

The Real Threat to Real Men : Marriage: Gays want to taunt heterosexuals with the subversive notion that a lawful union can be stable and happy.

By ROBERT SCHEER April 2, 1996 12 AM PT

After careful consideration, I have decided that I, too, am opposed to gay marriages. Not that any gays have asked to marry me, but ever since Bob Dole and Pat Buchanan made this a vital issue in the presidential campaign, I have felt the need to speak out.

I agree with the conservatives that gays cannot fulfill the sacred obligation of marriage, which is to procreate. And to be consistent, I believe that heterosexual marriages that prove childless after nine months should be dissolved. This would end Dole's, Buchanan's and Newt Gingrich's current marriages, but I'm sure they will understand.

They are also right in arguing that gay marriages are very threatening to heterosexual marriages. If you've ever lived near a gay couple, you would know that they set a very bad example. I remember trying to be heterosexually married once in the notorious Castro district of San Francisco. My wife of the time kept comparing me very unfavorably to gay spouses. They managed to earn a living, participate in civic life and still find time to do the dishes, fix the sink and even paint their houses. I kept telling her it's unnatural for a man to be so handy. Her unreasonably heightened expectations soon ended our marriage.

Another thing is that gay men who want to get legally married as opposed to just living together, or better yet, having one-night stands, are clearly abnormal. I have never met a heterosexual man who was thrilled at the prospect of tying the legal knot. That's why we get stupidly drunk and destructive at darkly ritualistic prewedding bachelor parties.

My heterosexual friends always thought that their live-in relationships were going along just fine and suspiciously questioned why their girlfriends felt the need to rush into marriage. My experience extends to a recently overheard conversation at a coffee house in my neighborhood. A scruffy, never-employed screenwriter was panicked that the successful executive woman he was being fixed up with for a blind date would prove desperate to lure him into marriage. Heterosexual men think they can never be too careful on this issue.

Marriage is scary. Suddenly, you are legally responsible for someone else's debts, health insurance, moods, and that person can make a claim on your income forever. Anyone who is eager to vow, in the eyes of the law, to love, honor and cherish another in sickness and until death has got to have a screw loose.

Unless one is in love. When heterosexual men are truly smitten, they become desperate to capture their prey before she gets away. But this wouldn't apply to gay marriages, because gay men never fall in love. All they care about is partying and sex, unlike heterosexual men, who mature as they move on in life.

You will notice that I haven't said anything about lesbians. That's because, being a heterosexual man, I'm convinced that lesbians don't really exist except in a kind of purgatory until a real man turns them around. So few of us and so little time.

So how do I explain all those gay men and lesbian women lining up to get married as soon as the opportunity presents itself? Even the recent semiofficial ceremony presided over by San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown brought out dozens of gay couples, most of whom claimed to have been cohabiting happily for a long time.

The answer is that they want to taunt us heterosexuals with the subversive notion that gays can be stable and happy. It's a plot to undermine our time-honored national values and the Constitution.

The Founding Fathers did not provide for gay marriages, even though surely some were gay. Conservatively speaking, at least 3% of the signers of the Constitution must have been gay, since that's the low estimate for any population sample. It was probably higher, given that they were a pretty talented bunch and wore wigs. They also never declared gays to be three-fifths of a person, which indicates a certain self-interested tolerance, if you get my drift.

Clearly, the Founding Fathers were as comfortable with hypocrisy as most politicians are today. But they forgot to write a "Don't ask, don't tell" clause into the Constitution. They also left marriage matters up to the states. Darn, and then the Supreme Court of Hawaii had to go and find that their state's Constitution may protect gay marriages. What if that ruling sticks and it turns out that thousands of gays achieve happiness in marriage? Dole is right; it could rock the very "foundation of marriage."

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Worse yet, gay couples would be eligible to purchase family insurance, share health benefits, file joint tax returns and have the right to visit a sick spouse in the hospital. The republic could fall.