JOHN SWEENEY AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES
MATT LABASH

the weekly Standard

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CAN WE GET THIS ELECTION OVER WITH ALREADY?

Tucker Carlson on Dole's bus
David Brooks in Newt's van
Matthew Rees visits Louisiana
Fred Barnes: Kemp Gets Gored
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the weekly Standard

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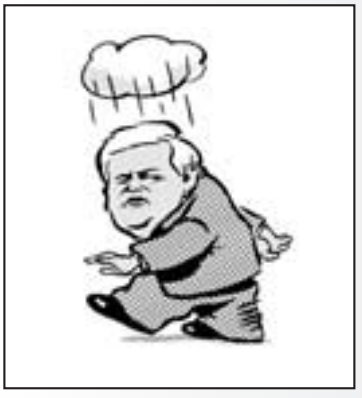

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The Lost Civilization of Bob Dole

It's seldom a good sign when a Republican presidential candidate gets praised for not going "negative" on his opponent. "For 90 minutes," wrote David Broder in the *Washington Post*, "the campaign of tedium was elevated into a lesson in civics and civility. The first debate . . . may not have helped Bob Dole much in his pursuit of the presidency, but he and President Clinton deserve a vote of thanks for helping politics regain its good name." R.W. Apple of the *New York Times* applauded the debate's "temperate, civilized tone," while ABC's Jeff Greenfield said it was a "high-minded discussion." In fact, the debate was so high-minded that every post-debate poll showed Clinton the clear winner by a 20-point margin. More astonishing was that Dole failed to discuss issues that would clearly have put Clinton on the defensive and helped Dole with Reagan Democrats and other swing voters. And we're not talking about Whitewater.

Consider that Dole spent several days on the stump criticizing Clinton's liberal judicial appointments, but never mentioned it when Clinton crowed about his tough-on-crime record. On affirmative action, Dole said nothing. And even though a majority of Catholics and one in every three evangelicals now support Clinton, Dole never talked about Clinton's veto of the partial-birth abortion ban.

So is there really any wonder why the Republican base is totally demoralized when obvious debate points are ignored? Doesn't the Dole campaign know that Reagan Democrats supported Reagan because he stood for more than increasing the growth rate two or three percentage points? In a recent *Washington Post* column, Charles Krauthammer, a contributing editor of The Weekly Standard, explained such missteps this way: "Dole's physical courage is beyond doubt. It is his political courage that is suspect." Well said.

Nine Million Who?

Truth-squadding the wild claims of Clinton, Gore & Co. has proved too much for the Dole campaign. Clinton and Gore both trumpeted in their nationally televised debates the canard that Dole's economic plan would raise taxes on 9 million Americans. Neither Dole nor Kemp rebutted the charge. In fact, it's off by 9 million. No one will get a tax hike. Dole's plan pares $19 billion from the earned income tax credit, and the welfare reform bill Clinton signed has already taken care of $3.2 billion of that. The rest wouldn't add to anyone's tax bill. It would merely trim the welfare payments given to those who don't pay any taxes.

The Carter Doctrine Returns

Jimmy Carter did not win the Nobel peace prize last week, thus really bumming out Al Hunt. For our part, we're delighted he didn't, because we got a taste again recently of just how reflexively anti-Israel this supposed "peacemaker" really is. (Check out his shocking book *The Blood of Abraham* if you really want to be reminded of this, chapter and verse.) At a recent symposium, he blamed the present turmoil on a single, malicious force: Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, "a negative factor." He cautioned "Palestinians and other Arabs" to be "more patient in the democratic crucible of Israel," because, you see, Netanyahu has an electoral rabble to appease.

Go write a children's book, Mr. Ex-President.

Run, Jesse, Run

Thank God for Jesse Helms! As other Republicans around the country succumb to the lure of political correctness, Helms continues on his merry way to reelection. Most recently at a North Carolina auto race, he high-fived Johnathan Prevette, the 6-year-old who was charged with sexual harassment after kissing a girl. And he didn't even apologize for doing so to all

Scrapbook

the soccer moms out there, or take time to agonize about what his gesture might mean for the gender gap. Too bad he's not on the national ticket.

The Politicians' Reading List

If there's one thing we know about politicians, it's that they really don't spend a lot of time reading books, or at least serious books (Ronald Reagan was very fond of a historical potboiler called ***Lion of Ireland***, while Bill Clinton favors the pompous and portentous child-abuse detective novels of Jonathan Kellerman). But serious works of non-fiction? Please. That very fact has led interviewers to try to humiliate candidates by asking them what books they've liked. The Dole campaign was so concerned about this, they prepared the candidate for just such a question by drilling into him the name of a book whose last chapter he had read in xeroxed form. Dole wasn't asked, so he volunteered: "I've just finished reading a book. I think it's called . . . What is it? ***The Demise of the Democratic Party*** by Ronald Kardosh or something, talking about all the liberal influences in the administration."

Usually one remembers the title of a book one has read, given the fact that it often takes several days to finish it. By punting the answer, Dole gave the lie to the idea that he had read it. He was referring to ***Divided They Fell: The Demise of the Democratic Party, 1964-1996***, by the historian Ronald Radosh.

This reminds us of some other bookish instances in presidential-debate history. In 1984, Walter Mondale scolded President Reagan for his failure to advance arms control with the Soviet Union. Evidence for this dereliction, he said, was to be found in Strobe Talbott's "classic book ***Deadly Gambits***" (which "classic" had been out for only a couple of months).

George Bush was asked about heroes in 1988, and after a moment's hesitation he hit a home run by digging up the name of Armando Valladares, "who was released from a Cuban jail, came out, and told the truth in this brilliant book ***Against All Hope*** about what is actually happening in Cuba."

That same year, Dan Quayle, naturally, was required to give multiple book reviews. What books have you read in the last six months that have had a "particularly strong effect on you?" he was asked, "and tell us why." Quayle listed Richard Nixon's ***1999***, a collection by his fellow Senate Hoosier Richard Lugar titled ***Letters to the Next President***, and "Bob" (that's Robert K. to you) Massie's ***Nicholas and Alexandra***, all of which he described in detail abnormal for these debates.

Four years later, Quayle made hay out of Al Gore's ***Earth in the Balance***, and Clinton, for his part, offered that "my wife, Hillary, gave me a book about a year ago in which the author defined insanity as just doing the same old thing over and over." And what book was that, Mr. President? Was it perhaps read as well by that staffer of yours who grew up in a trailer park and took umbrage at Dole's convention address? And what is the exact name of that staffer, please?

Casual

Joycelyn to the World

As falls from grace go, former surgeon general Joycelyn Elders took a hard one. Elders hasn't heard word one from any administration official since she was canned in December 1994 after advocating school children be taught how to . . . butter their own corn, as my pals in the bunkhalls of Camp Alto Frio used to say.

It's sad, really, watching her peddle her newly published autobiography at a miked podium in a D.C. bookstore with only 15 people present due to a torrential downpour. A fourth of us are media, and Elders barely finishes her speech before an innocuous-looking Ruth Shalit, the Lizzie Borden of the *New Republic*, pleasantly suggests they "go out for a sandwich or something." Such an invite is the journalistic equivalent of cannoli with Clemenza from *The Godfather*. But Elders merrily complies and even lives to see another book-signing later that night at some far-flung public library in Maryland.

She was always a lot more passionate than politically astute. From "Bomb Thrower" to "Condom Queen," she's been called many things, "Brightest Bulb on the Tree" not being one of them. She says she never saw her severance coming, since "masturbation is something that is normal—it alleviates stress, it prevents disease."

In her defense, she and Bill Clinton seemed to enjoy any number of indelible bonds that would have precluded her termination: They both grew up poor Arkansans. They both love sugary snacks. Her son sold cocaine, his brother bought it. She got in trouble for espousing self-touch, he for touching others.

"He knew what he was getting," Elders says with no rancor. And indeed Clinton did; she had a condom-in-every-school-clinic policy back in Arkansas. But Elders was expendable as the embodiment of the Administration That Time Forgot, becoming a garish funhouse image of the unpalatable Clinton associates he has since worked so hard to distance himself from.

At least she made us see the good in others. By comparison, her turf-conscious boss Donna Shalala looked moderate; Jim McDougal positively sane. Unlike Clinton's other jettisoned meeklings, however, Elders retains a romantic mulishness. "Regrets? . . . I'd do it all the same," she states with the swagger of Sinatra if he were a black female pediatric endrocrinologist. It is this kind of willingness to step in it that, even in exile, still attracts kick-the-carcass reporters like me and Ruth.

But getting Elders to reiterate and even compound her greatest foibles proves a hollow experience. It's a feeling I can only compare to that which B-movie directors must get when coaxing Shannon Tweed to take off her shirt. The goal is so easily realized that it quickly loses its sport.

I ask her if drug dealers should be imprisoned. She thinks a bit, then says, "No . . . as long as they're not selling to children." She still advocates free birth control for prostitutes who need money to buy their drugs: "I wouldn't want them having any unplanned children." And she harbors no remorse about calling pro-lifers "fetus lovers." "They are!" she says.

As for the onanistic uproar, she remains genuinely perplexed. After all, Elders says, let he who has never drawn the shades for a quick tug on the giggle stick raise his hairless palm. "We know that 90 percent of men masturbate, 70 percent of women masturbate, and the rest lie . . . I think we just need to make people understand how important it is."

So it's small wonder she remains radioactive. But don't pity the old gal. She got to keep her uniform, and though she rarely goes to occasions formal enough to sport the gold-braided epaulets, "I wear the shirts—12 white cotton ones, which I really enjoy."

She's back plying her trade now at the University of Arkansas. And, as when she was the nation's top doctor, she rarely digresses into the metabolic derangements of hepatic glycogen storage diseases. Mostly, she talks about sex and stuffing high school backpacks with prophylactics.

Her earnestness is still as pungent. She dons a lightning bolt on her lapel—"I always said I didn't mind being the lightning rod if you all would be the thunder behind me." But in her oversized glasses, no-frills navy suit, and sailor-knotted scarf, she looks more like an American Airlines stewardess than the most incendiary expatriate of the Clinton administration. She welcomed all comers as if they were visiting relatives, even sitting down for 30 minutes with an ill-intentioned reporter who still couldn't dampen her buoyant spirit.

And with good reason. The folks back home don't get so ruffled about her spouting off—which she now does at $15,000 a clip—when she's not signing books, as she was kind enough to do mine:

"To Matt, Keep your hands out of your pockets—Joycelyn Elders."

Matt Labash

the weekly Standard

Saving the GOP From Dole-Kemp '96

Heads up. The sky is falling. Barring the possibility of some freak event or act of unprecedented self-destruction by Bill Clinton, this year's presidential campaign is over. On November 5, American voters will almost certainly return a Democratic administration to the White House. In fact, there's a serious risk that the Dole-Kemp ticket will spin through its drain with sufficient deadly speed to suck the entire 1994 congressional revolution right down with it.

And what will happen in that case? The GOP will further confuse itself with a round of *après-le-déluge* recriminations. You can already hear the angry murmurs begin. It's a message problem, one faction says; we've done a bad job telling people who we are and who Clinton is. No, it's a substantive ideological problem, says another; we are too far outside the mainstream. Either way, it's a technical problem, as well, all agree: The Dole campaign is incompetent, plain and simple.

Excited by a landslide, and inspired into analytical overdrive by the Republican self-doubt this event will produce, print and broadcast deep-thinkers will chew anew on a question that not long ago seemed settled beyond dispute. Is this really a conservative era in American history? *Hmmm: Maybe not*.

Election Day turnout will tell the tale. If Republican voters are given no reason to hope for a Dole presidency between now and November 5—and given the campaign's current entropy, it's hard to imagine they will be—millions of them may give up and stay home. And if the GOP, irrespective of Dole, cannot otherwise impel the great majority of its voters to the polls, then the Republican Congress will vanish. We will appear to be right back where we started, in January 1993.

Dear God, you protest . . . but don't blame Him. There has been nothing natural or inevitable about the trajectory of this year's politics so far. Yes, the economy is strong and the international stage seems calm. That makes 1996 an "incumbent's year," and the perfect Republican candidate running the perfect campaign might still have fallen short—by a sizeable five points, say, in the popular vote—against a sitting president whose career seems uniquely touched by luck.

But chance is not enough to explain the 10- to 15-point Clinton blowout every national opinion survey has been forecasting for months on end. The setback Republicans suffered during last year's government shutdown can't fully account for it, either. Speaker Gingrich and company linked their party and its conservatism to a controversial, Medicare-reforming budget without adequately preparing the political ground for it. A painful error. But not an automatically devastating one, for the GOP or its ideas. How do we know? Bill Clinton proves the point. He is walking to easy reelection, and yet he flees the word "liberal" as if it were a fatal illness. Clinton recognizes the power of conservative ideas, in other words. Would that Messrs. Dole and Kemp could voice those ideas clearly.

Bill Clinton has his off nights. He had one during the first presidential debate in Hartford, an evening during which he seemed grinningly content just to down the football and not suffer injury. But even at half-throttle, every time he opens his mouth, the president is a man who shows evidence of having worked his mind to absorb and synthesize his own arguments—and the arguments of his opponents—into a semi-plausibly coherent . . . well, *vision*. This is his great strength as a politician. Clinton offers his partisan confrères an account of themselves, a self-justifying story they can take before the public. Voters always want to hear such a story.

Bob Dole tries hard and means well but makes an inadequate storyteller. Dole performed with creditable doggedness in Hartford. He came with facts and ideas to use against his opponent. He had facts and ideas to use in his own defense. But as he has all too often throughout the campaign, Dole managed his memorized information much as a law student manages his answers on a final exam. In presidential politics, alas, you do not get credit simply for mentioning stuff. You're required to put it together into something larger, something gripping and alive.

Which was always supposed to be Jack Kemp's great skill. He was supposed to be the Republican presidential campaign's "man of ideas," its energy, its

talk. But in the vice-presidential debate, up against that patronizing schoolmarm Al Gore, Kemp was something else. He was passive, unprepared, lazy. Time and again, Gore leveled robotic, specific complaints against the Republican party and used Kemp's past words against Bob Dole. Time and again, Kemp came back empty, with vague and loose appeals to economic growth and inner-city development. No doubt he believes in both. But his passion cannot excuse what was palpably true: Kemp had not done his homework. The story he told was tissue-thin. He hurt his party.

THE WEEKLY STANDARD does not care for Bill Clinton, as a president or a man. It goes without saying that we think it would be far better if Bob Dole and Jack Kemp were elected to replace him in the White House. But neither Dole nor Kemp has done what all national candidates must do: Give the American people a convincing reason to cast an affirmative vote for them in November.

The Republican Congress, however, has earned the honor of reelection. The goal of keeping the House and Senate in GOP hands is still achievable. It is also important, not only for the party as an institution but (far more crucial) for conservatism as an idea. Republican House and Senate candidates, for the most part, run far ahead of Dole and Kemp in state and local preference polls. If turnout is good, those candidates will probably do well enough to secure the reelection of a bicameral Republican congressional majority for the first time since 1928. If not, the fault will lie in one specific place, above all. At the top of the ticket. Bob Dole and Jack Kemp have failed to fulfill their responsibilities as party leaders.

State by state, district by district, Republican candidates should make their case. They should behave as if *they* were at the top of the ticket, making the overarching case for conservative government that has eluded Dole and Kemp. If GOP House and Senate candidates manage to do this, they still may succeed. And the country will be better for it.

—David Tell, for the Editors

KEMP GETS GORED

by Fred Barnes

PRE-DEBATE WITH AL GORE, Jack Kemp had met every test as Bob Dole's running mate. He'd proved himself a team player, an effective second banana who voluntarily merged his positions on immigration and affirmative action with Dole's. "It made Jack a bigger person, being number two," says a Dole aide. When Kemp joined Dole on the stump, both were better, Kemp more succinct, Dole more energetic. Kemp wanted to campaign more often as Dole's warm-up act, but was rebuffed. A few Dole loyalists groused about Kemp's appearances at black events, where the pickings for Republican votes are slim. But Kemp made news at those events. And it was "a way to soften the image of the party without compromising your stance on any issue," the Dole aide notes.

The debate with Gore, however, underscored a sad truth about Kemp: While he had the potential to make a huge difference in the election as Dole's running mate—more even than Lyndon Johnson did in 1960—he's made only a small difference. Kemp has probably added more to the ticket than the alternatives—Sens. Connie Mack and John McCain—but not much more.

For a veep candidate, what matters most is the nationally televised debate, the one shot at addressing tens of millions of voters at once. Kemp faltered. It wasn't so much that he let Gore, an underrated but methodically effective debater, get away with exaggerations and untruths. The problem was that Kemp allowed Gore to make the case for himself and President Clinton on Kemp's own issues—cutting taxes, enterprise zones, and a balanced budget.

Worries about Kemp's performance began almost as soon as the debate with Gore was scheduled. Reports filtered back to Dole headquarters that Kemp wasn't studying his briefing book. Then, his first practice debate with Sen. Judd Gregg playing Gore went poorly: Gregg won. But early preparation really didn't matter. Kemp's job was to take up themes Dole had laid down in speeches and in his first debate with Clinton three days before the Kemp-Gore clash. Being prepared on those issues was what counted. "If Kemp has been preparing, he'll do well," predicted a Kemp ally. "If he's unfocused and rambles, he won't score points."

Kemp *was* unfocused and he rambled. He ignored Dole's talking points. In his standard speech, Dole harps on five things: the 15 percent tax cut, a balanced budget, Clinton's veto of two balanced budgets, the president's signing of the biggest tax increase in history, and the fact that Medicare spending will rise 39 percent under Republican plans. Kemp never once

mentioned the figure "15 percent." Worse, he cast the Dole plan as the solution to inner-city woes, not to wage stagnation that squeezes millions of middle-class voters. He said "the have-nots," hardly a synonym for the middle class, had done poorly under Clinton. "No Republican should ever utter the phrase 'have-nots,'" insists a Kemp adviser.

On issue after issue—partial-birth abortion, affirmative action, trust—Kemp had been crisper, clearer, and more eloquent on *Meet the Press* three days earlier. There, Kemp said Clinton's backing of partial-birth abortion is "the most extreme position in America today." In the debate, he said only that Dole wouldn't have vetoed the ban on such abortions. On both occasions, Kemp said his position on affirmative action hadn't changed. But on *Meet the Press*, he declared, "I have always opposed and always will any affirmative action program that leads to a quota. . . . The president has said mend it, but he has no plan to mend it." In the debate, he let Gore claim he had flip-flopped crassly on CCRI, the popular California referendum on racial preferences, without response. Kemp had a nice riff on trust on the TV show, saying "the most important part" of the character issue is, "Who can you trust?" That echoed Dole. But against Gore, Kemp was silent.

Kemp knew he'd done poorly. He complained afterwards about Jim Lehrer's questions on Haiti and the family leave act. Haiti is peripheral, but family leave is a staple of Clinton-Gore rhetoric, so there was no reason for surprise. Kemp's real problem was strategic. No one expected him to sacrifice himself (and his high standing with journalists) and go after Clinton the relentless way Dan Quayle did in his 1992 debate with Gore. But a few nicks out of Clinton's hide would have helped. In 1992, Gore left Clinton undefended; this time, Kemp left Dole unprotected. Then, the Bush White House greeted Quayle's return with a South Lawn rally. When Quayle's limo arrived, Bush rushed out to shake his hand as White House aides cheered. On October 10, the day after Kemp debated Gore, the GOP candidates appeared together in Cincinnati. Dole thanked Kemp for doing "a great job," then turned away as Kemp addressed the crowd. Others in conservative circles were less reticent in their dismay at Kemp's performance. "It was a disaster," Rush Limbaugh told his radio audience that same day. "We need new leaders." ♦

Woody and the Moon Child

by Matthew Rees

Baton Rouge, La.

BACK AT THE BEGINNING OF SEPTEMBER, three weeks before Louisiana's "jungle" primary for the seat of retiring Senate Democrat J. Bennett Johnston, the state's Republicans were in a funk. Six GOP candidates were running against two Democrats, and Republicans feared the six would split the conservative vote and enable the Democrats to sneak into the runoff (which is between the top vote-getters, regardless of party). That prompted two developments: National Republican leaders threw their support behind conservative state representative Louis "Woody" Jenkins, and an arm of the National Republican Senatorial Committee spent $650,000 on ads trashing the Democratic candidates.

The strategy worked: Jenkins won the primary, knocking one Democrat out of the runoff. This has Republicans giddy at the prospect of picking up a Democratic Senate seat, but their giddiness looks premature. Jenkins's opponent is Mary Landrieu, an attractive, moderate, 40-year-old Democrat who hasn't been afraid to play hardball and is leading in the polls. The difference between the two candidates' bases of support, says Wayne Parent of Louisiana State University, is that hers is broad but soft, while his is deep but narrow.

Yet there are a number of reasons why Jenkins should be the favorite. In the past eight presidential elections, Louisiana has voted Democratic only twice, and last year it elected a Republican governor, Mike Foster, with 63 percent of the vote. Formerly a state senator, Foster had become a Republican just six weeks before the primary; he then ran a remarkably right-wing campaign and later endorsed Pat Buchanan for president. Jenkins should also benefit from Mary Landrieu's vulnerabilities: her association with New Orleans—her father was mayor—a city many of the state's rural citizens see as a den of iniquity; her strained ties with the Democratic establishment; and her failure to win the endorsement of her Democratic opponent, Richard Ieyoub.

On closer inspection, however, it's not obvious that any conservative tide will sweep Jenkins into the Senate. Bill Clinton leads in Louisiana, and he won the state four years ago with 46 percent of the vote. Foster's victory last year came against a weak opponent,

black liberal congressman Cleo Fields, and Foster himself has yet to issue an unqualified endorsement of Jenkins. And while all but one of Jenkins's Republican primary opponents have endorsed him, his devoutly conservative philosophy could cause trouble in the New Orleans suburbs and Acadiana, an important swing region in the south that is full of Cajun Catholics who support abortion rights. Most important, says John Maginnis, editor of the *Louisiana Political Fax Weekly* in Baton Rouge, is that the conditions fueling support for a figure like David Duke earlier this decade—severe economic distress due to the oil industry's collapse and a corrupt state government—have mostly disappeared.

While Jenkins is a polished, telegenic speaker who's made two previous runs for the Senate, his statewide profile is limited to abortion. He's best known for leading the 1990 fight to pass what would have been the nation's most restrictive abortion law and for occasionally bringing a plastic fetus onto the floor of the legislature. More broadly, he brags of never having voted for a tax increase during his 24-year legislative career. "If you like Ronald Reagan, if you like Mike Foster, you'll like Woody Jenkins," says the candidate, who until two years ago was a Democrat.

Kent Lemon

Louis "Woody" Jenkins

Actually, with his opposition to abortion, gun control, gay rights, and NAFTA, Jenkins is closer to Pat Buchanan than to Reagan or Foster. He's a founding member of the Council on National Policy, a conservative version of the Council on Foreign Relations, and was active in Friends of the Americas, a Cold War humanitarian group associated with Oliver North. This won't mean much in a campaign concentrating on domestic concerns, but Jenkins's close ties to reliably Republican groups ranging from the Christian Coalition to the state's 25,000 Amway representatives (Jenkins and his wife among them) will come in handy.

The Landrieu campaign has combed through Jenkins's thousands of votes in the legislature for 100 reasons why he's "too extreme for the United States Senate." Four of the first eight are votes opposing heavier penalties for drive-by shooters, criminal-background checks for nursing-home employees, criminalization of possession of a firearm on school property, and criminalization of spousal rape. Jenkins is also on the defensive over his proposal to scrap the income tax, abolish the IRS, and institute a national sales tax. Landrieu's campaign is distributing an article House majority leader Dick Armey wrote last year in which he lambastes the sales-tax idea. Her mantra has become, "Under Woody, every day is tax day."

Landrieu's deft positioning on taxes is part of her own version of triangulation. When announcing her Senate candidacy in May, she took the obligatory digs at Newt Gingrich, but she also declared that as a senator she would "say no to old-line Democrats who think that throwing money at every problem is the only viable solution." Thus, she's for the balanced budget amendment, a capital-gains tax cut, and Clintonesque tax credits for college tuition and day care. She also supported the welfare bill and favors the death penalty, a constitutional amendment banning flag burning, and citizens' right to carry concealed weapons. Gay marriage? She's against it. "Overall, my record has been very moderate," she told me, adding, "We need to find ways to give people a hand up, not a handout." A rare chink in her moderate armor is that she's accepted over $100,000 in bundled contributions from the feminist group Emily's List—a fact the Jenkins campaign is all too happy to point out.

To longtime observers of Louisiana politics, Landrieu's ascent is only natural. Her father, Moon Landrieu, was a reformist mayor of New Orleans from 1970 to 1977, who worked to integrate the city government (earning the moniker "Moon the Coon"), then spent four years as housing secretary in the Carter administration. While he was in Washington, Mary graduated from Louisiana State University and was elected to the state legislature in 1979 at the age of 23. She spent eight years there, then eight years as state treasurer, before unsuccessfully running for governor last year.

Yet for someone who has spent most of her adult life in the middle of Louisiana Democrats' crooked politics, Landrieu has steered clear of trouble and managed to carve out a reformist reputation. This has earned her the enmity of party barons such as the ethically challenged former governor Edwin Edwards. Her renegade position within the party will help her with

Republicans uneasy over Jenkins's conservatism, but Ed Renwick, a political scientist at Loyola University in New Orleans, points out that this benefit will likely be outweighed by her troubles with fund-raising and turnout among traditionally Democratic voters.

Blacks, indeed, are Landrieu's Achilles' heel. Unlike Edwards, she's never been a close political ally of the state's black leadership, and her standing sank further when she refused to endorse Cleo Fields after he narrowly defeated her in the gubernatorial primary last year.

Fields returned the snub by endorsing her Democratic opponent this year, Richard Ieyoub, and he has yet to endorse her against Jenkins. After a recent breakfast with Fields and Al Gore at the vice president's residence, Landrieu offered a half-baked apology, saying she was sorry if she had ever said or done anything that "offended anyone." Yet no specific reference was made to Fields, which is wise since Landrieu risks alienating whites if she's thought to be pandering to blacks. Nonetheless, with blacks about 25 percent of the state's registered voters, she needs them to vote in large numbers if she is to win.

The latest independent poll shows Landrieu leading statewide by six points, though the poll was conducted while state newspapers were flogging a story about the nine liens placed on a television station Jenkins owns. Jenkins professes not to be worried by the negative publicity, but it only underscores Landrieu's good-government credentials. She still has obstacles to overcome, from black indifference to lack of precedent for sending a woman to the Senate in a state that's elected only one woman to Congress. But when it comes to tradition, Jenkins may have the bigger problem: Louisianans have never elected a Republican senator. ♦

Bring Back Shotgun Weddings

by John J. Dilulio, Jr.

In the 1950s, a distant teenage relative of mine got pregnant out of wedlock. The father was a college boy who, despite repeated entreaties from the girl's mild-mannered papa, expressed absolutely no interest in marrying her and declared he had no intention of paying a dime's worth of child support. So her papa phoned one of the girl's doting uncles, a burly local politician with a well-deserved reputation as a street fighter and a license to carry a gun. After a "visit" from this uncle, the boy had a sudden change of heart. As family legend goes, he proposed on both knees and promised to provide for her until death—death being a subject that her uncle had helped him to confront. Within weeks, a wedding date was set. Within months, a bouncing baby boy was born. Within years, more children followed. The girl was happy, the children were happy, and all was matter-of-factly forgiven. "You see," her Italian grandmother used to say, "one man can make the babies, but sometimes other men have to make the fathers."

Believe it or not, the fall issue of the *Brookings Review* brought that anecdote to mind. There, in a conventional-wisdom-shattering article, husband-and-wife economists George A. Akerlof and Janet L. Yellen argue that a large part of the surge in illegitimacy is due to the demise of the shotgun wedding. "New Mothers, Not Married: Technology Shock, the Demise of Shotgun Marriage, and the Increase in Out-of-Wedlock Births" sums up for a public-policy audience the research findings Akerlof and Yellen published in the May 1996 *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. Their fresh insights are timely, given the latest intellectual bidding over welfare's role in promoting illegitimacy.

By now, almost everyone agrees that the runaway illegitimacy rate—32 percent of U.S. live births in 1995, up from just 5.3 percent in 1960—is ruinous. The spiral in violent youth crime, for example, and the increase in substantiated child abuse and neglect are linked to the proliferation of fatherless households. In today's tragic tangle of social pathology, welfare-dependent inner-city girls get impregnated by only-out-for-sex older men who have criminal records but no employment histories. Too often, the men hang around just long enough to maltreat the mothers and their offspring.

But the problem isn't only American. Between 1960 and 1992 the rate of "nonmarital births" (as the defining-deviancy-down demographers like to say) more than quintupled in almost every industrialized nation. On this measure, the United States is actually better off than Iceland (57 percent), Sweden (50 percent) and Denmark (46 percent), about even with France (33 percent) and the United Kingdom (30 percent), and worse off than Canada (27 percent) and Australia (24 percent).

Liberals and conservatives give different explanations for this illegitimate-baby boom. Conservative

analysts insist that since 1960 illegitimacy among low-income women has been driven skyward by perversely generous government welfare benefits that subsidize rather than stigmatize the irresponsible behavior of those who bear children outside marriage, often without the capacity to care for their young. Their solution: abolish or slash welfare. Liberals respond that welfare benefits have little, if any, effect on fertility. Their solution to illegitimacy: provide better "family planning services," including counseling, parenting classes, and easy-to-obtain abortions.

To date, the best scholarly summaries of the two points of view are Charles Murray's 1993 article in the *Journal of Labor Economics* and the 1995 Brookings volume *Looking Before We Leap: Social Science and Welfare Reform*, edited by R. Kent Weaver and William T. Dickens. Lately, the liberals have been losing empirical ground to Murray. For instance, there is now scattered evidence that welfare time limits may trim illegitimacy rates. And a recent study sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences suggests that among low-income women, every 1 percent increase in welfare benefits triggers a 1.2 percent increase in illegitimacy.

Still, neither side has clinched its case empirically. And some analysts are wary of both camps. In his Wriston Lecture at the Manhattan Institute in 1994, James Q. Wilson admonished both liberals and conservatives to face up to the fact that the recent debate about welfare reform and illegitimacy has been based almost entirely on "untested assumptions, ideological posturing, and perverse priorities." Clearly addressing himself mainly to conservative reformers, Wilson cautioned, "It is fathers whose behavior we most want to change, and nobody has yet explained how cutting off welfare to mothers will make biological fathers act like real fathers."

Thoughtful conservatives need to take heed and revisit the welfare/illegitimacy question. They should begin by considering Akerlof and Yellen's work. Fathers are very much on these authors' minds, though their story begins with what they call the "reproductive-technology shock."

Around 1970, observe Akerlof and Yellen, the United States and other industrialized democracies legalized abortion and made contraceptive aids more widely available, giving women unprecedented control over the number and timing of their children. Most observers expected the rate of illegitimate births to decline. But the opposite happened—because of the way the abortion-contraception shock undercut the longstanding custom of shotgun marriage.

"Before 1970," argue Akerlof and Yellen, "the stigma of unwed motherhood was so great that few women were willing to bear children outside of marriage. The only circumstance that would cause women to engage in sexual activity was a promise of marriage in the event of pregnancy. Men were willing to make (and keep) that promise, for they knew that in leaving one woman they would be unlikely to find another who would not make the same demand."

Abortion and contraception changed this. They made unwanted pregnancy seem avoidable and unwanted childbearing actually avoidable, at least for women willing to undergo abortion. As a result, more women chose to risk sexual activity without commitment. And the more they did, the less women in general enjoyed leverage over men, who now could leave one partner with a reasonable prospect of finding another willing to engage in sexual relations without any promises. Just as the sexual revolution made "the birth of the child the physical choice of the mother," write Akerlof and Yellen, it made "marriage and child support a social choice of the father."

Akerlof and Yellen chart the decline of shotgun marriage. In the period 1965-69, shotgun weddings were the norm in cases of premarital pregnancy. They estimate that nearly 60 percent of first-birth white women and a quarter of first-birth black women who conceived outside of marriage got the fathers to marry them. By the early 1980s, these rates had fallen sharply. "If the shotgun marriage rate had remained steady from 1965 to 1990," they maintain, "white out-of-wedlock births would have risen only 25 percent as much as they have. Black out-of-wedlock births would have increased only 40 percent as much."

So far, so insightful. Unfortunately, Akerlof and Yellen get cold feet at the public-policy altar. First, they mischaracterize Charles Murray as attributing the increase in illegitimacy simply "to overly generous federal welfare benefits." In fact, Murray was way ahead of them in arguing that out-of-wedlock childbearing has proliferated because it now results not in social ostracism but in its opposite—a gusher of financial and social support.

Then, though conceding that "federal benefits may play a role" in illegitimacy rates among blacks and low-income women for whom "an increase in welfare benefits has the same effect on out-of-wedlock births as a decline in the stigma to bearing a child out-of-wedlock," they go on to assert that cuts in welfare "would only further immiserize the victims." The honeymoon with welfare is never over.

But the biggest disappointment is what Akerlof and Yellen say about reproductive-technology shock and shotgun weddings. Reinstating restrictions on abortion and contraception, they argue, "would almost surely be counterproductive." By contrast, they

express confidence that men unwilling to marry can be held financially responsible by such popgun measures as child-support laws, plus schemes that "tax men for fathering children, thereby offsetting at least partially the change in terms between fathers and mothers."

It has been at least three decades since any major jurisdiction in America really enforced its child-support laws. Thirty years ago, non-supporters were viewed as lowlifes who needed not only to pay up but to be taught a lesson. Lawmen would cross state lines to bring back fathers who fled; one from Philadelphia recalled flying all the way to California to capture a single deadbeat. But today's federal, state, and local child-support laws, like child-abuse and statutory-rape laws, are largely a farce, especially when fathers change residences, change states, or visit state pens for other crimes. I doubt the IRS could do better by taxing the bums.

Yet James Q. Wilson is right: We have to find ways of changing fathers' behavior. This means pushing childbearing back into marriage—that is, delegitimizing the non-marital childbearing that now occurs on a mass scale. I, for one, would bet on three approaches.

¶First, follow Wilson's advice in *Commentary* and elsewhere and make welfare payments for teenage mothers contingent on their living in adult-supervised settings. The new welfare law does nothing of the sort.

¶Second, tie welfare for teenage mothers to the work of churches that monitor, mentor, and minister to at-risk youth, teaching and preaching absolute moral prohibitions against premarital sex. Organize women to teach young girls what's really at stake, why they should just say no, and to whom they should turn if anyone, especially an older man, won't take no for an answer.

¶Last but not least, bring back the shotgun wedding. Start by acknowledging in plain language that most men, especially young ones, will take sex without commitment and without honor if you offer it free of any adverse consequence. Admit that abortion and contraception are culprits in raising illegitimacy rates and in fostering the feminization of poverty. Don't settle for biological fathers' support payments; demand their positive, permanent presence where women and children need them and their entire earnings. And again, use churches and other local institutions to publicize the names and games of sex scammers. Organize committees of clergy and other men to visit those who hit and run. Have the precinct police crack down hard on domestic abuse of women and children. And treat the statutory rape of poor black girls with the same moral seriousness that liberal elites now lavish on "date rape" on college campuses.

And remember: The worst consequences of the illegitimacy spiral for every race and place have yet to be felt. The 68.1 percent of blacks and 22.6 percent of whites born out of wedlock in 1992 will not reach the all-hell-breaks-loose age of 14 until the year 2006, which is still all of a decade away.

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How To Win

Memorandum to: Bob Dole
From: Mike Murphy

As you will recall, I was in the business of giving you paid advice until Don Sipple and I resigned in early September. We were frustrated with the campaign, and they were frustrated with us. But you deserve to win—and you still can. So here's some free advice.

What you need is a good three-week blitz campaign. That means a simple message, a focused effort, and plenty of risk-taking.

The bad news is that Clinton has stolen the middle. The good news is that you can let him have it. Sure he is faking it, but there is not enough time, nor enough media honesty, to undo his year-long thievery. Look at it in reverse: You are safe, since you and Clinton *agree* on the popular stuff—world peace, welfare reform, balancing the budget. So make the election about two very big *differences*: Only Bob Dole will cut your taxes. And only Bob Dole tells the truth.

In every election, you need to figure out what central questions you want voters thinking about when they enter the polling booth. In this election, the questions should be these: Do I want a tax cut? Do I want a president who tells the truth? If those are the questions, the answer will be Bob Dole.

So here's how to win:

One. Stop all the useless polling and focus groups. Dole for President has polled and focus-grouped its way to disaster. Any poll taken today will give the same toxic advice: Be more like Clinton. Worse, polls and focus groups are behind the really numbskull ideas, like "mention the Internet in your big debate close." You deserve better. End the madness, ban the polls and focus groups, and remember: Good campaigns move polls, they don't surrender to them.

Two. Order the door taken off every office on the 10th floor of headquarters. Create a culture more like a campaign and less like the Kremlin.

Three. Stop traveling to the wrong places. You should put your time and the campaign's money in the true swing states: Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, California, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri. Spending limited media money and candidate time in near-base states like Florida and Arizona isn't a strategy: It's a surrender. It wastes time and money on states you will win anyway, *if you win*. I can just hear the Clinton troops howling with laughter every time Dole for President sends another half-million to Florida. Sure, the polls—making trouble again—show you slightly behind in these base states. But if you fall into the trap of spending in your base, a national loss is guaranteed, since it defunds the vital swing states. So, *play to win*, and let the national free media, Kemp, the debates, surrogates, and the like deliver the base states. If you can't come back enough to win the base states without big investments in time and money, it is over. Gamble to win, not to lose.

Four. Turn operations in those swing states over to the governors. Ridge, Engler, Whitman, Voinovich, Sundquist, and Wilson all know how to win their states better than your campaign does. Surrender event and schedule control to them for the last three weeks. Give them authority over all radio advertising, telephoning, and direct mail in their states.

Five. You only need three 30-second spots; one for each of the two big questions, and one comparison spot to remind everybody about the other guy. Run nothing but those three spots until the election. Don't go in for tit-for-tat on small issues with Clinton; that will just grind you down on defense.

Spot One should make it crystal clear Bob Dole will cut taxes 15 percent. Avoid the silly complications of the message that foolish focus groups have forced on your earlier advertising. I know: Nobody yet believes in your tax cut. It's true, they don't. Polls always show voters disbelieving political promises. They didn't believe Christie Whitman or John Engler at this stage either. But look at what voters actually do, not what they tell pollsters. People vote for tax cuts. And they'll believe you enough by election day if you continue to hammer the message home.

Spot Two should remind us all that a president must tell the truth, and Bob Dole does.

Spot Three should compare: Clinton is against cutting taxes and does not tell the truth; the only candidate who will cut taxes and tell the truth is Bob Dole.

Six. Produce three half-hour "man in the arena" TV shows, one for each of the remaining Sunday nights on the networks. You answer questions from a real audience; not a circus, but not a softball contest either. You should risk hard questions; it's the only way to hit a real home run.

Seven. Be yourself. Loosen up on the road with the press. Sure, they're mostly for Clinton. But you showed charm and humor in the debate. Let America see it on the news every night. Puncture the bubble so you can go out and make some news.

At worst, a strong final three-week effort will protect your fellow Republicans in the House and Senate. At best, it will give America the better man by far. You're at your best when times are tough. Start blitzing.

Mike Murphy is a GOP media consultant who has worked on campaigns for Govs. John Engler, Christie Whitman, and Terry Branstad.

What Happened to Newt Gingrich?

By David Brooks

Greensboro, N.C.

The longer you watch Newt Gingrich, the less you know about him. He creates a striking first impression as the self-declared Man of Destiny, but over time the clarity of that self-made Newt dissolves, and a humbler, more modest, and more enigmatic Gingrich drifts into view. If you formed your impression of Newt Gingrich at the dawn of the 104th Congress, when the magazine covers were rife with his caricature, it is likely that everything you know about Gingrich is wrong.

I

The leaders of the conservative movement have now fallen out of love with the speaker, and he with them. "Movement conservatives are wonderfully critical in a way that bears almost no relationship with political reality," Gingrich says now. "It seems to make them feel good."

The split is deeper than any policy disagreement. It goes to demeanor. Conservatives prize the vigorous virtues—the virtues of a leader who is self-disciplined, robust, loyal to friends, and fierce against foes. Gingrich lauds those virtues too, and so at first glance promises to be an American version of the Iron Lady. But in fact, Gingrich is a much more mercurial figure than Margaret Thatcher. "He's a very emotional man," says Republican whip Tom DeLay, stressing the quality that recurs in conversations about Gingrich. House Republicans were initially surprised by this, but then came to accept Gingrich's sudden bursts of emotion. As he spoke at a caucus meeting in the spring about how the Republicans had become a family, Gingrich's eyes suddenly welled up with tears, and the room fell uncomfortably silent. In August he cried at a meeting with *Washington Post* editors while contemplating Jack Kemp's love of his children. And there was at least one moment during the budget crisis when he sobbed uncontrollably under the strain, hugged and comforted by his wife and Rep. Steve Gunderson—an episode that was later described in detail on the *Post*'s front page.

"That's so unlike my own way . . ." one Republican intimate trails off while trying to solve the puzzle of Gingrich's emotional openness. Conservatives are a reticent bunch, normally contemptuous of emotional display and overt sentiment. In conservative talk about Gingrich, even among those who still admire him, you can hear unspoken doubts about the speaker's manliness. The traits that would humanize the speaker with Barbara Walters raise concerns among conservative elites.

Those doubts were reinforced during the 1995 budget negotiations themselves, when conservatives discovered that Gingrich is far from the ruthless extremist the newsweeklies had made him out to be. Gingrich, as he himself later confessed, "melted" in Clinton's presence. Conservatives say he was soft in those meetings, too eager to seek the middle ground and to trust in the good faith of the other side.

But the most serious strains have surfaced since the budget ordeal. Gingrich fell from public view in the spring (though he remained active within Congress), and when he emerged, many conservatives were hoping for a return to what he called "permanent offense." The idea was that the country is still basically hostile to government, and that if Gingrich would hammer away on his visionary themes, regardless of short-term polling, then eventually the country would grow at least to respect him. Right-wingers were looking for Gingrich to remain the chief articulator of conservative ideas.

What they got instead was a strategy that the activists and writers deride as "Dare to be Dull." Gingrich's conservative critics say that the strategy was engineered by Gingrich's secretive political adviser, Joe Gaylord, who emerges in the conservative demonology as Gingrich's Dick Morris. Gaylord, according to his rivals, believed that the economy would tank in 1996 and that if Gingrich lay low, Clinton would get the blame. A hard-headed political operative and thus thoroughly poll-driven, Gaylord was interested in getting Gingrich's approval ratings up. His advice dovetailed with the pressure from congressional colleagues to be relentlessly upbeat. "I would

talk in terms of positives. Use fewer attack lines. Just constantly be positive. Be a little happier. Joke more," advises DeLay. And Gingrich agrees: "I think you *should* stay positive. It's good for television. You *should* smile."

The Deaveresque strategy manifested itself in a number of ways. There were several high-profile media appearances of an entirely non-political nature, the most notorious of which came when Gingrich found himself struggling with a squealing pig as Jay Leno looked on, aghast. There was also, with the help of pollster Frank Luntz, a vigorous search for phrases that would make the Republican record sound as unobjectionable as possible. Suddenly the daring thinker with the 50-year time horizons was tailoring his language to the poll results of the previous week. ("We tested it," he boasts after one of his speech lines goes over especially well.) Instead of talking in his dazzling way about great historical trends, Gingrich tried to use language to inoculate himself against his liberal critics. His Republican convention speech was anodyne. At the Williamsburg debate with other congressional leaders, he followed the gentle Luntzian script.


Kevin Chadwick

Through summer and fall, Gingrich's spirits and approval ratings improved, but conservatives still complained about his tendency to swing wildly between attempts to appear cuddly (often with animals) and fits of purposeless anger. He seemed unable to refrain from attacking the media. He placed calls to conservative television pundits to repeat his charges of media bias. His conversation returned incessantly to the perfidy of David Bonior, his chief Democratic tormentor on the ethics charges. Some conservatives wondered about his resilience, and the thinness of his skin. He seemed to many to be on permanent defense.

Defensiveness in public was accompanied by defensiveness on Capitol Hill. Congress approved a minimum-wage hike without much protest, and there were concessions galore on the 1997 budget. And so began the debate in right-wing circles on whether Gingrich had ever really been conservative. "He's randomly conservative," says a senior congressional Republican. "He has no conservative instincts," says another House member. "He's conservative, but not in any conventional sense," says a longtime colleague. "I knew a lot of people were going to get their heart broken with him. He believes in what is expedient," a movement leader tells his friends. Paul Weyrich was willing to wrap up the anti-Gingrich view on the record in *Rolling Stone*: "Newt's a brilliant fellow who is very able to excite people and motivate them, but he believes in very little, so most of his views are negotiable. Newt creates scenarios for himself, and he becomes morally certain that they are going to play out. Then when it doesn't happen, he goes into a blue funk."

Conservatives are still willing to be dazzled. A brilliant foreign-policy speech last month before the Center for Security Policy had right-wingers reminiscing about their feelings for him before the Great Disillusion. But by now most conservative elites consider themselves to be in a tactical alliance with Gingrich and nothing more. Others speculate on a leadership challenge if the Republicans keep the Congress with a reduced majority.

"My job is to do everything I can to reelect a majority while movement critics attack us for not having been pure enough to make sure we lost the majority," Gingrich counters, with anger in his voice.

II

It's cold for an October day in North Carolina, and the golfers on the first tee at the Forest Oaks Country Club are jumping up and down to get warm. This club is a stop on the PGA Tour, and the parking lot is filled with cars bearing Republican bumper stickers, and probably would be even if some of the local congressmen weren't holding a fund-raiser here. Inside, businessmen and eminences are milling about. Each country club has its own pecking order, and at the top

of this one is a big, athletic-looking man in a pink golf shirt and bright green sweater, bragging to a klatch of younger executives how much he's enjoying retirement.

There are four Republican congressmen circulating in this most Republican of environments. Three of the congressmen seem to rank below the guy in the bright green sweater, but when the speaker of the House arrives he becomes the center of the room. A minister offers a blessing—"Lord, we gather here together not, as the dominant media culture would have it, to starve the poor, kick the elderly . . ."—and then the speaker gets up to the podium. His speech is orthodox Republicanism. Taxes are too high. The federal bureaucracy wastes money. Drugs are a menace. We should expand the death penalty. There's no Third Wave vision here, no big theories about the march of history or grandiose historical parallels. On the contrary, the speaker is willfully pedestrian. On everybody's chair is a mimeograph showing two checks for $1,261, one made out to "My Family," another made out to "The IRS." The speaker asks which check the 100 or so members of the audience would rather have. That's about as abstract as the economic portion of the speech gets.

WHILE GINGRICH MAY HAVE HIS TROUBLES WITH CONSERVATIVES, AMONG ROCK-RIBBED REPUBLICANS HE IS A SUCCESS.

He holds up a bucket and tells the story of how the Democratic leadership had government workers delivering ice to congressional offices even though the refrigerator had been invented 80 years before. "You could always find the ice bucket," the speaker jokes. "It was melting right next to the refrigerator." A table of senior citizens erupts in laughter. The stories of government waste are concrete and lowbrow: a few thousand here and there wasted to subsidize a congressional shoeshine stand, parking spaces for lobbyists, a congressional beauty parlor, and the congressional post office. The Republicans ended that. Efficient government is a theme that goes back before Sam Snead's first win at the Greensboro tournament. It's a very successful speech—familiar, comfortable, yet delivered with passion, and the crowd applauds enthusiastically, as the speaker wraps up and heads out the door.

Gingrich at these moments is very far from the professorial pose and the lecturing style that have proved unpopular. After the event, he climbs into his van with his daughter Kathleen (who owns some coffee shops in Greensboro) and his one traveling aide. His spirits are high, as he bounces from one Republican fund-raiser to another. And from the conversations and reception at the country club, you're reminded once again that while Gingrich may have his troubles with conservatives, among rock-ribbed Republicans he is a success.

It's ironic. Gingrich set out to launch a conservative revolution. But his successes so far have come as a pre-ideological Republican. He set out to be Thatcher, but has succeeded so far as a superior Bob Dole. He has reorganized the way the House works, reduced waste, clarified decision-making, and, within the confines of the House, has been a brilliant legislative manager. "Moving legislation was much harder than we expected," says retiring Republican Bob Walker, who was part of the leadership team. "We had to spend enormous amounts of time putting together coalitions; all of us were astounded by the difficulty of it."

Gingrich is simply unmatched as a tactician. Much of the work is mundane: how to keep everyone informed about upcoming decisions; how much power to give to committee chairmen, how much to give to task forces; when to intervene in appropriations disputes and when not to; how to balance the influence of the conservatives and the moderates; when to reward loyalists with conference committee assignments and punish dissenters by withholding foreign travel. *Congressional Quarterly* summed up his success at these things: "He in fact has evolved into one of the most effective speakers of modern times."

Within the halls of Congress, Gingrich seems driven more by the management ideas of Peter Drucker than the free-market theory of Adam Smith or, to move from the sublime to the ridiculous, the futurism of Alvin Toffler. He takes his various management formulas seriously and is immensely proud when one of his "After Action Reviews" detects an error in his own management technique. "We went back and did an After Action Review and learned we weren't communicating very well," he says, with the air of an engineer who has triumphantly solved a problem. Colleagues know that he will not necessarily come down on the conservative side of intra-Republican disputes. He preserved certain types of agriculture subsidies—peanuts, for example—to help vulnerable Republicans. And often he will sacrifice his views for the sake of getting some larger piece of legislation passed.

Riding in the van in North Carolina, I asked Gingrich to describe an instance in which his conservative convictions had guided him through a legislative morass when he could have been distracted by politi-

cal expediency. Gingrich pointed to the conclusion of the legislative term:

"A good example is our decision to get out by the 27th of September. We use a planning model of Visions, Strategies, Projects, and Tactics and a leadership model of Listen, Learn, Help, and Lead, and we made the decision at the Vision and Strategy level in late June that one of the key criteria for keeping Congress was to get out of session by September 27, and that the worst for us was to be in a fight over a potential shutdown and be in session in October. We paid $6 billion in ransom on the premise that in any circumstance you would pay $3 billion. . . . Our conservative critics don't have a clue how hard it is, and they keep nagging us, Why don't we pick a fight over $100 million at the margin that will keep us in session an extra week and risk losing control of Congress? That's a very good example of long-range vision versus tactical considerations. This was truly a strategic victory, to get out of session."

In fact, of course, it was just the reverse. The decision to agree to $6 billion in increased spending was a triumph of short-term political considerations—the desire to campaign for reelection—over long-range vision—reducing the size of government. Gingrich probably made the right decision. A concession on spending meant his members would have an extra week in their districts to campaign. But his description is an example of how he has become a much more traditional speaker than anyone could have predicted, of the way logistics and political necessity are necessarily foremost in his mind, at the occasional cost of ideological purity.

His nimble footwork in Congress has made him much more popular there than he is in the country at large. At the start of the Congress, when the conservative revolution was riding high, he was protective of the Republican moderates. This year, with the moderates happy, he has been careful to do all he can to help vulnerable conservatives. The people who have done the most to canvass the mood of the Republican caucus say that Gingrich's status as speaker is secure if the Republicans retain a majority. Despite some talk among conservatives, there will probably be no leadership challenge.

Bob Walker says Gingrich's coming task is to build more bipartisan coalitions: "He has to be seen as speaker of the whole House. As he puts forth working groups and task forces, he has to reach out to Democrats who share the basic approach." Which may be easier than anyone would have imagined a year ago. In closing out this session, Gingrich gave a final speech that was meant as a bookend to the speech he gave on the opening day. At its end, the House rose and gave Gingrich a standing ovation. All of the Republicans stood, and so did about 90 percent of the *Democrats*.

"There was this sudden spontaneous standing ovation that went on for over two minutes," Gingrich remembers, "which is a very long time if you're the one standing there watching it. I was astonished by it and the truth is I don't know why it happened."

III

Gingrich's van pulls up at a stop and a group of local reporters are huddled around for their scheduled press availability. The speaker steps up to the microphones and hoists the ice bucket in the air and gives his ice-bucket spiel. Then he lifts the paper with the two $1,261 checks and does his "My Family" or "The IRS" bit. That done, a local TV reporter finally gets to ask why it is that the Republican message doesn't seem to be getting through.

"Because you lie about our record," Gingrich declares.

Gingrich is far more flexible than Thatcher. He is less ideological. He is more emotional and mercurial. But in one regard he really is her American counterpart: He just can't resist going into enemy territory. If he sees a stronghold or institution that is hostile to him, he does not simply avoid it, as most people do. He charges at it with a battering ram. He may or may not be a believer in orthodox conservatism, but he is a believer in conflict. Gingrich seems to see politics as Thatcher did, as a series of campaigns against corrupt institutions. For Thatcher it was the unions, the Argentines, and the Eurocrats. With Gingrich, it's the media, the union bosses, and David Bonior. Notice, though, that Gingrich's current fights are not matters of high ideology. He's not brawling with the unions over some workplace policy; it's simply that they're spending $35 million to try to take away his majority. These are street-level fights for power.

> IN ONE REGARD GINGRICH REALLY IS THATCHER'S AMERICAN COUNTERPART: HE JUST CAN'T RESIST GOING INTO ENEMY TERRITORY.

To him, it's war, two armies bent on each other's destruction. George Will recently criticized Gingrich for relying on military metaphors, but Gingrich defends his military mode of thinking about politics:

"When I'm thinking about a campaign, I plan a campaign. In that world that's how I think, and I think my track record is pretty good."

And he does describe politics in totalistic terms. "I was literally thinking of Wellington this morning, because we are entering the crisis of this campaign. . . . I wouldn't assume we'd keep a majority. I am very worried by the size of the union effort. I think this is sort of Armageddon. This campaign is much tougher and much more dishonest than I expected. They're spending far more money than has ever been spent in American history." Gingrich's view of the other side is indeed apocalyptic. "People like Bonior hate me. It's personal. Anything they do to me is legitimate because I'm the man who took away their power. . . . They lie. . . . They made a deliberate decision to break the law."

Once, Gingrich was known as a Republican who courted media heavyweights. But now he relentlessly bashes reporters, to their faces, not only for bias but for sloppiness and incompetence. Jackie Koszczuk covers Gingrich for the *Congressional Quarterly* and is the author of the most sophisticated and balanced of the recent profiles. Yet in composing it, she had to overcome Gingrich's adversarial tone during their interview. "By the end of it I felt very attacked," she says. "He made his dim view of my profession known."

Gingrich wants nothing less than to undermine the media's legitimacy. His media-bashing, he says, "educates the public so they are much more skeptical of the press than they were ten years ago. Every time the press is biased or unfair in its treatment, if you don't say that's biased and unfair people think that's normal. You have an obligation to report to the public their bias."

Thatcher was secure enough in her person that she could survive these brutal political fights and a life of constant vilification by her enemies. New York mayor Rudy Giuliani has a skin tough enough so that he can retain his equanimity even while he is picking one street brawl after another. But many of Gingrich's friends wonder whether he has the same personality.

For one thing, Gingrich is not as blasé about media criticism as Thatcher was (she almost never read the newspapers). Instead, his conversation is littered with protests at press barbs. ("George Will had a snippy column about me using the ice bucket. He probably would have denigrated Lincoln with the log cabin. He doesn't get it.") And he and his staff do seem to use press coverage, as most politicians do, as a way of keeping score. When the Democrats got better press during the budget crisis, that was judged a political defeat.

Furthermore, Gingrich is an American, in many ways a quintessential American, and Americans want to be liked. In Britain they name their avenues after battles they *lost*; Thatcher could draw on a culture that prizes bloody-minded resistance. But Americans don't live easily with unpopularity. Gingrich brazenly says he's happy to live in national disfavor. He sometimes puts himself beside Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas as defiant conservatives who, in Dan Quayle's words, wear media scorn as a badge of honor. He says he can wait for historians of the next century to rescue his reputation. But intimates doubt Gingrich is really able to go through life unpopular. They say he lacks an airtight group of family-like intimates that can serve as a fortress against the world's opprobrium. "He relies on politics for his friendships," says one friend. Another colleague illustrates Gingrich's hunger for human contact by recalling that when Gingrich used to campaign he would pass out lapel stickers for admirers to wear reading "Friend of Newt."

It's impossible to imagine Margaret Thatcher handing out pseudo-intimate stickers reading "Friend of Maggie." Gingrich may have Thatcher's taste for conflict, but the struggle itself probably comes harder to him because he is not impervious to the arrows of combat. He is, in the end, a more normal human being.

IV

Given how badly the media have described the speaker in the past, only a fool would venture forth and declare that he has now located the key to The Real Newt Gingrich. We know for sure that he is not the Scrooge-like figure described by the newsweeklies. That was a phantasm derived from reporters' own stereotypes. But it remains terribly difficult to put together the fragments of Gingrich's life in one coherent picture.

He may not contain multitudes, but he certainly contains a number of different and contradictory sides. There is the self-made image of the Great Historical Figure, and then there is the more complex, organic Gingrich. And you can never tell which side is stronger. Is he the conservative visionary or the opportunistic politician? The philosopher king or the legislative tactician? The five-step management guru or the instinctive decision-maker? The iron-willed streetfighter or the instinctive compromiser who wants to be loved?

If the Republicans lose control of the House, then Gingrich's political career will be effectively over, and we will have wasted one of the most interesting political minds of our time. Or he may also be brought

down by the remaining ethics charges against him, which are being taken seriously even by Gingrich's political allies (despite Gingrich's own dismissive rebuttals). The rumor mill is rife with gossip about sloppy accounting among the various enterprises that make up Newtworld. All in all, if the fall does come, his will be an old-fashioned story about hubris, but also a modern story about life in the media age. Gingrich became nationally famous all at once. The media were forced to come up with an instant identity for him. They came up with an inaccurate one, and in some way Gingrich fed their prejudices with his awful decision to sign a lucrative book deal and other blunders. Had fame come to him more slowly, then people would have come gradually to see his many sides, and they would have come to treasure him more.

But if the Republicans keep the House, then Gingrich will come back, for there is no untruer truism than Fitzgerald's claim that there are no second acts in American lives. Gingrich will have natural advantages. A reelected President Clinton will want to pass some legislation, and given the fractiousness of the Democratic party, he will have to rely often on a legislative strategist of Gingrich's caliber. The public will see Gingrich's constructive side. And while some conservatives may doubt his loyalty to conservative principle, Gingrich is far more ideologically rooted than Bill Clinton. His pull on legislation will be substantial.

Then in 1998, if historical trends hold true, the Republicans will gain seats in the House, and Gingrich will see his stature enhanced. At that point it will be possible to see his speakership lasting a long time (assuming he ignores his silly pledge to term-limit himself). The odd thing for a self-described revolutionary is that Gingrich does worst when time is compressed, when a lot of things happen at once. At such moments, his passions come to the surface, his desire for conflict seems angriest, his brain is at its most hyperactive, and his skin is thinnest. Gingrich does best when time stretches out, over the long haul (as in the struggle to gain the majority). In those circumstances, Gingrich's ability to see more broadly and imagine farther serves him well. And his ability to keep his focus on a distant goal while other people are distracted by temporary phenomena comes to the fore. If Gingrich survives this election, he will be able slowly to rebuild, and he will have the opportunity to dominate the coming era. ♦

The Quixotic Quest for the Perfect Dole Picture

By Tucker Carlson

The Meadowlands, N.J.

On the night of the first presidential debate, in a cramped hotel room near Giants Stadium, three members of the Dole campaign's advance team mix a round of gin-and-Diet-Cokes and settle in to watch their candidate. The advancemen are tired, having worked 18-hour days for most of the week preparing for Dole's bus trip across New Jersey, and they stare intently as the opening statements begin. Soon, the advancemen begin to chortle, softly at first, then with gusto at every wearily familiar phrase that passes from the candidate's lips. Shaking with laughter at the senator's asides, they pound the arms of their chairs in enthusiasm. To the advancemen watching from the hotel room, Bob Dole is positively mopping up the opposition: *Take that, Bill Clinton*.

Bob Dole's advancemen may be the last of the true believers on the Republican presidential campaign. While just about everybody else involved in Dole '96, including the candidate himself, appears at times to have lost faith, many advancemen still believe victory is possible. That attitude is a symptom of the self-delusion that tends to infect political campaigns—the ability that campaign staff have to talk themselves into believing what they have to believe to get up in the morning and go cheerfully to work. And from an advanceman's narrow perspective, the Dole campaign *is* succeeding: Crowds turn out at events, there are enough signs to go around, the music is upbeat, the rallies look good on television. Almost every appearance begins on time. The only thing missing is an inspiring candidate to put in front of the backdrop.

If it is true that a modern political campaign is little more than a theatrical presentation, then advancemen are its roadies, gaffers, and choreographers. They attend to the thousand details that make a successful political rally possible, from finding a suitable site to hiring contractors to build the stage to making certain the local cops get to pose with the candidate before he rolls off to yet another appearance. Most of all, it is the advancemen who attempt to orchestrate The Picture—the footage or photograph that will end up defining the event for the rest of the country. Jeffrey Weiss, the Dole advanceman who prepared much of the candidate's recent trip through New Jersey, sums up his job without hesitation or embarrassment. "The Picture," he says, "is everything."

Attention to detail makes a good picture, and advancemen labor to let no detail pass unnoticed. Moments before Dole was scheduled to conduct a live television interview last week with the nascent Fox News Channel, an advanceman determined that a pile of books stacked spine-outward on a coffee table next to the candidate's chair might distract from the day's intended message. The volumes—*The Age of Delirium*, *Hazardous Duty*, and *The Making of a Catastrophe*—promptly disappeared, replaced by a Rush Limbaugh book. Likewise, Dole's advance team takes no chances with news photographers. From the moment the press buses open their doors in front of a rally, anyone with a camera is herded by campaign staffers to specially cordoned-off areas. If advancemen have choreographed the event well—and under the direction of legendary Dole advance chief Jim Hooley, they usually have—a photographer's every vantage will show Dole with the sun on his face and a campaign poster behind him. To ensure the candidate plays along, advancemen frequently place masking-tape markers on the ground in places where Dole will look best in photographs.

Pitted against the advanceman in his pursuit of The Picture are members of the plainclothes Secret Service detail. As a rule, Secret Service agents couldn't be less interested in how a candidate looks, only in his safety, and they make demands accordingly. For one recent rally, advancemen show up with a box of miniature American flags (items that, along with campaign signs, pompoms, foam fingers, and other political trinkets, are known in advance parlance as "chum") for spectators to wave as Dole speaks. An hour before the event begins, an agent offhandedly declares that the flags will not be allowed. His reasoning: "People could rip the flags off and throw the sticks." It's not clear who would do the throwing, since the crowd this day consists almost exclusively of middle-aged and elderly supporters, some in wheelchairs. Nor are the sticks themselves—flimsy softwood dowels about the diameter of a pencil—very threatening weapons. But no matter: The flags stay in their boxes.

Unreasonable directives like this—and security officials on the campaign trail issue many of them every day—have caused some campaign staffers to hypothesize that the Secret Service employs a Chief Paranoid, an edgy man in a basement office somewhere whose job it is to envision every way a presidential candidate could possibly be killed, maimed, or embarrassed. "If it was up to the Secret Service," says one staffer, "Dole would be traveling in an iron box with a slit to give speeches out of." As it is, advancemen do their best to accommodate the Secret Service. It's not easy, since, in addition to a tendency to paranoia, Secret Service agents are notorious for being rude, even threateningly hostile, to just about anyone below the rank of the candidate himself. At an open-air event in New Jersey not long ago, one hulking agent in a crew cut screamed in the face of a 24-year-old Dole volunteer simply for parking a car incorrectly. "They think with their guns," says a longtime campaign aide.

A SECRET SERVICE AGENT DECLARES THE FLAGS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED. HIS REASONING: "PEOPLE COULD RIP THE FLAGS OFF AND THROW THE STICKS."

The average advanceman can spend hours a day wrangling with Secret Service agents—to their grief at times; it was a Secret Service demand that a fake fence remain unsecured that led to Dole's fall from the stage in Chico, Calif.—but this is hardly the worst part of the job. The worst part of the job is escorting senior campaign staff to events. Secret Service agents may be suspicious and surly, but at least they have a clear purpose. In the Dole campaign, senior staff often do not. Many consider their presence on the campaign trail a nuisance and a distraction, even a bad omen. "As soon as a lot of senior staff and advisers started traveling with the campaign, we started going down in the polls," says one advanceman. "Is there a connection? You tell me."

With little to do, advisers often take to pestering advancemen with questions: *When is Dole coming? Where can I find a phone? Where can I sit down?* Anything to avoid appearing irrelevant. It doesn't always work. At a rally at a Toms River high school in New

Jersey last week, a cluster of Dole advisers stand idly next to "Asphalt II," a converted tour bus outfitted with mobile office equipment. The bus, though freshly painted, has the feeling of a relic—and indeed it is, having served the same function in campaigns past, including Bush '92 and Forbes '96. In front of the bus a line of teenage cheerleaders enthusiastically sway to the rhythm of "Play that Funky Music, White Boy," performed in this case by a mostly black ensemble. The advisers look as road-worn as the bus. There's Charlie Black, veteran of at least six presidential campaigns, many of them losing, sharing a cigarette with Margaret Tutwiler, late of the Bush administration. Beside them in gray suit and Raybans is Martin Anderson, a onetime Reagan administration economist who now resides at the Hoover Institution when he's not traveling with Dole in his capacity as . . . as what? Senior adviser?

That may be his official title, but Anderson doesn't look like he has been doing a lot of advising lately. For the moment, he makes like the rest of the Dole brain trust and stares glumly off into space. A rally the next day finds Anderson, wearing the same suit, doing much the same thing. As Dole speaks—"It's your money! It's your money! It's your money!" he chants to the crowd, not very convincingly—Anderson lurks alone by the side of the stage fidgeting with a small instamatic camera, the kind tourists take to Disney World. He is trying to get a shot of Dole for the photo album back home, but Secret Service agents keep getting in the way. Anderson looks faintly sad, and in this he is no different from many on the campaign. "The atmosphere is funerary," admits one staff member. "You get the feeling that to say anything hopeful would be in poor taste."

Between jumpy Secret Service agents and morose senior staff, the Dole campaign is full of distractions for advancemen. The best among them seem able to shut off their peripheral vision and focus wholly on the immediate goal, The Picture. At a red light in midtown Manhattan last week, en route to a Dole fundraiser at a nearby hotel, advanceman Damon Moley found himself with car trouble. As a rush-hour crowd of pedestrians watched, acrid smoke began to billow from under the car's hood, while pints of unidentifiable green fluid leaked from the engine into the crosswalk. The light changed and the drivers trapped behind him honked furiously, but Moley simpy abandoned his car in the intersection and casually walked the remaining blocks to the fund-raiser. It was hours before he bothered to call a tow truck.

Moley's single-mindedness is common among advancemen on the Dole campaign. Yet even the most skilled advance work cannot by itself create a successful political rally. On the first day of his bus trip through New Jersey, Dole was scheduled to appear at the state's memorial to Vietnam War dead. From an advanceman's point of view, the venue was perfect, an austerely handsome open amphitheater ringed with black granite. The weather was unusually pleasant for fall, providing ample light for the 30-odd assembled cameramen. And the planned program couldn't have been better: As Dole laid a wreath at the foot of a statue depicting a fallen serviceman, a lone bugler played "Taps." A row of wizened veterans, simultaneously noble and sad, stood at attention in the background, bright flags fluttering gently behind them. Next to

Dole: Christie Whitman, the state's popular governor, and her husband, a decorated Vietnam veteran.

The Perfect Picture? The advancemen certainly did their job, and the program came off with few hitches. But Dole never actually *said* anything: No attack on Clinton's draft dodging or foreign policy, no vision for the future of the military, not even his own experiences in the Big One. Instead he walked slowly through the crowd, saying little. "How'd it go last night?" asked a reporter, referring to the debate. "Oh, it went all right," Dole replied. Apparently unable to bear Dole's lame response, Christie Whitman jumped in. "It went great! Great!" she shouted, sounding a lot like a protective mother speaking up for a meek child.

Even a war memorial makes for dull film footage after a while, and since Dole was mostly silent, the news crews were restless. When a Dole supporter, a loud man in his 50s who appeared drunk, yelled out that Clinton was a "creep and a lowlife," he was instantly swarmed with cameras. Reporters rushed in to record his opinions, and suddenly no one was paying attention to Dole. Somehow the campaign has overlooked the most basic law of the media: News coverage gravitates toward the most stimulating point. In this case, that point was not Bob Dole. Despite the pretty backdrop, he was boring.

These days, even the most optimistic advancemen may be losing confidence in Dole's ability as a candidate. "When you're 20 points down, it's not because of logistical problems," says one. Recently, one of the senior members of the advance team, a man with years of experience orchestrating The Picture, summed it up. "We keep putting Dole into Reaganesque settings," he said. "Only problem is, he's not Reagan." ♦

John Sweeney and the State of His Union

By Matt Labash

A year ago, John Sweeney swept away the forces of Lane Kirkland to become president of the AFL-CIO. His triumph was hailed in the media as reinvigorating the labor movement with a breath of go-go progressive air.

Sweeney soon announced the change of a decades-old ritual, the winter executive-council meeting (known by union wags as "the beaching of the whales"). This is where labor bosses with pocked slabs of fat cushioning what used to be their obliques smoke fine cigars under Bal Harbour cabanas, displaying to the average $30,000-a-year pipefitter how fiscally responsible they are with his membership dues. The image-conscious Sweeney decided that no longer would the meeting be held at the four-star, $250-plus-a-night Bal Harbour Sheraton; instead, it would be held at the four-star, $200-plus-a-night Regal Biltmore in Los Angeles. (Although the Paris apartment and the corporate jet have stayed.)

Furthermore, Sweeney would beef up the federation's organizing apparatus with a $20 million budget, ten times the previous amount. And "Union Summer" interns would stalk the field with real organizers, getting a taste of strikes, recruitment—even violence.

In Watsonville, California, strawberry workers balked at an aggressive organizing campaign by the United Farm Workers (in conjunction with the AFL-CIO, not itself a union but a federation of 78 unions). Frustrated at their lack of progress, organizers goaded "exploited" Hispanic field hands, even calling them "mother—" and "son of a bitch," according to a sheriff's report. This sparked a fight, and later some 4,000 of the workers and their families turned out for a protest against the union's efforts, which, if successful, would have taken 2 percent of the workers' paychecks and kicked a portion of it over to Sweeney's AFL-CIO (which would have spent it to recruit even more workers unwilling to be organized). This did not stop Sweeney from showing up in Fresno—HUD secretary Henry Cisneros at his side—to avow, "If we don't grow in big numbers, we cannot survive."

Thus does today's AFL-CIO try to arrest the steep decline of the movement. In the mid-1950s, 34.7 percent of the national work force was unionized; that figure is now down to 14.6 percent. And Sweeney's highly touted measures serve mainly to reveal the growing

gap between leadership and rank and file. His agenda bears a strong resemblance to the contemporary civil-rights movement in that it constantly invokes a glorious past (fighting for the 40-hour week, the minimum wage) to perfume a sorry present. He has increased ties to far-left groups and undertaken a costly, polarizing political campaign—all the while honoring a long union tradition of corruption.

The differences between Sweeney and Kirkland are many and pronounced. Kirkland was an intellectual, obsessed with foreign policy, who presided over a flaccid bureaucracy and sometimes laid French on reporters (if he deigned to talk to them at all). Sweeney, born in the Bronx to Irish immigrants, exudes the common touch. Says Rep. Peter King, a New York Republican and a longtime acquaintance, "He's from the activist, Catholic Workers Union/Dorothy Day school. Labor is so intertwined with his Catholicism that he almost treats it as a religion."

Yet Sweeney has never worn his collar terribly blue. He majored in economics at Iona College in New Rochelle and then did a stint at IBM. Later, he signed up as a researcher for the lady garment workers. Before his AFL-CIO victory, he had risen to the presidency of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

Union insiders say that Sweeney was a natural choice to challenge the federation establishment. He had allies in several quarters, including Gerald McEntee, boss of AFSCME, the powerful public-employees union, and Richard Trumka, then-president of the United Mine Workers, who represented the Sweeney insurgency's hard-left wing. (Trumka is now Sweeney's second-in-command, and many say that he will succeed him.)

McEntee, the architect of the coup, would by himself have proven unpalatable to the more conservative building-trade unions. But he and his like symbolize the future of the movement, as 42 percent of union members are now public employees. Only slightly more than one in ten private-sector workers belongs to a union. Says an AFL-CIO source, "The public sector is taking over, but Sweeney is their front man, an old-guard type. The trades and the manufacturing unions think of them as Johnnies-come-lately, and they recognize them as having different impulses, which is to make everybody a public-sector employee."

At the SEIU, Sweeney solidified his leftist credentials through anti-industry, anti-Republican jihads, ranging from the harassment of corporations to the blockade of Washington traffic in his notorious "Justice for Janitors" campaign. Not that Sweeney is without appeal to the pomade-and-pinkie-ring set. He has never been directly linked to organized crime, but not so his old local, SEIU 32B-J. As *New York* magazine's Jeffrey Goldberg recently reported, a top FBI informant has identified the local as Genovese-controlled. Says a former labor-rackets investigator in New York, "The history of that local as something created by Lucky Luciano is well documented. Tom Dewey dealt with it—and the local has *never* changed." Sweeney remained on the payroll of the local (now headed by his handpicked successor, Gus Bevona) while serving as International president. (This is known as "double-dipping" and is regarded as an unsavory practice by ethical labor leaders, of whom historically there has not been a surplus.)

In Sweeney's anti-Kirkland coalition were men like Ron Carey of the Teamsters and Arthur Coia of the Laborers International Union—both of whom have been investigated for organized-crime connections. Sources say that this was no coincidence. "Guys like Trumka [the Left's favorite] can't get the building trades, the mob unions, the Coias," says one. Adds another, "Picking Sweeney is a signal. The fact that he lived with Bevona and had his hand in the cookie jar makes it clear to people like Coia that, hey—we may be talking revolution in the streets, but we ain't talking about cleaning up unions."

So, Sweeney made the perfect hybrid transitional candidate: acceptable to old-line Catholic unions, to left-leaning public-sector unions, and to those in between.

The hallmark of Sweeney's "New Voice" platform is his $35 million "voter-education" campaign. He called for a special convention last March—the first of its kind since the AFL and the CIO merged—at which a rubber-stamp vote plucked the $35 mil out of membership dues (whether the members objected or not). The money has since been used to wage war on Republicans, though in the guise of "issue advocacy," as the Federal Election Commission forbids such organizations to campaign for specific candidates. Sweeney's "voter education" has consisted primarily of attack ads against 75 Republican incumbents and the placement of ground troops in districts where the GOP is considered vulnerable.

And the effort is not just a play for a more sympathetic Congress; it is a p.r. campaign and a membership drive for a desperate movement. "These guys are as interested in touting their clout as they are in the election," says a former AFL-CIO official. "Sweeney

and McEntee are interested in showing the rank and file that they're doing *something*."

That something is not insignificant. The Center for Responsive Politics reports that the average House loser in 1994 spent $238,715. Sweeney's $35 million when allotted 75 ways comes out to $466,000 per Democratic challenger, which frees up those candidates' own war chests for other expenses. And this is not taking into account labor's estimated $300 million-$500 million in unreported in-kind expenditures.

Unsurprisingly, Republicans and their allies are screaming, particularly about a 1988 Supreme Court decision that entitles union members to recoup dues used for political purposes. The National Right to Work Legal Defense Fund claims that it has received hundreds of phone calls from annoyed unionists and that these could result in as many as 100 lawsuits.

Sweeney, for his part, treats dissent with a chuckle. "What do workers want of their unions?" he asks. "They want us to be a bigger force, to fiercely champion their values and their interests, independent of party or candidate"—though independence is hardly his strong suit. He addressed the Democratic convention as "my brothers and sisters"—perhaps because 800 of the delegates were AFL-CIO members—and sat in Hillary Clinton's box.

About Republican complaints to the FEC, he said, "Our goal is to educate our members to judge candidates by their positions on the issues, not by whether they are Democrats or Republicans." Strange, then, that he is sending out a million pieces of political mail against Republicans, followed up by a half-million phone calls; that his old union, the SEIU, is shutting down for two weeks to send "volunteers" to get out the vote; and that he held a secret "candidate seminar" in July exclusively for Democrats, afterward refusing to release a list of attendees to the *Chicago Tribune*, which had discovered the meeting. Not a single Democrat has been targeted by his "issue advocacy"; reliably pro-labor Republicans like Buffalo's Jack Quinn (anti-NAFTA, pro-minimum-wage hike, etc.) are on the hit list. And most of Sweeney's TV spots have been produced by Frank Greer, chief of the official ad agency for Clinton/Gore '92.

Some of the ads disingenuously scare voters into thinking that Republicans are out to destroy Medicare. The Republican National Committee has squawked so loudly about this and other distortions that at least 24 stations have refused to run the ads or have pulled them, in some cases offering free response time. Even CNN labeled the spots "dishonest."

Says Peter King, "If the Democrats take back the Congress, Sweeney could well be one of the two or three most powerful people in the country. If they don't, he's really hurt organized labor," because he has totally alienated the GOP. "If he'd been more of an appeaser to pro-labor Republicans, we wouldn't get drilled by [House speaker] Newt [Gingrich] for supporting labor. But now he can just say, 'Why are you stupid bastards messing around with them? They're just a Democratic annex.'"

Gingrich would have a point. Steve Rosenthal, Sweeney's political director, was an official of the Democratic National Committee and a deputy in Robert Reich's Labor Department. Amy Chapman, now a Clinton/Gore reelection ace, ran Sweeney's AFL-CIO campaign last year. Gerri Palast, a Labor Department assistant secretary, worked for both AFSCME and the SEIU. And Karen Nussbaum, who served under Sweeney at the SEIU and now heads the AFL-CIO's spanking new Working Women's Department, also worked for Reich.

Sweeney himself has a personal connection or two: He was a national health-care adviser to Clinton in 1992, and his new book, *America Needs a Raise*, was ghosted by David Kusnet, Clinton's chief speechwriter from 1992-94.

And how do the unionized feel about this gung-ho Democracy? During his run for the top job, Sweeney said, "The problem with unions is that we are irrelevant to the vast majority of unorganized workers in this country." The *organized* workers might be feeling a tad left out themselves.

In March, the AFL-CIO's pollsters, Peter Hart Research Associates, did a survey showing that members supported Democrats over Republicans by a 25-point margin (which Sweeney used to justify the $35 million carve-out). But in April, Frank Luntz, a Republican pollster, conducted his own survey, which showed 82 percent of members supporting a balanced budget, 87 percent strict welfare reform, and 78 percent a $500 tax credit (all opposed by Sweeney). Moreover, 44 percent described themselves as conservative, 18 percent as liberal. And a full 62 percent objected to the deployment of their dues against Republican candidates.

These findings were consistent with another Hart report, issued to the AFL-CIO leadership back in February and largely unknown. Hart discovered then that only 33 percent believed that a Republican Congress represented a change for the worse, and that only 37 percent believed their families had been better off under Democrats. (Forty-one percent said it made no difference.) Hart also warned that "members often suspect that their unions just automatically support Democrats in all cases"; that they do not "naturally

turn to their union for political information"; and that, though more Democratic than the public at large, "they are not more liberal." In addition, "Members are five times more likely to feel that the [Democratic] Party is 'too liberal' (39 percent) than to think it is 'too conservative' (8 percent)."

Yet contrast Hart's recommendation—"Unions must downplay partisan rhetoric"—with the stylings of, say, Richard Trumka—"I got two messages for you, Newt: Up yours and in your dreams." Says Hart: "Members state quite clearly that they do not want to be told for whom to vote." Says Sweeney: "We will re-elect a president and elect a Democratic Congress committed to people who 'work hard and play by the rules.'"

If the Great Resuscitator is a little slack in heeding his membership, he is gangbusters for crafting new alliances and welcoming back old friends who had been estranged for decades. The SEIU has even coaxed open a new demographic: This summer, nude dancers at the Lusty Lady in San Francisco joined the union and proudly sported their local's button on their garter belts.

And the renaissance waters the academic grove. The days of labor-friendly writers like John Steinbeck, Malcolm Cowley, and Irving Howe may be long past, but at Columbia University this month, Sweeney launched what he hopes will be a series of teach-ins. Panelists included Katha Pollitt, Betty Friedan, and Cornel West, who discussed such sheet-metal-worker favorites as "Race and the Wages of Whiteness" and "Culture, Identity, and Class Politics."

Sweeney has also formed alliances with the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), the National Organization for Women, Michael Lerner's Summit on Ethics and Meaning, the Institute for Policy Studies, the Natural Law Party, the Rainbow Coalition, and Voters for Choice, to name a few.

This is the company that labor now keeps, as a new generation—the one characterized by George Meany as a "dirty-necked and dirty-mouthed group of kooks"—replaces the arteriosclerotic barons of yesteryear. Sweeney has elevated so many red-diaper babies, activists-at-large, and other New Leftovers that a listing of them would be longer than the Port Huron alumni directory—not that they're brand-new to labor.

"A lot of these people have been around 20 years," says one of the old guard. "They were activists in the '60s who knew the student movement wasn't going to support them in adulthood, so they needed another base of operations. The labor movement not only provides an institutional base to work from, but you also get that compulsory-dues money."

Consequently, the Sweeney administration looks like it was staffed by Saul Alinsky (whose *Rules for Radicals* is in fact on the Union Summer reading list). On the ascent are race-and-gender people like Nussbaum, once billed as "one of the most outstanding young feminist leaders in the country," and Bill Lucy, leader of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and a member of Michael Harrington's Democratic Socialists of America (DSA).

Sweeney, too, is a member of the DSA, as first reported by the Heritage Foundation's Kenneth Weinstein. According to its Internet home page, the DSA is

the largest "openly socialist presence in American communities and politics." Alan Charney, the group's national director, says that Sweeney joined only last August, in a move that "clearly indicated that he wanted to break with some of the old political traditions of the AFL-CIO." Charney refers to the splintering of the Socialist party into the Social Democrats (SDUSA) and the DSA. Says an AFL-CIO source, "Kirkland was always at war with the DSA because they were the soft-on-commies, socialist wing of the Democratic party. Sweeney used to be on the Kirkland track and would identify himself with SDUSA types. But this switch is basically his way of saying, 'F— you, Lane.'"

That's all right by Charney, who says, "On the progressive side, there's great hope that the union movement will be militant again and organize workers and lead a new progressive coalition for broader social justice."

Nor is he alone. The Communist party, which hasn't enjoyed serious influence in the labor movement since the CIO purges of the '50s, has given Sweeney's book rhapsodic reviews. George Meyers wrote in the *People's Weekly World* that Sweeney was elected "behind a militant program whose implementation can affect our entire nation for many years to come." And he rejoiced that the Communists were allowed to distribute literature at Sweeney's nominating convention and that "for the first time in 40 years, Communist trade unionists were elected delegates and spoke."

Sweeney's great, burning issue is that—yes, America Needs a Raise. This simple observation leads to impassioned booklets that declare, "Hispanic Workers Need a Raise." Ditto Asian workers and black workers. Even "Laid Off Workers [who'd presumably settle for jobs] Need Jobs with Raises." The federation has established entire divisions to peddle such banalities, like the Working Women's Department headed by Nussbaum. "Most women work because of economic need," she said in one of her first press releases. (While men work for fun?)

Similarly vapid is the federation's Union Summer, the object of fawning media attention. ("It's Hip to Be Union," said *Newsweek*.) Last summer, college kids scrambled from fruit fields to catfish plants, getting their union feet wet. With $200-a-week stipends and free housing, this was an attempt to "inject new energy and life" into the AFL-CIO. One union official is somewhat scornful: "People who clean bedpans in hospitals are paying for socialist summer camp for the disaffected daughters of the upper middle class and graduates of Williams."

But even if they eventually eschew the difficult vocation of union organizing, the youngsters had a swell time. They got to watch *Matewan*, protested a wedding reception, and called for the eradication of the word "plantation" at southern hotels. Meanwhile, federation bulletins resembled giddy freshman diaries: "In Hilton Head, SC, the activists had some fun performing 'guerrilla theater,'" while in Denver, "activists produced a theater piece dressed as scab-lawyer vultures, complete with beaks and feather boas, and picked apart the benefits package of union workers."

And what about corruption, the perpetually inflamed heel of Big Labor? While president of the SEIU, Sweeney told *Irish America*, "The criticism in terms of corruption or anything like that, well, there's a few bad apples in every industry"—and he happens to be friends with most of them.

Jack Joyce of the International Union of Bricklayers & Allied Craftsmen sits on the federation's executive council. He has spent about $2 million in membership dues on transportation. Not just any transportation, mind you, but, for example, a round trip on a private jet from his summer home in Maine to make a doctor's appointment in Baltimore.

Ron Carey of the Teamsters is also on the executive council. He is regarded as a reformer and is so soft that he even wants to remove the "Brotherhood" from "Brotherhood of Teamsters," on grounds of inclusiveness. But Teamsters trustees have inquired into their leaders' "unprecedented" payments for apartments and travel, even as the union has hiked dues and reduced out-of-work benefits.

Arthur Coia of the Laborers International Union is perhaps the reigning granddaddy of malfeasance. Not only does he occupy a place on Sweeney's council, his headquarters is right next to the federation's, a cement shoe's throw from the White House. He has made a comfortable living representing toxic-waste handlers and oil riggers, his booty including a red Ferrari, an ocean-front mansion in Rhode Island, and a home in Delray Beach. But in 1994, the Justice Department called him a "mob puppet," the Patriarca family of New England his Geppetto. The department's 212-page draft complaint said that Coia was party to extortion and raiding union funds and had "employed actual and threatened force, violence, and economic injury to create a climate of intimidation." But Justice nevertheless cut him what most believe is a sweetheart deal: As long as he rids the union of corruption—which critics perceive as an excellent excuse for eliminating rivals—he stays on at full salary. Since the complaint

was filed, he has been a guest at the Clinton White House 24 times.

"What these guys want from politicians more than anything is no more clean-ups of unions," says a rackets investigator. "As soon as they get investigated, they go to the White House and say, 'I'm clean as a hound's tooth.' And the evidence is they've been in organized crime since the day they were born or they're stealing with both hands."

And what of Sweeney's successor at the old local? Union bosses love to advertise that their pay lags behind their corporate counterparts', but in 1995 Gus Bevona collected over $400,000 in multiple salaries. He and Sweeney appear to have worked out a double-dipping quid pro quo. According to 1995 disclosure forms filed with the Labor Department, Sweeney made $246,509 in salary last year. But until at least 1994, he drew a kind of annual allowance from his old local, topping out at nearly $80,000 in 1993 as an "executive advisor," a title created for him by Bevona. Likewise, Bevona is listed on the disclosure forms as receiving an additional $79,194 as a "vice president" of the International. (The average take of the other "vice presidents" was $32,091.)

John Sweeney Kent Lemon

More alarming, though, than any salary scheme is a story scantly covered outside the New York media: the strong-arming of a union dissident, an Ecuadorean immigrant, who questioned unethical leadership practices. Court records say that in February 1991, Carlos Guzman, a 20-year member of the Sweeney- and Bevona-ruled local, began circulating flyers to protest another dues increase and to call for a 50 percent reduction in officers' salaries.

When Bevona caught wind of it, he hired surveillance and ordered a private dick to monitor Guzman 16 hours a day. After the laborer discovered someone listening at his door, following his wife, and showing his picture to the neighbors, he concluded that he was being hunted by a hit man and requested a police escort out of his building.

Guzman went to the district attorney, while Bevona went to his joint executive board (of which Sweeney was a member). The board unanimously ratified the decision to spy on Guzman. Shop stewards even assaulted him outside a union meeting. (They were never disciplined.) Finally, in August 1995, Guzman was awarded $100,000 in damages by a federal court, and Sweeney, Bevona, and the boys were enjoined from further threatening Guzman and ordered to pay back the $19,343 in dues they had expended for surveillance.

Says one former AFL-CIO official, "This was a dues revolt against a corrupt, groaning, Teamsters-style double-salary structure in which Sweeney partook, and they hired private detectives to scare this poor bastard out of his wits."

John Sweeney calls his new AFL-CIO a "worker-based movement against greed," which "isn't about dividing people through fear, it's about bringing people together through compassion." So I figured I'd give the improved, "open and democratic," bottom-up system a whirl by trying to get the answers to a few basic questions, like: How much is Sweeney making? Is he still drawing an International salary or a Bevona-local salary? Why was Bevona's salary so much higher than the other vice-presidents'? These are easy questions and will be answered on disclosure forms in a few months, anyway (though law-enforcement sources tell me the accounting can get tricky).

I could not gain access to Sweeney. My numerous, repeated calls—to the SEIU local, to the International, to the AFL-CIO—yielded . . . nothing. All told, I talked to six different people. Nobody knew anything. Everybody was supposed to get back to me. No one ever did. "Most of these guys are very adept at covering their asses after the fact," offered one AFL-CIO source, explaining why I shouldn't have been surprised at union stonewalling. After all, he said, for all the talk of fresh air, of change, "It's still like the line in that Jack Nicholson movie—'It's only Chinatown.'" ♦

Borking the Culture

By Tod Lindberg

Robert H. Bork's *Slouching Towards Gomorrah* (Regan Books/HarperCollins, 382 pages, $25) has an air of authority that borders on the magisterial. The legal scholar, former appeals-court judge, and defeated nominee for the United States Supreme Court has written a work of intellectual history and social criticism that, in fewer than 350 pages, means to offer a comprehensive account of the failure of modern liberalism (the book's subtitle is *Modern Liberalism and American Decline*). It is easy to imagine such an ambitious project ending in superficiality, eccentricity, or triviality. *Slouching Towards Gomorrah* does not.

On the contrary, the book is steeped in serious thought about Modern Times. The prose is engaging. But the manner is that of the serious if not fusty law professor scouring casebooks for illuminating precedents—in this case meticulously selecting source material on the basis of the quality and clarity of the analysis that has gone before.

Slouching Towards Gomorrah is not, therefore, a particularly original or eye-popping work. But then again, it is clear that Bork does not consider originality to be much of a virtue—certainly not something to which one aspires at the expense of clear-headedness and accuracy of observation. On page 66, about the point at which a reader might be musing that he has been down this road before, Bork offers a notably revealing sentence about his own purpose: "If there is anything new in this book, it is the demonstration of the ill effects of the passion [for equality] in a variety of contemporary social and cultural fields." *If there is anything new in this book.* In this, the age of the publicist, an honest willingness to admit that one might *or might not* be saying something new, and then to go on and say it because it needs saying—well, that is more striking in its way than even the most dazzling exercises in literary or intellectual pyrotechnics.

Slouching Towards Gomorrah is a deeply pessimistic book, one that fully delivers on the promise of its doleful title. Our cultural condition is not *merely* as bad as Yeats's description of it in "The Second Coming"—the center not holding, the best lacking all conviction, the worst full of passionate intensity, mere anarchy loosed upon the world. Our condition is worse. We are slouching past Bethlehem all the way to Gomorrah, the sin city destroyed by God in a fit of disgust with what His creatures were capable of. Illegitimacy is staggeringly high, the universities are collapsing, porn is proliferating on the Internet: In policy area after policy area, things are bad. But the totality of our failure is far worse than the sum of its parts. It is, in Bork's view, biblical in proportion.

The first two chapters of *Slouching Towards Gomorrah* are about the intellectual upheaval of the 1960s, the period in which contemporary liberalism's two most noxious strains suffused the body politic. They were radical individualism and radical egalitarianism. The first amounts to an assault on the notion that a society or culture can legitimately impose standards on people's behavior. The second is the doctrine that, in the interest of justice, a society must work to ensure equal social outcomes.

Each of these doctrines has a pedigree stretching back much farther than the 1960s. And Bork, unlike a number of other scholars, is unwilling to let classical liberalism off the hook for the perversions and wretched excess of its radicalized 1960s incarnation. The passions for equality and liberty, in his view, have always contained the germinal material for our current afflictions.

But it was only in the '60s, with the rise of the youth movement and the counterculture, that these ideas attained critical mass and exploded. The damage was everywhere. Universities capitulated, surrendering their academic standards as the price of peace with the radical student thugs who had taken over the administration buildings. The street protests against the war in Vietnam made a confused policy all the more tortured. Legislators struggled to pass bills designed to bring more equality, but the political system was under attack as fundamentally illegitimate.

The counterculture's more visible manifestations faded after the end of the draft and the war. Surveying it all, and taking into consideration Richard Nixon's evocation of the "silent majority" that provided his landslide win over George McGovern, one might conclude that the United States weathered the worst of the storm tolera-

Tod Lindberg is the editorial page editor of the Washington Times.

bly well. The hangover would persist in a host of subsidiary maladies ranging from Watergate to the "Vietnam syndrome" to stagflation. But the worst was over.

Bork disagrees. The radical passions that animated the student movement of the 1960s neither diminished nor were repudiated by their adherents. It's just that those adherents fanned out into junior positions in political and broadly "cultural" professions. Three decades later, they are at the peaks of their careers. And from the heights they now command—as federal judges, tenured full professors, media and entertainment superstars and moguls, foundation chiefs, and advocacy eminences—they propagate exactly the same dogma of radical individualism and radical egalitarianism they learned in their youth.

Only to much, much greater effect. Bork writes: "It was a malignant decade that, after a fifteen-year remission, returned in the 1980s to metastasize more devastatingly throughout our culture than it had in the Sixties, not with tumult but quietly, in the moral and political assumptions of those who now control and guide our major cultural institutions. The Sixties radicals are still with us, but now they do not paralyze the universities, they run the universities."

Bork devotes much of his book to a survey course in our cultural horrors: a Supreme Court intent on imposing its egalitarian, individualist ideas on a benighted society; a bureaucracy that feels the same way; a popular culture that wallows in obscenity, degradation, and rape-and-murder fantasies that desensitize to violence those whom they don't incite to it; a justice system that has lost faith in the idea that it is right to punish criminals; a sexual revolution yielding rampant illegitimacy and convenience abortion; a "gender" feminism and multiculturalism that decry reason as oppressive; a race-based spoils system according to which individual merit is subordinated to group identity; and more.

How dark is *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*? This dark: "At another conference, I referred, not approvingly, to Michael Jackson's crotch-clutching performance at the Super Bowl. Another panelist tartly informed me that it was precisely the desire to enjoy such manifestations of American culture that had brought down the Berlin Wall. That seems as good an argument as any for putting the wall back up again."


Kent Lemon
Robert Bork

And this dark: "We are, then, entering a period of tribal hostilities. Some of what we may expect includes a rise in interethnic violence, a slowing of economic productivity, a vulgarization of scholarship (which is already well underway), and increasing government intrusion into our lives in the name of producing greater equality and ethnic peace, which will, predictably, produce still greater polarization and fractiousness."

And this dark: "Sir Henry Maine made the point that, looking back, we are amazed at the blindness of the privileged classes in France to the approach of the Revolution that was to overwhelm them. . . . Yet we seem at least as sanguine about the prospects for democratic government as were Maine's contemporaries."

Bork offers little hope, though along the way he recommends such measures as censorship of obscene and pornographic speech and allowing Congress to vote to overturn Supreme Court decisions. At the end, he avers that the "pessimism of the intellect" still allows room for the "optimism of the will." But he doesn't sound persuaded himself, and the optimism here sounds more like religious consolation than a program for action.

Are we, then, finished? Bork won't let us take any comfort from the fact that, for example, most of popular music is merely pleasant—and has no truck with the derangements of the rapper Tupac Shakur. We delude ourselves, he believes, if we base an assessment of our condition on a sugar-coated view that does not take into account the extremes of the degradation we allow. But the act of keeping the spotlight focused so unforgivingly on the extremes also foreordains Bork's gloomy conclusion.

In fact, he allows into evidence a couple of points that, though he does not explore them, offer some measure of surcease from all this

sorrow. In the course of detailing the riot of political correctness currently disfiguring campus life and curricula, he notes, "But a student who rejects the criteria by which our society judges achievement is himself handicapped, probably for life." And though he laments a loss of national identity and deplores the tribalization of American life, he also observes, "Immigrant parents want their children to learn English and become Americans."

A tony elite may make a buck, garner status, and wreak havoc by wallowing in the mire or by trying to impose an egalitarian and individualist vision on people. It would be foolish to deny or minimize the problems this causes. But there is a price to be paid for indulging it. Sometimes (Tupac Shakur is dead) members of the elite themselves pay a price—though, to be sure, rarely, since money and status offer insulation from the folly of their actions.

A far more serious price attaches to the folly of those who have not arrived in the top quintile, but perhaps aspire to it, or at least to their own advancement. A young woman of modest talent and humble origin who gets into Brown on a scholarship and decides to devote her time there to an exploration of gender politics and her own lesbian side—well, she may miss an opportunity. Similarly, an immigrant who disdains the cultural imperialism implicit in the English language and boycotts learning it is, precisely, not going to go far. By and large, the young woman and the immigrant know this, or at least their parents do.

Common sense is a substantial counterweight to the pile of moral and intellectual depravity Bork has heaped on one side of the scale. It is tempting to attribute the one-sidedness to the unique persecution Bork endured at the hands of a cultural elite bent on keeping him off the Supreme Court. But that's unfair to the man; his conservatism and cultural pessimism have deeper and profounder roots than that. In the end, the case he makes in *Slouching Towards Gomorrah* is one we are obliged to confront and take seriously, even if it is not finally persuasive and even if its relentless morbidity leads the author himself into such occasional flights of perversity as a *faux* longing for the return of the Berlin Wall. ♦

Books

The Devil's Biography

By Norman Podhoretz

There is an old Latin saying, *sine diabolo nullus dominus*, which means "without the Devil, no God." It seems entirely appropriate, then, that a year or so after being presented with a book entitled *God: A Biography* (by an American, Jack Miles), we should now get one called *The Devil: A Biography* (Holt, 302 pages, $27.50). But this new book, by a young Englishman named Peter Stanford, is not the only sustained attention Satan has received lately. In the past year or two alone, there have been at least five other books about him in English aimed at a general audience, and probably more than that in other languages. My impression, without having taken a careful count, is that God has not done nearly so well during the same period.

This, of course, is nothing new. Dante's portrait of Hell has always been much more popular than the section of *The Divine Comedy* devoted to Paradise, and the same is true of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* as compared with his *Paradise Regained*. And in *Paradise Lost* itself, the character of Satan is so much more vividly drawn than the character of God that William Blake could famously observe: "The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of angels and God, and at liberty when of devils and hell, is because he was a true poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it."

Peter Stanford is not a poet, true or otherwise, but in a sense he too is of the Devil's party without knowing it. Charles Baudelaire, who certainly was a true poet and whose great collection *Les fleurs du mal* was practically dedicated to the Devil, once remarked: "The Devil's deepest wile is to persuade us that he does not exist." Stanford quotes this stunning aphorism, never realizing that his own book might easily be taken as an illustration of it.

For this "biography" is based on the assumption that belief in the Devil is a superstition that persists only on "the fundamentalist fringes among those whose Christianity is often medieval in its worldview" and also among others who are "bewildered by the world in all its complexity." Such troglodytic ignoramuses may still think that the Devil is real, but Stanford is too "coldly rational" for that (at least for "ninety-nine percent of the time," the other one percent being, he tells us, a hangover from his Catholic upbringing).

Norman Podhoretz is senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and editor-at-large of Commentary, *where he was editor-in-chief for 35 years. He last wrote for* The Weekly Standard *about Bob Dole's convention speech.*

With this "coldly rational" perspective as his guide, Stanford has produced not a biography of the Devil but rather a history of "the idea of a devil," and a very spotty history at that. Whole eras and entire bodies of religious thought race by as Stanford traces the development of this idea from the ancient pagan world through the Old Testament and the apocrypha and then into the Christian era stretching from Jesus to our own day—all in about 300 loosely printed pages, and in a prose style so breezy, relaxed, and colloquial that it serves in itself to make light of its subject.

Not that there is nothing worthwhile here. On the contrary, Stanford comes up with much interesting and colorful material about the role of the Devil in popular religious belief. He also provides us with useful capsule summaries of the sophisticated theological arguments for the existence of the Devil, belief in whom offered an escape from the otherwise logical necessity of blaming evil on an all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-loving God.

But what Stanford mainly tries to do is show how foolish and at the same time how dangerous the idea of the Devil has been. One tactic he uses is to poke fun at the naive personifications of the Devil that were popular in ages past. Another is to document the cruelties and injustices that have been committed in the name of fighting against the Devil and his disciples—the torturing and the burning and the hanging of innocents like Sarah Good, who, Stanford recounts in one of the most wrenching of the many such stories he tells, cried out to the hangman as she stood on the scaffold in Salem, Massachusetts, on July 19, 1692: "I am no more a witch than you are a wizard, and if you take away my life, God will give you blood to drink."

Yet just as God remains invisible to the non-believer and is only revealed to the eyes of faith, so must Satan remain incomprehensible to agnostics like Stanford. He has diligently studied, and traced, and considered many of the conceptions of the Devil that have been formed over the centuries, and especially since the birth of Christianity. But he keeps losing sight of the essential point, which is that—whether imagined as incarnate in some gruesome earthly shape or seen as a fallen angel or thought of as a disembodied spiritual principle or force—the Devil always represents nothing more and nothing less than the moral and spiritual antithesis of God. Indeed, the old Latin saying I quoted at the outset (and that Stanford quotes as well) has it the wrong way around. God can exist without the Devil, but the Devil cannot exist without God.

> JUST AS GOD REMAINS INVISIBLE TO THE NON-BELIEVER SO MUST SATAN REMAIN INCOMPREHENSIBLE TO AGNOSTICS LIKE PETER STANFORD.

In certain pagan religions like Zoroastrianism, and in a number of heretical Manichean and Gnostic strains within Judaism and Christianity, the Devil is a power equal to God. Stanford goes into this in some detail, and he also understands that within the mainstream of the great monotheistic creeds, the Devil must always remain subordinate to God. What he fails to grasp clearly, however, is that under the doctrine of free will (a subject about which he has very little to say), the Devil becomes an embodiment of the standing temptation within the human soul not only to disobey God here and there or on this or that point, but to do the very opposite of what God commands. It is a temptation bred by the fantasy that this (as the serpent puts it to Eve) is how to "be as God"—in other words, transcend the limitations of the human condition. So it was in the Garden of Eden, and so it is today, when the same temptation and the same fantasy present themselves in a variety of up-to-date guises.

In the public realm, the great contemporary example (foreseen by Dostoevsky in the novel formerly known in English as *The Possessed* but now in a more accurate translation entitled *The Devils*) is the utopian dream of an earthly paradise, which gave rise to totalitarianism. Under the influence of that dream, millions upon millions of people were slaughtered, and many millions more deprived of their freedom. Those who did the slaughtering, moreover, were convinced of their own rectitude. Thus Heinrich Himmler once declared that he himself, and the Nazi functionaries under his command who were carrying out the Holocaust, deserved great praise for the "glory" of performing so difficult a job without losing their "integrity." It would be impossible to find a more perfect demonstration than this of a key element of the diabolistic principle under which people are cajoled—by themselves and by others—into doing evil by calling it good.

In the private realm, a striking contemporary example of the same diabolistic principle at work can be detected in the changing attitude in our culture toward suicide. Suicide has always been regarded with a special horror because it violates the most fundamental of all natural laws. But the choice of death over life has also been seen in biblical terms as one of those sins that go beyond mere transgression or disobedience and strive to achieve the

exact opposite of what God commands ("I have set before you life and death," runs the verse in Deuteronomy, "therefore choose life"). Worse yet, in taking upon himself the power to end his own life, the suicide is trying to do precisely what Eve did in eating the apple—to "be as God."

What, then, are we to make of the fact that today a veritable cult has grown up around suicide? In the world of the arts, minor poets like Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton have been venerated as martyrs largely by virtue of having killed themselves, while in the world of public policy, "assisted suicide" has become the latest cause of the enlightened American mind. What else can this be but another case of people seduced into doing evil under the spell of the illusion that they are doing good?

Such considerations are beyond Peter Stanford's range. All he seems able to take into account are the pitiable innocents who in a less enlightened era were accused of being in league with the Devil, and such homicidal maniacs of our own time as Charles Manson who have done evil knowing it to be evil and precisely because it is evil. But I would guess that an instinctive sense of the less obvious presence and the wilier manifestations of the diabolistic principle in other phenomena of contemporary society explains why so much interest continues to be shown in the Devil, even by people like Stanford, who regard a belief in him as hopelessly retrograde and irrational. ♦

Books

Down at the Clinic

By Ellen Wilson Fielding

In the abortion world, the Lovejoy Surgicenter in Portland, Oregon, is famous. Over 4,000 abortions took place there in 1995, making it one of the highest-volume such clinics in the country. Lovejoy's doctors perform abortions as late as 25 weeks into pregnancy, and the center has been a favorite object of picketing, "rescues," and other anti-abortion activity.

Journalist Peter Korn explores this subject in *Lovejoy: A Year in the Life of an Abortion Clinic* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 320 pages, $22). The book is not exactly reading for a quiet hour by the fire. Indeed, it seems destined to be read mainly by pro-choice activists, for Korn portrays the clinic's staff as on the side of the angels.

Opponents of abortion are profiled, too. One is Shelley Shannon, who firebombed the center. She is now in prison for the attempted murder of an abortion doctor in another state. Another opponent is Andrew Burnett of Advocates for Life. He publishes a newsletter that encourages Shelley Shannon's brand of violence.

It is against this canvas that Lovejoy's officials are painted. We meet owner and administrator Allene Klass, along with her chief counselor and heir apparent Carye Ortman. Korn shows them as caring, compassionate, intelligent, humorous, courageous—right out of *The Book of Virtues*. He dwells distractingly on Klass's "jet black Jaguar" and her collection of short skirts and fitted suits, which contrast with the dull, regimental women's wear of the anti-abortionists. We learn that Ortman drives a Volvo and that she owns a handgun, for protection against zealots. Her husband jokes that she must be the only gun-toting Volvo driver in America.

Ortman was brought up a Christian fundamentalist, but she now sees life in shades of gray. To a client who harbors doubts about her scheduled abortion, she offers therapy-speak: "To look at something from a moral point of view, that's a good thing. It's really important to know that you're going to let yourself know the sadness and the grief."

The occasional medical emergency and attendant human drama carry the reader along, much as in *Rescue 911* or on *Oprah*. But there are problems with the author's larger project of humanizing the abortion business. He tries to present the center's doctors in soothing pastels, but reality reins him in. Take medical director Harold Suchak, whom Korn sets up as a convert to family values. After sacrificing a first marriage to the hours of a busy ob/gyn, Suchak cut back to a 20-hour week at Lovejoy, which allowed him to continue making $300,000 a year while paying lower insurance premiums than doctors handling live babies. And Suchak is not much help to the muddled middle of Americans who are unhappy about abortion but unsure how to limit it—though he has been known to decline to abort a 25-week-old fetus because "this one is a baby to me."

If the book has a major failing, it is its wearily familiar premise that if we just try to understand one another, we can work out our differences. This kind of understanding may be useful in interpersonal relations or in "hating the sin while loving the sinner," but it is useless when it comes to reaching conclu-

Ellen Wilson Fielding is a columnist for Crisis *magazine.*

sions about right and wrong.

Most of the clients profiled in *Lovejoy* are in a bad way. Many are young and scared; some are the victims of brutal boyfriends or domineering parents. The proper question is not whether we should care about them, but what we should do about them. To "feel" their pain is insufficient; it does not direct us to do the right thing to alleviate that pain, as witness Jack Kevorkian's seeming acts of mercy. Unleashed from the moorings of reason and conscience, compassion can be deadly.

Richard Brookhiser met this problem head-on in a recent issue of *Human Life Review*. Men, he noted, are more naturally "pro-choice" than women. They lack the maternal instinct, and it is the woman—the lover, sister, daughter, friend—rather than the baby who engages their hearts and imaginations. "As a biological bystander," he wrote, "I have a clear choice between preborns I have never met, and women I have." But "the element missing from purely emotional analysis is thought. The missing thought in this case is that you don't kill innocent human beings."

Peter Korn's book is loaded with sympathetic stories and sympathetic people. Lovejoy seems at times to be run by Mother Teresa's nuns. But what is his point? That people with charitable impulses shouldn't be shot at or firebombed? That people capable of admirable actions shouldn't be picketed? That, after reading this book, we should be less troubled by a million-plus abortions per year?

The book lacks a point altogether, if by point we mean a rational argument or a principled defense. Korn merely wants us to feel warm, fuzzy feelings for one another, while agreeing that abortion is a complex issue best left to the women who end up at places like Lovejoy and the Dr. Suchaks they encounter there. ♦

GEORGE HERBERT WALKER BUSH

Dear Bob—

Thanks so much for that spiffy lunch last week. Haven't had cottage cheese with ketchup since RN was in the Oval!

But hey— listen up, old friend— boffo job on the debate sunday night! Just capital. Glad my advice helped. Especially think the line about BC not calling me "Mr. Pres" in '92 debates worked extra well. A little sorry you couldn't use it a 3rd time. Outta-the-ballpark material. ~~Fat-bastard~~ oops! wouldn't be prudent!

Another debate comin' up! What they call a "town hall" format. Hey, been there. A few pointers: keep close track of time. Might have to "sneak a peek" at your watch now + then. And for Godssake stick with the "Bozo" line. I shoulda used it more!

Have to have you & the Lidster up to Kennebunk soon. How's the week of Nov. 6 look? Think you'll be free!

George