The Kelly Flinn Flim-Flam

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Now we are told that adultery may pay off big for Kelly Flinn. The skillful media campaign managed by her attorney has made her such a celebrity "victim" that he's talking glibly of a book deal and a movie, as well as airline jobs.

Dick Morris, who also rose to notoriety and a lucrative book deal after adultery, chimed in with his two-cents worth. This adviser to Presidents and Majority Leaders predicted, "I think she may become a very significant feminist figure and spokesperson."

Trent Lott denies getting advice from Morris about this controversy, but his curious defense of Kelly Flinn sent shock waves through his conservative supporters. It is a mystery why he jumped into the feminist shoes left empty by Patricia Schroeder's retirement from Congress.

When Lott asserted that Kelly was "being badly abused" by the Air Force, was he defending her because she was a successful career woman in a nontraditional role? Some pundits have suggested this was his way of trying to deal with the Republican Party's gender gap.

Or, when Trent Lott defended Kelly "on this so-called question of fraternization," saying "get real; you're still dealing with human beings," was he just showing that he is in step with the modern culture which prohibits saying out loud that adultery is wrong?

But Kelly's adultery, perjury and disobedience weren't her only offenses. She committed the particular kind of adultery that clearly cannot be tolerated in an officer, namely having sex, first, with an enlisted man, and secondly, with the husband of an enlisted woman.

The aggrieved spouse, Airman Gayla Zigo, explained this in her eloquent letter to the Secretary of the Air Force. She wrote, "How could I compete with her? She had power, both as an officer and Academy graduate. She also had special status as the first female B-52 pilot."

Gayla wrote that, "less than a week after we arrived to the base, Kelly was in bed with my husband having sex. . . . In several occasions, I came home from work and found her at my house with Marc. While at my house, she was always in her flight suit flaunting the fact that she was an Academy graduate and the first female bomber pilot."

Some commentators have tried to excuse the fraternization charge by asserting that Kelly's lover was a civilian. But consider the possible scenarios if his wife, Airman Zigo, were a mechanic servicing the B-52 bomber Kelly was flying.

Clinton Administration officials would have walked over hot coals rather than cashier their poster girl of the supposedly successful sex integration of the Air Force. Kelly was one of the golden girls who "proved" that women in the military can "hold their own" with men.

The evidence against her was so overwhelming that the Air Force had to press charges. She was not "singled out," but was treated highly preferentially compared to the 60 men whom the Air Force court-martialed for adultery last year and the many male officers whose careers were destroyed for much lesser offenses.

Kelly's media campaign has been rather successful, but she made one slip. She tried to excuse herself on CBS's 60 Minutes by saying, "I was only 25 years old and I was confused." Can we afford to have someone confused who is piloting a B-52 carrying nuclear weapons?

The military is to blame for leading young women like Kelly to mistakenly believe they can do a man's job. Of course, she can pilot a plane, but there's a lot more to being a military pilot than guiding the plane's controls.

Her position required the emotional maturity and stamina to work at a base where her pilot peers had wives, but she did not. Kelly was lonesome. Her mother, whining about Kelly's predicament, said that the cad whom Kelly called her "first love" was "the first man who made her feel like a woman."

Pardon me; we have been endlessly told that women in the military can perform just like men. Sex integration in the military was supposed to prove what Robin Morgan said years ago on the Phil Donahue Show, "We are becoming the men we once wanted to marry."

Now we learn that the top female bomber pilot really wanted to be treated like a woman! When the Air Force handed Kelly a written order to break off her relationship, she chose her lover over her spectacular career, telling the New York Times, "I figured at least I'd salvage my relationship with Marc [Zigo]."

Airman Gayla Zigo's letter quoted Kelly as saying that "she wanted to settle down with someone." Gayla added, "I didn't know that that somebody was my husband."

Feminist Congressperson Nita Lowey (D-NY) is calling for an "overhaul" of military policies concerning gender and fraternization. Good idea! The military's gender scandals have become a soap opera.

As Trent Lott might say: Get real. You're dealing with young men and women at the peak of their sexual urges, you're putting them in terrible temptation, and they're lonesome.

It's time to abandon the foolish feminist notion that the U.S. Armed Services can be gender neutral. For starters, tell your Congressman to join the other 120 Congressmen and women who are co-sponsors of Rep. Roscoe Bartlett's (R-MD) bipartisan bill to end mixed-sex recruit training.