

Miami Herald, The (FL)

May 7, 1987

Section: EDITORIAL

Edition: FINAL

Page: 34A

NOW THE COVER-UP

Herald Staff

GARY HART now has added lying to his previously documented demonstrations of bad judgment. The Democratic Presidential candidate is behaving in the classic pattern of a man trapped by public disclosure of his own actions: He is shading the truth.

* Mr. Hart lied when he told the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA) on Tuesday that Herald reporters "refused to interview the very people who could have given them the facts before filing their story." In fact, on Saturday night outside his home Herald reporters repeatedly asked Mr. Hart to identify and let them interview the woman they had seen him with on Friday night and Saturday. He refused. Nor would he identify or make available for interviews the "friends" with whom he said she was staying.

* Mr. Hart lied when he told the ANPA that Herald reporters "now concede they may have gotten it wrong." The Herald concedes no such thing. It is possible that Mr. Hart and the woman, Donna Rice of Miami, could have entered and left his house by the back door during periods when The Herald wasn't watching access to both doors. But what the reporters might have missed seeing is, by any reasonable reckoning, far less important than what they saw. He is simply being disingenuous by contending otherwise.

* Mr. Hart lied about approaching the reporters on Saturday night and confronting them. In fact, he walked past their car and the reporters had to catch up to him in order to identify themselves and ask him questions.

Numerous other discrepancies remain in the separate narratives of Ms. Rice, Mr. Hart, Mr. Broadhurst, and campaign aide William Dixon. These accounts variously have the couple walking back to Mr. Hart's home or being driven, have them picnicking along the Potomac on Saturday or looking at apartments elsewhere, and coming and going from the town house at hours when Herald reporters, watching entry to both doors, affirm that no one entered or left.

His own self-interest requires Mr. Hart to attack The Herald because its disclosures are stark:

Mr. Hart has maintained a relationship over a period of months with a beautiful 29-year-old woman whom he had met twice at glamorous parties. He admits telephoning her long distance at least six times. She says that he telephoned her to invite her to accompany him on the charter yacht Monkey Business to Bimini; he says that Mr. Broadhurst invited them both. She says that the guests were the same foursome as in Washington last weekend -- herself, Mr. Hart, Mr. Broadhurst, and Lynn Armandt of Miami. Mr. Hart suggested that there might have been an additional guest, which suggestion would dilute the double-date image of two married men with two single women on the 82-foot yacht. Mr. Hart may characterize this association as "ordinary" if he chooses. And voters may choose to accept that view if they wish. The Herald does not. Nor does it find acceptable Mr. Hart's willingness to lie to protect his candidacy from the justified condemnation of public opinion.