



★ SCREWED ★

SAY GOOD-BYE TO YOUR SEX LIFE
IF THINGS GO SOUTH IN NOVEMBER

BY NANCY L. COHEN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEVI BROWN

YOUR SEX LIFE IS DESTROYING AMERICA. That's according to Iowa Republican Steve King, who took to the floor of the House last summer to explain that sex for pleasure—instead of for creating babies—would make Americans extinct. A year later, his colleague Mike Kelly called a press conference to sound the alarm that affordable birth control was a plot to destroy the nation. “I know in your mind you can think of times when America was attacked. One is December 7. That’s Pearl Harbor day. The other is September 11.... I want you to remember August 1, 2012”—the day a mandate went into effect requiring health insurers to provide free contraception coverage. “That is a date that will live in infamy,” the representative from Pennsylvania declaimed on the steps of Congress, his face reddening as he rallied fellow patriots to join his fight. “The question is, if not us, who? If not now, when? It is our turn.” King and Kelly weren’t alone.

From the Gulf Coast to the Great Lakes and the Great Plains, heartland Republicans pushed nearly a thousand laws to restrict access to contraception and abortion. The Tennessee senate took up the dangers of “gateway sexual activity,” while the Texas GOP officially declared that pornography was rending the “fabric of society.” In one orgy of delirium, Republicans revealed that sexual freedom itself was on their chopping block.

Welcome to the war on your sex life.

If you’re reading this magazine, it’s a safe bet you take it for granted that you can have sex with just about anyone you desire, and in just about any manner you desire. You likely believe you should be allowed to read what you want and have children when you choose. But it wasn’t so long ago when the opposite was true, when the sex life you enjoy today was risky, dangerous and, in many situations, completely illegal. When Willard Mitt Romney entered high school, in 1961, birth control was illegal in some states, abortion was illegal except in rare cases, sodomy—often including oral sex—was a crime in every state and young single women had to lie to get the pill.

Is America going back to those days? That depends on what happens in November.

IT'S THE SEX, STUPID

The average American woman will have sex at least 1,880 times during her fertile years. Ninety-nine percent of women who have ever had sex have used birth control. Considering those figures, making contraception universally accessible makes sense. So in January 2012, the Obama administration ruled that under health care reform, all FDA-approved forms of birth control and sterilization—including condoms, the pill and the morning-after pill—must be provided by health insurers free of extra charge as part of the basic health care package.

The thought of that much sex drove Republican politicians into a self-righteous froth. Rick Santorum, who was already on record calling contraception “a license to do things in a sexual realm that is counter to how things are supposed to be,” whipped the religious right into a frenzy and surged in the GOP presidential polls. With Santorum in hot pursuit, Romney shamelessly plunged into the anti-birth-control hysteria. The faltering front-runner, whose great-grandfather had self-exiled to Mexico to escape arrest for polygamy, charged that the birth control mandate amounted to the “most serious assault” on “religious liberty” in generations. In a few deft pirouettes to the far right, Romney stole Santorum’s momentum and rode the Republican sex panic to victory.

On Capitol Hill, the GOP-controlled House of Representatives staged hearings about the birth control regulation that featured an all-male panel of celibates and religious authorities. Republicans in the Senate voted in favor of giving employers the right to eliminate birth control from their employees’ insurance plan based on a vague “moral objection.” Copycat anticontraception bills proliferated in Republican-ruled statehouses across the nation. One New Hampshire lawmaker recommended that married couples practice abstinence until they are ready for children. Arizona’s bill included a show-me-your-birth-control-papers-please provision, which would have allowed your girlfriend’s boss to fire her for having sex outside of marriage.

If a President Romney and his Republican comrades get their way, contraception will be less accessible, more expensive and, for some women, completely out of reach. Romney has vowed that he will abolish the contraception mandate. (That is, if he can’t repeal health care reform.) Five million women get their birth control through Title X, the federal family-planning program that Romney and his running mate, Paul Ryan, have promised to eliminate. Romney says he’ll get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood, and he plans to reinstate a George W. Bush executive order that gave anyone working in a pharmacy the right to claim that birth control violates their conscience, allowing the worker to refuse to fill a prescription or even ring up a condom sale in the supermarket checkout line. Under a President Romney, your sex life gets a lot more complicated.

If for nothing else, we have Obamacare to thank for pulling back the curtain to reveal the sex police standing at the levers of the GOP machine. By the end of the Republicans’ birth control bender, it had become clear that casual sex itself was

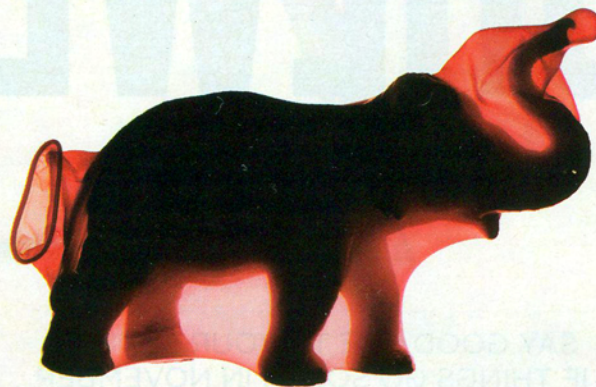
their target. It might sound outlandish, but the path they are on could lead to eliminating access to forms of birth control like condoms. If they succeed, our ability to control when and if we have children—a constitutionally protected right—goes with it. But to ban birth control, Romney first has to fulfill his other promise: to outlaw abortion.

THE WAR ON WOMEN—AND YOU

A woman’s constitutional right to an abortion rests on a tenuous Supreme Court majority in favor of upholding *Roe v. Wade*. One retirement among the pro-choice justices while Romney is president and the right to a legal abortion is gone. The Court’s staunchest advocate of personal freedom and reproductive rights, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, is also its oldest member. As a 79-year-old cancer survivor, she may not be able to serve through two terms of a Romney presidency.

Priority number one on Romney’s Supreme Court agenda

is to overturn *Roe*. He has said the decision was “one of the darkest moments in Supreme Court history.” He has speculated, “If we had justices like Roberts, Alito, Thomas and Scalia, and more justices like that,” *Roe* would be overturned, and he holds up those staunch conservatives as models for the kind of justice he would appoint. The 2012 Republican Party platform calls for a U.S. constitutional amendment to ban abortion even in cases of incest, rape and threat to the life of the mother. Romney himself has signed on to such extreme positions as outlawing abortion for rape victims and denying them emergency contraception. Ryan, a heartbeat from the Oval Office, believes that



By the end of the Republicans’ birth control bender, it had become clear that casual sex itself was their target.

doctors who perform abortions to save a woman’s life should be prosecuted. Ryan’s message to a woman, say a rape victim, who has an abortion? “If it’s illegal, it’s illegal.”

Should Romney have the opportunity to appoint a Supreme Court justice, *Roe* will without question be overturned. With that, Americans could in the near future face laws that restrict and even outright ban birth control. Romney disavows any interest in outlawing contraception, yet his own actions could set in motion a domino effect that ends in that result.

Here some legal background is necessary. In *Roe*, the Court found that the right to an abortion fell within the right to privacy, first articulated in 1965 in *Griswold v. Connecticut*, the landmark case in which the Court invalidated state bans on birth control for married couples. When *Griswold*’s right to privacy and birth control was extended to single people (in 1972), the Supreme Court essentially said that your sexual freedom is a constitutional right, up there with your right to free speech, a free press and religious liberty. So naturally there is little that gets religious nuts more incensed than the right to privacy. They’re praying for *Griswold* to be struck down with *Roe*. Asked about *Griswold*, Romney—a Harvard-educated lawyer—said, “I don’t believe they decided that correctly.”

If *Griswold* goes, as it well might when a Romney Supreme Court overturns *Roe*, nothing stands in the way, constitutionally, of laws against birth control. The question then becomes, would lawmakers dare? At a national level, (continued on page 139)

Yowden. "Like all good townsfolk."

The hack Roderick Loose was at the cottage door, knocking, and then we saw him disappear into the lighted place.

"Didn't you think, Mr. Blinken, that I was onto you? How you'd methodically gone down the list of hated judges and was knocking them off one by one and that Mr. Melbourne Yeastie, who was once mayor of Saddleshire, would be next on your murderous agenda?"

"I came to warn him," I said.

"Well, let's go in then and warn him," the constable said, leading me into the neat little domicile.

"Out back, Yowden," the newsman Roderick Loose called. Suddenly there was a great noise on the roof as if there was a row in the attic, but such a house did not have an attic and I could smell horses beyond ours and I heard that little yelp that Far Cry makes when he's working. Suddenly, I knew all about it.

We went into the back garden and found Mr. Melbourne Yeastie flat on the stone terrace, glowing white but quite dead. The mark on his neck was glorious, red and raised, and seeing it this way, I could discern the tooth marks.

"He's still warm," Roderick said.

"How did you do this?" Constable Oldchair asked me. "By what magic? Just tell me how."

"I didn't do anything," I told him. "I was with you."

"You applied your exsanguinating machine and killed Mr. Yeastie."

"I exsanguinated no one," I said. "Ever." I turned to the scribbler Roderick Loose and told him: "Write that down." After the first casualty Roderick had ceased asking people how to spell exsanguinated.

"Well, he's been exsanguinated."

"He certainly has," I agreed. "But I rode over the hill to warn him."

Oldchair folded his arms. "I guess you did," he said. "But what on earth has happened here?" The constable now looked like an actor in a silent comedy, where a house has fallen in and the problem of putting it back up has him vexed anew. I could see where Mr. Yeastie had been having his soup at the wooden table in his little kitchen when he got up thinking he heard horses in his garden. It would have been a cruel surprise to see those four equine faces when he opened the door and then all those teeth.

Now the dark air above us was empty and I knew we were safe. The horses had flown back to their sorceress and were eating fresh oats in their warm barn, a late meal to go with their morbid cordial.

This is when I saw a sheaf of blue betting slips sticking out of Roderick Loose's ratty notebook and another packet of the things protruding from the constable's riding jacket pocket.

I pointed. "Have you bet on Stirrupshire?" I asked.

"Of course," Yowden said to me.

"Good," I said. "Keep those tickets. Tomorrow night at the Fetlock I have a powerful feeling that you'll be buying."

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certainly not. But if you're single and live in the Bible Belt, you might want to start laying in supplies.

In red states, it's a near certainty that Republican politicians will impose onerous regulations on birth control. Expect insurers to drop contraception coverage to avoid the harassment of antisex bureaucrats combing through their balance sheets. Don't expect men and women under the age of 18 to be able to buy condoms legally or get a prescription for hormonal birth control. Laws restricting access to contraception for unmarried adults could even be passed. Think that is out of the question? The 2010 Texas Republican Party platform called for raising the age of sexual consent to 18. The Utah state criminal code

defines "fornication"—that is, sex between single people—as a Class B misdemeanor.

More proof that the attack on abortion is a war on birth control comes from the personhood movement—the new frontier of the anti-abortion religious right. Personhood initiatives define "life" as beginning at fertilization—the moment the sperm hits the egg. As the 2012 Minnesota Republican Party platform puts it, an individual's inalienable right to life begins "when the DNA of Man-kind is joined." Personhood advocates falsely claim that hormonal contraception and the IUD work as forms of abortion. Combine these two notions—no abortion after "life" begins and birth control is abortion—and you end up with abortion bans that treat taking the pill as tantamount to murder.

The Romney-Ryan ticket and the GOP platform have endorsed the goals of the



"Personally, I didn't think she rated more than a B-minus."



personhood movement. Romney said, a year ago on Mike Huckabee's Fox News show, that he "absolutely" supports constitutional amendments defining life as beginning at conception. Often Romney parrots the far right's talking point that "the pill kills" when he calls contraception and the morning-after pill "abortive pills." Ryan has pushed an even more aggressive agenda by repeatedly partnering with Todd Akin, the representative from Missouri who made headlines on the eve of the Republican National Convention with his comments about "legitimate rape." The duo co-sponsored a federal personhood bill, which said, "The life of each human being begins with fertilization, cloning or its functional equivalent... at which time every human being shall have all the legal and constitutional attributes and privileges of personhood." The 2012 GOP platform calls for a human life amendment, that is, a personhood amendment, to the U.S. Constitution.

Are Romney, Ryan and the GOP gunning for your birth control? You betcha.

★★★ THE DEATH OF CASUAL SEX

Many people presume that Romney, epic flip-flopper that he is, didn't mean anything he said during the GOP primary to swat down the wild-eyed fanatics like Michele Bachmann, Newt Gingrich, Rick Perry and Rick Santorum. They're trusting that the candidate who once swore to Massachusetts voters that he was pro-choice and pro-gay rights is the real McCoy.

That's a comforting fairy tale but a dangerous one.

The evidence from Romney's years as governor—a subject he religiously avoids talking about—shows him to be anything but moderate. Governor Romney reneged on just about every campaign promise he had made to women and gays about sexual rights, personal freedom and privacy. Romney wouldn't even protect a rape victim from having to bear the child of her rapist; he vetoed a bill requiring hospitals to give emergency contraception to rape victims.

Romney may not present himself as a religious zealot, but the passion-challenged multimillionaire from Bain Capital has sealed himself for eternity to the GOP's sex police. So what could America look like after a few years of a Romney presidency?

To get a preview of what might be in store for you, sexually speaking, take a tour of

today's Republican-ruled lands. Start in our nation's capital, where the House spent one out of every seven days focused on America's lady parts, where Senator Rand Paul tried to attach a "life begins at conception" rider to the National Flood Insurance Program while Florida was bailing out from Tropical Storm Debby. Head north to Wisconsin, home of Paul Ryan, where recall survivor Governor Scott Walker and the GOP legislature defunded Planned Parenthood, ended the state family-planning program and, for good measure, repealed the state's equal-pay-for-women law. Travel through the heartland and over the Rockies into Salt Lake City, where in the shadow of the Mormon Tabernacle a Utah lawmaker defended censorship because saying the word *condom* to students was like encouraging them to "mainline" heroin. End your

was a tyrannical intrusion on American liberty. Meanwhile, a national law requiring women seeking abortions to undergo compulsory transvaginal ultrasounds has gone into effect. The records of their abortions, their sexual partners and the names of their doctors are being stored in a national database.

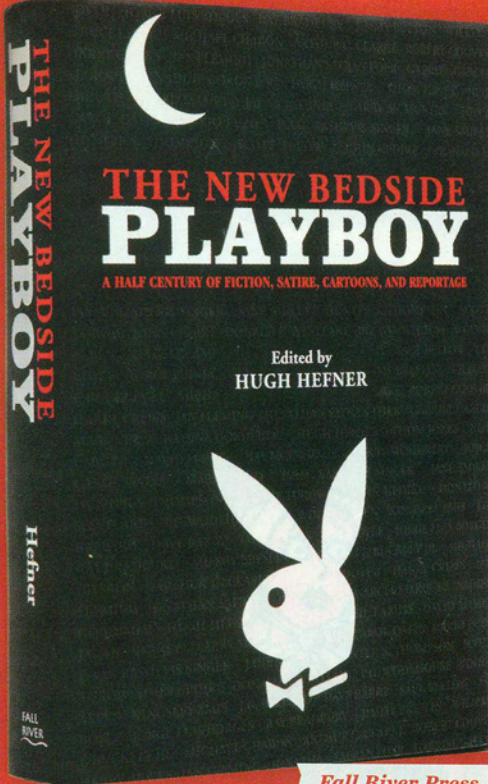
With the constitutional rights to privacy and abortion wiped out, absolutely nothing stands in the way of the antisex crusaders. Birth control has become less like Viagra and more like medical marijuana: expensive and a bit complicated to procure. Few health insurers cover contraception, tube tying or vasectomies anymore; the government paperwork and personhood protests in front of their corporate offices make it too politically costly to attempt. Condoms have disappeared from store shelves in states where laws prohibiting sex outside of marriage have been enacted.

Perhaps President Romney has delivered on an under-the-radar pledge to the Republican base that he made on his first trip down the presidential campaign trail. "We all gotta clean up the water that our kids are swimming in," Romney told a conclave of so-called values voters. "By that I mean the pornography, the drug culture, the violence, the sex, the perversion that bombards them day in and day out. I want to make sure that every new computer sold in this country after I'm president has installed on it a filter to block all pornography and that parents can flick that filter to make sure kids don't see that kind of stuff coming in on their computer." To prove his zeal, he said he wanted "to enforce our obscenity laws."

The Republican Party granted Romney's wish, stating in its 2012 national platform, "Current laws on all forms of pornography and obscenity need to be vigorously enforced."

Now it's 2016. As Americans ready themselves for another presidential election and watch the Rio Olympics, most of the old porn-friendly computers have been sent off to the scrap heap of history. In half the nation abortion is illegal and birth control is rare. The average age of marriage has plummeted to 20. The notion of casual sex is a fantasy, the sexual revolution history. The sexual counter-revolutionaries have won.

Welcome to the future of your sex life. Welcome back to 1950.



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journey in Texas, where the Republican Party officially declared the separation of church and state to be a "myth" and called for outlawing no-fault divorce.

Flash forward a few years. The Romney-Roberts Supreme Court has overturned *Roe* and *Griswold*. Abortion is illegal in most of the country and the morning-after pill is no longer an approved FDA drug. When the Defense of Marriage Act came before the Court in 2014, Justice Scalia used the occasion to restore the government's power to outlaw sex acts deemed immoral by overturning *Lawrence and Garner v. Texas*, the landmark 2003 decision that tossed out antisodomy laws. The Affordable Care Act has been repealed by the Republican Congress on the rationale that Obamacare's mandate to buy insurance

