the weekly Standard

ICKY HAROLD ICKES
ANDREW FERGUSON

OCTOBER 20, 1997 $2.95

Fall Books

NOEMIE EMERY ON RFK AND LBJ

DAVID FRUM ON BOOKS FOR BOYS

JAY NORDLINGER ON GEORG SOLTI'S MEMOIRS

DANIEL WATTENBERG ON ANNE RICE

WOODY WEST ON THE CIVIL WAR

the weekly Standard

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Cover by Kevin Chadwick

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The Good Old Days

Instead of more bad news of toadying to the butchers of Beijing, let us suspend for a week the Dianne Feinstein Moral Equivalence Awards and return, as the radio announcer used to say, to those thrilling days of yesteryear. To 1983 to be precise, when Feinstein was still the mayor of a left-coast city and not yet The Scrapbook's eponymous appeaser of China, when Ronald Reagan was in the White House, and when "moral equivalence" was still fightin' words. In Senate testimony last week, Paul Wolfowitz, dean of the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, made many cogent points about the U.S.-China relationship and also recalled this striking moment in George Shultz's tenure as secretary of state:

"I think the basis of a good relationship [with China] comes when they recognize that they have to respect our interests, especially on something as fundamental as American security. I might say as an aside, I was with Secretary Shultz when he visited China in 1983, his first visit as secretary of state, and a particularly difficult period in U.S.-China relations. In fact, if you read the American press and believe it, and maybe they were right, we were on the verge of a complete rupture and loss of all the gains that had been made in two previous administrations with China. And there was all kinds of pressure on Shultz to go to China and be nice to the Chinese, and give them whatever they asked for to try to improve the atmosphere. And, to his great credit, he resisted that.

"I remember, in fact, one incident that took place in Beijing when he was meeting with the, as it turned out, erroneously named American Chamber of Commerce in Beijing—I say 'erroneously named' because he had one question after another that could have come from the Chinese ministry of trade or the Chinese foreign ministry. And finally a question came on a subject that is still around, which was, Why can't we sell nuclear reactors to China when our French and German competitors can do so? And Shultz was not a man to lose his temper by accident, but he blew up at that point. And he said, Well, we have regulations to regulate this trade because it is an unusual and dangerous trade. And if you don't like it, if you'd rather be a Frenchman or a German, go to France or Germany."

Or you can lie low and wait 10 years for the Clinton administration.

Eine Kleine Red-Baiting

Will the "democratic Left" rally to the defense of Kurt Stand? After all, the Washington labor lawyer—arrested last week on charges he spent two decades spying for East Germany's murderous secret police force, the Stasi—has an impeccable "democratic Left" credential. Stand is a member—at least he was at the time of his arrest—of the Political Committee of the Democratic Socialists of America (the Michael Harrington socialists). And the DSA's left-wing supporters never tired of telling us during the Cold War that the organization was "nonpartisan," "anti-Communist," "just an idealistic branch of the labor movement," "the socialism of Mitterrand, not Mao."

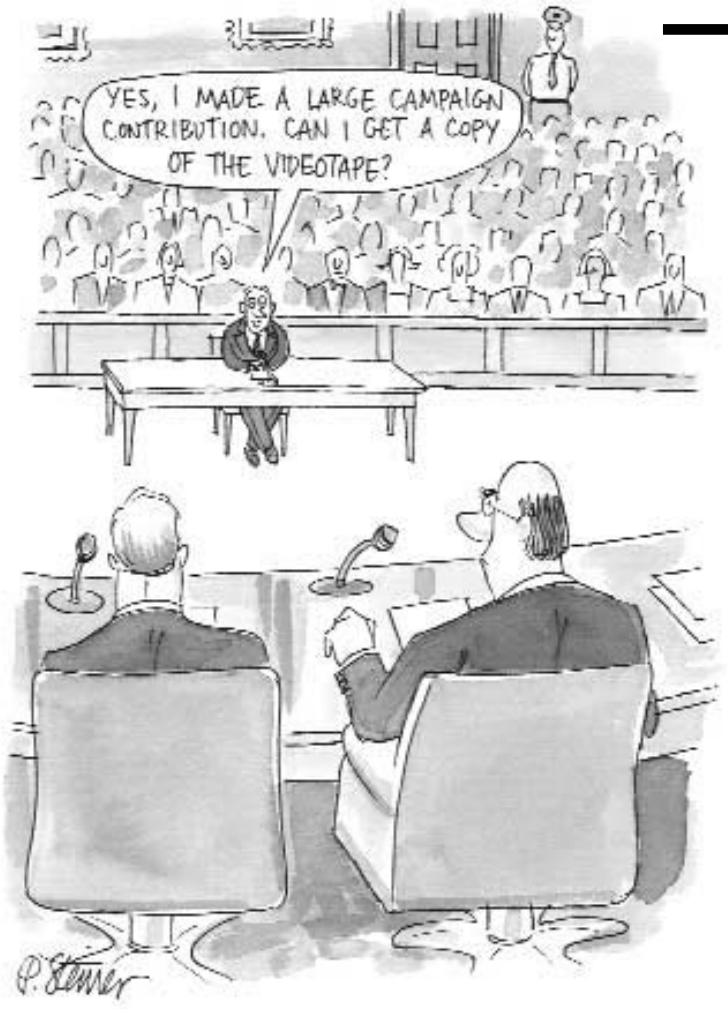
So what does DSA honorary chairman Cornel West think about his Communist colleague? Does Barbara Ehrenreich, another honorary chair, think he's being railroaded? Why don't other DSA members—like AFL-CIO president John Sweeney or Gloria Steinem or Rep. Ron Dellums—come to Stand's defense? How can they sit silently by? Surely they won't submit to the capitalist yoke by throwing him off the Political Committee!

Meantime, Stand's wife, Theresa Marie Squillacote, a Pentagon lawyer who was also charged with conspiracy to commit espionage, was apparently pretty skilled at her day job. Indeed, so skilled that she was the recipient of a performance award from Vice President Al Gore's National Performance Review. Squillacote led something called the "Protest Reform Working Group," which sounds oddly enough like some leftist Berlin *groupuscule*, badly translated into English. In fact, as explained in the *New York Times*, it's a group that "sought to simplify losing bidders' protests of Pentagon contracts." Ah yes, how very clever—streamlining grievance procedures to heighten the conflict among the tentacles of the military-industrial complex. Now we understand what the vice president meant by "reinventing government."

Harold Ickes and His Pal Al (Hunt)

It looked like a scene out of college fraternity rush. Cable viewers of Fred Thompson's campaign-finance hearings saw columnist Al Hunt of the *Wall Street Journal* warmly greet Harold Ickes as the former Clinton White House aide was about to take his seat and testify. The air of mirth and good humor and utter familiarity between Hunt and Ickes was palpable, Hunt acting like the glad-handing fraternity president and Ickes the prize freshman

Scrapbook



rushee. This was unusual, even by the standards of the Washington press corps: a public display of bonhomie between a journalist and a central figure in a still-unraveling scandal. In his column the next day, Hunt scarcely mentioned Ickes, except to say that his appearance before Thompson "lent credence" to the notion that the Thompson hearings are going nowhere (a notion Hunt disputed, by the way). There was no mention of the dozens of times Ickes was conveniently forgetful about his days at the White House.

Calamity Jane

Jane Alexander announced last week that she would be resigning from the chairmanship of the National Endowment for the Arts, having successfully stared down congressional Republicans and other critics of the federal arts agency. The following day, Alexander vented her true feelings to the *New York Times* and revealed the astonishing damage wrought by the Republican campaign against the NEA.

"Ms. Alexander," the *Times* reported, "said that the persistent assault by conservatives had a chilling effect on the willingness of arts groups to apply for Federal aid. 'What has happened is that the applicants themselves are not sending in proposals for provocative work because they want to get funded,' she said.

"Ms. Alexander said artists were 'very astute' and so were now seeking support for controversial work elsewhere."

Ah, the depths of the liberal imagination. The "danger" of the anti-NEA campaign, one supposed, was that "provocative" art (or what passes for it) would not be created. Now we see the true horror: It might be created but *without federal funding*.

That is indeed intolerable.

The Anita Hill Fan Club

Anita Hill is back in the spotlight, promoting her new book, *Speaking Truth to Power*. But her appearance on NBC's *Dateline* mainly showed how little interested in the truth journalists continue to be. Jane Pauley held a virtual pity party for Hill. "Most people concluded that Anita Hill had lied," said Pauley. "But within a year, public opinion did a flip, and now six years later, according to a *Dateline*/NBC News poll, more people think she was telling the truth, but an awful lot of people still don't know what to think."

Pauley wasn't about to provide them with any assistance. Viewers looking for merely an imitation of journalism had to be disappointed, as Pauley instead played the cheerleader ("I can see the steel in your spine even as you say that"). As for who violated the Privacy Act and delivered Hill's statement to the press, Pauley tried to maintain mystery: "Some of the members of the committee had never seen her statement . . . but someone who did, it's never been determined who, leaked it to the press." Sorry, Jane, everybody knows it was Ricki Seidman and James Brudney—aides to Ted Kennedy and Howard Metzenbaum, respectively—two liberal hired guns paid to derail Bush administration appointees.

In wrapping up the story, Pauley called attention to Hill's modesty through her troubled times. "Anita Hill has been a reluctant public figure, but writing a book seems to be an acknowledgment that notoriety is here to stay." Reluctant? Between moderating debates, accepting awards for her courage, and covering the speakers circuit, Anita Hill has been many things, but a reluctant public figure, no.

Casual

Please Don't Play It Again, Sam

There is a time in life when civilized tact checks out and dangerous candor checks in. Usually the time is late in one's seventies or in one's eighties. The condition seems to afflict men more than women. The grave yawns, further suppression of long repressed views no longer seems to have much point; what the hell, one says, let 'er rip, and, swoosh, the dam bursts with the opinion held back for so many years.

A close friend of mine, who is in the mortgage business, reports this happening one day to his 80-year-old father in the office of an important vice president of a bank with whom they had long done business. Sitting there, exchanging the standard pleasantries, my friend's father suddenly said: "You know, Grossman, you are a pompous ass, and always have been. If you had any courage at all, you wouldn't have wasted your life working for a bank." Cold silence. General embarrassment felt by everyone except my friend's father, who looked as if he had just committed a splendid public service. I asked my friend what he did. "Tried, without success," he said, "to find a place to hide my eyes."

Precocious in a number of ways, I worry about whether I myself may be hitting the stage of dangerous candor well ahead of schedule. The other day, standing near one of the cash registers in a large book store, a young man, maybe 23 or 24, with a mustache and goatee, asked the clerk if she knew where he might find a copy of *Naked Lunch* by William Burroughs. He asked in a tentative way, as if he had only learned about the book himself in the past few days. Ever the helpful guide, I stepped forth.

"Excuse me," I said, "but I don't think you need to read that book. It's full of ugliness, stupid violence, odious philosophy, and other dreary stuff. Take my advice: Save your money and take a pass on this loathsome tome."

He looked at me as if to say, "Who is this guy?" Quite right, too. Who was I to offer such opinionation? I wished I had a badge showing him that I had published four books of literary criticism, but I'm fairly certain it wouldn't have helped. In any case, he turned away, pretending I wasn't there, obvious kook that I was, and waited for the clerk, now consulting her computer, to tell him in which section of the store he might find *Naked Lunch*. So much for vigilante literary criticism in our day.

As I recollect this emotion in tranquility, I recognize that what triggered my outburst is my sense that there is, looming even as I write, a revived appreciation of the Beat generation as precursors of the 1960s in all its (presumably) glorious tumult. Seeing signs of this everywhere causes my blood to boil, my bile to bubble, my brain to burn.

The recent obituary press for Allen Ginsberg was just the beginning. Ginsberg, whose verse today remains largely unreadable and whose every political utterance was wrong, died with the kind of praise that might have seemed heavy-handed had it been applied to Walt Whitman (to whom, inevitably, he was compared). The only good story I've ever heard about Allen Ginsberg had to do with his one night receiving an award from some cultural organization presented to him by a man named Henry Geldzhaler. The audience was clearly carriage trade, men in black tie, women in blue-rinse hairdo. By way of introduction, Geldzhaler thanked his good friend Allen for his courage in coming out of the closet so early and so fearlessly, and went on about this at great, sentimental length. When Ginsberg finally spoke, he thanked Geldzhaler, but said that, after this introduction, he wasn't clear whether he was being given this award for poetry or fellatio, though he used the much rougher word.

More. In a course in prose style I teach at Northwestern University, three students in a class of 25 brought in sentences from Jack Kerouac as examples of prose they much admire. Only the greatest exertion of self-control allowed me not to ask them why they thought so well of such dreck.

A new wave of '60s envy looks to be upon us—an emotion that entails the strong feeling among the young that they missed something momentous, that great days have passed them by. Worship of the Beats, I sense, is a way of getting back to the '60s (even if the Beats' own beginning was the '50s). The Beats' literary legacy is just below negligible, their politics chiefly about druggery and buggery. Why, some 40 years later, is this still not clear to all?

The threatened reappearance of the '60s is what has put me in my current mood of dangerous candor. Should I happen upon you in a bookstore inquiring about a Hermann Hesse novel or in the street carrying an old Kurt Vonnegut book, please don't take it personally if I start telling you off.

Joseph Epstein

Race Matters Under Review

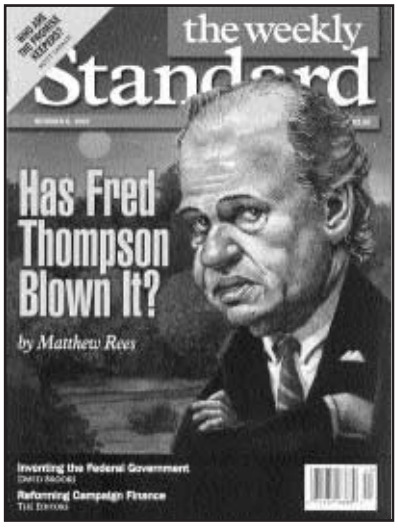
Evidently The Weekly Standard has a highly unusual (if not unique) "don't ask, don't tell" policy in assigning book reviews. Dinesh D'Souza had a glaring conflict of interest in agreeing to review our *America in Black and White* ("Cockeyed Optimists," Oct. 6). One of us had reviewed his book, *The End of Racism*, for the *Times Literary Supplement* (Dec. 8, 1995) and was harshly critical of it. D'Souza had written a good first book—a solid journalistic account of the p.c. wars in higher education—but he simply lacked the necessary training to do justice to the subject of race. His historical analysis was pedestrian at best and laughable at worst. Payback time, is how we read his review of our work.

D'Souza accuses us of attempting to curry favor with "liberal reviewers"—a studied insult to scholars such as Alan Wolfe who reviewed our work in The *New Republic* and certainly cannot be pushed around by "posturing." We do not name "a single reputable conservative" who actually espouses the "see no evil" position, D'Souza charges. It is true, we didn't make a great effort to document the point in the book, because the literature on race is so heavily skewed in the liberal direction. But if D'Souza really wants chapter and verse, we can quote at length from *The End of Racism*, which he presumably considers "reputable" enough.

It is a "see no evil" view, for example, to make the astounding claim that the South's Jim Crow system—perfectly constructed to deliver a message of blacks as a lesser breed—was actually "designed to encourage and preserve" black self-esteem. Moreover, elite southern whites were unable to offer "intellectual resistance" to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s movement, D'Souza argued, because their commitment to "the code of the gentleman" prevented them from arguing publicly that blacks were innately inferior. D'Souza also devoted much effort to dispelling what he calls "the myth" that the "civil rights movement represented a triumph of justice and enlightenment over the forces of Southern racism and hate." We refrained, in our book, from once again attacking D'Souza directly, but the first third of our work is an implicit answer to him (and others) who try hard to ignore America's terrible history of racial subjugation.

D'Souza complains that we attack only extremists who see no black progress over the past decades. Would that only liberal extremists were ignorant of the story of astonishing black advancement, beginning in the 1940s—a story that we ourselves did not know until we wrote the book! That advancement is fully documented with statistical data that cannot be found in any other single volume.

He also asserts that we "face a more serious challenge" in dealing with a position "more nuanced" than that of



liberal extremists. The "nuanced position" that he identifies presumably includes himself, but in any case ranges from Herrnstein and Murray to Thomas Sowell. Sowell is certainly our model of a scholar, and we fully embrace his views, as should have been evident from a cursory reading of the book. On the question of Herrnstein and Murray, yes, we are among many good scholars who do not find the concept of IQ useful, for reasons we explain in the book. To dismiss our carefully considered views as pious or frivolous is in itself frivolous—as well as insulting to our command of statistical analyses.

Ours is indeed an optimistic book—and Sowell shares our optimism. But skeptical readers can open the volume themselves and stare at the 76 tables and many other data. If they see a different story in the numbers, we welcome their analysis. They have the statistical information with which to work—hard data that are sorely lacking in D'Souza's own writing on race.

Stephan Thernstrom
Abigail Thernstrom
Cambridge, MA

The Editors respond: ***Dinesh D'Souza did indeed inform us, when we asked him to write on the Thernstroms' book, that his volume*** **The End of Racism** ***had been the subject of an unfavorable assessment by Stephan Thernstrom. We were satisfied, after a conversation, that D'Souza would still be a fair reviewer of the Thernstroms' book. And we think he was. It is understandable that the Thernstroms would be disappointed with D'Souza's review, but the differences between them seem to us to be a disagreement between serious writers considering a difficult subject.***

Dinesh D'Souza's review of *America in Black and White* answers more questions than it raises—and does so sloppily. It describes middle-class blacks as "uncompetitive with their white counterparts on virtually every measure of academic achievement and economic performance." Such groupism is offensive. Life is not a football game that divides groups into winners and losers. Further, D'Souza does not explain in what sense white counterparts are comparable if the groups are uncompetitive in *every* area. He hails Herrnstein and Murray's *The Bell Curve* as advancing "serious claims based on a wealth of data" without noting the wealth of serious objections raised by serious scholars to the same work. He refers to attitudes and behavior within the African-American community as the principal remaining obstacle to continued black progress. He makes no relevant distinction here—groupism again—and suggests that history, schools, social networks, the welfare system, and the relative return on human capital have little to do with behavior. This may be convenient, but it is also absurdly reductionist.

Thomas J. Meeks
Petersburg, VA

Correspondence

Holding Out the Promise

I enjoyed Matt Labash's "What Is—Or Are—the Promise Keepers?" (Oct. 6), but I have one major complaint. True fundamentalists are not "legalistic." Legalism is contrary to the doctrine of grace, and fundamentalists preach salvation by grace. The apostle Paul put it this way: "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21). As far as Labash's sarcastic crack about "your daughter's hemline" is concerned, allow me to remind him that the Bible teaches that women should "adorn themselves in modest apparel" (I Tim. 2:9).

Independent Baptists are too busy evangelizing a lost and dying world to waste time hanging around football stadiums bouncing beach balls, listening to insipid "Christian rock music," and enduring inane psychobabble from "nerf theologians" like Gary Smalley. If Bill McCartney is sincere—and many of us have our doubts—then he needs to consider that the Bible teaches holiness, the preeminence of the local church, and separation from worldliness. I agree with Bob Diehl that we are in a war, but I'm afraid he may be on the wrong side.

Rev. James Barker
Elmont, NY

As one who reads everything about evangelicals, I simply cannot praise Matt Labash's article enough. It was theologically sound, historically accurate, and politically nuanced. And in more than several places, it was hysterically funny.

Would it fit within the budget of The Weekly Standard to send a complimentary copy of this issue to the few remaining members of the National Organization for Women?

Michael Cromartie
Washington, DC

Matt Labash's piece was an excellent examination of a group that many pundits have trouble dealing with. Frankly, any group that can make NOW do the shimmy shake can't be all bad.

However, as a member of the Society for American Baseball Research, I must offer a correction to one flaw in Labash's piece. Evangelist Billy Sunday played major league baseball with the franchise that became the Chicago Cubs. The team was known as the White Stockings and Colts while Sunday played there. He concluded his career with the Pittsburgh Alleghenies, forerunners of the Pirates. He made one pitching appearance in his career as well.

While the error is trivial, we must retain our high standards in the era of Clinton.

Dave Anderson
Granger, IN

Semitic Semantics

Mitchell G. Bard's otherwise excellent article is marred by an imprecise use of the word "Palestinian" to describe the Arabs who were, in 1947, residents in what is now Israel ("The Palestinian Welfare State," Oct. 6).

From the destruction of the Temple —when Judea was renamed Philistina as an additional Roman affront—until 1973, the word "Palestinian" meant Jew. The British army unit "His Majesty's Palestinian Brigade" was a Jewish force, the Palestinian Philharmonic was the forerunner of the Israel Symphony, and even the redoubtable *Jerusalem Post* was known as the *Palestinian Post* prior to 1948. It was following the Fez Summit that the Arab states engaged the J. Walter Thompson Company in New York to polish their image—one that was clearly understood at the time to be 22 Arab states facing tiny Israel. The company's advice was to invert the David and Goliath image by appropriating the name "Palestinian" to describe all Arabs with geographical ties to what is now Israel. The word has no ethnic basis.

But forgive the quibbling. The Weekly Standard is one of the very few publications with a balanced view of the Middle East.

Lionel Chetwynd
Los Angeles, CA

It's for the Children

I am writing to clarify some misunderstandings about the advisory-panel meeting for voluntary national tests ("Clinton Contractors Dis Congress," Scrapbook, Oct. 6).

First, not one single panelist who serves on the two advisory panels for mathematics and reading stayed at the Four Seasons Hotel. Panelists stayed at the Georgetown Suites, which honors the government rate. The Four Seasons was used only for meeting space and meals.

A second inaccuracy is your claim that participants were nervous about the timing of the meeting, prior to congressional approval. As the Council for Basic Education recruited panelists and later advised them of the meeting date, there was no indication from the panelists of any nervousness about the timing of the meeting. Rather, CBE was struck by the enthusiasm that the panelists voiced. During the meeting, advisory-panel members were actively engaged in substantive and productive discourse.

Finally, CBE took tremendous care in bringing to the table a diverse group of individuals to serve on the two panels.

While CBE's costs and overhead for management of the technical panels are indeed reimbursed by the government, as a non-profit organization we do not "earn a tidy sum." Virtually all of our overhead costs are used to support our mission of advocating a strong liberal-arts education for all children.

The Council for Basic Education has always prided itself on its independence and insistence upon excellence. The meeting was consistent with these principles.

Christopher T. Cross
President
Council for Basic Education
Washington, DC

The Weekly Standard

welcomes letters to the editor. Letters will be edited for length and clarity and must include the writer's name, address, and phone number. All letters should be addressed:

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The Disgrace of Janet Reno

This Wednesday, Attorney General Janet Reno will testify at an oversight hearing of the House Judiciary Committee. The hearing will center on her management of the Justice Department inquiry into 1996 campaign fund-raising. Committee chairman Henry Hyde's Republican majority will want to know why Reno's career investigators and prosecutors seem forever behind the curve on this matter—which has already spattered more grime on a sitting president's reputation for "public integrity" than any scandal since Richard Nixon's Watergate. It will no doubt be a tense and sparky affair.

We expect committee Republicans will want to know how the Justice Department could so obviously botch the question of Al Gore's notorious big-buck telephone calls from the White House. In April, Reno announced that Gore had dialed only for "soft-money" contributions to the Democratic party. No problem, she said; that's not illegal. But five months later, the *Washington Post* reported that Gore's calls had actually generated a fair bit of "hard money"—which may well be illegal. The *Post* based this report on publicly available Democratic National Committee documents, copies of which had been sitting unreviewed at the Justice Department the entire time.

Hyde's colleagues will also no doubt be curious about a more recent and spectacular Justice fumble, this one involving video and audio tapes of Bill Clinton's White House donor coffees. White House counsel Charles F.C. Ruff's staffers "discovered" these tapes, they say, on October 1. At 3 p.m. on October 2, Ruff went to the Justice Department for a regularly scheduled meeting with Reno. He didn't mention the tapes. At 6:30 p.m. on October 3, Reno officially determined that where the Clinton coffees were concerned, "specific" and "credible" evidence that would, by law, require her to secure the appointment of an independent counsel simply did not exist. On October 4, Ruff's men finally clued her in about the tapes.

This raises a suspicion about obstruction of justice at the White House, of course. It raises more than a suspicion about incompetence at Justice, however. How is it, in all those months, that it never once occurred to our law-enforcement officials to pursue such basic documentary records? How is it, for that matter, that the investigative enthusiasm of Reno's department has been allowed to ebb and flow with what looks like a distinctly partisan tide?

Justice has this year smoothly forwarded a number of Republican controversies to a federal grand jury: an overseas loan secured for a GOP think tank by former party chairman Haley Barbour, for instance, and an allegation by Democratic lobbyist Mark Siegel that House Government Reform and Oversight Committee chairman Dan Burton had pressured Siegel for campaign contributions. At the same time, bigger Democratic fish have largely escaped the Justice Department's attention. Former Democratic party chairman Don Fowler clearly intervened with the CIA on behalf of donor-oilman Roger Tamraz, though he absurdly claims to have forgotten the incident. We know that from sworn witness testimony and several thousand pages of DNC documents introduced before Fred Thompson's Senate committee. Has the FBI contacted the committee for information about this troubling event? It has not.

Nor did the Justice task force get around to interviewing so central a figure in 1996 Democratic fundraising as former White House deputy chief of staff Harold Ickes until late last month. The hold-up seems rooted in Janet Reno's understanding of the independent-counsel statute. Here, too, Henry Hyde and company will want to quiz the attorney general hard: about how she squares the language of various formal legal opinions and criminal-code provisions with her refusal so far to recuse her department and seek an independent counsel.

They will not get much out of her, we wager. Janet Reno seems the kind of person who grows ever more stubborn as her position grows ever less secure. She will decline to answer particular questions of legal interpretation, and refer them, as she routinely does, to her subordinates. She will decline to answer even general questions about the progress of her task force,

citing, as she just as routinely does, the sensitivity of any pending criminal investigation. And she will decline to accept any criticism of that task force—something she has lately begun doing with unseemly vehemence. Complaints about her management of the fund-raising inquiry, Reno says, are the product of ignorance, "innuendo," and "rank speculation." She is doing "the right thing," the attorney general insists, and she intends to keep right on doing it. Or not doing it, as the case may be.

So we probably won't learn much of anything that's new on Wednesday. No matter; we already know all we need to. On October 3, the *Washington Post* published an exhaustive account of the Justice Department task force's history. The work of the task force, it turns out, has been radically circumscribed by the attorney general's fetishization of the independent-counsel statute. If Justice investigators trip across the slightest hint that a high official covered by that statute's guidelines may be associated with some potential wrongdoing, they must immediately back away and refer the matter to Janet Reno. Janet Reno then reviews whether this initial evidence is sufficient to trigger the statute. If she decides that it is not, then the entire line of inquiry that produced the evidence must be dropped. Even, it seems, if that line of inquiry promises to bring to light crimes that do not involve covered officials at all. First, one Justice lawyer told the *Post*, "you can't ask someone whether a covered person committed a crime." And second, another Justice Department source reported, "even if it looks like a duck, we can't poke it to make it quack."

Janet Reno has managed to turn the independent-counsel statute completely on its head. That law, designed to ensure the unbiased prosecution of senior government officials, now operates, under Reno's direction, as a near-blanket insurance policy for those officials *against* such prosecution.

And in Reno's hands, the independent-counsel statute is also doing something arguably worse. It is preventing all the lesser Democratic ducks—their feathers more deeply stained by implications of fund-raising illegality than Bill Clinton and Al Gore's feathers will likely ever be—from quacking. Federal laws have been broken, right and left: kited checks, fictitious donors, foreign contributions, fund-raising on property owned by tax-exempt institutions, you name it. And the attorney general of the United States appears to believe that it is her duty *not* to investigate those crimes thoroughly and speedily.

Janet Reno has a self-imposed conflict of interest with her broadest responsibility to oath and office. She is not enforcing the law, and she is not administering the Justice Department in an orderly and credible fashion. If she were truly the person of "integrity" everyone ritualistically says she is, Janet Reno would resign.

—David Tell, for the Editors

The Tories in Disarray

by Irwin M. Stelzer

Blackpool, England

Last week, a Labour party celebration; this week, a Tory wake. Britain's Conservative party gathered beside the Irish Sea in Blackpool to lick its wounds after its electoral rout in May, and to try to persuade itself that it is now on the road to renewal and a return to power. This is, after all, the party that considers itself to be Great Britain's "natural party of government."

Unfortunately for the Tories, what may have been true in the days of Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher is not true in the day of William Hague, the party's new, young leader. Dubbed "wee Willie" by Labour—and by more Conservatives than he cares to admit—Hague has inherited a bedraggled, aging (average age of his party's members: 65), broke, and fractious party. And he has decided that his first chore is to use his skills as a former management consultant to restructure the organization.

This elevation of organization over ideology created a confrontation at the party conference—between those who see Hague's managerial strategy as the path back to power and those who think that ideas are what makes a political party successful. Leading the charge of the thinkers is David Willetts, who has written a string of books and pamphlets that attempt to define conservatism. Willetts is a favorite of American think-tankers; he is also a successful politician who graduated from the policy-formulating bodies set up by Sir Keith Joseph and Margaret Thatcher to bring the policies that became known as Thatcherism into elective politics.

And he personifies the split between economic and social conservatives that is so much a part of the disputes on the American Right as well. Willetts made the ritual bow to free markets that all social conservatives feel obliged to make. But economics, he

quickly adds, isn't everything. There must be more to life than mindless acts of serial consumption. After all, the Tories were reelected in 1992 when Britain was in the midst of a recession, and defeated in 1997, when the economy was booming, the nation's unemployment rate the lowest in Europe, and inflation under control. Willetts called for the preservation of institutions that mediate between the state and the individual, and for a return to what we would call family values.

But he has a problem. The new leader of this trendier Tory party decided to cohabit with his girlfriend during the conference, to much tut-tutting from Lady Thatcher and many of the party elders. Worse, he decided to throw Tory support behind a Labour move to lower the statutory age of consent for homosexuals from 18 to 16. At least one very modern observer of British social life told me that the main danger young homosexuals face in Britain is being preyed upon by older men, and so even many of the trendier Tories are not sure Hague is on the right side of this issue.

THE NEW LEADER OF THIS TRENDIER TORY PARTY DECIDED TO COHABIT WITH HIS GIRLFRIEND DURING THE CONFERENCE.

That's not the only problem that the social conservatives have with this New Age Conservative party. Labour has promised to remove the voting rights of hereditary peers in the House of Lords. Many Tories worry that this will remove the one constraint on majority tyranny. After all, with a huge margin in the House of Commons, Prime Minister Tony Blair can push through just about any legislation that suits him. There is no executive-branch veto to check his power, no written constitution against which such laws can be measured. Although the House of Lords has no effective power against the House of Commons, it can at least make "the other place," as it calls the Commons, consider some amendments and have a rethink. And the hereditary members are the ones not beholden to any party for their positions. Eliminate them, and the elected majority party is free to do what it will, and instantly.

The danger of a tyranny of the majority does not seem to have bothered Hague, who let it be known that he was in favor of the Labour reforms. They are, after all, "modern." This brought a howl of protest from Lord Cecil Parkinson (son of a railroad worker, and definitely not a hereditary peer), the safe pair of hands the Tories have persuaded to return to politics as party chairman. "You really can boil cabbage twice," Parkinson quoted one party stalwart as saying when some argued that a new face might better serve the interests of a party trying to recreate itself.

Hague seems to have backed down after Parkinson's rebuke, but not before sending a chill down the collective spine of Tory social conservatives who fear that their leader's mad dash to modernity might bring down the institutions they so value.

The dispute between the traditionalists and the modernizers broke out on still another front. Lord Tebbit, probably one of the most popular Tories with the grass roots of the party, made a public attack on multiculturalism. To a standing ovation from his audience of some 500, the former party chairman and most Thatcherite of Thatcherites (he once famously suggested that the unemployed emulate his father, and get on their bikes to find a job) told a packed room, "Youngsters of all races born here should be taught that British history is their history, or they will forever be foreigners holding British passports and this kingdom will become a Yugoslavia. . . . Unless we share standards, moral values, language, and our national heritage, we will constitute neither a society nor a nation but just a population living under the same jurisdiction." Lest his modernizing leader not find this enough of a thumb in the eye, Tebbit derided management consultants, and added that he is uncomfortable "sharing a party with those who advocate sodomite marriage."

Despite the fact that Lord Tebbit emphasized that he opposed neither immigration nor immigrants, many of whom share his views on the crucial role of the family and educational attainment, Hague felt compelled to issue what his spokesmen described as "a slap-down." Hague said he believes in a multicultural, tolerant party, and hopes to recruit more blacks and Asians and, while he is in the diversity business, more single moms, married couples, gays, and young folk. One of the latter exulted, "No more Victorian morality for us Tories."

This combination of events put Hague on the side of those who have no objection to couples' cohabiting without benefit of clergy, who would allow consensual homosexual sex by men not old enough to vote, who place little value on the tradition embodied in the currently structured House of Lords, and who see no threat to social cohesion from multiculturalism. One keen observer told me that this new morality will antagonize party members: "They aren't Conservatives because they read Milton Friedman; they're Conservatives because they hate the culture of the 1960s."

No report on the gathering of Conservatives would be complete without relating the further doings of Alan Clark, MP for posh Kensington and Chelsea. Clark is remembered by some for his brilliant diaries, recording his days as a member of Margaret Thatcher's government. And he is even better remembered for admitting that he simultaneously seduced a mother and her two daughters, to the delight of the tabloid press here.

This loose cannon used a fringe meeting question-and-answer session to put forward his own solution to the troubles in Ireland: "The only solution for dealing with the IRA is to kill 600 people in one night—let the U.N. and Bill Clinton and everyone else make a scene—and it [the violence] is over for twenty years." This was described as "unhelpful" by the party leadership. "Alan, if he has nothing better to say, should just shut up," said Parkinson.

All of this had one advantage: It distracted attention from the party's continued split over possible British membership in the European Monetary Union. That chasm remains, huge and unbridgeable, one that the party will sooner or later have to bridge if William Hague is ever to take up residence in 10 Downing Street with the woman who will soon be his wife and by then may be his grandchildren's grandmother.

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Misremember the Alamo!

by Jorge Amselle

Hispanic Heritage Month runs from September 15, independence day for most of Central America, to October 15. This year, the Hispanic press is portraying two sisters, Nadine and Patsy Cordova, as martyrs for the Chicano-history movement. The two were junior-high and high-school teachers in Vaughn, New Mexico, until they were fired for teaching their students about Cesar Chavez and racial tolerance, or so they claim. In fact, the textbook they were using—*500 Years of Chicano History in Pictures*, edited by Elizabeth Martinez—teaches, above all, racial, ethnic, and class antagonism through relentless attacks on whites, Europeans, capitalism, and, of course, America.

THE TEXTBOOK *500 YEARS OF CHICANO HISTORY IN PICTURES* TEACHES NOT ETHNIC PRIDE BUT UNDILUTED ANTI-AMERICANISM.

Written in Spanish and "Spanglish" and consisting mostly of pictures, this widely used book is in its third printing. Its propaganda message is pervasive. Thus, it recounts that Chicanos are not white but *mestizo*, "a people born from an act of destruction, a people born from an act of rape, a new people of America born to revolt." The introduction tells students that the book was published in response to the "Bicentennial celebration of the 1776 American Revolution, and its lies." Its purpose is to "celebrate our resistance to being colonized and absorbed by racist empire builders."

According to the book, the defenders of the Alamo were nothing but "slave owners, land speculators, and Indian killers." Davey Crockett was a cannibal. The 1846 "War on Mexico" was an unprovoked U.S. invasion, and the "*yanquis desgraciados*" massacred innocent civilians. The chapter headings include Death to the Invader, U.S. Conquest and Betrayal, We Are Now a U.S. Colony, In Occupied America, and They Stole the Land.

The United States is accused of "legalized murder" when it created the Texas Rangers, who act like a "terrorist force." Indeed, "like any police force, [the Rangers] exist to protect the property of the rich and to keep down the oppressed," says the book. "Today they still serve the rich by repressing farm workers." The Immigration and Naturalization Service becomes "the Gestapo of Mexicans," responsible for "massive raids, detentions, and deportations, racist pursuit and even murder at the border. . . . These practices have gone on for years. Like hunters pursuing animal prey, *La Migra* [derogatory slang for U.S. immigration authorities] has tracked down *mexicanos* at the border and killed them with guns or INS vehicles."

Students are taught that, "for poor Chicanos and Indian people, the land is our mother—not private property. It is a means of survival, of production, that we both lost to the capitalist system and its values." Pre-invasion Mexico "was a land of ancient cultures that prohibited anyone going hungry or homeless.

The idea of private property did not exist." Today, by contrast, Mexico's wealth "goes to U.S. capitalists, whose domination of Mexico's economy is part of *el imperialismo yankee*" (the book spells Yankee both the English and the Spanish way).

Unfortunately, over 300 schools, colleges, and universities around the country are using *500 Years of Chicano History in Pictures* as a classroom text. It appears to be particularly popular in California. Yet it was in tiny Vaughn—with just 700 residents, almost all of them Hispanic—that the school board and superintendent objected to the teaching of racist Chicano history in the town's single school. When Patsy and Nadine Cordova refused to heed repeated warnings to stop using non-approved materials in their classes, they were fired, bringing down the wrath of the nationally organized radical-Hispanic establishment and its liberal allies.

Predictably, with the assistance of the New Mexico Civil Liberties Union, the two fired teachers are suing the school for, among other things, violating their First Amendment rights. Supporters of the sisters include the South West Organizing Project (the book's publisher), the University of New Mexico's Chicano-studies department, the Southwest Workers Union in San Antonio, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) in Albuquerque, and the United Farm Workers union in California.

These groups led protests against the school board, accusing the Hispanic residents of Vaughn of being ashamed of their roots. How could it be that Hispanics would oppose the teaching of radical Chicano history? Herman Garcia, of the curriculum and instruction department at New Mexico State University, gave the *Fresno Bee* the inevitable explanation: "The racism of this region in New Mexico is such that many people of Mexican or IndoHispano origin proclaim that they have Spanish rather than Mexican blood."

Andy Cordova, Vaughn's school board president and a cousin of the fired teachers, says that the vast majority of the people in Vaughn support the school board's actions. "The community does not agree with what the sisters were teaching. It's only these outside groups that are giving us a hard time," he said. And Cordova added, "People here know who they are and where they come from, but this curriculum is not the way to go. We are all Americans and we need to come together, not alienate the Anglo students and residents."

Jorge Amselle is communications director of the Center for Equal Opportunity in Washington, D.C.

Welfare Reform As We Know It

by John J. Dilulio Jr.

LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THE LATEST conservative chatter about the course and consequences of the federal welfare reform of 1996, and you will hear a new political legend in the making.

It begins in 1992. President Clinton, a liberal in centrist's clothing, comes to power promising to "end welfare as we know it." But instead of the president's trying to reform welfare, his wife tries to nationalize health care. She fails, and with Clintoncare defeated, in 1995 the historic Republican-led 104th Congress forces the president's hand on welfare reform. When the dust settles, Clinton signs Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the basic welfare entitlement, into statutory oblivion, replacing it with a block grant, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, in October 1996.

The new program promises to reduce spending, streamline bureaucracy, enforce strict time limits on the receipt of welfare payments, and impose tough welfare-to-work provisions. But Clinton feels the pain of defeated welfare stand-patters, including the first lady. In 1997 he makes good on his reelection pledge to "fix" the reform. He is aided and abetted by a disorganized and demoralized Republican congressional majority that has lost the spirit of '94.

Here the legend-in-the-making takes a sharp right turn to a happy ending. Despite the "fix of '97," and thanks to Republican pushes for reform in the states, welfare rolls decline by 25 percent. That's *25 percent!* Even if the liberals who fought the reforms are ultimately proven right about such particulars as how tough it will be for most long-term welfare recipients to find jobs and how little cutoffs will do to reduce births to women on welfare, so what? The reforms "send the right moral message," and the message has already gotten through. Thus, before a single new provision has taken effect, mere publicity and street scuttlebutt about time limits and work requirements have cowed able-bodied loafers into removing themselves from the rolls and scared would-be welfare scammers off applying. The reforms enshrined in the federal Per-

sonal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 and their sister reforms in all the states will deservedly go down in history as a reminder to the nation of the Republican view of republican virtue, a view centered on individual initiative and personal responsibility.

Like most political legends, the GOP's welfare-reform legend blends fact with myth, misinformation, and self-satisfaction. Begin with the much-celebrated 25 percent drop.

It is true that, between March 1994 and May 1997, the AFDC rolls dropped by 23.3 percent—from 4.6 million households to 3.5 million households. But they had risen dramatically in the early 1990s, and the recent decline left nearly 44,000 more households on AFDC in May 1997 than in July 1989. Moreover, a recent study by the president's Council of Economic Advisers estimated that over two-fifths of the decline was due to economic growth. Other, more conservative analysts suggest that general economic factors account for about a fifth of the drop. Split the analytical difference and it's about a third.

UNDOUBTEDLY WHAT REPUBLICAN GOVERNORS LIKE THOMPSON AND ENGLER HAVE DONE IS NOBLE. BUT THERE'S MORE TO THIS STORY.

So what accounts for the other two-thirds of the drop? With pardonable pride, the GOP's conservative legend-makers say, "We do!" Undoubtedly, what Republican governors like Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin and John Engler of Michigan have done to move people off the dole and into work is a noble fact of public administration and no rank ideological fiction. But there's more to this story.

In a scrupulously objective report summarizing the empirical evidence, Thomas L. Gais, Donald Boyd, and Elizabeth Davis of the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government at the State University of New York-Albany emphasize that in many states the caseload decline *preceded* the reforms; indeed, changes in the laws often had their greatest impact in the year before they took effect. As the SUNY-Albany scholars note, several studies, including the analysis by the Council of Economic Advisers, have seconded the conservative conjecture that many able-bodied welfare-eligible adults saw the work requirements and cutoffs coming and responded by getting off the rolls or not applying in the first place. Other studies, however, suggest that the laws were actually being implemented informally before they were officially in place, detecting and dumping welfare ineligibles, not merely deterring them.

But nobody really knows. As the SUNY-Albany study notes, "State-by-state comparisons uncover many anomalies. Thus, Pennsylvania and New Jersey underwent similar economic cycles and showed very similar patterns of caseload growth and decline. But New Jersey had federal waivers [and imposed time limits, work requirements, and fixed family benefits regardless of the birth of additional children], while Pennsylvania was one of the few states that did not."

By the same token, both Pennsylvania and New Jersey—along with roughly half of the states—are defaulting on one or more of the federal law's work requirements. States are required, for example, to have three-quarters of their two-parent welfare families working at least 35 hours a week. Despite much pushing and prodding by welfare officials, Pennsylvania has only 46 percent of those families working, New Jersey 49 percent.

And there's another rub. Two-parent families are only 2 percent of Pennsylvania's welfare households and 4 percent of New Jersey's. These families are more likely than the rest of the welfare caseload to contain people with a recent work history and less likely to live in inner-city neighborhoods with few jobs. Much harder to move into the workforce are the far more numerous, often highly dysfunctional, urban single-parent families. (Philadelphia's 200,000 people on welfare, including 80,000 children under 6, make up 43 percent of the Pennsylvania caseload.) To get these people working will require, among other measures, the development of many thousands of community service jobs (cleaning parks, staffing zoos, and so on), which welfare officials in most states are just beginning to debate.

What of the impact of the new federal and state laws on childbearing by welfare-dependent mothers? A new Rutgers University study of New Jersey's post-August 1993 experience with denying cash-benefit increases to mothers who have more children while on welfare found no statistically significant effect on childbearing. Similarly, economists Robert W. Fairlie and Rebecca A. London, writing in the current *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, conclude from a wealth of statistical evidence that "the potential effect of family caps on the fertility of AFDC recipients is likely to be small at best," while the scant evidence to the contrary relies on demonstrably imprecise measurements and spurious correlations.

Welfare reform at both federal and state levels has yet to pass what Charles Murray terms the "trendline test." In his recent book *What It Means to Be a Libertarian*, Murray writes, "The first step in asking whether

we can get rid of government is this standard test: Draw a trendline showing what was happening before and after the intervention of government." The Democrats' Great Society anti-poverty reforms, he argues, fail the test because using "retrospective calculations of poverty, the trendline shows a regular drop in poverty from World War II through the 1960s, with the Johnson years accounting for their fair share, no more."

In many states, the welfare rolls were already declining from their March 1994 high at the time most reforms kicked in. Until some significant part of the continuing decline can be clearly traced to the new policies, welfare reform cannot be deemed to have passed the trendline test. Nor have its biggest advocates come to grips with credible, up-close accounts of how the most widely touted of the reforms were actually implemented—namely, by strengthening, not slashing, state and local welfare bureaucracies. As Lawrence Mead concluded in one detailed report on the Wisconsin experience, reforming welfare "can save money on balance, but it requires more bureaucracy rather than less. . . . Growing bureaucracy is exactly what one should expect if the main task of reform is to get on top of the caseload. That is precisely what Wisconsin is doing. . . . Dependency is falling precisely because government is growing, and not in spite of it." The same story holds for most of the much less well publicized instances of dramatic caseload decline in states from Tennessee to Texas.

And what has become of those among whom "dependency is falling"? The post-AFDC horror show predicted by some liberals starred starving hordes sleeping on mean streets as states ran a welfare-benefits "race to the bottom." The worst has not even come close to happening, and there is little evidence that former welfare recipients are crowding shelters or flooding food banks. But are they working? Did they trail back to other forms of cash or in-kind public assistance? Are their children getting adequate medical care? Nobody knows.

All that seems definite so far is that many of those who have left the rolls and found jobs are drawn from the short-term, civil, sober, once-employed elite of the welfare population, not from the mass of long-dependent adults who have no job history and are socially dysfunctional in the extreme (drug or alcohol-addicted, in trouble with the law, and so on).

Right now, many households eligible for assistance under the federal reform are headed by people "mired in habits of dependency," as Murray put it in a 1994 essay in *Commentary*. Murray recommended abolishing AFDC but with a grandfather clause, allowing people already receiving assistance to continue doing so under the old rules, rather than forcing them to meet unbendable time limits or unrealistic work requirements.

Even amid the continuing economic expansion, that recommendation is gaining de facto assent in many state welfare bureaucracies. And sooner or later, the boom will end. When it does, you can be sure that increases in unemployment will swell the welfare caseloads. How much? The consensus is that each 1 percent rise in unemployment triggers a caseload rise in the 2 to 5 percent range.

Reforming welfare is but one of the many hard tasks of contemporary, post-Great Society conservative governance. It is an effective-governance task, on which a fresh and fruitful start has been made—but only a start.

Contributing editor John J. DiIulio Jr. is the co-editor (with Frank Thompson) of* Medicaid and the States, *forthcoming from Brookings.

Promise Keepers and the Press

by Terry Eastland

EARLIER THIS YEAR the National Organization for Women and its friends on the cultural left decided it was time to take on Promise Keepers, the men's evangelical movement founded six years ago by the former University of Colorado football coach Bill McCartney. Armageddon was to be October 4, 1997, when Promise Keepers gathered in the nation's capital to hold a big rally. In op-eds and on talk shows, the cultural Left argued that Promise Keepers really was part of the religious Right and that it was intent on undermining the rights revolution of the past half century that has brought women equality with men. McCartney and other PK leaders insisted that the organization was not political or against women. Yet this question of the Promise Keepers' identity had been planted, and in the run-up to the event, it was a dominant topic in the news coverage.

The headline of a long piece on McCartney in the September 28 *Washington Post* asked whether "He's the Coach for the Faithful—Or the Far Right?" Two days

later the *NBC Nightly News*, in its first story on the event, noted that "some women's groups feel that Promise Keepers, their warm and fuzzy ideology, is a mask for something more sinister." The NOW-ish kicker by correspondent Jim Avila was this: "But not everyone is a convert, and as the Promise Keepers face their biggest weekend ever, they're finding that returning to a world where man has the final word will take more than a promise and a prayer."

But the NOW storyline did not dominate. Remarkably, the more common journalism was sympathetic to the organization and the rally, and some pieces—like one in *U.S. News & World Report*—explicitly rejected NOW's take. A story the *Post* published the day before the rally noted that PK opponents who had flocked to Washington to spread "their own message" were now admitting that their message had been "drowned out by the generally favorable coverage the group has received."

This trend in the coverage did not change when the rally was held, no doubt because none of the speakers made a political speech. One of the most glowing pieces was the *New York Times*'s main story on the rally, by Laurie Goodstein. It began this way: "In a religious revival rally that stretched a mile from the Capitol past the Washington Monument, hundreds of thousands of Christian men hugged, sang, and sank to their knees today, repenting for their own sins and what they see as a secular and socially troubled America." The story included many comments from the men who did the repenting, and not until the 24th paragraph (out of 33) was there a mention of NOW's perspective. It was introduced with this dismissive lead sentence: "The event has its critics." The next paragraph quoted the wife of one of the men, who said that NOW was off base and that Promise Keepers had helped her husband "realize that work is not as important as family."

No news organization assigned as many reporters to the event as the *Washington Post* did—at least 23, by my count. And the *Post*'s Sunday coverage of the rally was massive (no fewer than eight bylined articles) and friendly. Consider these headlines: "Promise Keepers Answer the Call"; "Men Were Driven to 'Confess Their Sins'"; "At Assembly, a Call to Bring the Races Together"; and "A Father and Son, Standing in the Generation Gap."

The *Post*'s coverage merits special notice in light of the fact that in 1993 it published a front-page article casually noting that the people who watch television evangelists are "largely poor, uneducated, and easy to command." Responding to hundreds of objecting readers, the *Post* published a correction, but it has had to live with the perception that it is hostile to evangelical Christianity. Did the experience affect how the paper covered the recent rally? An editor who worked on the coverage says it didn't, and perhaps that is so. In any event, the coverage of the rally left those who objected to the "largely poor, uneducated, and easy to command" stereotype four years ago little to complain about. The *Post* has not had to run any corrections of its Promise Keepers stories.

There can be no question that the frame of the story would have sharply changed had McCartney or any other of the many speakers at the rally declaimed on abortion rights or vouchers—or if religious-Right figures like James Dobson or Gary Bauer or Ralph Reed had spoken. At the same time, the many "people" stories that were available as the men poured into Washington meant that much of the coverage would be upbeat. The rally's emphasis on racial reconciliation also invited positive coverage, unless this commitment could be somehow shown to be inauthentic. That proved an impossible task, as prayers of forgiveness for racism were lifted to the heavens by the assembled (one in seven was black). And no doubt it left a favorable impression with the media that some of the men who came to the rally repaired a dilapidated school in the District of Columbia. Indeed, it is hard to discount the impact on the media of the manner in which the hundreds of thousands of Promise Keepers conducted themselves, both before and after the event, and during it. "You can't help but be moved," said one CNN correspondent reporting on the rally.

The nature of the coverage left the Media Research Center with nothing to do. MRC, which specializes in reporting media bias, was prepared to stand in the gap with a special report on rally coverage. "I was waiting for a huge hit on Sunday and Monday about how subversive the Promise Keepers are," says MRC's Brent Baker, "but it didn't happen."

The most significant failings of the coverage turned out to be theological. Promise Keepers has been criticized for avoiding the sacraments, encouraging small-group ministries that promote pietistic excess, and failing to come to grips with hard theological differences in order to promote Christian unity. Few stories treated these issues. But perhaps that was too much to ask of secular journalists few of whom are knowledgeable about such matters. At least most of them got the basic story that here were men who met on the Mall to repent of their sins and worship God and better serve their families. It was hard to be negative about that.

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They're Baaack

By Andrew Ferguson

Tuesday, October 7

It was just like old times. As the Thompson hearings into the campaign-finance scandals resumed this morning, the hearing room buzzed like a county fair on Kiss a Heifer Day. Outside, the queue of normal people waiting to get in was longer than I'd ever seen it. Inside, the biggest of the media's bigfeet (*Al Hunt! Mary McGrory! What's-his-name!*) milled about, greeting and laughing and back-slapping like long-lost pals, as if they hadn't just seen one another on TV all weekend. Reporters of the more earthbound variety packed the press tables. The cause of all this commotion was the appearance at last of Harold Ickes, the president's former deputy chief of staff. From his perch at the White House, as the world knows, Ickes oversaw the 1996 Clinton-Gore campaign, which, as the world also knows, has birthed scandals the way a cat has kittens. Ickes is famously smart and contentious, with a volcanic temper, so his testimony was expected to yield good theater if nothing else. (I can hear the bigfeet rehearsing already: "Well, Mark, I'm afraid the hearings this week generated more *heat* than *light*." Much arching of eyebrows. Much wagging of chins.)

I say the hearings "resumed" today, but in fact they never really stopped. It just seemed that way. Several weeks ago, following a rollicking good performance by the multinational businessman (and Clinton donor) Roger Tamraz, Senators Thompson and Glenn abruptly shut down the "investigative" portion of the hearings in favor of expert testimony about the urgency of campaign-finance reform. I attended the first of these hearings last month, and as I walked in I saw the room was almost empty: no cameramen, no spectators, two reporters. In the seats reserved for White House counsel a solitary woman sat, reading *Iron John*. And most ominous of all: There in the witness chairs were Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute and Thomas Mann of the Brookings Institution. It's true that these two campaign-finance experts are intelligent men, but it's likewise true that computer-generated climatological models have demonstrated that together they are responsible for fully 40 percent of the greenhouse-gas emissions that threaten the very survival of the planet. I made a hasty exit, and in the weeks that followed you couldn't find a news story about the Thompson hearings with a microscope.

All this will presumably change with Ickes. The *Iron John* lady was gone this morning, and in her place was the chief White House counsel Charles Ruff. He wasn't a scheduled witness, but like Lucy Ricardo he had some 'splainin' to do. Over the weekend the White House had miraculously discovered and produced at least 44 videotapes that Ruff had previously told the committee didn't exist. The tapes that didn't exist but now do exist were of the notorious White House coffees, which weren't fund-raisers but raised several million dollars in funds. (This White House is totally postmodern.) How to 'splain the tapes' spontaneous generation? Ruff didn't testify, but he told reporters, by way of clarification, that they *wouldn't believe* how hard his overworked, understaffed staff works. "Seven days a week, 16-, 18-, 20 hours a day," he said. And he did look tired. No president has ever worked harder than Bill Clinton at telling people how hard he works. Apparently it's catching.

The commotion over the tapes was so preoccupying that Ickes never did get to testify; after several hours of senatorial speechifying, with the Republicans complaining about the White House and the attorney general, and the Democrats complaining about all the Republicans' complaining, he read his opening statement in late afternoon, before the committee adjourned for the day. To my utter amazement, I found myself feeling slightly sorry for him. Fanned out behind Ickes were no less than nine attendants, the bulk of them lawyers, presumably, including the bulky Robert Bennett, whose rates are stratospheric—as high as $550 an hour. By day's end, the witness had probably dropped close to $10,000 in attorneys' fees alone, and he had yet to answer a single question. Plus he had to eat in the Dirksen Building cafeteria. I'm not sure even Harold Ickes deserves this.

Wednesday, October 8

Chairman Thompson has taken much criticism for his conduct of the hearings and the investigation—from Democrats who scorn his partisanship, and from Republicans who scorn his bipartisanship.

Andrew Ferguson is a senior editor of The Weekly Standard.

"It doesn't bother me," he says over and over, again and again. But he must surely have been happy this morning. The *Washington Post* devoted most of its oped page to reprinting his opening statement from yesterday. It was worth reprinting—an impromptu attack on the White House, shaded with a kind of controlled anger and phrased in a plainspoken eloquence that senators seldom achieve. "Just a parting comment," he drawled in closing, "and I guess it'll probably be about worth what's being paid for it, but I feel compelled to say it, anyway. There's a missing player in most of these discussions. I think it's the President of the United States. . . .

"This committee has tried to be fair to you, Mr. President. I've taken an awful lot of criticism because I've tried to be fair to you. And I haven't done it just for you. I've done it because I thought the American people expected it of me. And now I think the American people expect you to step up to the plate and take responsibility, because surely nobody wants this to go down looking like a successful cover-up of much more serious activities. No one who loves their country wants that."

This was excellent stagecraft, and in fact Thompson's only PR triumph after months of hearings.

And then, this morning . . . a PR catastrophe. The chairman opened the questioning of Ickes by dwelling on the recently exposed scheme, between the Teamsters and the Democratic National Committee, to launder money through the election campaign of Teamsters president Ron Carey. "Now I don't want to seem like I'm surprising you," Thompson said, and then proceeded to surprise everybody by announcing that three of the principals in the scheme had met with President Clinton in the White House residence days before the plan was executed. A few days after that, two of the three met again with the president, also in the residence. The implication: Clinton was in on it too! Several reporters rushed from the hearing room to file bulletins, just the way they do in the movies. The unflappable Ickes seemed momentarily flapped.

By lunchtime, however, after rebuttal questioning from the committee's Democratic counsel, the charge had gone out of this potentially explosive story. The first of the "private" meetings, it turned out, was a fund-raising lunch in the Blue Room, attended by at least eight other guests, including such unlikely conspiratorialists as the general counsel of the Burlington Northern Railroad and the chairman of the Cheyenne Arapaho Nation. The second "meeting in the residence" to which Thompson alluded was a state dinner for the president of Ireland attended by 400 people. Imagine a conspiracy with 400 Irishmen.

At the lunch break reporters were furious. A hapless Republican staffer stood sweating in the hallway outside, taking shouted questions. The question was no longer "What did the president know and when did he know it?" Did the chairman knowingly create a false impression? Did he know the meetings weren't private? Did he understand he was recklessly implicating the president in a criminal conspiracy? What did Fred Thompson know and when did he know it?

Like the president, the chairman was apparently the victim of "bad staff work." He had been misinformed, embarrassed by incompetent or sluggish aides. It all sounded familiar to Lanny Davis, the White House counsel who monitors the hearings. I've never seen him so happy. Lanny does not have many good days. But this was turning into a very good day. "I trust that the senator did not intend any unfair innuendo," he told reporters. "But I do hope that the next time we at the White House may inadvertently overlook something, he will give us the same benefit of the doubt that we have given him." His eyes twinkled.

"Do you like that line?" he asked.

Thursday, October 9

I decided to spend the day on the House side of Capitol Hill, watching congressman Dan Burton's rival campaign-finance hearings, and I take back every bad thing I ever said about the Dirksen Building cafeteria and the United States Senate in general. The House, unimaginably, is even drearier than the Senate—the offices more crowded, the hearing rooms shabbier, the elevators slower, the food worse.

The first thing you notice about congressmen is that there are so many of them. The Thompson committee has 16 members. The Burton committee has 44. There is a difference in deportment and couture as well. Senators, as a rule, favor French cuffs and those fancy striped shirts with white collars. They have expensive hair and excellent posture. Congressmen, by contrast, tend to wear ties that reach only halfway to their belt buckles. They take their coats off a lot and roll up the sleeves of their perma-press shirts, as though they were back home at the car dealership dickering with the boys about sticker prices over a nice cool can of Yoohoo.

Chairman Burton himself is an elegant dresser, as befits a chairman. This morning he sported a silk tie and double-breasted suit with a puffy scarlet pocket square of the richest silk. The effect is impressive, though it can't obscure the fact that he is, fundamentally, a Hoosier. He is also a Clinton-hater of the first order. He has dwelled long and lovingly, for example,

on what Clinton obsessives like to call "the mysterious death of Vincent Foster," and he views the campaign-finance scandals in the most extravagant context of criminality. He has staffed his team with veterans of the D'Amato Whitewater committee—a career move that offers another example of the singular Washington phenomenon of failing up.

Their handiwork was on display today, the first full day of Burton's hearings. The first witness was the sister of Charlie Trie, one of the many Clinton friends and fund-raisers who have fled to China. The sister was a demure, nervous woman who spoke halting English. The partisan lines were quickly drawn. Democrats apologized to her for her inconvenience and then spent 10 minutes each saying how sorry they were that they were taking up her valuable time. Republicans, for their part, took turns doing their imitation of Richard Widmark in *Kiss of Death*, the movie where he pushes the old lady down the stairs in a wheelchair. "Could you repeat question, please?" the sister asked Congressman Chris Shays, after he'd stumped her with a quadruple-compound question. "I'm not going to repeat any question," he snarled.

It seems impossible that anyone could have made the Thompson hearings seem a model of efficiency and truth-seeking, but Chairman Burton and his Democratic counterpart, Henry Waxman, have achieved the impossible. Their contempt for each other is palpable and probably deserved. The hearing dragged on into the early evening. The Republicans interrupted the Democrats with "parliamentary inquiries," which were seldom parliamentary or even, for that matter, inquiries, and the Democrats responded with dilatory tactics of their own. "I think it really must be said," Congressman Barrett of Wisconsin told Trie's sister, "that you've made a mistake in judgment. You know, I have made mistakes in judgment in the past. I am confident that I will make them in the future. I know when my constituents compliment me on the job I'm doing, I say, Don't worry—I'll make a mistake someday and then . . ."

As the hearings progress, on both sides of the Hill, they raise yet again the question that Aristotle, in Book Two of the *Politics*, said was ever the enduring issue of representative democracy: "*Holy smokes, where do we get these people?*" ♦

Al Gore's Globaloney

By Tucker Carlson

Does global warming exist? If so, is it caused by man-made pollutants, or by some natural phenomenon? And if the earth's temperature really is rising, is there anything that can be done to reverse it? Questions like these are debated by responsible scientists all over the world. But you would never know it from listening to Al Gore. Repeatedly over the last several weeks, the vice president has insisted that there is no longer a legitimate debate over the existence and effects of global warming. Indeed, those who question the administration's position that global warming is a dire problem that can and must be addressed immediately are not simply wrong, as Gore sees it, they are morally equivalent to the tobacco executives who once "said with a straight face and seemingly no embarrassment, there is no link between smoking cigarettes and lung cancer."

For an administration attempting to pitch a costly program based on dubious science to a skeptical public, this may be the only effective political strategy. (Look for Gore's speech at the next Democratic convention to contain a poignant anecdote about a close relative killed by global warming.) In less than two months, members of the administration will travel to Kyoto, Japan, to sign an international anti-global-warming treaty. In all likelihood, the treaty will require the United States to reduce its emissions of carbon dioxide, a "greenhouse gas" that is a byproduct of fossil-fuel use. The effect of imposing such a limit on the American economy is apt to be profound, since just about everything productive that Americans do, from turning on the lights to manufacturing software, produces carbon dioxide. The treaty will be a hard sell, particularly in the Senate, where it must be ratified by a two-thirds vote. The administration is worried. The result has been a public-relations campaign nastier and more desperate than anything seen in Washington since the 1993 health-care debate.

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Earlier this month, Gore summoned more than 100 television weathermen to the White House for a lecture on the importance of global warming. "You're in the business of saving lives," he told the group solemnly. "Thank you for your profoundly important work. . . . Thank you for your leadership." The weathermen were flattered, if perhaps a little confused. "I was somewhat skeptical that human beings were really doing anything to affect the weather," Barry Finn, a forecaster at WYOU in Scranton, told the *Washington Post*. "But hearing the president and vice president state emphatically that the scientific debate is over, well, that went a long way toward convincing me."

Not everyone is so easily impressed. For those who required more than a photo-op on the West Lawn, the administration hosted a day-long "teach-in" on global climate change last week at Georgetown University. The event was simulcast to dozens of similar forums around the country and attended by Gore, both Clintons, Madeleine Albright, EPA administrator Carol Browner, and the heads of half a dozen federal agencies. White House officials listened intently as a group of administration-approved scientists outlined "what we know" about global warming. The picture the scientists painted made cigarette smoking look healthy by comparison.

John Holdren, a longtime nuclear-disarmament activist who heads the President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology, kicked things off with a prediction that unconstrained global warming will cause a rash of heatstroke deaths throughout the land. Diana Liverman, head of the Latin American studies program at the University of Arizona, followed and raised the stakes by warning that rising temperatures will turn America into a tropical petri dish, complete with "increases in diseases such as dengue fever, cholera, and malaria." Sound unlikely? Not at all, said Gore, who pointed out that at least one case of malaria has already been reported, in Detroit of all places. Troubling, agreed Clinton, but that's not all. In some parts of the country, the president said, the heat and mosquitoes have gotten so bad, people have had to flee their homes. (Clinton claimed to have met a mosquito refugee during his vacation this summer on Martha's Vineyard.) True, nodded Liverman, and for those who cannot relocate, the future will be stifling. "There are many people in the southern states who can't afford increased air conditioning," she said sadly.

As if heatstroke, mosquitoes, and cholera weren't enough to make every American want to give up greenhouse gases for good, the scientists agreed that things will soon get a lot worse. "Sea level has increased by four to six inches over the last 100 years," warned Holdren. As he spoke, a screen next to him showed an artist's depiction of what the state of Florida will look like once it is submerged by an Atlantic Ocean swollen with runoff from melting glaciers (wet, in case you were wondering). Thomas Karl, a scientist at the National Climatic Data Center, said that global warming has been responsible for an unusually high number of "catastrophic floods" over the past five years. Donald Wilhite of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln took the microphone soon after to blame global warming for widespread drought conditions, as well as for the forest fires they cause.

Wait a second. Droughts *and* floods? How could global warming be responsible for both? Perhaps sensing the growing bewilderment in the room, Clinton stepped up to explain this "apparent contradiction." "When the temperatures warm," said the president, sounding unsure of himself, "they dry the soil and create the conditions for the floods simultaneously." Understand? Well, in any case, said Robert Watson of the World Bank, "the large majority of scientists do believe that this is a very, very important issue."

In fact, about the only aspect of global-warming theory that most climate specialists seem to agree on is that land temperatures have risen during this century. Much has been made of this fact. "The five warmest years on record began in 1991," writes Ross Gelbspan, author of *The Heat is On*, a recent book about global warming that has been influential with environmentalists in the Clinton administration. (Clinton himself reportedly read the book during his last vacation.) "The warmest year ever recorded was 1995."

Interesting as these factoids may be, they do not, from a scientific point of view at least, come remotely close to establishing a trend, much less prove the existence of global warming. As the *Washington Post* pointed out recently, temperatures around the world have fluctuated dramatically throughout history. (As recently as 1975, *Newsweek* reported that scientists were "almost unanimous" in their belief that the earth was cooling—enough to "reduce agricultural productivity for the rest of the century.") In Greenland 10,000 years ago, according to ice cores extracted there, temperatures shot up more than 12 degrees in only 10 years. By contrast, even proponents of the most alarmist global warming theories concede that if carbon-dioxide levels were to double over the next century, the earth's temperature probably would increase by no more than about 2.3 degrees.

Scientists aren't sure why temperatures have risen and fallen over time—fossil fuels can't be the culprit,

since most fluctuations took place long before the internal-combustion engine was invented—and for all the effort now being focused on global warming, most scientists freely admit that important questions can't be answered. For instance, why have temperatures in the lower atmosphere been falling at the same time those on Earth's surface have risen slightly? The computer models used to forecast global warming have long predicted that surface and air temperatures would rise and fall together—so this is not an unimportant question. So far, no one has been able to answer it.

Equally inconvenient is the fact that the rise in surface temperatures has been only about half as steep as that predicted by early champions of the global-warming theory. "Many climate experts caution that it is not at all clear yet that human activities have begun to warm the planet—or how bad greenhouse warming will be when it arrives," explained an article, "Greenhouse Forecasting Still Cloudy," published in the May issue of *Science*. "Indeed, most modelers now agree that the climate models will not be able to link greenhouse warming unambiguously to human actions for a decade or more."

If ever. According to the *New York Times*, some research suggests that changes in the intensity of the sun could "account for virtually all of the global warming measured to date." It turns out there is a legitimate debate over global warming after all. As for the theory that global warming has caused the destructive weather patterns that those who attended the Georgetown teach-in heard so much about—it may be true. But at this point, there seems to be precisely no evidence to prove such a claim.

Shaky science or not, the administration appears committed to signing a treaty that will be very costly to the United States. And probably only to the United States The Kyoto agreement will almost certainly require the U.S. to reduce its greenhouse emissions below 1990 levels. It's not clear how this would be done, although dramatic increases in energy taxes are an obvious solution. And what will other members of the U.N. do to reduce emissions? In most cases, not much. In Eastern Europe, smoke-belching Soviet-era power plants are being replaced anyway, making reduction goals much less costly to reach. Most Third World nations militantly oppose abiding by any restrictions. The U.S. emits the greatest volume of greenhouse gases, the argument goes; therefore, the Americans should foot most of the bill for reducing them.

It's an argument that hasn't gone over well with American businesses or the groups that represent their interests. "*Of course* we emit the most," says Jonathan Adler of the Competitive Enterprise Institute. "We *produce* the most. And emissions levels are directly tied to productivity." An energy-industry lobbyist puts it simply: "We see this as a trade war."

This fall, the Global Climate Information Project, a lobby group funded by the energy industry, began running a television spot it called "U.N. Map." "The U.S. is preparing to sign a United Nations treaty on global climate," the ad began. "But their global agreement isn't global. One hundred thirty-two of 166 countries are exempt. So while the United States is required to make drastic reductions in energy use, countries like India, China, and Mexico are not." Polling showed the spot was having a devastating effect. "The idea that once again the world is beating up on America was a theme that resonated," says one of the people responsible for the ad. Within weeks, CNN took the spot off the air, refusing to run it under orders from owner Ted Turner, an enthusiastic supporter of the Kyoto treaty. (The network recently reversed its decision following days of terrible press.)

For all the gamesmanship over the treaty, it's not yet clear which proposal the administration will bring to Kyoto. Gore, along with environmentalists like Interior secretary Bruce Babbitt and the EPA's Browner, has pushed hard for dramatic limits on U.S. emissions. (During a radio interview in July, Babbitt accused energy companies that are lobbying for lower restrictions of being "un-American in the most basic sense.") On the other side are Treasury secretary Robert Rubin and his deputy secretary, Lawrence Summers, both of whom have argued privately that tough emissions restrictions would damage the economy. According to one Gore aide, Rubin and Summers have made a compelling case. The proposal "is going to be something very moderate and market-oriented from the business perspective," he says. "I know that's a priority."

Maybe. The administration—and Gore in particular—has been under pressure for months from environmentalists angry over perceived capitulations to business interests. A draft of the Kyoto proposal will probably be released in the last week of October, and it may be as intemperate as most of the rhetoric surrounding global warming. There is a theory afloat around Washington that the Clinton administration will go to Kyoto with a treaty it knows the Senate will never approve. A signed but unratified treaty would soothe both business and environmental interests. For Democrats, a thumbs down from the Republican Senate might also make an effective campaign issue in 1998 and 2000. Would the White House do something so cynical? "We're not that sophisticated," protests a Gore adviser. For once, the Clinton administration may be being too modest. ♦

When Boys Were Boys

What 19th-century Youth Literature Knew That We Don't

By David Frum

On his first day of nursery school, my son was understandably nervous. Who knew what might be waiting for him there? So he decided he wanted to take along a little precaution: a small blue Power Ranger doll. Bad move on his part—our nursery school absolutely forbids all "violent" toys.

It's not at all clear what the school thought it was accomplishing by this rule (other than to give him his first taste of injustice—even at 3, he noticed that the girls in his class were permitted to bring along whatever small plastic figurines *they* liked). The little boys we know don't play together any less aggressively when permitted only blocks than they do when given access to the entire G.I. Joe arsenal. Boys are boys: There are good ones and bad ones, rough ones and gentle ones, and plastic objects don't affect their character much one way or another.

But then, to many adults nowadays, the phrase "boys will be boys" is a challenge: an invitation to test the outer limits of social engineering. This is not a good time to be a boy. Courts are ordering girls admitted to Boy Scout troops and hockey teams. The schools view boys suspiciously as potential sexual harassers. Tests on which they do well are being gender-normed, while the tests on which they do not are being left alone. And lurking in the shadows are the omnipresent psychologists, impatient to pump them full of Ritalin. It must sometimes seem to the American boy that the whole world is hostile to him, that every authority in his life wants him to be dainty and docile, that nobody will permit him to escape the supervision of women and find out who he is and what he's made of.

They won't permit it even in imagination. My son is a little older now, and I spend a good many of my lunch hours in local book stores searching for books he might like. The classics are always there, of course. But as one looks through the racks of new books, one is overwhelmed by how hostile grownup society seems to be to its sons.

It's not that grownup society is hostile to boyishness as such. On the contrary, grownups eagerly encourage risk-taking and adventuring—provided only that it's done by girls. There's no shortage of books for young readers about wars and western exploration, about mountain-climbing and bravery during floods and hurricanes. But the protagonists of these books are usually 10-year-old girls. Pick up a catalogue of the children's books published in the past two or three years. You'll find *Seeing Red*, the story of an intrepid Cornish girl who saves her village from Napoleonic invasion, and *The Ballad of Lucy Whipple*, about a young girl's adventures in the California Gold Rush. There is *Grace the Pirate*, *Behind Rebel Lines: The Incredible Story of Emma Edmond, Civil War Spy*, and the *Daughters of Liberty* series, which tells bold stories of girlish derring-do during the Revolution.

Stories for boys are no longer permitted to be so exciting. Here is a publisher's blurb for a book about a boy who courageously "defies teasing to remain enrolled in ballet class." Here's another about "Lame teenager Shem" who "finds manhood in the Michigan wilderness with the help of an old Indian woman." And a third: "Doing volunteer work at Santa Barbara's Sidewalk's End, a day-care facility for children of the homeless, Ben witnesses an instance of physical abuse and—for the best of reasons—decides to take matters into his own hands."

Indeed, one of the things most striking about the books for boys being published today is that before being allowed to have adventures, male characters must be transformed into something else: giant mechanical insects, as in one popular series, or androgynous androids, like the Power Rangers. And of course, boys must always have girls with them, doing everything they do—indeed, almost always doing it better. You hear many complaints that boys today don't seem interested in reading. Who can blame them?

It didn't use to be this way. Not so long ago, as these things go, the boy's adventure story was a genre as lively as the detective story or the romance novel is now. The musty old library of my rattletrap Toronto school had a great cache of these books stowed away toward the back: enduring classics like Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped*, but also more perishable works in which characters not much older than the intended reader defied death on Arctic explorations and chased cattle rustlers on the Western plains, unearthed ancient treasures in Mesopotamia and crouched behind the rocks on the Northwest Frontier as the bullets of the ghazis' rifles

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went *pocka-pocka-pocka* into the dust. The most lurid of them were all written by the same man: the prodigiously productive Victorian writer G.A. Henty.

Even at the time, I recognized that Henty's books weren't exactly great literature. The hero was a stick figure, always 16, always plucky, and always encountering the same types of minor characters: the treacherous sneaky boy, the grownup unaccountably hostile to him, the kindhearted great man of history who always makes an appearance, and so on. Even the titles were formulaic: *With Clive in India*, *With Wolfe in Canada*, and so on. And always lurking in the background was a literary treatment of the exotic locale that was patronizing at best and appallingly racist at worst. None of that made Henty's battle scenes any less gripping, his summary of the history any less clear, his depiction of teenage bravery any less inspiring. I read every one of them my school possessed, and as many more as I could find in the catalogue of the main city library. And 20 years later, I found myself haunting used book stores, searching (without success) for copies of Henty to put in my son's bookcase.

G.A. Henty
Selected Works
Lost Classics Book Company
Lake Wales, Florida

Then, in one morning's mail, there arrived at THE WEEKLY STANDARD a curious flyer. Somebody in Florida had started a company to republish these "lost classics" of the boy's literature of the last century. One of the first to be published was Henty's Civil War novel, *With Lee in Virginia*. I telephoned the number on the flyer and got through to the company's owner, George O'Neill, a part-time businessman, part-time sculptor, and full-time collector of antique adventure books for children. Soon afterward, a parcel with the Lost Classics Book Company's first nine titles arrived on my doorstep: two reading primers and two history primers from the 1890s, and five novels.

In some ways, these books make reassuring reading for the worried modern parent. As cloying and didactic as modern books for children are, those of the 19th century could be every bit as bad. In Oliver Optic's 1866 story "Hope and Have," naughty Fanny Grant steals money and runs away from home. She reaches New York and learns humility by spending her money to save a poor woman from being foreclosed and then watching the woman's too-pure-to-live daughter die of one of those mysterious 19th-century literary diseases that spread themselves over three tear-soaked chapters. But before she departs this vale of tears, the dying girl leaves behind a note, asking Fanny's relatives "Please to forgive Fanny, for the sake of her dying friend." Fanny of course promptly becomes just as good as can be. This is the sort of yuckiness that explains why American and British writers spent the next 75 years in the grip of the condition somebody has called Horror Victorianus.

But if the Victorians hectored and lectured girls, they let the minds of boys run a great deal freer. Reading Henty again—as well as two Revolutionary War novels by the prolific Edward Stratemeyer (who, under one of his many pseudonyms, also created the Hardy Boys series)—one is plunged into an era utterly unlike our own. This is a world in which instead of being caring, gentle, and open with their feelings, boys are encouraged to be brave, inventive, and uncomplaining.

Of all these attributes, it is the emphasis on bravery that is the most astonishing to us now. Stratemeyer's *Minute Boys of Lexington* ends with Our Hero, 16-year-old Roger Morse, chained up in a cabin loaded with gunpowder, to which the British Redcoats and their evil Tory sympathizers have lit a slow match. Will he somehow snuff it out? The seconds tick away desperately . . . and of course at the last moment, he does. Roger Morse at least sometimes feels pangs of fear. Henty's characters never do. They are shot at, cut with swords, have their ribs broken by shrapnel, and remain as undaunted and plucky as ever. It's utterly unlifelike, of course, even comical. And yet there's something valuable about it even so—and especially valuable now.

Courage, the Greeks believed, is the chief of all virtues, because without it the other virtues are all useless. We now, in late-20th-century North America, still pay lip service to the value of courage. But the truth is,

when we talk about it to boys, we often do so in the most off-putting possible contexts: Think of that boy who found the courage to remain enrolled in ballet. Very commendable, unquestionably—but not very likely to be a convincing exemplar of manliness to many 8-year-olds.

In our eagerness to direct boys toward pacific amusements, though, we forget that—whatever we say about it—boys live and always will live in a world of terrifying brutality. A friend of mine who attended a British boarding school said that from his earliest days there, he realized that he could never tell his parents the truth about what it was like: They would find it too frightening. Think of your own childhood. When your parents asked what happened that day at school, did you ever dare really tell them? What would they do about it—except make a shrieky fuss that would only antagonize the bullies who lurk in every playground worse than ever?

Violence is very real to boys, and they need codes by which to understand and regulate it. Books that describe boys who are ready to fight, who aren't afraid of fighting, but who never strike first and always fight fair guide boys in ways that the "anti-violence" curriculums now being taught in every public school never will. The contemporary grownup world has a bad habit of lumping together all boyish physical conflict and play as "violence" and trying to suppress it all—as if playing space pirates in the schoolyard were the first step on the slippery slope toward gang membership and drive-by shootings. The old adventure stories, for all their ridiculousness, linked ideals of gentleness and fairness in their readers' young minds to equally powerful ideals of heroism and manliness. We, by refusing to admit that the two ideals can have anything to do with each other, end by telling our boys that they must choose between being a milquetoast and a thug.

Every year, more than 2 million boys are born in the United States. The job of civilizing them is not an easy one, and, by all indications, American society is succeeding at it much less well than it did 70 or a hundred years ago. Radio stations, television, and the culture of the streets bombard them with images of manhood drawn from the most bestial parts of our nature. The schools and the publishing companies attempt to counteract these vicious images with a counter-image so prissy that one wonders how a boy with even half the normal red corpuscle count can possibly stand it. Which is how America has come to be a society in which half of American men abandon their wives, while the other half stand in football stadiums crying, hugging, and vowing to Keep Promises.

I don't know whether, in this post-literate society, even the very best books can do much to counteract our failure to find a compelling definition of manliness for our sons. And even if books mattered as much as they once did, it would still be doubtful how much good they could do in a society so fanatically committed to androgyny that its military trains its elite units to stop their ears to the screams of tortured women, and every video arcade offers boys the opportunity, for just 50 cents, to kick a lady martial artist to death electronically.

Still, for whatever good they can do, the old books are there: Horatio Hornblower and *Tom Sawyer*, *The Black Arrow* and *Ivanhoe*, Sherlock Holmes and *The Three Musketeers*. Thanks to an enterprising Floridian, you can bulk the reading experience of your children out with writers of the second tier, like Henty and Stratemeyer. Henty's snobbery and racism may be hard to take; Stratemeyer's books may be too visibly cranked out on the assembly line. But they serve to remind us that there is very little wrong, and very much that is right, with letting boys be boys. ♦

Solti's Final Masterpiece

The Conductor's Marvelous Posthumous Memoirs

By Jay Nordlinger

In the first week of September, as the world was mourning Princess Diana and Mother Teresa, Sir Georg Solti died at the age of 84. The newspapers did find some room for him: He had been the dean of the world's conductors, perhaps the best loved of them all. He ruled podiums in both the United States and Europe, particularly Chicago and London, his musical homes. The *Chicago Sun-Times* called him a "master builder"; Solti had led the remarkable Chicago Symphony Orchestra for 22 years, from 1969 to 1991. The *Times* of London said he was "the undisputed Grand Old Man of music"; Solti had built the Royal Opera into an international force and lent renewed respectability to the London Philharmonic. With Solti, more than a man passed from the scene; a musical era—the tradition of the dominating Central European conductor—went with him.

He was working vigorously until the end. His style—before an orchestra and in life—was always driven, nearly manic. He had been set to conduct a Verdi *Requiem* in London to honor the deceased princess. A month later, he was to conduct his thousandth concert with the Chicago Symphony. And on the day he died, while vacationing with his family in the south of France, he applied the finishing touches to his memoirs, to be released on October 21, his 85th birthday. Solti swallowed life voraciously; he never thought that he would have enough, always worried that it would end too soon.

Normally, musical autobiographies fall with a thud. Solti's memoirs, by happy contrast, are superb, the written legacy of a conductor who stood at the pinnacle of his profession for virtually the entire second half of the 20th century, who met everyone, questioned everyone, performed with everyone, and gathered a treasury of opinions and stories that must be second to none.

Georg Solti
Solti on Solti
Memoirs
Knopf, 272 pp., $25.95

Solti always came off as the most urbane and aristocratic of musicians, but he was born to a humble Jewish family in Budapest in 1912. The young Solti was not an obvious candidate for greatness—he was little "György Stern," son of a longsuffering businessman whose every exertion was a failure. But Móricz Stern must have had higher aspirations for his children, because he gave them a different surname—"Solti," after a small Hungarian town—in order, as the conductor writes, "to facilitate our careers." (Later, Solti changed his first name to the German "Georg," so that his name is pronounced "GAY-org SHOLE-tee.")

Solti writes movingly about his childhood and adolescence, recalling, if dimly, the chaos of World War I and, later, the murderous struggle in Hungary between the Reds and the Whites. "Since that time," he allows, "I have never been able to rid myself of the fear of anyone wearing a military or police uniform, or even a customs-office uniform." The Sterns attempted to observe the old traditions, but his mother was not especially religious, and when, at Passover, the family would say, "Next year in Jerusalem," she would pipe up, "But not with me!" ("If only my parents had gone to Jerusalem in the 1920s or 1930s," Solti writes, "how different our lives might have been.")

He exhibits consistently what is most admirable in European liberalism, and, in self-examination, he is positively ruthless. He considers anti-Semitism—which "continues unabated"—"so ingrained that it can almost be described as innate." "Many European Jews were themselves infected with it," he says, "and I can still remember, with shame, how pleased I was . . . when people would tell me that I didn't look Jewish."

After graduation from the prestigious Liszt Academy (where his teachers included Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály), Solti went to the Budapest Opera as a *répétiteur*—a staff member or coach—and learned the ins and outs of his complicated trade. In that day, all who wished to become symphonic conductors began in the opera house, where they acquired, through often tedious labor, the various skills of musical leadership. Solti figured "from the start," however, "that, as a Jew, I would never be allowed to conduct a performance." So he prevailed on the conductor Josef Krips to take him as an assistant to the Karlsruhe Opera in Germany, where, after only a few months, a local Nazi newspaper inveighed against the *Ostjude* whom Krips had brought to town. "I know why this has happened," said Krips. "One of the first violins is a terrible Nazi, and he is trying to get rid of me." So, Solti had to pack his bags and retreat to Budapest. Later, in 1937, he had the fortune to work with Arturo Toscanini in Salzburg. The magisterial tyrant addressed but a single word to him: *bene*, good. Solti confides that, in over six decades of near-constant praise, it was the nicest compliment he ever received.

The following year, Solti was

Jay Nordlinger is associate editor and music critic of The Weekly Standard.

favored with the chance that he had long waited for: He would raise his baton at the Budapest Opera, in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*. The date, though, was inauspicious: March 11, 1938. Solti noticed, to his annoyance, that, in the third act, his Count Almaviva had begun to make "all sorts of mistakes," to sing "incoherently," to perform without confidence. He later found out why: Before going on stage, the singer had been handed a special edition of the evening paper. Hitler's troops had crossed into Austria and were heading to Vienna; the *Anschluss* was on. "My baritone, who was Jewish, had lost his self-control, and who could blame him?" he writes. "I probably would have done the same had I known . . ."

Solti's parents had planned a post-performance party for him, but it was canceled, and Solti—then 25 and chafing—"felt that all my hopes had been dashed." He remained in Budapest until August 1939, when he thought to make a brief trip to Switzerland to seek out Toscanini at the Lucerne Festival. His father accompanied him to the train station and, shortly before his son was to board, began to cry. This was embarrassing to Solti, who snapped, "Can't you see that I'm taking only this one little suitcase? I'm coming back in ten days' time!" Solti never saw his father again. He writes, with the characteristic candor that makes a reader wince, "The sight of his tears and the harsh tone of my voice have haunted me ever since. I have never forgiven myself . . ."

Unable to obtain a visa to the United States, Solti spent World War II in Switzerland. The war stunted his musical growth, but at least it did not kill him—more than can be said for many of those whom he left behind in Hungary. He was unable to conduct, but he coached singers, studied scores, and practiced the piano (winning, in fact, the Geneva International Piano Competition in 1942). After the war, Solti went to an odd place: Germany. He explains that the "prime of my life" had been "wasted" and that "the desire to conduct was an irresistible force in me." Conducting opportunities were plentiful in Germany, where American de-Nazification was in full flower and German conductors—including many of the world's most celebrated—were banned from their own podiums. How else could a young, woefully inexperienced Hungarian expatriate assume the directorship of the Bavarian State Opera, "one of the most important conducting positions in the world"? As far as American officials were concerned, no politically acceptable Germans were available, so the post fell to Solti—who took due advantage of it and began, at that moment, his heady ascent to international fame.

On every page, as he winds his way through the chronology of his life, Solti studs his memoirs with facts, impressions, portraits, truths. Paul Hindemith was renowned as a compositional revolutionary, but, by the time Solti met him, he looked and sounded "more like a Swiss banker." Inghe Borkh, the rugged-voiced soprano? She was "a Teutonic Callas," "hysterical, a wild beast in every sense." When the conductor Pierre Monteux finished a performance of the Prelude and *Liebestod* from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, his wife greeted him backstage with, "Were you thinking of me, darling?" He responded: "No—I was thinking of Eleanor Roosevelt."

Solti, too, is free with his opinions, which may seem an unremarkable thing, but is invaluable in a musical memoirist and not a quality found in every one of them. He expounds on the differences between European orchestras and American orchestras, and speaks frankly about his difficulties with the notoriously prickly Vienna Philharmonic ("For many years, I used to say that my favorite street in Vienna was the road to the airport"). Solti is, in both the particulars and the broad outlines of his

book, a fair dealer, and he even finds occasion to mock his own memory: He thought that, in rehearsals for an opera that Sir John Gielgud was directing, he was "so much in awe" of Sir John's "beautiful English," "I hardly dared open my mouth." Later, he checked with the baritone Geraint Evans, who contradicted, "Oh, but you spoke all the time."

When Solti took over the Royal Opera at Covent Garden in 1961, the house was in disarray. Solti quickly asserted his iron control over the company, demanding numerous and meticulous rehearsals, ruffling British reserve, and insisting on first-class musicianship. He went to Chicago in 1969, beginning a conductor-orchestra relationship that ranks with Eugene Ormandy-Philadelphia, Herbert von Karajan-Berlin, and Leonard Bernstein-New York in popular appeal and commercial viability. The orchestra had always been excellent, but had yet to secure an international reputation. Solti remedied this with a European tour in 1971, after which Mayor Daley treated him and the orchestra to a ticker-tape parade down State Street. Two years later, *Time* magazine put Solti on its cover as "The Fastest Baton in the West.

In his concluding chapter, "Music, First and Last," Solti undertakes what amounts to a survey of the principal symphonic repertory, offering his hard-won conclusions on the Strauss tone poems, the Bach oratorios, and the symphonies of Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Mahler, and Bruckner. He swears that, "in my mid-eighties, I feel more strongly than ever that I have an endless amount of studying and thinking to do in order to become the musician I would like to be." Pure agony for him is the recognition that, for example, "I shall die without having learned much more" of Bach's music.

Even when his musical views are iconoclastic (Bartók's *Mikrokosmos* is "no less important" than Bach's *Well-tempered Clavier*), they are stimulating. Yet his astonishing strength is his understanding of people: their nobility and frailty, their heroism and vulnerability. Over and over, he startles the reader with the tales he tells or the admissions he makes: how, for years, he could not bring himself to conduct Shostakovich, "because I was convinced that anyone who could have written such relatively progressive music in the Soviet Union must have been politically compromised with the regime"; how he encountered the 86-year-old Winston Churchill at the Savoy Grill and could not keep from staring at him, remembering his debts to the old man for the inspiration of his wartime speeches, broadcast over the BBC; how he, again, has "never forgiven himself" for not being kinder to his sister after the war, because, "at the time, I wanted to get away from my past and everything connected with it."

"I have had an enormously lucky life," Solti concedes, and that may be true, but he worked like a demon, and he exploited every break he got. Many of us do not regard him as the finest conductor who ever lived. But surely no conductor—and few people—ever wrote memoirs more compelling or durable than these. ♦

SEX AND VIOLINS

Anne Rice's Supernatural Self-Help

By Daniel Wattenberg

Click. Paul Bogaards, Knopf promotion director, hung up on me.

His answer, of sorts, to this question about Knopf author Anne Rice's latest novel, *Violin*, her 18th: "The announced first printing of *Violin* was 750,000. Now it's down to 400,000. What happened there?"

Anne Rice
Violin
Knopf, 304 pp., $25.95

For the vast majority of authors, an initial print run of 400,000 would be cause for celebration. But Anne Rice, the queen of neo-Gothic horror fiction, with worldwide sales of over 100 million books, does not belong to the vast majority. With Grisham, Crichton, Clancy, and King, she belongs to the most exclusive club in popular fiction, a bankable brand whose name alone guarantees huge advances, first printings, and sales. She is the author of two hugely successful series of supernatural fiction, the Vampire Chronicles (five books) and the Lives of the Mayfair Witches (three books), as well as several books of historical fiction. Under the pen names Anne Rampling and A.N. Roquelaure, she has written hardcore S/M pornography and softer erotica for more restricted markets (and advances).

According to published reports and her own coy admission last year on *The Charlie Rose Show*, Anne Rice's current three-book contract with Knopf is worth $26 million. Let's do some quick-and-dirty, dumb-guy math. Assume the entire print run (but no more) sells out. Four hundred thousand copies times the (rounded up) sales price of $26 per copy equals $10.4 million. The

Daniel Wattenberg, a contributing editor to George, *previously wrote for* THE WEEKLY STANDARD *about John Berendt's* Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil.

standard author's royalty on the sales (15 percent) comes out to $1.56 million.

But, assuming a three-book $26 million deal, Knopf is paying her at a rate of $8.6 million per book. In this (ultra-simplified) model, she is being paid 5.5 times the market value for this book. This model excludes many revenue streams (book-club sales, pre-sold paperback and foreign rights, etc.) and all costs beyond the author's advance (manufacturing, distribution, advertising, overhead, the booksellers' 50 percent share of sales, and returns). But this book would need to sell in the vicinity of 2 million copies to "earn back" the author's advance.

It is way too soon to pronounce *Violin* a vampiric, profit-leeching fiasco. Ultimately, readers will decide after the book goes on sale October 31, and Rice's are legendarily devoted. But there are some bad omens:

The discrepancy between announced first printing (recorded on the cover of the advance proof) and the actual print order is unusually large, even allowing for the unrealistic sales puffery commonly reflected in the announced figure. The revised print order is low, for Rice. In comparison, the first printings of her last two books were 1 million for *Servant of the Bones* (religio-historical fiction) and 750,000 for *Memnoch the Devil* (fifth in the Vampire Chronicles series), according to Knopf's associate director for publicity, Nicholas Latimer.

Publishers sell most of their books to retail chains like Barnes and Noble. "I can just tell you my buy was in line with about a 500,000 print run," says Barnes and Noble's Sessalee Hensley of her order for *Violin*.

The trade publications (often in the past friendly exceptions in a critical environment generally cool to Rice) have reduced *Violin* to splinters: "a disjointed and maudlin rumination on death, loss and rejuvenation" (*Publishers Weekly*); "soul mush," "dreadfully in need of a caustic edit" (*Kirkus Reviews*).

Violin is devoid of the vampires, witches, and evil incubi that populate Rice's biggest sellers. "The book is not a vampire book," explains Hensley. "The witches don't sell as well as the vampires, and [historical novels] *Cry to Heaven* and *Feast of All Saints* don't backlist as well as her books in" either the vampire or the witch series.

In an interview, Knopf's Latimer wrote off the steep dive from the prospective first printing to industry-wide butterflies about falling sales, rising returns, and shrinking profits. Of course, a major source of book-biz indigestion is the mind-boggling author advances that publishers are eating. Typically cited are the lottery-winner advances for fluky, short-shelf-lived celebrities like Marcia Clark, not perennial commercial heavyweights like Rice. Her back titles sell consistently, and even if her current book is a turkey she may rebound with new titles that rival the sales of her backlist.

Even so, it's possible that in a soft book market one can overpay, even for Anne Rice. But don't blame Knopf. If anything in publishing is a sure thing, it's Anne Rice. Born Howard Allen O'Brien in New Orleans in 1941, she changed her first name to Anne in the first grade. She changed her last name when she married her high-school sweetheart, Stan Rice, a poet. Her imagination was "nourished on [the] stories of saints and miracles" of her Catholic girlhood in New Orleans. But her intellect left the church when she moved to Texas and entered college. I "discovered things like existentialism, [and] it was like emerging into the modern world," she told *Playboy*.

In 1964, she and her husband moved to San Francisco. There, she acquired a drinking habit ("I didn't see the end of my own dinner parties

for ten years," a sober Rice said in a 1994 interview) and won literary fame with her *Interview With the Vampire*, published in 1976.

Depressed and drinking heavily after the leukemia death of her 5-year-old daughter in 1972, she wrote this first novel in a five-week fever. When she wrote, she was unconscious of any psychological link between her personal grief and her tale of a vampire "family": mischievous Lestat, melancholy Louis—and their vampire "daughter" Claudia, perpetually imprisoned in the body of a 5-year-old girl.

Rice's popular fiction is a witch's brew of blood, angst, wine-bar philosophizing, and you-name-it eroticism—homo-, hetero-, incestuous (filial and fraternal), even incorporeal. In *The Witching Hour*, mortal witch Rowan has the best sex she ever had—on a commercial airliner with Lasher, an evil spirit.

Critics have tended to dismiss her writing as overripe and underedited schlock that wants to be art. Rice returns the sentiments. "Book reviewing is a mess," she told one interviewer. "It's not like opera reviewing. The opera guy . . . can't just go in and say, 'Why are they screaming in Italian?' But a book reviewer can do that: 'Why are all these people vampires?'"

Rice's fictional people are not vampires. But her vampires are people—and therein lies the originality and the source of the vast popularity of her Vampire Chronicles. She gave new life to a tired genre by turning its conventions inside out. In traditional Gothic horror, readers share the terror of mortals stalked by one-dimensionally predatory fiends. Rice's reverse angle "reveals" the inner guilt and anxiety of the vampire. The vampire Louis, the hero of *Interview*, is torn between vestigial human remorse about the taking of innocent life and anxiety at his inability to surrender without apologies to his "natural" vampire appetite for fresh human blood.

Her vampires are *complicated* creatures, on endless, ultimately fruitless journeys of self-discovery. And they need to talk about their inner conflicts—and talk and talk. The vampire books are narcissistic down to their narrative form. In *Interview*, Louis spills his story to an interviewer with a tape recorder. In *The Vampire Lestat* (second in the series), the risen Lestat violates the vampire taboo on self-disclosure to mortals and tells all in the eponymously titled autobiography-within-the-novel. Rice anticipated the current vogue in publishing for transgressive, confessional non-fiction years ago in her fiction.

RICE'S FICTION IS A WITCH'S BREW OF BLOOD, ANGST, PHILOSOPHIZING, AND YOU-NAME-IT EROTICISM.

Rice is sufficiently fascinating to some to have spawned a derivative market in pop exegesis. There is an *Unauthorized Anne Rice Companion*, an *Anne Rice Reader*, companion guides to both the vampire and the witch series, and a biography, *Prism of the Night*. And there are the inevitable theories, mostly of the vampires-are-us variety, explaining her appeal. Her significant gay market sees itself reflected in the micro-culture secrecy and naughty night-prowling of vampire society. Recovering drug addicts and alcoholics see the vampire bloodlust as a metaphor for their own insatiable appetites. You get the picture.

Rice's work combines the live-for-today hedonism of New Orleans (where she returned to live with her family in 1988) with the earnest, help-me-make-it-through-the-night self-exploration of her longtime home-in-exile, San Francisco. Hedonism (give in to your appetites) and self-discovery (validate your self-surrender) lie at the the heart of the cultural Left's secular alternative to traditional faith and morality. It is pop fiction for a culture unmoored from its traditional beliefs by a pop writer unmoored from her own. (While Rice left the Catholic church, whether she escaped it is open to question: The abortion passages in *The Witching Hour* suggest she remains emotionally, if not politically, pro-life.)

Rice refuses to condemn her monsters. She tries to understand them. Or she aestheticizes them (her vampires are glamourous Romantic archetypes, Byronic, David Bowie-ish) to the point where moral evaluation is moot. Not exactly new. From *In Cold Blood* and *Bonnie and Clyde*, through *The Godfather* and *The Executioner's Song* and Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* (a Rice fave), postwar American culture (high and pop) has long been alternately empathizing with and aestheticizing its degenerates and criminals. But Rice may have been the first to aestheticize and relativize our literal, make-believe monsters.

Daniel Bell famously argued that in a postmodern culture, what has been permitted in the imaginative realm will sooner or later be permitted in real life. Thirty years of imaginative understanding of our monsters, and ultimately you get—acquittals in the Menendez-brothers, Bobbitt, and Lemrick Nelson trials? Pinning that kind of thing on Anne Rice's toothy predators would be a real stretch. Then again, this weird biting outbreak (Mike Tyson, Christian Slater, Marv Albert) might bear further study.

Denied the critical acceptance she craves, Rice has enjoyed the kind of mass adoration usually reserved these days for professional athletes, movie icons, and rock stars. Wrap-around-the-block lines of the faithful form for her major book signings, theatrical marathons in which both readers and author are apt to appear in cos-

tume inspired by her work. She traveled in style on her last tour in a bus that once belonged to Willie Nelson. (She has another thing in common with the red-headed tax rebel: During last year's presidential campaign, she published an open letter to President Clinton in *Variety* urging him to steal a march on Dole by embracing a flat tax.)

To grasp the size of her readership, consider these in-print figures from *Publishers Weekly*: *Interview* (6 million), *The Vampire Lestat* (3.1 million), *The Tale of the Body Thief* (2.3 million), *The Witching Hour* (1.9 million in mass-market paperback, 423,000 in trade paper), and *Lasher* (400,000). Rice received a $5 million advance for *The Witching Hour* (the first in the witch series) and *The Tale of the Body Thief* (the fourth installment in the Vampire Chronicles), and in 1993 she signed her next contract for $17 million, according to published reports.

Rice is generous and surprisingly available to her fans. She hosts annual Halloween balls for them in New Orleans. Gabby phone messages transcribed on her Web site update her followers on her plans and latest (sometimes batty) pensées—on movies, boxing, public affairs, her childhood, and the House of Windsor. "I hope Prince William and Prince Harry, I wish that there was some way I could express my feelings you know that wouldn't be vulgar, you know, like an ad in the paper to just tell them learn from your mother, learn what it means, that royalty means something," she mused in a recent bulletin. "It is not just, you know, the privilege to go play polo and say nasty things to the press. I think Prince Charles' behavior towards Lady Diana has been despicable since the beginning of the marriage."

But in interviews over the years, Rice has often sounded like one of her own unpacified spirits, suspended uneasily between genuine gratitude for her popular success and resentment of a critical elite that still giggles. She can be refreshingly unpretentious. A cinephile, she can admit to spending far more time nowadays watching videos than reading literary fiction (less canonical fiction than in her younger days, and virtually no contemporary fiction). She is often peevish in her criticism of contemporaries writing in different modes: "I have a real problem with much of the so-called literary fiction of these times," she told *Rolling Stone*'s Mikal Gilmore. "I have not read John Updike or Anne Tyler. . . . There's a real arrogance to the pedestrian realism of the twentieth century novel. Not only are books about ordinary people and ordinary lives and ordinary events and littlebitty epiphanies . . . not worth reading most of the time, they're simply garbage."

Rice's canon-envy lies close to the surface. Henry James's "wonderful haunting novel" *The Turn of the Screw* was "just the beginning," she told the *New York Times*. "I want *The Witching Hour* to be as great or greater than Henry James."

While perhaps useful as a performance goal, James's compact classic is completely unrealistic as a critical standard against which to measure herself. Close to 1,000 pages long, *The Witching Hour* tediously chronicles the saga (through four centuries and thirteen generations) of the Mayfair witch clan, haunted by Lasher, a demon who drives them to inbreed to create a witch powerful enough to permit him to occupy a human body. Here, the dislocation that makes the vampire novels interesting is absent: Instead of strange creatures facing affectingly familiar human dilemmas, the novel's cast of idealized stock human characters is threatened from without by a malicious specter. Genre fiction minus pulp's self-aware modesty, *The Witching Hour* labors under the technical defects that undermine even Rice's best fiction: spongy, digressive plots, dialogue that poses weighty metaphysical questions in language all but deaf to

the small variations of individualized speech, and inexcusably undisciplined repetition.

Knopf's Vicky Wilson salutes the author's "courage" for taking a "different direction" in the autobiographical *Violin*. "Some of this material I don't think she thought she would ever write about," she says. (Rice's nominal editor, Wilson told me in a rare public acknowledgment that she "worked on the first few books" until Rice "said she didn't want to be edited—it was too painful.")

Whatever *Violin* is (dream diary? allegory about the artistic temperament? advice manual on channeling the dead?), this interview with Anne Rice's id gives shlock a bad name. The plot? You had to ask. Okay, heroine (and author surrogate) Triana Becker is beside herself with grief over the recent AIDS death of her husband (she cuddles with his corpse) and tormented by feelings of loss and guilt about the long-ago deaths of her mother (from alcoholism) and young daughter (cancer). And, oh, she is tormented too by creative yearnings doomed to frustration by her meager talents (she always wanted to be a violinist). "Lord God, to be born with no talent is bad enough, but to have a macabre and febrile imagination as well is a curse," she writes.

So anyway, a violin-playing ghost (Stefan Stefanovsky, a romantically melancholy 19th-century Russian aristocrat who died for his art and killed his titled father in the process, the selfish twit) arrives to beguile and manipulate Triana through the musical power of his magic Stradivarius. Triana steals her ghost's "long Strad," and with its aid becomes a world-famous violinist—an untutored, possessed, improvisational, expressionist *genius* adored by her fans. After oneiric excursions to Beethoven's Vienna and Paganini's Venice for some way-back-story on the mopey, parricidal Stefan, Triana ultimately heads to present-day Rio de Janeiro, where her deceased child may or may not have been reincarnated.

Almost as mystifying as the now-you-see-it-now-you-don't plot are the random changes in narrative voice. Triana's first-person narration changes at whim into the second person. And in the second person, Triana may address the reader, her deceased loved ones, individually or plurally, or even herself, as in, "Dig deep, deep, my soul, to find the heart—the blood, the heat, the shrine and resting place." And then sometimes there are just disembodied lyrical outpourings addressed to nobody in particular. For example, a paragraph in which Triana recounts how her younger sister had as a child sat passively for hours beside their mother who had passed out drunk on the front porch is followed immediately by this short paragraph:

"Shame, blame, maim, pain, vain!"

Disordered, therapized, incontinent, *Violin* is hard to read and harder to interpret. Had it arrived unsolicited at Knopf by an unknown, chances are it would have been returned to its author unpublished. Had I paid millions for it, I would not be eager to talk about it—and might just hang up on a reporter who was.

If New Orleans is ruled by self-forgetting and San Francisco by self-discovery, New York, where Anne Rice's checks are cut, is still ruled by the bottom line.

Scheduled for publication next year is Anne Rice's *Pandora*, the first novel in a series, New Tales of the Vampires. ♦

BCA

The Sumter of All Things

Maury Klein's Wonderful Days of Defiance

By Woody West

As the 1860 election approached in a nation convulsively at odds with itself, Republicans had reason for optimism. The Democrats were sectionally fractured, and in the previous election, the first for the Republican party, presidential candidate John C. Frémont had carried 11 states. Any credible nominee should reach the White House, Republicans were confident—giddily confident, some of them. Hold those 11 states, win three others, and they should be in the White House. "'I am for the man who can carry Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Indiana,' declared Fitz-Henry Warren of Iowa before the convention, 'with this reservation, that I will not go into cemetery or catacomb; the candidate must be alive, and able to walk at least from parlor to dining room.'"

Maury Klein
Days of Defiance
Sumter, Secession and the Coming of the Civil War
Knopf, 512 pp., $30

That's the sort of engaging detail with which Maury Klein spices *Days of Defiance*. In the blizzard of Civil War books—general histories, battle histories, regimental histories, biographies, essays, collections of letters, reprints of memoirs, and whatever else is dustily in the archives—even avid readers risk being overwhelmed. Klein has taken as his subject the

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much-discussed five months that preceded the firing of the first shot at Fort Sumter, from the election of Abraham Lincoln to Jefferson Davis's taking the oath as president of the Confederate States of America in Montgomery, Alabama.

Days of Defiance might seem to be another pawing over of a period wholly familiar to readers, in the as-every-schoolboy-knows-category (T.B. Macaulay, check your e-mail). It is not. Klein has written a masterly narrative of those chaotic months with an immediacy and human scale that is quite stunning—evolving around "a classic American dilemma, the unavoidable clash between law and conscience."

Upon the ideological and cultural stage that was to give way under the terrible weight of historical convergences, Klein cues the principals and, flavorfully, dozens of lesser-known members of that memorable cast.

Among the effective bit players, there's the remarkable diarist George Templeton Strong, who stalked out of the Capitol to visit the Smithsonian, saying that he preferred "stuffed penguins and pickled lizards to the dishonest gabble of the Senate." The acidulous Henry Adams, writing of William Seward and Charles Sumner, who were incessantly combative during the futile months, says that "each was created only for exasperating the other."

There are vivid portraits of Lincoln and Davis, as distinct in personality, style, and conviction as conceivable. James Buchanan, timorous but hardly traitorous, was the wrong man in the wrong place at a calamitous time. Seward is one of the most fascinating figures, astute, devious, initially condescending to Lincoln and certain of his own fitness to run the country, yet a man of principle and devotion to the Union.

Klein excels at acute characterizations. Ohio senator Ben Wade was "as crude and rough a piece of western lumber as could be found in Congress"; the aged Army commander Gen. Winfield Scott, emotionally attached to his native Virginia but steadfast in duty to the Union, "had become a man with a country but without a state."

With each passing week, the nation's capital increasingly reflected Macduff's anguished cry at Duncan's murder, "Confusion now hath made his masterpiece." More and more, Americans of North and South gazed into the abyss—and grew accustomed to the destiny to which they were rushing. Rep. Thomas Corwin of Ohio would write in January 1861 as if in a fatal resignation, "Four or five States are gone others are driving before the gale. I have looked on this horrid picture till I have been able to gaze on it with perfect calmness."

Between the adamancies of North and South, the middle ground vanished. Once it became evident that there would be no concessions of extension of slavery into the western territories, Klein writes, secession became the explosive focus. "The

gridlock was as obvious as it was unbreakable. Some believed secession was legal, others thought it legal but wrong, and still others considered it illegal. Some argued that the use of force to prevent secession was illegal, others thought it legal but impractical or impolitic, while others still considered it legal and absolutely necessary to maintain national unity."

Klein briskly moves the momentum toward war from Washington to Charleston, with the harbor fort dominating the nation's attention after South Carolina seceded on Dec. 20, 1860. The narrative's pace has a telegraphic quality, not unlike the way the newly formed Associated Press was giving a new power and velocity to public opinion.

Klein's intriguing insight and the theme of his book is this: "What Americans lacked above all else was a history." Though the Constitution had been the basic document of governance for nearly three quarters of a century, America in April 1861 had less a national history than several brilliant chapters written and others in draft.

The horrendous blood-letting of the Civil War secured the Union to permit additional chapters to be written of America's noble, if often fitful, efforts to honor the founding ideals. The war as well initiated a centralization of power in the national government that was hardly imaginable before.

Days of Defiance is a superb blending of the men and the igniting issues of the war. Not the least haunting aspect of the Civil War, as the author emphasizes, is that the nation continues to grapple with disagreements over governmental power and individual rights similar to the ones that killed more than 600,000 Americans 135 years ago. ♦

BCA

Clash of the Near-Titans

RFK and LBJ, in Enmity Forever

By Noemie Emery

"Lyndon Johnson and Robert Kennedy loathed each other," goes the very first line of *Mutual Contempt*, Jeff Shesol's splendid new book about a great public trainwreck. "Their mutual contempt was so acute, their bitterness was so intense . . . they could barely speak in each other's presence. . . . Alone or with friends . . . each man ranted and obsessed, sulked and brooded. . . . Their antagonisms spawned political turf battles . . . divided constituencies . . . and weakened their party by forcing its members to choose." They did. For five sullen years, from late 1963 to 1968, the distrust and aversion between these two people functioned as a prime mover in national politics. Johnson and Kennedy belonged to the same party, had common concerns, and, by common sense, should have been allies. What this book tells us is that common sense is not all that common, and that sense itself gives way to other things. The situation in which these two men had found themselves after John Kennedy's murder was indeed dicey; but had it concerned other people—Kennedy himself, say, and Dwight Eisenhower—it would have ended quite differently. Eisenhower and John Kennedy were rational people given to courtesy in their everyday dealings, who remained in close touch with objective reality. Robert Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson were intuitive people, emotional to the point of being irrational, people to whom the truth was a subjective matter and reality was what they sensed or felt. Ike and JFK had frequent outbursts of profane irritation, but seldom held grudges. Bobby and Johnson cherished their slights, which they replayed in their heads like old movies, and which grew in size and importance with every retelling. Worse, they were programmed to attach a human face to their fears and frustrations. Unfortunately, the face that each chose was that of the other.

The feud, Shesol says, began without reason, stemming to first encounters in the 1950s when Johnson was Senate majority leader, Jack a senator, and Bobby a counsel to Senate committees. It picked up steam in 1960, when Johnson for a short time fought John Kennedy for the presidential nomination, and made some charges, most of them true, about Joseph Kennedy's complicity in the pre-war appeasement policies of Neville Chamberlain and the poor state of John Kennedy's health. Rational Jack dismissed this, as part of the great game of politics. Visceral Bobby could not. Later, the confusion surrounding the vice-presidential nod to Johnson and his acceptance of it caused more bad blood between them. Bobby resented Johnson for having (he thought) forced his way onto the ticket. Johnson thought Bobby had schemed (without Jack's knowledge) to have him removed. It was an offer Johnson must have later regretted accepting: If he thought his majority leader's status would follow him, he was soon proved wrong. Quickly, he went from being the second most powerful man in the American government to being the odd man out in the administration, and beyond that, to being its butt. While John Kennedy treated him with

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understanding and courtesy—"You are dealing with a very insecure, sensitive man, with a huge ego," he told one assistant—his underlings and aides did not. On the principle that the best time to kick a man is when he is powerless, the Camelot groupies laid on with a vengeance, wearing disdain like a fashion accessory, as if mockery proved their own merit and elegance. "Johnson jokes and Johnson stories were as inexhaustible as they were merciless," Shesol writes, "with a real bitterness, a mean-spiritedness, that was hard to explain." Johnson restrained himself from counterattack with heroic self-discipline, making himself almost ill in the process. For this he blamed not Jack, whom he always was fond of, but Bobby, custodian of the New Frontier and its ethos. Contrary to Johnson's fears, there was no conspiracy to ease him off the 1964 ticket: He was loyal, he was a southerner, and he was politically useful. But this was all for which he was valued. Meanwhile Bobby, his longtime *bête noire*, had become, at 36, the second most powerful man in the country, less by the power of his cabinet office than the nepotistic position that gave him entrée into every office, every department, every arm of the government. The scales seemed to have tilted forever in the favor of the younger rival, who behaved as if nothing would ever be different. Magazines talked of a Kennedy dynasty, passing from John Kennedy's brothers to his son, then still an infant. Whoever the future was, it was not Lyndon Johnson. Or so it seemed.

November 22 changed everything. John Kennedy was not the first president to die in office, or even to be killed in it, but he was surely the first whose succession was compromised in emotional, if not legal, terms. No president before had died leaving a viable political-cum-dynastic heir for his successor to deal with. And none had left such an irrational heir. For Johnson, the emotional truth of the assassination and after was that Robert Kennedy was leading a dynastic war to unseat him,

Jeff Shesol
Mutual Contempt
Lyndon Johnson, Robert Kennedy, and the Feud that Defined a Decade
Norton, 576 pp., $32.50

and really could do it. For Robert Kennedy, devastated by the death of the brother he worshiped, the emotional truth was that his brother had been "killed" by LBJ. The circumstantial emotional "evidence"—Johnson had profited by John Kennedy's death, the murder took place in Texas and stemmed from its gun culture—seemed to add up to a bill of indictment. That indictment was best expressed in the original beginning of William Manchester's *Death of a President*, in which a reluctant John Kennedy is forced by LBJ to shoot a deer. As Shesol relates, Arthur Schlesinger urged that this prologue be axed, writing, "Some critics may write that the unconscious argument . . . is that Johnson killed Kennedy (. . . as an expression of the forces of violence and irrationality which ran rampant through his native state)." For his part, Johnson was actively paranoid from the start: "Johnson said later, 'I think he [Bobby] seriously considered whether he would let me be President, whether he should really take the position [that] the vice president doesn't automatically move in. I thought that was on his mind every

time I saw him in the first few days. . . . I think he was seriously considering what steps to take.'"

To the normal lashings of survivor's guilt, Johnson added his own skittishness regarding Bobby—as a bereaved brother, deserving of sympathy, as well as a political rival—and his private doubts about himself. The dead president had been charming, young, eloquent—all his successor was not. It was not John Kennedy's looks alone, but many other things about him—his Ivy League and prep-school background; his literary sense and his grounding in history; the easy knowledge of foreign countries, foreign capitals, and foreign leaders that had been his since childhood—that made him the epitome of the establishment that intimidated Johnson.

While he still believed that he deserved the presidency more than John Kennedy—a younger man, and an indifferent senator—he also saw himself as an "illegal usurper," "illegitimate," inadequate and wanting as a presidential successor, "a naked man, with no presidential covering, a pretender to the throne."

Johnson's pleasures were compromised, but at least he held power. Bobby was nothing but misery multiplied: his grief at the loss of his adored older brother coupled with an utter loss of power for himself. Now he would have, from a weakened position, to wholly rebuild his career. Already himself a Shakespearean figure, Bobby now saw Johnson as Hamlet had regarded Claudius, and Malcolm and Donalbain had seen Macbeth. "Our president was a gentleman and a human being," he said, in a remarkable paraphrase of the Prince of Denmark. "This man is not. He's mean, bitter, vicious—an animal in many ways." As Johnson hit his stride in 1964, Bobby begrudged him the plaudits of others, as if each word buried his dead brother deeper. "Respect for Johnson did not come easily," Shesol says, with understatement. "He was having trouble simply calling Johnson 'the president,' a term Bobby reserved for his late brother. Usually, Johnson remained nameless, referred to by a simple 'he' or 'him'—as in, 'Can you believe what he just did?'"

As time passed, the trendies resumed Johnson-bashing, their malice increased by their impotence. Johnson in turn raged against the "Georgetown press," seeing as plots all critiques of his doings; he finally purged from government circles anyone who had so much as talked to a Kennedy. "Not a sparrow fell from a tree but what he was convinced that it was the intervention of a Kennedy," said a Johnson aide who had fed his obsession. Johnson himself told Walter Cronkite that Kennedy's people "undermined the administration, and bored from within" to destroy him.

In retrospect, the direct confrontation that finally took place in 1968 appears to have been inevitable, as Johnson had all along realized. Though Shesol is at pains to show Bobby's challenge as driven by policy, the evidence says something different: The emotional impetus went out of Bobby when Johnson withdrew from the field. Running on issues was somehow less urgent. "Kennedy was subdued, obviously deflated . . . there had been a *cause* in running against Johnson . . . a real challenge, a real adversary, emotion, and even 'fun.'" When Robert Kennedy himself was shot, Johnson's horror and anguish were evident. But he still could not stop himself from trying to keep Bobby from being buried near his brother in Arlington National Cemetery, or refusing to allocate federal money to maintain the grave and its grounds. That would have to wait for 1969, and Richard Nixon, who had his own mixed feelings about Kennedys. Giving Robert Kennedy his own place in Arlington could elevate him to a national standing, on par with his brother, the president. This was the one thing Johnson could not consent to. It would have been the bridge too far.

In a private setting, this would all have been painful. In a public one, it was serious, too. Robert Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson were not merely men; they were the two polar heads of the country's majority party, and nothing they did lacked political impact. Robert Kennedy haunted the whole Johnson tenure. Nothing was done without thinking of Bobby: what Bobby would say, what Bobby would do, how something done would give Bobby an issue and opening, how something else would frustrate and checkmate his purpose. Without this, Shesol thinks, the Johnson years would have been different and better. Shesol agrees with Johnson intimate Doris Kearns Goodwin that "Kennedy's mere existence intensified Johnson's terror" of seeking an exit from his Asian war. Had he tried, Johnson thought, "the dovish Bobby would have turned hawk, 'telling everyone that I had betrayed John Kennedy's commitment. That I had let a democracy fall into the hands of the Communists. That I was a coward. An unmanly man.'"

Fear of Bobby also shaped the Great Society, planned as the jewel in the crown of the Johnson agenda and now best remembered as a testament to the law of unintended consequences and the good intentions with which roads to hell are paved.

Bobby was one of the first to warn his own party that its devotion to the nanny state was wrong. "As the flaws in the Great Society began to mount, Kennedy became the first Democrat of real prominence to acknowledge the limits of government action—the first to argue that traditional, centralized solutions were not working," Shesol says. Bobby's plans involved small-scale projects, finely tailored to the needs of local areas, that focused on economic opportunity, involved the private sector, and tried to empower the poor. He distrusted big, remote, and centralized government,

and thought that dependence killed character. "We had learned enough about bureaucracies to make us profoundly distrustful of the notion that the government could do more than set a direction or create a set of incentives and opportunities," Shesol quotes one of his aides. He also ties him, correctly, to modern conservative activists. "He endorsed direct, non-categorical federal aid to state and local governments—an early notion of 'block grants' borrowed from House Republicans. In 1967 the left-wing *Ramparts* compared him to Ronald Reagan. . . . Kennedy admitted that he 'sounded like a Republican' in appealing to the private sector, but its involvement was crucial. So were block grants." Clearly, Bobby was on the right track and Johnson the wrong one, something the president might have recognized readily had the words not come from the mouth of a Kennedy. But by the time Bobby developed his program, the feud between them had become so intractable that his urgings pushed Johnson in the other direction. And many opportunities were lost.

In the beginning, Johnson shut himself off from ideas coming from Bobby. Then he shut himself off from ideas altogether. His fear of Bobby and of his plots against him (some of them real, but most highly exaggerated) made him view all critiques as attacks on his person, and all dissension as part of a plot. In this he created a bunker mentality and lost the ability to respond to the people, and to the ever-changing nature of events. Blaming Bobby for inciting the riots, that in 1965 put the first blot on his record, Johnson began purging the government of "Kennedy people," among them some of the best in his party. Now and then, a brave aide would dare to suggest this was counterproductive: "An obsession with Bobby and with the relationship of your best people to him may . . . distort policy and offend the very men you need to attract," Harry McPherson warned him.

Politics is a great clash of interests and theories, and therefore, in some ways, a science. It is also a drama, about human beings, whose feelings can trump all the rest. Bobby Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson loathed each other, and their party was splintered. Bobby Kennedy and Gene McCarthy loathed each other, and their movement was splintered. Thus is politics not merely political science; it is also biography and about human weakness. Shesol, who knows this, has written a wonderful book, a great tragic read about two driven people, who were their own worst enemies because they were each other's worst enemy. Read it, and weep. ♦

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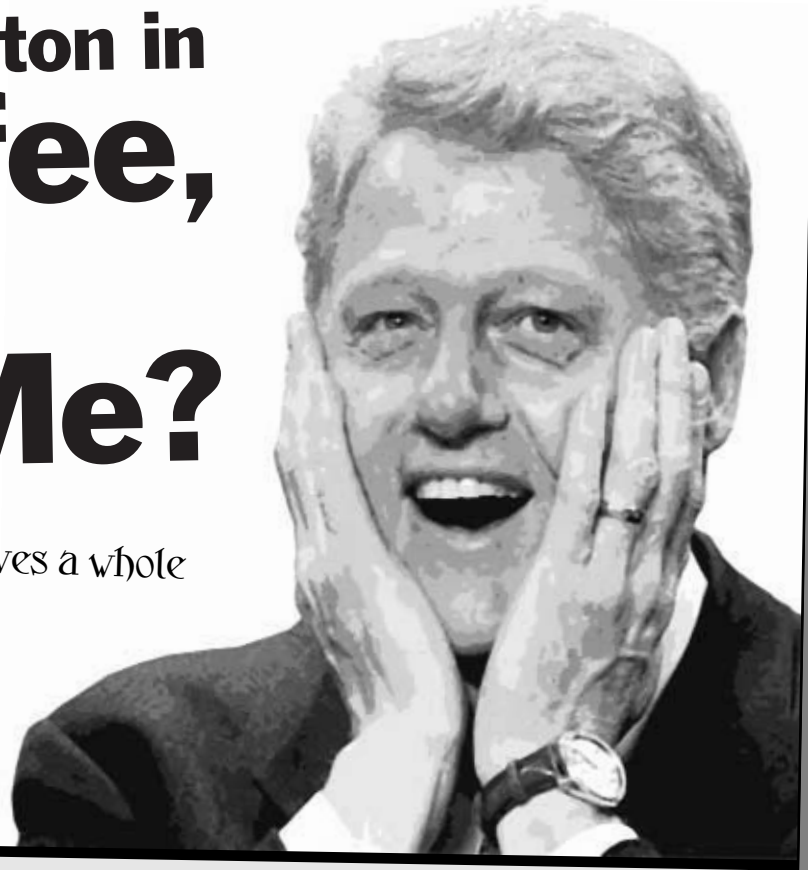

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