

A PATH FORWARD Steven P. Dinkin

WHEN A KISS IS MORE THAN 'JUST A KISS' — IT'S WRONG

Movie lovers fondly remember the scene in Casablanca when Sam is coaxed by Ilsa to sing "As Time Goes By." The song begins with these words: "You must remember this, a kiss is just a kiss, a sigh is just a sigh. The fundamental things apply, as time goes by."

For Luis Rubiales, president of the Spanish Football Federation, "just a kiss" has caused a global uproar. Rubiales — caught up in the excitement of Spain's first-ever victory in the Women's World Cup — kissed team player Jenni Hermoso on the lips at the medal presentation.

Despite his assertions to the contrary, Hermoso said Rubiales' behavior made her feel uncomfortable and violated. She didn't know him personally.

Yet somehow, Rubiales thought it appropriate to make jokes about marrying Hermoso. In dressing-room footage, shared by the players, Rubiales is seen with his arm around her. There, he announced a trip to Ibiza for the team, where "we will celebrate the wedding of Jenni and Luis Rubiales."

FIFA, the world governing body of football, reacted to the controversy by suspending Rubiales from all football-related activities for 90 days, while disciplinary proceedings are under way. In 2019, FIFA amended its code of ethics to include "severe sanctions for sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation."

Rubiales has defended his actions as a spontaneous expression of joy and affection. He called his critics "idiots, losers, and dumb - - -," according to several accounts.

In The Guardian, Ashifa Kasam wrote that Rubiales "left many Spaniards in shock" following an emergency meeting of the football federation, where he was widely expected to announce his departure. Instead, she explained, Rubiales defiantly declared, "I will not resign" five times. He portrayed himself as the victim, denouncing "false feminism" and recasting the kiss as a peck.

The more Rubiales digs in, the more he is vilified. The entire World Cup-winning squad supported Hermoso's statement, refusing to play again until Ru-

biales' removal. All but one of the team's coaches resigned in protest. The last holdout — Jorge Vilda — recently called Rubiales' behavior "inappropriate and unacceptable." Government officials, media, team sponsors, and football fans across Spain and around the world have joined the chorus of condemnation.

The episode follows a pattern of behavior that's practically been normalized: powerful men who exert control over women — sometimes in unthinkable ways — and believe their advances are wanted, if not invited. There is never an apology, only defiance; the woman and her supporters are always wrong. Rubiales himself has claimed that Hermoso initiated their exchange.

Some have called the outrage an overreaction. If you've seen the video, the kiss in question was indeed a peck. But that misses the point in these very different times.

I'm convinced that the whole thing would have blown over had Rubiales stepped forward, admitted his wrongdoing, and apologized to Hermoso and her teammates. A show of humility and

remorse would have gone a long way toward assuaging the public.

But good sense doesn't seem to be in Rubiales' DNA — and the kiss wasn't just a momentary indiscretion. Immediately after Spain's victory, Rubiales had also grabbed his crotch in a victory gesture. That occurred with 16-year-old Princess Infanta Sofia and Queen Letizia of Spain standing nearby.

The Guardian's headline captured the kiss, and its aftermath, perfectly: "Ego above dignity."

In an interview with Reuters on Wednesday, Equality Minister Irene Montero said that Spanish society must break a "pact of silence" and stop normalizing sexist behavior — and instead, support women who are brave enough to speak out when it happens. She expressed hope that the furor will serve as an inflection point in the fight against sexism in Spain.

Already, #SeAcabó (Spanish for "It's over") is trending across Spanish social media. Women have started using the hashtag to spotlight their mistreatment by men. But according to Reuters, the topic isn't new: In the past

several years, tens of thousands of Spanish women have taken part in street marches protesting persistent sexual abuse and violence.

The government, for its part, has initiated legal proceedings to remove Rubiales from his post, invoking a law that allows them to intervene in sports federations when there are serious irregularities or breaches of public order. But as Reuters reported, the case will be closed if Hermoso doesn't file a formal complaint.

As the highest representative of Spanish football, Rubiales should resign. His actions have stained a World Cup victory that's been lauded as a historic achievement for the women's team, in a match that drew a record global audience of more than 1.2 billion viewers.

Unfortunately, we've seen this movie before: a woman's glory obscured by a selfish man.

Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center, a San Diego-based group working to create solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. To learn about NCRC's programming, visit ncronline.com

HIGHWAY PATROL RELEASES E-BIKE SAFETY PROGRAM AS REQUIRED BY LAW

Online course covers equipment, rules of road, best practices

BY LUKE HAROLD

The California Highway Patrol released an online e-bike safety program last week, as required by a state law that the governor signed last year.

The law, Assembly Bill 1946, authored by Assemblymember Tasha Boerner, D-Encinitas, was signed by the governor last fall. It gave CHP a September 2023 deadline to release an e-bike program in response to the rise in e-bikes on California roads, which has led to a rise in traffic collisions involving e-bikes.

"I am excited to see the release of the California Highway Patrol's e-bike training program," Boerner said in a statement. "I'm especially grateful for their time and effort spent collaborating with a diverse group of relevant stake-

holders. I hope every e-bike rider takes the time to review e-bike safety, emergency maneuver skills, rules of the road, and other laws related to e-bikes."

The online course has 11 sections that cover topics such as proper equipment and gear, rules of the road and bicycle laws, avoiding hazards and best practices.

AB 1946 was approved last year by the state Assembly 73-0, with seven members not voting, and 37-0 in the Senate, with three not voting, before being signed into law by Gov. Gavin Newsom.

Local cities have also been taking steps to improve bicycle safety. Encinitas and Carlsbad have adopted diversion programs, which allow first-time violators to take an approved online safety course when they receive citations on their bicycles or e-bikes. The Solana Beach City Council also recently approved an ordinance, which is pending a second reading next month, that would include a diversion program.

Another bill by Boerner, AB 530, would require e-bike riders to pass an online test and get a state-issued identification card if they don't have drivers licenses. The bill, which isn't headed for the governor's desk this year, would also ban children 12 and under from riding e-bikes. It has been met with some opposition from e-bike enthusiasts who agree that new riders, especially children, should take to the roads on e-bikes with more education, but also

think the requirements in the bill would be overly burdensome.

"Having photo IDs, getting the DMV involved, I don't know if it will kill the movement," Solana Beach resident Karl Rudnick, an instructor with the League of American Bicyclists who teaches e-bike safety classes, said in a recent interview. "Not sure it would change it. I don't even know how you'd enforce it. Kids don't run around with ID. It sounds like a nightmare."

Solana Beach Deputy Mayor David Zito echoed that sentiment during a recent council meeting: "If we're going to send all these kids to the DMV, that will kill the movement," referring to local children who ride their e-bikes to school.

Boerner said in a statement last month that AB 530 is at the start of a "long process" that will continue with meetings this fall.

"As a mother and a legislator, I believe that we must act to prevent our youth

from injuries and educate parents on the promise and responsibility of e-bikes, and AB 530 is another step to increase their safety while sharing the road," she said in the statement. "Not every parent is a bike rider that can ensure our youth receive proper training."

To view the course, visit chp.ca.gov/programs-services/services-information/bike-and-ped-safety.

Harold writes for the UT Community Press.

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RETIRED TEST PILOT NOW WELL GROUNDED AT FREDERICKA MANOR

In the 1940s, one-hour flying lessons in San Antonio, Texas, cost \$8. Frank Frazier, a teenager at the time, saved what he could, and whenever he managed to accumulate \$4, took a half-hour lesson in a Cub airplane. He flew solo for the first time at age 16.

"I just wanted to be up in the air," the Fredericka Manor resident said. He didn't simply love flying, however — he also excelled at it. Within 15 years of that first solo flight, he had served as a decorated Air Force pilot in the Korean War; set a record for flying 80 hours and 36 minutes nonstop in a jet; and was a pilot finalist for Project Mercury, the NASA program that sent the first Americans to space.

Frank recalled the moment he fell for flying. At age six, he was working in the garden of his family's Texas farm when an open-cockpit plane flew over. As he and the pilot waved excitedly at each other, "my future was set," he said.

After graduating from Texas A&M with a degree in aeronautical engineering, Frank, who by that time had married his wife, Barbara, went to flight school, then served in the Korean War. He flew more than 60 missions in Korea. After the war, he received the Distinguished Flying Cross and other honors.

In 2021, Texas A&M's Engineering Department profiled Frank as a "Living Legacy," producing a story and video about his life. As much as Frank loved to fly, his family was always most important to him. He and Barbara went on to have seven children, and he retired from the Air Force after 21 years.

At Fredericka Manor, Frank has taken up a new hobby: playing the ukulele. He's

also turned to spirituality. "I've learned about oneness, how to respect yourself and other people, love yourself and other people ...," he said. He still loves planes, but has found another way to elevate his soul.

Elevate your soul at Fredericka Manor. We're home to poets, architects, aspiring authors, experimental chefs, master gardeners and pilots like Frank.

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