefeller has vetoed the harshest antipot bill ever passed by the New York legislature. In 1966, it was Rockefeller himself who recommended raising the maximum penalty for selling grass to minors from 15 years' imprisonment to 20 years'; and in 1967, the governor approved the legislature's further increase of the maximum penalty to 25 years. This year, however, the solons in Albany decided to raise the maximum to life imprisonment. Rockefeller balked, quoting opposition to the bill by various law-enforcement officials, including New York City District Attorney Frank Hogan, and pronounced the new law "absurd." Since "sale" in the New York narcotic laws means to "sell, exchange, give or dispose of," the bill could have resulted in life imprisonment for a college student who gave a single marijuana cigarette to a friend. Apparently, the governor felt that 25 years is sufficient for such a heinous crime.

of courtroom time have been wasted. Three books have been found obscene; the store still has thousands of others in stock. "Calculating roughly," Dave Hill, a local reporter, wrote, "it will take about 10,000 years to put [Wabasha bookstore] out of business at the snail's pace at which the war is now progressing in the courts." When the *Minneapolis Morning Tribune* suggested editorially that police time might better be devoted to the 4000 burglaries that occurred in St. Paul last year, an irate clergyman wrote to them: "These other crimes will be small, indeed, in comparison with the huge destruction that this smut literature will cause over a long period of time." Recently, a local eccentric entered the long-suffering bookstore and began disrupting business by throwing the books off the tables onto the floor. Now the Y.M.C.A., which holds the lease on the store, has announced that the lease is terminated and the premises will have to be vacated, "because of circumstances which have recently come to the attention of the Y.M.C.A.," and the city is attempting to have the store closed permanently as "a public nuisance."

If Saint Paul was actually the first Puritan, as historians suggest, then this town is well named.

(Name withheld by request)
St. Paul, Minnesota

SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE

The following is an excerpt of an article that appeared in the *San Diego Evening Tribune*:

Three strippers from the Hollywood Theater, 314 F Street, told police a partially undressed man approached them at 1:40 A.M. yesterday as they were window-shopping on their way home from work. They said the suspect approached them as they were standing on the sidewalk in the 1300 block of Fifth Avenue. They called police, who arrested the man, 25, in the 500 block of Ash Street. He was taken to city jail in connection with indecent exposure, a violation of the state Penal Code.

The moral of this story is that if you show it off for pay on a lighted stage, it is legal; but if you show it off for free, you get arrested. Apparently, turnabout is not fair play.

Robert G. Kaplan, Ph.D.
Consulting Psychologist
San Diego, California

SINE QUA NON

I find it increasingly difficult to preach meaningful sermons to my congregation, to prepare relevant lectures for my college students or to write on contemporary issues without reference to PLAYBOY.

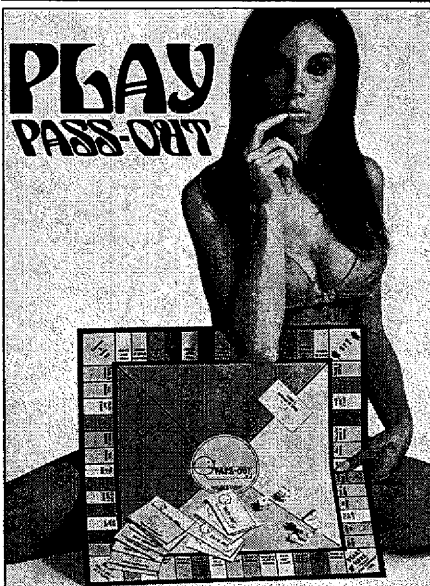
Rabbi Reeve R. Brenner
Princeton, New Jersey



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AGAINST RELIGION

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PLAYBOY's influence, however, is spreading rather slowly and will continue to do so, because you attack only the symptoms and neglect the disease. The disease is religion. Supernatural beliefs have been the cause of many wars and presently remain a major obstacle to East-West reconciliation; they have retarded science, education and the full development of man; they require us to reproduce more babies than we can feed; they spread hate instead of love.

PLAYBOY will make its most progressive assertion when it "exposes" religion, the greatest fraud ever perpetrated.

Gerard Martin
Forestville, Maryland

"CHRISTIAN" COLLEGES

I am a minister at a secular university, Purdue, where I find the atmosphere much more honest and congenial than at the so-called Christian college where I formerly served as chaplain. My experience there confirmed the impressions of the unfortunate girl whose dean virtually consigned her to hell without a hearing, on the basis of rumors that the girl was a Lesbian (*The Playboy Forum*, July). That such a place can cloak bigotry, hostility toward sex, contempt and injustice for the accused and a total lack of respect for individual freedom under the label "Christian" is appalling, if not incomprehensible.

The Rev. H. Richard Rasmusson
University Presbyterian
Church (All Student)
West Lafayette, Indiana

ANOTHER OTHER WOMAN

Three cheers for the "other woman" who replied in the June *Playboy Forum* to the injured wives of America. I, too, am an other woman and I know that my man's wife resents me. But I would like her to try to put herself in my place for a minute.

I am not really very different from her. But has she ever really been lonesome for him? Has she ever waited for the phone to ring, though it didn't because he couldn't get away? (I worry about him as much as she does, when he is away from me.) Has she ever been

awake at two A.M. feeling so alone that she ached inside? Has she ever considered how little of him I actually have? My life consists of a daily phone call and a few hours a week with him. How does that compare with what she has? Has she ever considered what I must give up in this situation? I have sacrificed the right to a home and a family and the right to turn to him for comfort when I'm upset or sick. I cannot express any personal needs nor make any claims on him, nor even expect him to acknowledge me in public with more than a nod.

I would gladly give half my remaining life to trade places with her. But if things were turned around, would she play my role? I think not; she could never put his needs and desires ahead of her own. She is too busy pushing him and planning his life to consider what goes on inside him or to listen to his problems and dreams. I am far less demanding and much more willing to put his happiness first. I will give him all that I can, in all ways, without the luxury of a wedding ring. And for this I am condemned by society.

(Name withheld by request)
St. Louis, Missouri

I have just read "The Other Woman Speaks" (*The Playboy Forum*, June) and I feel the need to say one word to the woman who wrote it: Baloney!

Having been both the offended and the offending party more than once, I feel qualified to speak on this subject. The first time I became pregnant, my husband started cheating immediately. I tried being all the things "the other woman" says American wives are not—"patient, understanding, loyal, devoted, affectionate, available and grateful." It didn't work. He didn't dig pregnant women. Alas, he also didn't dig contraceptives (this was before the pill). Result: I became virtually a brood sow, being impregnated time after time and then rejected for some slim young thing as soon as I began physically to show the pregnancy. After several years of this, I decided that as a person in my own right, I could use some extracurricular activities myself. There was a shortage of single men in our suburb, so my affairs were with married men. I heard the same story from all of them—the story that other woman repeats. I began to wonder if there were that many selfish and stupid wives in the world or if this was just the standard line all philandering husbands use.

Somehow, our marriage staggers along, although we have been on the verge of divorce countless times. Meanwhile, the chief victims are our innocent children. I am trying to hold the family together for their sake, not for the "consumer goodies" that the other woman claims hypnotize us. And, unlike her, I am not proud of my adulterous carryings-on; I

would much rather be faithful and monogamous. But I am not going to sit home biting my nails in frustration while my husband is out bouncing some young chick in a cheap motel.

(Name and address withheld by request)

OTHER WOMAN'S COMPENSATION

The June *Playboy Forum* letter from "the other woman" was very moving. But, without being patronizing or expressing moralistic disapproval, I would like to know what she gains from what must be one of the most self-destructive of human relationships. How can she tolerate such a relationship, knowing that it must end unhappily? How does she put up with the lack of freedom resulting from the constant need for secrecy? In short, she makes it clear in her letter what she gives to the relationship, but how can a woman as intelligent and as articulate as she seems to be dedicate a large part of her life to masochism?

Mrs. Fay Cooper
London, England

SEX AS COMMUNICATION

As a Methodist pastor, I am constantly expected to uphold the present moral system, which, I feel, prescribes stereotyped behavior, labels conduct mechanically and is motivated by fear, unnecessary guilt and conformism. Our concept of sexuality needs to be redefined; I believe that sex is an instrument for communication. What is communicated is worth, sensitivity, affection and approval; these things add up to love. Sex is a dialog in which a male and a female exalt each other's person to the maximum. It is most enjoyed when it is spontaneous, when coercion, smooth talk and guilt are absent, when there is only the feeling of joyful fulfillment. So understood, this relationship can be universally approved for all who want to express love; with our contraceptive devices, there is no reason why its premarital or extramarital forms should be disapproved. Regarding extramarital sex, it is wrong to think that going to bed with someone other than one's spouse in any way damages the marital relationship; this would be the same as saying that a man should not talk to any woman other than his wife. Extramarital sexual communication harms marriage no more than does extramarital verbal communication. It is time we freed our understanding of marriage from its property-rights attitude. It is time a number of our penal laws were revised. It is time we updated our sexual ethics to a level that enriches human life.

(Name withheld by request)
Syracuse, New York

TRIAL MARRIAGE PLAN

The high number of divorces in this country is a national tragedy and something ought to be done about it. The surest way to cut down the number of
(continued on page 180)



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PLAYBOY FORUM (continued from page 71)

divorces is to reduce the number of marriages (since no unwed couple has ever succeeded in obtaining a bona fide divorce).

I propose that a law be passed preventing any couple from marrying before living together for at least one year. As it is difficult to legislate mores, I propose also that clergymen support such action by denouncing marriage prior to a year's cohabitation as a mortal sin.

This solution not only would de-escalate divorce but also would radically reduce the disrespect of the sanctity of marriage exhibited whenever two virtual strangers are permitted to wed. For, regardless of how long the courtship, two people who wed prior to living together are, at the time of their marital union, little more than strangers.

Before technological advances made possible adequate safeguards against unwanted pregnancy and V. D., there was some justification for premarital chastity. Today, however, thanks to the discoveries

of science, no good excuse remains for permitting people who hardly know each other to wed.

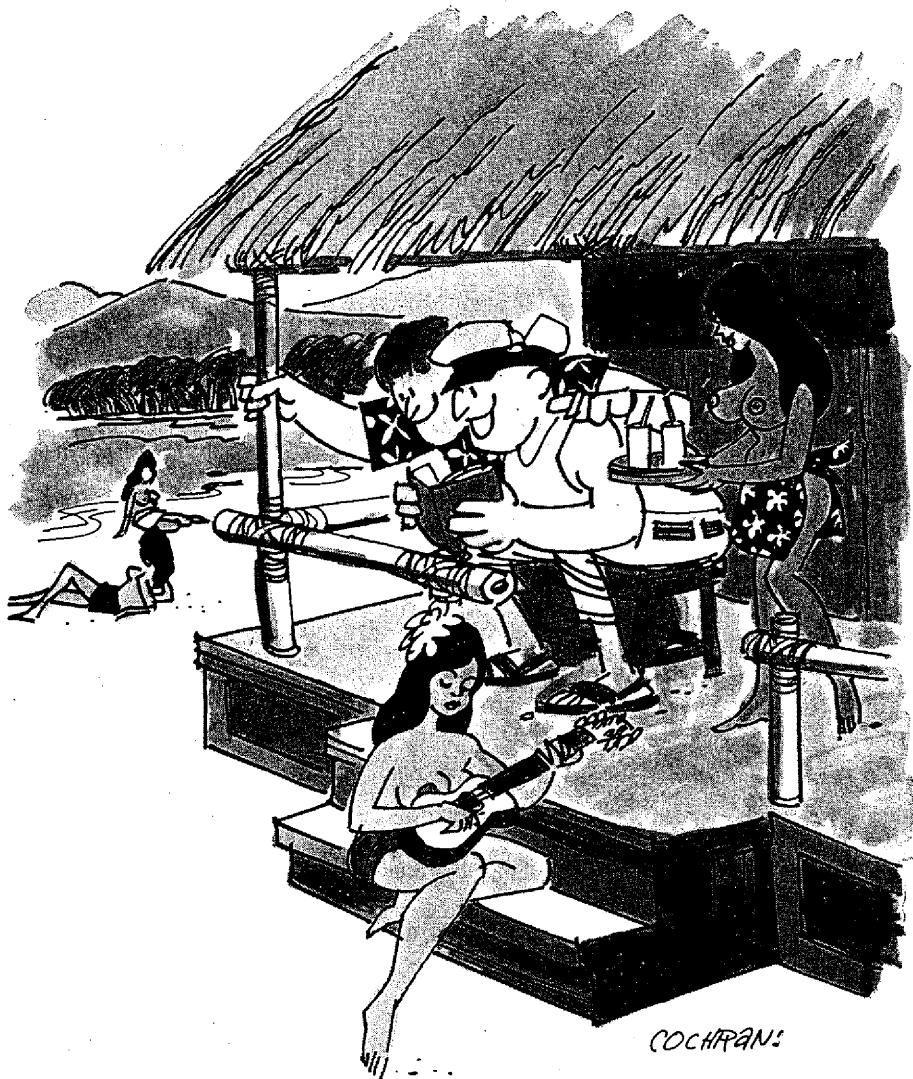
Now that sociologists justly worry about the world overpopulating itself, a further advantage of this new law becomes clear—it would reduce the birth rate by delaying the date of, and reducing the rate of, marriage.

Lawrence La Fave, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Sociology
Indiana State University
Terre Haute, Indiana

CONTRACEPTION WITH ZIP

A religious organization doesn't get to be one of the oldest in the world without a high degree of cleverness; and, despite the Pope's prohibitive attitude toward birth control, the Catholic Church is no exception. Witness this article I read recently in the Jesuit magazine *America*:

Royal Institute for the Study of Sex and Suicide (Gonadsbërge, Sweden)



"Slowly she began to unbutton her blouse. . . ."

—A final solution to the vexing problem of birth control among Catholics appeared imminent today with the announcement of the development, by two Swedish scientists, of a new pill called ZIP (short for Zipchloroxylinic acid, the chemical foundation of the drug). ZIP, according to its discoverers, replaces the normal sexual urge in human beings with an irresistible urge to indulge in violent exercise. It generally manifests itself in a desire to run around objects (e.g., buildings, gymnasiums, ball diamonds, etc.), although it may take a variety of mutant forms (e.g., the desire to do push-ups, chin oneself, chop wood, do somersaults or climb poles), depending on the personality and background of the individual.

"The only contraindication so far," said Dr. Lars Svetsaks, co-discoverer of the pill, "is the difficulty in determining individual dosage. The theory, of course, is that the person exercises until he loses all desire to do anything but drop over. Unfortunately, a few of our subjects with overdeveloped sexual appetites have dropped dead from overexertion. This, of course, is rather disconcerting to the researcher. It is important, therefore, that ZIP be administered only under the watchful eye of the physician. Our control groups indicate not a single pregnancy among 1500 ZIP users over a period of a year. A side benefit is the development of several runners who should set new records in the forthcoming Olympic games. Sweden will no doubt dominate all long-distance events. It's really too bad they don't have events in somersaulting and pole climbing. We'd win those, too. . . ."

Catholic theologians who have been consulted stated that they could see no conflict between ZIP and traditional Catholic doctrine. "We've always told young people to take a few turns around the gym whenever they . . . ah . . . whenever the . . . ah . . . pressure builds up," said one eminent spokesman. "As far as I can see, this is just scientific verification of one of our basic teachings. One never ceases to marvel at how science ultimately verifies the ancient truths."

Swift approval of ZIP is expected from the Vatican, although certain conservative Catholic sources have already labeled the use of the drug as "race suicide" and a direct contradiction of the command to go forth, increase and multiply.

One observer, however, hailed ZIP as the final solution to the

problem of priests who want to get married. "Won't hurt their waistlines, either," he winked.

This highly amusing put-on is the product of the satirical (dare I say fertile?) brain of P. J. Laux, director of the Canisius College library.

Walter Fidman
Wilmington, Delaware

REPEAL ALL ABORTION LAWS

We must put an end to *all* abortion laws. Liberalization is insufficient, especially when one considers that total repeal of abortion laws would produce the following benefits:

The increased number of abortion requests would make the medical community aware of the need for extensive contraception and sterilization programs, and this long-standing need would at last be responded to.

Illegal abortions would almost disappear. Most abortions would be performed in hospitals that, by their standards of safety, show proper regard for "the sanctity of human life."

The status of women would be improved, because each would be allowed to regulate her own bodily functions. (No woman should have to plead a case to obtain an abortion.)

Mental health would improve, because sane attitudes toward sex would evolve as a result of lessened anxiety about unwanted pregnancy.

Poverty would diminish, since families would be smaller and better suited to their incomes. An important side benefit would be happier homes.

The era of *wanted* children would arrive at last. Almost every child would be planned and joyfully anticipated.

Appreciable amounts of public funds would be saved, because there would be less need to wage war on poverty and to provide welfare support.

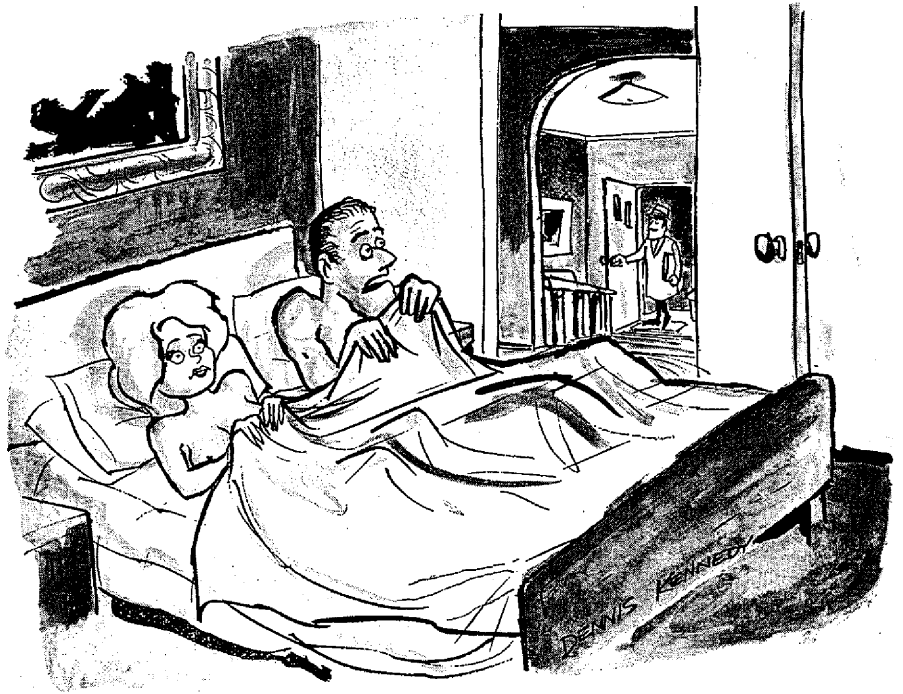
As these primary results spread their beneficial effect throughout our society, the general rise in happiness would be incalculable. Is it any wonder that so many physicians and clergymen favor the complete repeal of abortion laws?

H. B. Munson, M. D.
Rapid City, South Dakota

CAPOTE AND THE WARREN REPORT

Surprise, surprise! Just a few short months ago, in his March interview, Truman Capote told *PLAYBOY*, "The Warren Report is correct. Oswald, acting alone, killed the President. And that's it." Capote, like Dwight MacDonal before him, imperiously said "the last word on the Warren Report," only to develop a bad case of hiccups upon suddenly swallowing his final verdict.

Capote now acknowledges that the Dallas assassination may have been a conspiracy, after all. According to Jack Gould, who in June in his *New York*



"God, Gloria! It's my husband!"

Times TV column described Capote's appearance on the Johnny Carson show: "Mr. Capote adroitly argued that there was a possibility all three assassinations were part of one large conspiracy. . . . Mr. Capote threw out the conspiratorial concept and then deftly backtracked that it might not be so." He was moved to reverse himself as to the sacrosanctity of the Warren Report by the appalling assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Senator Robert F. Kennedy, *not* by his examination of the official records of the Warren Commission.

Capote's change of heart is uninformed, no less than was his earlier orthodoxy, and evidences merely the same disdain for fact and evidence. I am therefore not overjoyed by the hint of his capitulation to the camp of the critics of the Warren Report. Nor have I formed an opinion about the two latest assassinations, since the evidence remains fragmentary and uncertain.

I would only point out that it would be graceful if Mr. Capote, having advanced to the point of conceding the possibility of conspiracy in the Dallas assassination, would now retract his description of some of the critics of the Warren Report as "a bunch of vultures [that] has discovered that pecking at the carrion of a dead President is an easy way to make a living." Sauce for the goose is, after all, sauce for the vulture.

Sylvia Meagher
New York, New York

Mrs. Meagher is the author of "Subject Index to the Warren Report and Hearings & Exhibits" and "Accessories

After the Fact: The Warren Commission, the Authorities and the Report," two widely acclaimed studies of the "Report of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy."

COURT RULINGS AND THE POLICE

We challenge the assertion of Police Chief Edward S. Kreins (*The Playboy Forum*, April) that U. S. Supreme Court decisions have shackled law enforcement. Police authorities of several major cities agree that recent decisions of the Court have not reduced the conviction rate. Note that the FBI, which had to work with these restrictive rules years before the states' laws were changed, has a conviction rate of over 90 percent.

Where Court decisions have had any effect on law enforcement, the effect has been good. In Detroit in 1966, the police started warning murder suspects of their legal rights, as required by the *Miranda* decision. There were actually more confessions than before, but they were considered essential in only 9.3 percent of the homicide cases—all because of sharper sleuthing before arrest. Former California Governor Edmund Brown states that police are doing better work since the search-and-seizure decisions and that investigations are producing more guilty pleas as a result of this work.

Those few police chiefs who still blame the Supreme Court for lack of police effectiveness are ignoring the real problems—their own inefficiency and their communities' indifference. The policeman of today is often undertrained

and underpaid for the skill required in his profession. He spends two thirds of his time on noncrime duties and half of the arrests he makes each month are for minor crimes, such as drunkenness, vagrancy and loitering, or for harmless breaches of moral statutes against gambling, drug taking and various kinds of sexual activity mentioned in your reply to Chief Kreins. Investigation of major crime occupies few of the policeman's hours.

Shouldn't our law-enforcement leaders contend with the real causes of inefficiency, rather than suggest that we sacrifice essential rights guaranteed by the Constitution?

Thomas McAfee
Stephen H. Snelgrove
Salt Lake City, Utah

GUN CONTROL

Because of the rash of assassinations and attempted killings not only of public officials but also of private citizens in the United States in the past five years, this country needs stronger, much stronger, measures for controlling firearms.

Ultimately, the best idea would be to outlaw guns completely for all private citizens. A gun is nothing but an instrument of death; it is made for nothing else, whether the object destroyed is human or nonhuman. Gone are the times when man had to hunt wild animals for food. Now he hunts for sport, but what kind of sport is it to drop a deer at 500 yards with a high-powered, scope-equipped rifle? The days should also be gone when a man needs a gun to protect himself and his family from enemies; they would be gone if firearms were not equally available to the enemies in question.

By gathering up the millions of guns now held by private citizens in this country and by making the law so stringent as to prevent the acquisition of more firearms, we may possibly prevent hundreds of murders and accidental deaths.

Needless to say, the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy precipitates this plea for action. We did nothing but grieve when President John F. Kennedy was killed; we were shocked again when Malcolm X was killed; we were frightened when Dr. Martin Luther King was killed. Now Senator Kennedy is dead. Our only remaining questions are: How long can this continue? Who will be next?

With local and state governments and the Federal Government working together, we must come up with the very best gun-control program possible. This must be one area in which lobbyists are not allowed to control legislators or to write bills to the detriment of the majority of Americans.

Franklin A. Weston
C. Robert Morgan
Rockaway Park, New York

As a result of the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, the press, the general public and the Government are calling for antigun legislation. Some has been passed and more may follow. This trend is based on blaming crime on the weapon rather than on the criminal who uses it. Guns are merely convenient. If they were not available, the same sick element in our society could do the same tragic work with bombs, knives, poison or other lethal objects.

Gun ownership is a serious crime in many countries. In New York City and in England, gun registration is in force. But has there been a decrease in violent crime in these and other places? No!

Instead of registration, therefore, I feel it would be better to pass legislation declaring the use of any firearm in conjunction with the commission of a crime as an especially serious offense with, perhaps, an automatic doubling of normal punishment. The idea would be to make the criminal use of guns so "expensive" to the criminal that he would return to less lethal weapons, such as clubs, knives or perhaps the latest British rage—acid throwing. Such legislation would get closer to the root of the problem by striking at the one percent who use guns criminally, rather than at the 99 percent of gun owners who are honest, law-abiding citizens.

Dr. R. B. Sanders
University of Nottingham
Nottingham, England

We don't think proposals for firearms control and registration are any more "antigun" than laws requiring automobile registration are "anticar." These mild proposals attempt only to make it more difficult for the immature, deranged or criminal to obtain firearms.

Moreover, we don't agree that effective measures aimed at controlling the availability of guns would fail to reduce the number of killings in America. To say that crime-prevention efforts should be directed not at the weapon but at the criminal who wields it overlooks the fact that the gun is the most effective all-round tool ever devised for individual killing. Bombs, knives, clubs, poison and the like are simply not as easy to use nor as reliably lethal. Chicago police and hospital statistics reveal that an attack with intent to kill is five times more likely to cause death when a gun is used as compared with a knife. According to statistics compiled by the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, between the years 1900 and 1966, guns were used in 269,436 murders (more than half the total murders during that period), 360,217 suicides and 138,265 accidental deaths—a grand and inglorious total of 767,918. Compare this with the 386,000 American troops killed in battle during the same period—a period that included two world wars, the Korean police action and the early part of the Vietnam conflict.

Contrary to your assertions, statistics support the view that regulation of guns does correlate with a comparatively low rate of violent crime. For example, in countries with strict gun-control laws, the death rate from firearms (as well as the over-all homicide rate) is only a fraction of that of the U. S. In England and Wales, the gun death rate is 1/55th of ours; West Germany's is 1/23rd; Japan's, 1/65th; and the Netherlands', 1/90th.

As for New York City, where the state's Sullivan Law requires a police permit for anyone buying or owning a handgun, only 25 percent of homicides are committed by gun, as compared with 72 percent in Dallas and 65.9 percent in Phoenix (where there are virtually no regulations).

You make the iffy assumption that people would turn to other weapons if deprived of guns. In all instances where gun control is strict, however, the over-all murder rate is comparatively low (New York's, for example, is lowest among the ten largest U. S. cities), indicating that there is no mass resort to other weapons when guns are unavailable.

Your idea that penalties for crimes committed with firearms should be stiffer, with the accompanying implication that the 99 percent of "honest" gun owners do not need regulations, reflects the myth circulated by organized opponents of gun control—that most gun murders are committed by armed criminals. The fact is that 80 percent of the murders committed in the U. S. are perpetrated by normally law-abiding citizens. These killings occur between friends, neighbors and family members. Thus, the type of legislation you propose would relate only to a relatively small percentage of potential homicides. And it might not have a great effect on them, at that, since—according to modern criminologists—the threat of punishment does not significantly deter violent crimes.

Those who support gun-control legislation do not "blame" the weapon; they recognize that the easy availability of the weapon makes possible carnage in the U. S. on a scale unknown in other economically advanced countries. The blame for this slaughter lies with those whose shortsightedness puts this weapon into potentially homicidal hands.

"The Playboy Forum" offers the opportunity for an extended dialog between readers and editors of this publication on subjects and issues raised in Hugh M. Hefner's continuing editorial series, "The Playboy Philosophy." Four booklet reprints of "The Playboy Philosophy," including installments 1-7, 8-12, 13-18 and 19-22, are available at 50¢ per booklet. Address all correspondence on both "Philosophy" and "Forum" to: The Playboy Forum, Playboy Building, 919 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60611.

