

# IS IT KEN STARR'S FAULT?

I found this story on the National Review cruise over at Susie's place. It's the perfect comedy to accompany the Sunday shows—stories about what nuts Republicans when they presume they're alone. There's a lot that worth reading, not least the portrayal of the Podhoretz-Buckley feud (with Buckley almost—but not quite—disowning his conservative offspring). But I was particularly amused by Ken Starr's self-denials, in response to the question of whether maybe he's personally responsible for 9/11.

nd one morning on the deck I discover Kenneth Starr, looking like he has stepped out of a long-forgotten 1990s news bulletin waving Monica's stained blue dress. His face is round and unlined, like an immense, contented baby. As I stare at him, all my repressed bewilderment rises, and I ask "Mr Starr, do you feel ashamed that, as Osama bin Laden plotted to murder American citizens, you brought the American government to a stand-still over a few consensual blowjob jobs? Do you ever lie awake at night wondering if a few more memos on national security would have reached the President's desk if he wasn't spending half his time dealing with your sexual McCarthyism?"

He smiles through his teeth and "in his soft somnambulant voice" says in perfect legalese, "I am entirely at rest with the process. The House of Representatives worked its will, the Senate worked its will, the Chief Justice of the United States presided. The constitutional process worked admirably."

It's an oddly meek defence, and the more I challenge him, the more

legalistic he becomes. Every answer is a variant on "it's not my fault". First, he says Clinton should have settled early on in Jones vs Clinton. Then he blames Jimmy Carter. "This critique really should be addressed to the now-departed, moribund independent counsel provisions. The Ethics and Government [provisions] ushered in during President Carter's administration has an extraordinarily low threshold for launching a special prosecutor..."

It's an excellent question with even more interesting answers. Ken Starr, the bulldog of the late 90s, can't even answer "no" to the question of whether he's personally responsible for 3000 dead Americans and the worst attack on US soil ever. And his denial—"the constitutional process worked admirably"—sure sounds different than what I heard from a bunch of Republican Congressman last Wednesday, who are convinced that the constitutional process somehow malfunctioned, because Clinton didn't go to jail for his consensual blow job.

Can we have more of this from US journalists? Maybe an interview a week from Ken Starr on his personal responsibility for 9/11?