

THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE REDNECK

Billy Carter has become the model of the American Redneck. That slang term originally just referred to a lower-class, uneducated Southern white rural worker, neck reddened in the sun. Sociologists have taken over the term to mean those characterized by relative illiteracy, rough manners, narrow-mindedness and bigotry.

Billy Carter qualifies on all counts. Leaving aside his general vulgarity, one remembers his polished observation that "there is more Arabians than Jews." When informed that he had troubled the Jewish community, he made an unprintable Redneck suggestion as to what the Jews could do. He believes that the Libyans have been badly treated by the media, which he thinks are controlled by the Jews.

There is a famous James Thurber story about an unknown American who becomes a hero by making an unprecedented solo airplane flight around the world. The headlines shriek his name, the crowds go wild, the nation is ready for an orgy of hero-worship. But American officials learn that he is the worst kind of Redneck. His language is unprintable, his attitudes are gross, his character is embarrassing. He cannot be turned loose as a hero-model for the young of the nation. In an act of patriotism, American officials shove him out a window.

Although Billy Carter is exactly that kind of embarrassment to the nation, no one thinks that he should be literally shoved out a window. But there are those who think he should be *figuratively* shoved out the window by his brother, whose relationship is the only basis for Billy's notoriety. The President has publicly disclaimed any association with Billy's pronouncements. There is no reason to believe that the President shares any of Billy's beliefs,

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or that Billy is anything but a political embarrassment to him. And it is abundantly clear that if Jimmy suggests something to Billy, Billy can be expected to do the opposite. With brothers like that, who needs enemies?

But, in the light of current disclosures that both Brzezinski and the President's wife used Billy to try to get Libyan intervention on behalf of our hostages in Iran, the American Jewish Congress has made the following comment: "President Carter cannot have it both ways. If he is prepared to use brother Billy, he can no longer disclaim responsibility for his actions." That comment has some validity.

All things being equal, Billy's Redneck anti-semitism is not likely to catch fire in America. The fact is that all studies show that kind of rough anti-semitism to be on the decline in America. When asked recently whether Jews are trying to get too much power in America, 13 per cent of Americans said "yes," down a bit from a few years ago -- and just about as many Americans (10 per cent) said that the *Catholics* are trying to get too much power.

Furthermore, the polls show that the majority of Americans look unfavorably on Billy Carter. His is an embarrassment to them, à la Thurber. As a matter of fact, the Libyans were probably pretty dumb to use Billy as a "link" to America. He has done their cause no good in the public eye.

It would be hard to fault the Administration for making approaches to *any* country to try to help the hostage situation. But the approaches should be made by appropriate representatives of this country.

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Billy's Redneck anti-semitism is reason in itself for the White House *not* to use Billy in any official or semi-official capacity at all ... It would be unfair to tar Jimmy Carter with a Billy brush -- but it is also terrible judgement to endow Billy with any kind of White House-connected dignity.

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