

from our viewpoint...

Resignation a tragedy, but state will survive

The resignation Friday of Paul Morrison as Kansas attorney general is a personal and political tragedy, one the state will survive, but difficult nonetheless.

It marked the first time in many decades that a Kansas state official has been driven from office, though at least two previous attorney generals became ensnared in sex scandals.

It marked a strange end to a somewhat strange political career. Just short of a year in office, Morrison left a week after the *Topeka Capital-Journal* revealed details of a sexual harassment complaint filed against him by a former employee.

The complaint alleged Morrison conducted a two-year affair with the director of administration in the Johnson County district attorney's office before and while he was running for attorney general and after he took office. As district attorney, of course, he was her boss.

That would cover the time he was running against Phill Kline, the incumbent Republican. During that same campaign, the erstwhile attorney general promised to restore integrity to an office he claimed Kline had used to pursue a "personal agenda."

The Morrison campaign ran two sets of television ads at one point, the first attacking Kline, the second featuring the candidate's family.

On one hand, the ads used half truths to undermine the incumbent — charging he was out to get everyone's private medical records when in fact the attorney general had asked for a few dozen records from abortion clinics he accused of breaking state law. Phill Kline wound up being painted as some sort of evil ogre, an image the dour Kline never successfully shook off.

On the other, the ads portrayed the Democrat candidate as a decent family man surrounded by a loving wife and children. And while that may be true, it obviously wasn't the whole truth.

While all this was going on, strange things were happening in Johnson County. Because Morrison was elected and served 18 years in office as a Republican before being recruited by the Democrats to run against Kline, the Republican county committee got to pick his replacement.

That turned out to be the same Phill Kline he'd just defeated. That made Linda Carter, who later would file a federal civil rights complaint against the attorney general, Kline's employee.

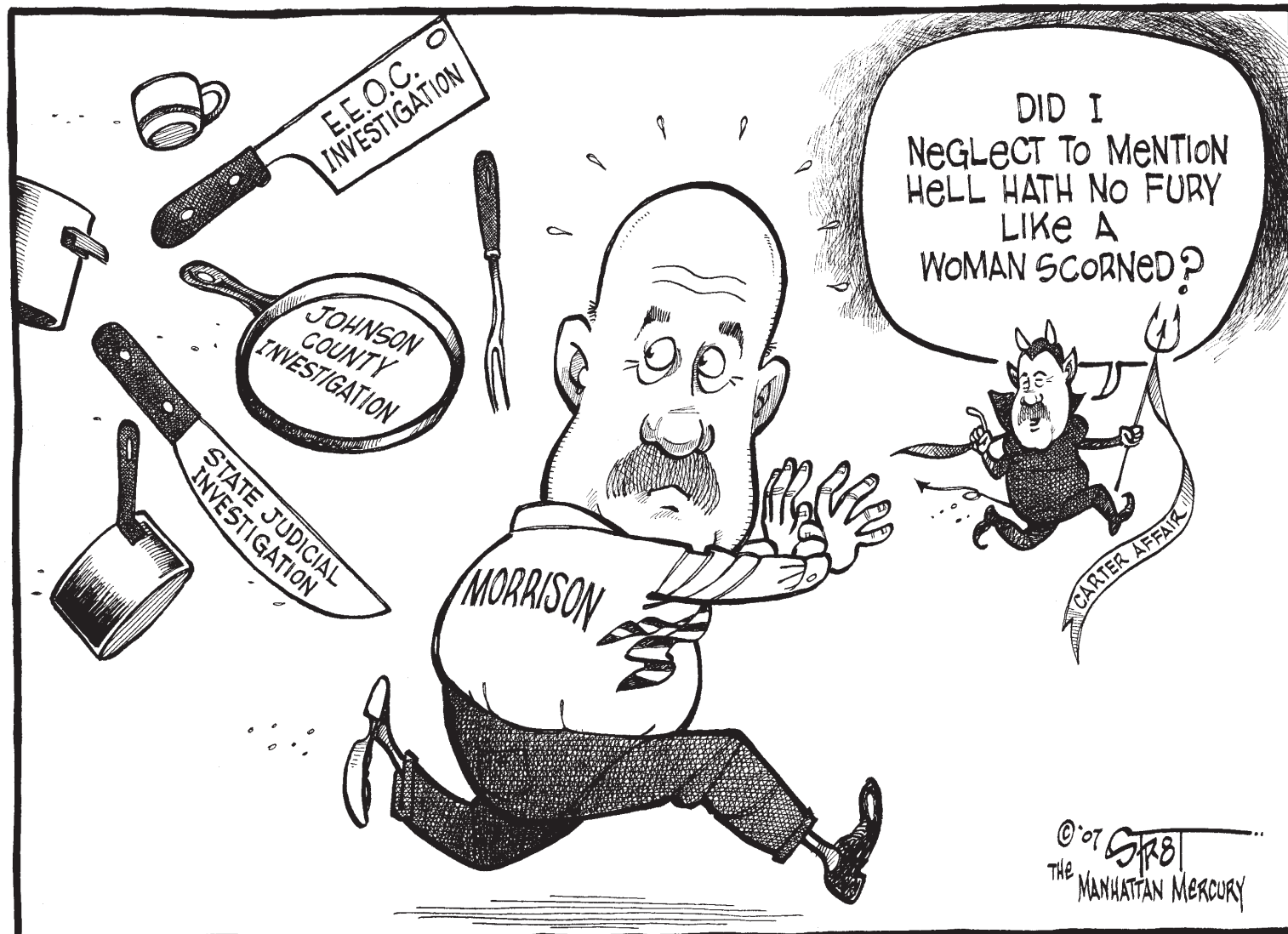
Morrison might have survived her charges about their affair had that been the end of it. She says it wasn't. Part of her claim, as revealed by the *Capital-Journal*, is that after moving to Topeka, Morrison attempted to persuade her to give him details of the district attorney's operation. He allegedly tried to get details of what was going on in the office, which she viewed as improper.

Those allegations may have been his undoing as much as anything. It was obvious he was near his end when the governor who had recruited him took great pains to distance herself from her one-time ally. She got so far behind him, she couldn't see him: her statement implied that "if the allegations were proven," he might well have to resign.

Without support from his new friends, and viewed as a traitor by most Republicans, the attorney general was out on the end of the proverbial limb. It will be up to his successor, whoever the governor names, to restore integrity to the office.

How all that will affect the political scene is a big unknown. Morrison's swift resignation cut off a budding swell of Republican comments. The governor has been talked up as a Democratic candidate for vice president or as a candidate for the U.S. Senate.

Observers say three years gives voters time to forget the Morrison debacle. For her, perhaps, a minor irritation. For Morrison, a career. — *Steve Haynes*



Scrubbing made me think of my pet peeves

As I was scrubbing the dried-up chili from the roaster, I fumed and thought of my pet peeves.

(I know this is the time of year to count your blessings, but I had about one too many packages to wrap, too many cards to send, too many tasks to do and too many cat boxes to clean.)

Why am I the only one in this house able to scrub out the roaster after a soup supper, food day at the office or turkey dinner?

The answer is simple — I can't stand dirty things in the kitchen. Steve, while a very clean, neat person, hates doing certain kitchen cleanups. As a result he can ignore a dirty skillet or roaster far longer than I can. So I do the job out of exasperation. And believe me, it is exasperation, since I like scrubbing dried up crud off of roasters about as much as I like dealing with dirty diapers or cleaning showers in locker rooms.

I shouldn't complain, I suppose. Steve al-



cynthia haynes

• open season

ways mows the lawn, a job I can ignore until a machete is required. He's also good at cleaning out the gutters, changing the light bulbs around the house and rinsing the dishes.

Jobs he avoids but I don't mind include folding clothes, emptying the dishwasher and hanging shirts.

Oh well. I won't have to deal with the roaster again for a few weeks, so I guess I'll have to complain about something else.

Like people who use snow blowers to clean their walks and driveways by blowing the snow into newly plowed streets or other people's property.

This is also true of those who use shovels, but they seem to be working so much harder that I have a harder time building up much indignation.

My last pet peeve of the week was a call from my youngest daughter, who lives in Augusta, Ga.

I was just headed out the door to shovel the latest offering of white from Mother Nature when the call came.

"Hi, baby, how's your weather?" "Oh, it's in the 50s now and supposed to get into the 60s later today. It's really hard to get in the Christmas spirit when it's so warm."

Twerp. I think I'll send her a package of Christmas spirit — but not by mail. It'd melt before it got there. I'd probably have to buy dry ice.

Which is faster, anyway, UPS or FedEx? I think I'll provide her with a white (or at least wet) Christmas this year.

Writer says hunting good for the country

Ted Nugent isn't the only guy in America who's not afraid to say hunting is good for the country. Frank Minter — the award-winning editor of *American Hunter* magazine who's stalked game on five continents — has written "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Hunting." The latest in Regnery Publishing's "PIG" series, it defends hunting from its know-nothing media critics in the big cities and spells out how it benefits conservation, cuts crop damage and saves human lives.

Q: What's your book about and why did you write it?

A: I've been reporting on these things for more than a decade. I worked for *Outdoor Life* Magazine and now *American Hunter* magazine, and after digging into what hunting actually does, I found all these facts that the mainstream media are not telling. I see hunting as the conservative environmental movement, actually. When you get really deep into it, that's what hunters really are. They're doing so much good, but that word just isn't getting out there. I thought this should be in a book and it should be out there for people to completely grasp, so I went to Regnery with the idea and it worked.

Q: Is there any one major thing that the general population isn't told about hunting that every American citizen should know?

A: When you talk to people against hunting, their ideas are usually based on an emotional side. They think that hunters want to go out there and kill for pleasure. That's not true at all. You're in Pennsylvania, and you're around that culture a lot. You've got a million hunters there. But when you talk to people in these real urban centers, they don't know that hunters are nature lovers. I tell them facts like, "Did you know that every animal in this country that has a hunting season on it has increased in number after a hunting season is placed on it?" They don't get that. I say, "Look, once you put a hunting season on an animal, you actually end up with a constituency of hunters fighting for that wildlife species." This has happened with elk and deer and turkey and all these other game animals.

Q: Is hunting an endangered pastime? The number of hunters has dropped from 19 million in 1975 to 12.5 million last year.

A: It's a fading pastime because we're becoming more of an urban nation than ever before. Even the rural states -- you go into the red states and those people move out to get the jobs in places like where I am now, Fairfax, Virginia. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service survey numbers have been slowly going down, though there are some bright spots. The number of women is up 72 percent in the last five years. ... Some of the youth programs now just coming on are bearing fruit. I see that as an important thing. When I talk to a hunter, he



bill steigerwald

• newsmakers

usually knows about the ecosystem he's hunting in. He knows where the deer are, and where the grouse are, and what the turkey are doing and this kind of stuff. I think he cares about that resource because he's involved in it so much. When you talk to a non-hunter, they may have a real compassion for wildlife but they don't often understand what the wildlife need, what they eat, what they're doing.

Q: What are three top reasons hunting is good for America?

A: I'd start with money. Hunting and fishing pay for conservation in this country. If you add taxes on our sporting goods (10 or 11 percent depending on what product it is) on the consumer and the manufacturer with hunting license fees, it's just over \$1 billion a year just going into habitat restoration and all the other things game agencies do. Non-hunters don't pay that stuff when they go hiking or mountain biking and those kinds of things.

No. 2, hunting actually saves lives. Two hundred people are killed a year in deer-auto collisions and 25,000 people injured out of a 1.5 million accidents nationwide. That's a big deal -- and that's with hunters killing 8 to 10 million white-tailed deer every year. You're five times as likely to hit a deer in urban America as you are in rural America, because you just cannot control deer populations in those areas.

The third -- and this is one thing the environmental movement is starting to understand -- is the ecological disaster that occurs from an un-hunted population of deer or elk and other species. In our Eastern forests, when we let a deer herd go completely uncontrolled they actually end up eating all the vegetation they can reach. You end up with this sort of ecological

desert under the canopy, because everything below 6 feet is gone; there's no vegetation whatsoever. The New Jersey Audubon Society in the last year opened up all its lands to hunting and they published a report that said we can't look at ourselves in the mirror anymore because not allowing hunting is destroying our own songbird populations on their own properties.

Q: How do you reverse the downward trend of fewer and fewer hunters?

A: To tell you the truth, it's happening. I don't know if you can completely reverse it. But there are youth programs in many states. I think 11 states now have passed different laws to bring more youth into the sports -- by basically lowering some of the age requirements, and taking away some of the course requirements for the first year; they can try it with a hunting mentor for the first year, that kind of stuff. And the women programs have certainly done that. But there is a change going on in this country right now. The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation is actually the biggest caucus in Washington. The NRA has taken a huge interest in hunting now; it has done a lot for hunting rights. Beyond that, if you look in the mainstream, *The New York Times Magazine* recently had a pro-hunting story; they were anti-hunting until just a couple years ago. *National Geographic* has a feature on the benefits of hunting, both nationally and internationally. Internationally, hunting has literally saved the white rhinoceros and lots of other species, because suddenly it gives the private landowner an incentive to have these animals there because they can make real money off of them. So you see the mainstream is starting to get it. If we can continue as a hunting community to get that word out there with books like mine and articles, there's hope. I guess I'm optimistic.

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