

Chapter I

Jimmy's Roots

Ancestry

Debrett, a British genealogist, has claimed that Jimmy Carter's ancestors were related to the British royal family and that his first direct ancestor, Thomas Carter, set foot on American soil in 1635. According to Debrett, Thomas and his brother John came from Kings Langley, which was supposedly the reason why John acquired the nickname "King." This version, however, was discarded by a Richmond historian, Latham M. Ewers, Jr., who showed that "in fact, the Carter known as 'King' was Robert Carter, a son of John Carter," and that his nickname had nothing to do with Kings Langley and everything to do with "his princely ways." Robert "King" Carter, who owned "300,000 acres, about 1,000 slaves and 10,000 pounds sterling," built Christ Church, a historic landmark in Lancaster County, Virginia, in which he had the largest pew, "directly beneath the three-deck pulpit." "King" Carter usually arrived "in a coach and six" with a large retinue. The congregation would remain in the church courtyard until he entered the church, and the church members remained seated until the Carter pew was empty. "I suppose you could say King Carter behaved much like recent American Presidents—even including Jimmy Carter at times," wrote Ewers.

However, this analogy, and not the genealogy, is the only link between Jimmy Carter and Robert "King" Carter. According to historian Dr. Kevin Kelly, Jimmy's first American ancestor was Thomas Carter, an indentured servant who had sold himself to pay for his voyage from England. He died in 1669, leaving a small

estate, which included four indentured servants: “two who are to serve 3 years apiece, one 5 years, one 4 years.” His son, Thomas Carter, Jr., joined Nathaniel Bacon’s small frontier army, which “battled the Indians in a determined effort to expand the colonies — an act the King and the Governor of Virginia opposed.” He and the others threw themselves on the mercy of the King, who pardoned them. Thomas married and instantly became rich—his father-in-law deeded him 400 acres and probably some slaves. One of Thomas’ sons, Moore Carter, moved to North Carolina where he joined the revolt against King George II in protest against high taxes. “Moore Carter’s name was put on a list of tax delinquents,” but some years later the tax was reduced and he avoided imprisonment by paying it. He died in 1741 a wealthy man, an owner of several hundred acres and four slaves:

“Sam, Moll, Judy and Isabel.” Moore’s son Isaac did not take part in the Revolutionary War, but according to historian William Price, “he appears to have provided the soldiers with a stream of supplies worth at least 10,000 pounds in local currency....” Isaac had four sons, three of whom fought the British during the Revolution.

The fourth son, Kindred. Carter’s fifth generation grandfather, did not do any fighting against the British - he “carved out a prosperous farm in wild and teeming with marauding Indians.” A severe depression gripped North Carolina in the late 1780s. Kindred abandoned his 640-acre farm and moved to eastern Georgia, where “the Indians were not yet subdued and the land was completely undeveloped.” When Kindred died in 1800, he left an estate of 307 acres and ten slaves.

Kindred’s son, James, was a man of great luck - he won two big tracts of vacated Indian land in the Georgia lottery. He died in 1858, leaving an estate of 500 acres and an unknown number of slaves. According to a local newspaper, “Christian Index,” James on his deathbed was ready to “converse about his hopes beyond the grave. He

had been a member of the Baptist Church for many years.” One of James’s children, Wiley, was a wealthy landlord with 29 slaves. He once accused a man Usry of stealing one of his slaves, obtained a warrant and, together with a group of friends, went to Usry’s house at night.

Usry cocked his gun and abused Carter in a most offensive character. Usry and Carter were cursing each other, and both raised their guns about the same time and Carter fired.

Carter was charged with murder, and went to trial half a year later. The trial lasted one day - the jury acquitted him. Nevertheless, he left town and moved his family to a site 20 miles from Plains. Wiley Carter died there in 1864.

Wiley’s son, Walker, fought as a private in the Confederate Army. He returned home after the Civil War only to be knifed to death during a drunken brawl with his business partner, D. P. McCann. “They were fighting over the proceeds of a’ flying jenny ‘a homemade merry-go-round that they owned and operated.” McCann, who was sought for murder, “vanished to South America and was never caught.” Walker’s wife, Mary Aim, died the same day as Walker, “due to grief at the shock of his death.” Among four orphans was the President’s grandfather, William.

William was also murdered during a business dispute. His 15-year-old son, Alton, who must be now almost 98 years old, witnessed the murder. According to Alton, his father “owned three sawmills and a lot of land in Early County. He rented a store to Will Taliaferro. When Taliaferro moved out, he took my dad’s desk with him to a new store.” William demanded the desk back, and the former partners “got to hitting one another with beer bottles.” When William walked out of Taliaferro’s store, Taliaferro went after him, “pulled a pistol and fired three shots.” William died the next day. As for Taliaferro, he “was tried for manslaughter twice - but the jury couldn’t reach

a verdict either time.” This happened in 1903. Next year, William’s widow, Nina, and her children, among them James Earl, the President’s father, moved to Plains.

“Daddy”

According to a Plains resident, Earl was:

“a shrewd and astute businessman who had a real talent for making money. Even as a young boy he was a moneymaker.... He was a hustler and he enjoyed working hard... Even after he became successful, he got out into a field like the hired hands and picked peanuts. He’d take the lead row and the others would have to keep up with him. He had his son Jimmy out in the fields, too, and instilled in him the habit of hard work.

“Now my husband,” Miss Lillian has said, “he was not an integrationist. He died before all this was the style, you might say.” Others describe Mr. Earl as “sort of a hateful man,” “kind of mean,” and an “avid segregationist.” Carter, who in his autobiography called his father “Daddy,” described him as “a stern disciplinarian,” who

”punished me severely when I misbehaved. From the time I was four years old until I was fifteen years old he whipped me six times and I’ve never forgotten any of those impressive experiences. The punishment was administered with a small, long, flexible peach tree switch.”

Carter wrote, “My most vivid memory of a whipping was when I was four or five years old.” Mr. Earl gave him a penny for the “offering.” Little Jimmy, however, “had taken out one extra penny from the collection plate” when it was passed around. He was severely whipped. “That was the last money I ever stole.” The second whipping occurred when Jimmy quarreled with his sister Gloria who “was younger than I, but larger, during our growing years.” Jimmy shot her “in the rear

end with a B.B. gun.” Gloria complained and “Daddy whipped me without further comment.” The third whipping occurred when Jimmy, unable to fall asleep in his bedroom because of “the loud talking, laughing and general merriment” of his parents and guests, walked out with a blanket to sleep in his tree house. After a while, Daddy came outside and called him. “But,” wrote Carter, “I chose not to answer. Next morning I received one of the few whippings of my boyhood, all of which I remember so well.”

The reason why Jimmy remembered this particular whipping “so well” becomes intelligible in light of what his sister Gloria had to say on the subject:

The worst punishment that could happen to us would be for Daddy to go out on the front porch and call us by our name. My Daddy never called us by our name unless it was something serious, and that meant he was going to ask us about something that we knew we had done already, and he was going to give us a lecture. Oh, that was horrible. It really was, and I couldn’t stand it. And I still can’t.

Gloria describes the “dance” the Carter children did when they got “the switching — the ‘ain’t gonna do it no more’—around and around and around.” To a psychiatrist who interviewed her, Gloria’s “comments carried the sense of Earl as a harsh, childbeating racist.”

Whatever prompted Mr. Earl to administer the other three major whippings, Carter failed to mention. However, his aunt, Sissy Dolvin, has recalled one punishment other than whipping. When Jimmy was seven, for not having pruned the watermelons, he was left alone in the field while the family went picnicking. “I’ll never forget how he looked out there in the watermelon patch— so little and forlorn.”

Despite the whippings by his disciplinarian Daddy, Carter wrote, “But I loved him.” Although his father “seldom read a book,” Jimmy felt “he was extremely intelligent,

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well read about current events,” and “he was always my friend.” Carter’s references to his father suggest an unusually intense ambivalence. For eleven years before his father’s death from cancer in 1953, Carter hardly saw him, and their relations were strained. But, on the eve of his father’s death, Carter came home. He spent long hours talking to the dying man. He cried and said he wanted to be like his father.

Miss Lillian

“Every time I think I am getting old, and gradually going to the grave, something else happens,” said Miss Lillian shortly before her son was elected President. She had “a mother’s premonition” that her son Jimmy one day would be famous. Yet Miss Lillian’s contribution to her son’s upbringing could hardly warrant extraordinary expectations on her part for Jimmy’s future. According to psychohistorian David Beizel, Miss Lillian “has been recreating the flight-from-home pattern throughout much of her adult life.” Her family had always been financially well-off, but most of the time she was working away from home, where she could treat, nurse and otherwise take care of “strangers in order to assuage some of the guilt for not dealing more intimately with her own family.” She was a “distancing mother in not-so-disguised form” - her children were taken care of by maids.

Miss Lillian described herself as “a registered nurse ... but I haven’t nursed any in forty-five years now. She spent most of her life in Plains—”until my husband died, I had never left Plains.” Mr. Earl died in 1953, which means that she did not venture outside of Plains until she was 55 years old! With his death, Miss Lillian was on the move. She left the family business to Jimmy and became a “housemother” at Auburn University where she stayed for eight years. Then, for some reason she was “getting nervous over things” and came home to Plains. About a

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year later she was “so miserable” she went to Peter Gartin, a friend, who had bought a nursing home at Blakely, Georgia, and offered to work for him, saying “I’ll go for nothing ‘cause I’m so miserable. I’m bored to death.” She worked there nearly two years, but again, suddenly feeling miserable, returned to Plains where a comfortable home, prosperous business, sizable income, and all her children and grandchildren were waiting for her.

Somehow, however, she was miserable again, and worse. “I like to have gone crazy sitting here.” Then “something else happened” one night in 1966 when she saw a T.V. show “Join the Peace Corps.” She applied, and was advised to undergo a psychiatric evaluation in Atlanta. “And I went there in my brand-new white Cadillac.” The psychiatrist asked her, “Why do you want to leave a comfortable home, and things you are fond of, and go like that?” To which she replied, “I just can’t tell you.” The interview continued, with the psychiatrist finally saying, “I understand why you want to go. You’ll get your acceptance in three days.” What she revealed to the psychiatrist and what he understood, Miss Lillian omitted. She went to India, remained there for almost a year treating lepers and otherwise trying to be helpful. Again she became very dissatisfied and frustrated with the family planning work because I wasn’t able to do enough for them to warrant my going 10,450 miles from Plains ... and I just prayed and prayed.... Sometimes I’d cry. And I’d just sit and talk to Jesus, just as if he was in the room. I told him, ‘I would never have come over here if you hadn’t brought me, and you’ll have to do something.’”

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other statements: "I am not a strong Baptist, I tell you."
The church in Plains "to me, it just means abuilding.... We didn't have a beer joint in town, we didn't have anything. We had the church and the school."
Miss Lillian came back to Plains having lost twenty-seven pounds. "I was skin and bones." She gained some weight and felt all right for a while. "I made 634 speeches after I came back from India, on India." This was before her son was elected President. Afterward she made countless speeches, in which her son and India figured prominently. She went back to India to represent her son at an important official function. She ~also went to Tito's funeral, which Carter did not attend. She is often in the news when, as she said, "something else happens." Her advice on how to deal with Khomiem, for example, was reported as being—"If I had a million dollars to spare, I'd look for someone to kill him."

Gloria

The least is known about the President's sister, Gloria. the "motorcycle fiend," who is two years younger than Jimmy. Miss Lillian told psychohistorian Paul Elovitz that:

anyone who gets an interview with Gloria has struck a gold ~ne... she is the most brilliant child I have, and I have four brilliant children. And Jimmy would tell you that Gloria is the most brilliant when he is speaking confidentially about it.

But Gloria is very defensive, hiding behind her sunglasses and reluctant to talk. She does not venture

beyond denying or confirming "the correctness of statements made by the interviewer."

When Gloria started school in Plains. Junmy was in the third grade. Jimmy asked her not to tell anybody that she

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was his sister "because I did not talk right; I had been raised out there in the country around the black children and I talked like they did." Jimmy's classmate once knocked Gloria down and broke her arm. Jimmy "tangled with the boy and from then on Jimmy was my big brother protector." Prior to that episode they were rivals, fighting for whatever attention was paid the children in the Carters' household. Mr. Earl nicknamed her "Go-Go," and gave Jimmy the nickname "Junior Hotshot." Gloria accepted him as "a bossy, controlling older brother." Gloria's present husband, Walter Spann, runs a 500-acre farm in Plains. Gloria has a son. Willie Carter Spann, "a self-confessed bank robber, dope addict, and homosexual," serving a 10 years-to-life prison term in California. When he lived in Plains, he had the nickname "Toady." He was first convicted for car theft and burglary. In 1971 Jimmy Carter, then Governor of Georgia, had to intercede on behalf of his nephew when Toady had complained he had received "death threats" in prison. Toady was placed in "protective custody," but in 1976 he again "expressed fear about death threats made against him in jail" for testifying in the robbery trial of a man he said was his "prison lover." On May 26, 1976, Toady pleaded guilty to two armed robberies in San Francisco. He said he was "so high on speed and heroin that I couldn't remember what happened." Rebellious son Toady caused Gloria to feel she was "a complete failure as a mother," and in the early

sixties she began attending "prayer retreats" volunteering for "any job anywhere that would ease someone else's load." She states that her husband Walter never complained about my absences; silently, he endured my fanaticism. He was probably glad to see me go off."

Ruth

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The President's other sister, Ruth Carter Stapleton, "Boop-a-Doop" by nickname, has often been in the news~ Miss Lillian has said, "I just love Ruth," complaining that "some papers call her 'faith healer,' but it isn't that at all." Ruth was raised as a Baptist. though according to Miss Lillian, "she's not affiliated with any church now. She is her own church." Ruth "had a period— not rebellion, but frustration or something," and was advised "to go into therapy; and she did go into therapy with eight people." Then Ruth started to go to "meetings of CFO — that's Camps Farthest Out... it was way out." In CFO Ruth played golf, swam, and listened to various speakers. "I think that's when she was converted," conjectured Miss Lillian. Ruth got a scholarship and went to college. While those events were taking place, her husband, Dr. Robert Stapleton, "had a hard time with four little children." Miss Lillian claimed that he looked after them, and Ruth "had the same maid forever."

It's gone to such dimensions now that she's always away. She's invited all over the world now, as you know. She is very happy in her work. It's..., it's her life.

Ruth's work has placed her at the center of attention of large crowds seeking her advice and. guidance on how to achieve "inner healing." Sometimes she addresses crowds of as many as 100,000 people. She has published two books— *The Gift of Inner Healing* and *The Experience of Inner Healing*—in which she combined the Gospel with Freud to explain her "healing" experience. "I use the unconditional love of Jesus Christ to break through to that repressed little child inside." The "repressed little child" only emerged after she had seen a psychiatrist. "I did not enjoy

Ruth's work has placed her at the center of attention

anything. I couldn't find anything to alleviate the pain. But I didn't know what caused the pain." She was in group therapy for three years and met there Norman Elliott, a psychologist, who helped her "to draw out" her "feelings of inadequacy," and to experience "a God of love and not of judgments hell-fire and damnation." She realized that

in inner healing, the only thing I have to do is to love the person I'm dealing with and not be judgmental and not condemn. We all want somebody who will accept us for what we are.

Ruth learned to be quite accepting. Her "love" became even "healing" for porn king Larry Flynt, publisher of Hustler magazine. "That's why I can work with rapists, murderers, prostitutes~ because I won't judge them," explained Ruth.

I know if they pulled that trigger, there was something motivating them from deep within that they can't understand. I know this because I know in my own life I never meant to be devious, or hateful or unloving or selfish, and yet rye been all those things in my life.

The inner healing has not yet eliminated all her problems. But at least she and her husband “are now able to communicate.” “My husband is like my father— totally loving.”

Fantasy seems to be a part of Ruth’s inner healing. “My father was just such a beautiful person and he did love me so and protected me and indulged me quite a bit.”

Actually Mr. Earl whipped Ruth when she was a little girl. He perhaps did this less frequently and fervently than in the case of Jimmy and Gloria, but Ruth also “danced” to the tune of “I ain’t gonna do it no more.

Mr. Earl formed her “idea of what love meant,” namely “to be the center of attention, to be the most adored—a kind of queenly attitude.”

In my inner definition of love, my father loved me more than my mother, because my mother didn’t indulge me as my father did. As I got older this grew into a rejection complex. My mother not only didn’t love me, the inner child was saying, my mother rejected me. Then, when I grew up and left home and met the cruel world, I found out I wasn’t the apple of everyone’s eye and the center of attention, and it was very traumatic. I was depressed all the time and I didn’t understand why.

Inner healing helped her to realize that “you can have a terrible rejection complex without every being rejected.” Miss Lillian had known nothing about Ruth’s feeling of rejection until Ruth told her that it was a “fantasy rejection.”

I made it very clear to her that she had never really rejected me. It was the little child in me who wanted to be the first, the best and the most loved and totally indulged.

Ruth’s work has placed her at the center of attention

In psychological terms, “Boop-a-Doop” suffered from colossal narcissism.

Billy

Billy seems to be a startling exception in the family where all the other children had nicknames. He has always been known as Billy. He is conscious of his distinct position: “I ain’t the Carter that won’t tell a lie.” In fact he has gone to extraordinary lengths to convince reporters that he enjoys lying.

I have always put people on. I can tell the damndest lies with a straight face. The biggest shock to me in the 1976 whole campaign was when you reporters believed the stuff I was saying. Some of the most ridiculous statements ever made were put in print. It took me a while to realize that. But I do tell the truth at times.

When Billy does not want to reveal how much money he makes, he simply says, “That ain’t none of your damned business.” Sometimes he gets annoyed by too much probing. He was invited to Boston to pick a winner in the Miss Piggy’s Pizza Beauty Pageant. A woman reporter asked him: “Is there anything you won’t do for money?” Billy said “yes,” adding quickly, “but if you proposition me, I’ll do it for free.”

Brothers Billy and Jimmy are different people. Gloria has stressed that Billy was the exception:

Daddy said he tried to raise three of us right and we came out awful, so he was going to raise Billy just like he wanted to, and enjoy it. And he did. But Billy was right with Daddy all his life.

No recollections of whippings in Billy’s case have come to light so far. His wife Sybil said that Miss Lillian

always tries to say the right thing, even if it's not always just exactly the truth. She'll talk to reporters about Billy and paint the prettiest picture about how nice a boy he was and what good grades he made in school and how he never gave her a bit of trouble. That may apply to Jimmy' but not to Billy. I wouldn't say that I wouldn't want one of my sons to grow up being like Billy. But if one of them did, I might be inclined to have some sort of professional counseling for him.

While Jimmy graduated second from the top in the local high school, and his sisters Ruth and Gloria did quite well also, Billy graduated 25th in the class of 26. Some of Billy's antics and gaffes have embarrassed the White House. An Oakland politician, Garter Gilmore, a black who was running on the slogan "Let's elect another Garter," joked that he and Billy were distant relatives. This was apparently too much for Billy, who replied, "I hate to say this, but we've all left a nigger in the woodpile somewhere." Gilmore demanded an apology, but never got one. In February 1979 Jimmy Carter felt the need to disavow indirectly some of Billy's statements in support of radical Arabs. Billy declared that Jews who objected to his close ties with Libyans "can kiss my... as far as I'm concerned now," and that "there are more Arabians than Jews." "You don't like Jimmy, do you?" asked writer Larry Woods, who with Billy's help was writing Billy's biography. "I love him, but I don't like him," said Billy. "'Cause I don't trust him."

Nevertheless Billy did some campaigning for Jimmy.
As Billy explained,

I was set up as a token redneck because it would maybe offset some of the problems Jimmy was having about his religion. It was a hard thing for me to do, but I did it for

And Jimmy now does a few things for Billy as well. He told a fat-cat audience at a Los Angeles fundraiser. "I was hoping that you would raise enough money to have my brother Billy come out and speak next year." Jimmy has even denied that Billy is any embarrassment to him: "I have never had any occasion to be embarrassed by Billy... Billy is a good man, and I'm proud he's my brother."

"Jimmy don't comment on my statements and I don't comment on his!" said Billy, adding, "You can read everything I've ever said, and you won't find a political comment anywhere." When Billy's dealings with the Libyans exploded into a major scandal in July 1980, Jimmy Carter called him and advised him to register as a foreign agent, terming Billy's \$220,000 "loan" and the multi-million dollar oil deal "not appropriate." "Honestly, Billy, if Jimmy called and said you've gone too far and you have got to stop, what would you do?" he was asked.

You may not believe this, but that's the easiest question I'll ever answer. If you knew Jimmy like you know me, you'd understand that he's never going to call up and tell me to change. Jimmy's staff may bitch, but that don't bother me. To hell with his damn staff.

There is something real about Billy. For one thing he is not a phony. One of Billy's supporters spoke up for him:

In a world addicted to pretentious sham, Billy Carter enjoys and insists on just being himself, in spite of the massive handicap of a genetic coincidence. Obviously, being born once was enough for him.

Although one commentator found it "hard to imagine Billy's adventures ending well," it is much harder to imagine our adventure with Jimmy ending well. Billy at least is smart enough not to take himself seriously. He is what he is— a money-grubbing little brother profiteering on genetic coincidence. He has no rebirth fantasies and does not strive for immortality. Having cashed in on his brother's cosmic rise, he has made arrangements for his funeral. "I've already found me an old Methodist preacher who promises that he'll tell lies."

The First Lady

While the Carters were the wealthiest family in Plains, Rosalynn's family lived in poverty. Her father, the town mechanic, died of leukemia when she was 13. Her mother supported the family by sewing, mostly trousseaus. After graduating from high school, Rosa-lynn "scraped through a two-year general diploma program in interior decorating at Georgia Southwestern." One night, after watching Jimmy dancing with other girls in his family's pond house, Rosalynn "told Carter point-blank that his date wasn't half as pretty as she." After the marriage the couple moved from one Navy post to another, but they rarely stayed together. "Our

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married life in the Navy was one of constant separations, interspersed with ecstatic reunions... ~" wrote Carter. During this period, Rosalynn was "a shy country girl with a quiet secret— she was as intense as Jimmy." Their life was punctuated by quarrels, the major one occurring immediately after Mr. Earl's death in 1953. The argument was triggered by Rosalynn's refusal to return to Plains and her fear that Miss Lillian and Rosalynn's mother would interfere in the family life. So she resisted, but Jimmy prevailed—he felt he had no choice but to return to Plains and take the place of his father. He began at this point his identification with his father. Rosalynn submitted to Jimmy's will in at least one important aspect — she revived in her own family Miss Lillian's role of the "distancing mother."

The training started with Rosalynn going to work and leaving three small children at home. "Jeffrey was still a baby. Chip was three years old. Jack was a first grader," noted Carter. She worked as a bookkeeper in the family peanut warehouse, sometimes eighteen hours a day. Then she became a full-time campaigner for her husband. How did this affect her children? According to ~Carter, his sons "are thoroughly familiar" with drugs and "they've been associated with friends who are much more deeply involved in this drug culture." His sons overcame the drug problem because "they got married earlier and their wives gave them a little more stability in life...." Quite typically for Carter's family, their sons also got over emotional problems by trying to solve other people's problems. While he was Governor of Georgia, Carter "put in effect the hard-drug treatment program," where his "sons could work with drug addicts with a feeling of

understanding and compatibility.”

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During that Georgia campaign, Rosalynn was shaking hands with tens of thousands of Georgia voters from before daybreak until after midnight. “She was hesitant about it at first,” wrote Carter, “but later became a fine public speaker... particularly in the field of mental health, her special interest.”

How did she acquire her expertise in this particular field? She was a delegate to the “Governor’s Commission to Improve Services for Mentally and Emotionally Handicapped Georgians” during Carter’s one-term Governorship, and after Carter’s ascendance to the Presidency, he appointed her “Honorary Chairman of the President’s Commission on Mental Health.” According to psychohistorian Henry Ebel

... in psychotherapeutic circles, the suggestion has circulated that crusading for ‘mental health’ and striking up what amounts to a virtual alliance with the nation’s psychologists, is the Carters’ way of admitting that all is much less than ‘well’ in the Carter family.

In a New York Times’ Op-Ed article, “Removing the Mental-Illness Stigma,” Rosalynn claimed:

at least one in four families is touched in some way by depression, marital stress, drug or alcohol related problems, the inability to cope as a result of death or a serious accident or illness, or simply low self-esteem.

For her examples, she could have chosen Carter’s 1966 depression and low self-esteem before he was “born again,” the marital stress in Carter’s family, especially at the time of Mr. Earl’s death, the drug problem of their sons, and the early death of Rosalynn’s father.

Rosalynn’s concern with mental health has political

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benefits. It inspires a line of reasoning by which such concern “precludes the possibility that the one who is concerned is himself or herself ill.” Or that “the leader ... is still ultimately capable of healing himself, and thereafter of healing us.” Henry Ebel has suggested that we have almost fully accepted the psychopathology of our everyday lives, including our “relationship to Presidents, Fuhrers, Generalissimos, and [in]perators.”

Examining previous elections, I noted the recurrence of popular concern over the psychological fitness of presidential candidates. In Henry Ebel’s opinion, Adlai Stevenson’s defeats in 1952 and 1956 were perhaps due to the notion that “he was psychologically inadequate for the role of leader,” and Nixon’s narrow defeat in 1960 could be attributed to the published hints that he “had been seeing a psychiatrist and had deeper problems than anyone suspected.” I was already in this country at the time of Barry Goldwater’s 1964 debacle and thought it might have had a lot to do with a published advertisement, signed by many psychiatrists, questioning his sanity. Thomas Eagleton’s withdrawal from the 1972 race was triggered by reports of past emotional problems. Something very strange happened in the last election. No psychiatrist suggested Carter was emotionally unstable and therefore unfit to be President. On the contrary, two psychohistorians, Bruce Mazlish and Edwin Diamand, published a long article, “Thrice Born, a Psychohistory of Jimmy Carter’s ‘Rebirth,’” in which they denied Carter’s psychological problems, stating that the “third-born Carter, at least provisionally, would get a good character reference.” In Carter’s case, the denial is more suggestive of an affirmation.

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