INSIDE THE CLINTON WHITE HOUSE

the weekly Standard

FEBRUARY 9, 1998 $2.95

the weekly Standard

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 21 • FEBRUARY 9, 1998

COVER BY SEAN DELONAS

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly, except for the first week of January and the first week of September, by News America Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY, 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Send subscription orders to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153. Yearly subscriptions, $78.00; Canadian, $98.00; foreign postage extra. Cover price, $2.95 ($3.50 Canadian). Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage and handling). Subscribers: Please send all remittances, address changes, and subscription inquiries to: The Weekly Standard, Customer Service, P.O. Box 710, Radnor, PA 19088-0710. If possible include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. For subscription customer service, call 1-800-983-7600. Send manuscripts and letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The Weekly Standard Advertising Sales Office in Washington, DC, is (202) 293-4900. Advertising Production: call Natalie Harwood, (610) 293-8540. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 930, Radnor, PA 19088-0930.

The Guerrillas of Love

Here's some helpful spin for Ann Lewis, James Carville, and the other bitter-end defenders of Bill Clinton: Not everyone judges the president harshly for allegedly indulging a certain sexual taste with a young White House intern.

In France, where President Mitterrand was laid to rest by both his wife and his mistress, we are told Mr. Clinton's behavior would rate no more than a Gallic shrug. And in South America . . . well, according to Carlos Fuentes, in South America he would be treated to cheers.

Fuentes is Mexico's most famous novelist, author of 20 books, including *The Death of Artemio Cruz* and *The Old Gringo*. He is also one of Mexico's most infamous radicals, a man of some political influence who writes regular newspaper columns to decry any retreat from the glory of the long-ruling party in Mexico—the Institutional Revolutionary party, as it calls itself.

Blaming the puritanical culture of America and the animus of the religious Right for Clinton's troubles, Fuentes posed the quite apposite question, "Who would topple a Latin American president for his extramarital indiscretions?" In the uninhibited, healthy cultures of the South, he explained, "our macho tradition tends to admire skirt-chasing presidents—and that's to say nothing of all the guerrillas of love, from Pancho Villa to Che Guevara.

"Time will tell the truth about Clinton and his sexual prowess," Fuentes concluded, but he added his own view of the old Gringo: "Philanderer, *si*; perjurer, *no*."

Given the public opinion polls at the end of the week, it looks as if we may be progressing toward South American mores.

And the Winner Is . . .

The Scrapbook offered a bounty—a one-year subscription to The Weekly Standard—to the first person who mailed in the incriminating photo shown here, in which this magazine's executive editor impersonates a Green Bay Packers fan. The winner of the subscription is Democratic senator Russ Feingold. And therein hangs a tale.

Barbara L. Lyons, executive director of Wisconsin Right to Life, Inc., actually mailed in the photo. And she elaborated as follows: "For a powerful and influential guy, Fred Barnes gets into more pickles than vinegar. We invite the poor guy out to Milwaukee and what happens? Our wonderful dinner emcee, Charles Sykes, provides us with a photo-op worthy of high-level blackmail (we're always looking for productive fund-raising ideas).

"Then you learn of our compromising photo. We were hoping some big-money eastern or Hollywood liberal would want to get Fred embarrassed on *60 Minutes* and pay big money for the photo. Instead you offer a one-year subscription. Oh well. Please send it to our ultraliberal, pro-abortion and partial-birth-supporting U.S. senator Russ Feingold. We'd really like to do something nice for him because we think he's going to be pretty sad come Election Day."

Consider it done, Barbara.

Jay Salvo

Fred "Cheesehead" Barnes

The Other Republican Response

Trent Lott did give a stinging response to Bill Clinton's State of the Union address. Not the tepid performance a few minutes after Clinton finished speaking, but his answer two days before the speech on *This Week with Sam and Cokie*. George Will asked Lott if he thought "moral turpitude" was grounds for removing a president. Lott ducked and Will pressed: "How can you talk about the state of the union without talking about this?" Replied Lott, "We can go ahead and pass these bills and hope that the president will have the good judgment and the moral turpitude to sign them."

Scrapbook

Just Say No

Republicans are always complaining that Bill Clinton has stolen their best issues, and crime is their Exhibit No. 1. Sure enough, in his State of the Union address, the president boasted that his administration is pursuing a "strategy of more police, tougher punishment, and smarter prevention." But instead of throwing up their hands in despair, Republicans should instead be asking, very loudly: Why does an administration that claims to want tougher punishment nominate to the federal bench judges who don't? Indeed, Republicans now have a sterling opportunity to deny a particularly egregious such judge her spot on the federal bench.

That judge is Frederica Massiah-Jackson of Philadelphia, who has been nominated by Clinton to the U.S. District Court for eastern Pennsylvania. The full Senate will vote on her nomination this month. Will Republicans exploit this matchless opportunity to explain why judicial activism is bad and why irresponsible judges should not be confirmed?

In her years on the local bench, Massiah-Jackson has compiled a record of astonishing hostility to police and prosecutors. In one notorious instance a decade ago, she blew the cover of two undercover police officers in her courtroom, saying, "Take a good look at these guys, and be careful out there." She has compiled an acquittal rate twice the average for other Philadelphia judges. She has consistently imposed lenient sentences—in one case immediately paroling a mugger who had slashed his victim on the neck, elbow, and hands with a razor. The mandatory minimum for robbery with a deadly weapon is four years' imprisonment; a higher court overturned Massiah-Jackson saying she erroneously held that the razor was not a deadly weapon.

Massiah-Jackson is a classic "root causes" liberal who doesn't believe in incarceration. As she argued in a 1994 speech, "the criminal justice system cannot reach through persistent poverty, joblessness, street cultures, teen pregnancies, low self-esteem, alcohol and drugs, and then 'cure' the . . . problems of society. . . . Locking folks up is a belated and expensive response to a social crisis."

The National Fraternal Order of Police has come out against the nomination, as has the Philadelphia FOP, the Pennsylvania District Attorney's Association, and, most tellingly, Democrat Lynne Abraham, Philadelphia's district attorney. Abraham wrote to Specter on Jan. 8, saying, "This nominee's judicial service is replete with instances of demonstrated leniency towards criminals, an adversarial attitude towards police, and disrespect and a hostile attitude towards prosecutors unmatched by any other present or former jurist with whom I am familiar."

For some reason, Sen. Specter remains a supporter of the nomination, but given the impressive roster of opponents, the only question left to be answered is how much covering fire other Republican senators think they need before poking their heads up out of the foxhole and voting the nominee down.

Help Wanted

Casual

No Sex Please, We're Democrats

There was a time not long ago, though it's hard to remember now, when the talk of fellatio in our office was confined to whispered exchanges of Pamela Lee Web addresses. But Monica Lewinsky has changed that. The president has again embarrassed the media into making his privates public. Decorum is on holiday throughout the country, and grown men freely euphemize about "knob polishings" before convulsing in titters.

Such junior-high catharsis is natural enough as we grapple with our national shame. But to some, this is no time for levity, as I discovered last week at the College Democrats' "1998 State of the Union Watch Party" on Capitol Hill. The word "party" may be stretching things a bit. The festivities involved packing into a rented microbrewery to watch an embattled Bill Clinton give a distended speech on the African Trade Act and the Clear Water Initiative—not exactly the recipe for a successful kegger.

I can think of cheerier ways to drink: Tippling brown-bag Thunderbird over a trash-can fire in Anacostia comes to mind. But the junior Dems made a valiant effort. They invited other leftoid worker bees from organizations like the Human Rights Campaign and Democrats With An Attitude. They crammed the place with 900 bodies, until young hipsters were scuffing their chunky-heeled Joan & David pumps and getting their Merino-wooled elbows dunked in neighbors' nacho-cheese tubs.

They partook of the puppy treats of Washington's intern class: proximity to power and free appetizers. They sipped "Pumpkin Ale" and "Blueberry Wheat" and other flavors that sound more like muffins than beer. They dug into Sterno-licked tanks of potato skins, while roving camera crews with fuzzy boom-mikes toppled plates heaped high with buffalo-wing remnants. But the healthy turnout was not due to the victuals or the speech. Like our embattled president, the student arm of the Democratic party was there for one reason: to pretend Monica Lewinsky doesn't exist.

The junior Dems are a solemn lot—they refer to themselves as "policy people." You've heard of the "business of the country" to which the president must return? They conduct it. Every day, they slave in legislative offices and advocacy nonprofits in the hope that someday all Americans will be able to say "Speaker Gephardt" and reduce CO_2 emissions with energy-efficient showerheads.

So when I canvass the bar with Lewinsky queries, they don't look amused. There is no time for amusement. The country's business is a jealous mistress. They have to "initiate dialogues!" Exchange "program ideas!" Disseminate "coalition-building binders!" with an exclamation point after every objective!

According to my hosts, such noble lives of public service leave no room for reflection on private moral or legal lapses. This has been the tattered refrain of Clinton defenders at least since 1992, and the polls suggest it's catching. The junior activists hope that when the rest of us bohunks get hip to that notion, we will put down our pot pies and Mountain Dews, telephone C-SPAN, and say, "Dammit, Lamb, we don't want to talk about the president's suborning perjury or caulking interns. We want to talk about repealing the cap on tax-exempt-bond issuance by colleges—and all the other issues that galvanized the public before this ugly business started."

As the night wore on and I had a refreshment or two, my questions grew blue, my hypotheticals more explicit. I asked a Rock the Vote staffer from MTV whether her network would tolerate a 50-year-old married veejay's diddling 21-year-old interns in the control room. "Probably not," she said, "but Clinton's still in a position where he's leading the country." He should, therefore, be held to a lower standard than the guy who introduces Puff Daddy videos.

A few busty patriots admitted they would relish Clinton's amorous attentions. Even those without presidential crushes expressed no revulsion at the alleged events (which most of them say never occurred). "If I got a dress from the president," says 18-year-old Crystal, "I'd be proud to show it off." And if it had a DNA keepsake? "I'd just wash it—and wear it again!"

It is generally bad form to pass judgment on your hosts after accepting their hospitality. But like the president's senior shills, mine were terminally earnest, woefully lemming-like, selectively myopic, and unmatched in their willingness to lie to themselves and others. Many have brilliant futures as the Ann Lewises of tomorrow.

It's just too bad the president didn't stop by after his address. He could have enjoyed a nice pale ale with a roasted nutty finish and inspected a lifetime reserve of suitable dating material.

Matt Labash

Sins of the Caring Professions

Nuha Abudabbeh, psychologist of mother Latrena Pixley, is quoted in Tucker Carlson's "Horror in the Court" (Jan. 26) as saying, "There are schizophrenic mothers who could be very good mothers. Who decides what's a good mother?" Well, prior to the early seventies (when the social-welfare policies of "mother infallibility" set in), the extended family in a good number of African-American communities—led usually by the maternal grandmother—would make that determination. For those of us who grew up in those communities, we all remember the sad moments when a classmate would inform us that he or she was "moving down South," ostensibly to live with married grandparents or aunts and uncles. This was almost always done upon the breakup of a marriage, the idea being that a single-parent environment was an at-risk environment for any child. For Abudabbeh—and for the litany of forensic psychologists, social workers, academics, white feminists, family law attorneys, and judges who feed at the trough of the "child industrial complex"—any return to the days when the village concept actually worked would result in their collective demise.

As long as public policy and family law reflect the view that the acceptable American family structure is composed of a mother, children, and a welfare check, children will continue to die; fatherless boys will join street gangs and skinhead crews for perverted male mentorship; and elites will delight that "the American family has not been destroyed, it's just changing."

Bill Stephney
Brooklyn, NY

Baseless on Baseball

Fred Barnes compares football to baseball and writes that our national pastime is "non-violent, fairly boring, and loved by liberals" ("Cheese in My Super Bowl," Jan. 26).

However, baseball is uniquely American. It is the only major sport where the ball is put into play by the *defense*. The home team, indicative of traditional American civility, yields the first at-bat to the visiting team. Each team harmoniously offers the other three outs an inning; sounds like equality of opportunity, doesn't it? A baseball player works with and for the team; he also is called, as an individual, to stand at the plate and be accountable for his worth as a member of a diverse team. Baseball players are well-rounded and individualistic, as opposed to the mind-numbing monotony of, say, a football lineman. These are conservative ideals.

I am a conservative. I like football. I love baseball. You need no particular political conviction to enjoy either sport.

Adam S. Jones
Palmyra, PA

As a football fan, a resident of Titletown, USA, and an owner of the Green Bay Packers, I take exception to Fred Barnes's portrayal of the sport, our city, and our team as "conservative."

Football a conservative sport? Many of us on the left share Barnes's gridiron passions. And wouldn't Barnes's comrade George Will resent a love of baseball being construed as a *liberal* affection? Isn't football a leftish game in which a team—composed of unionized players—collectively struggles to move the ball forward?

Green Bay a conservative city? Admittedly, Joe McCarthy lies buried at the other end of this congressional district, but last year—when the Packers triumphed in the Super Bowl—Green Bay and northeast Wisconsin chose a Democrat, Jay Johnson, to represent us in Congress, electing him over a conservative Republican.

The Packers a conservative team? Sure, many a prominent player and coach are cultural conservatives, but just as Republicans were able to govern for much of the late 20th century without (until recently) undoing the best of liberalism and social democracy, conservative coaches and players can lead a progressive sports franchise without undoing its truly popular non-capitalist foundations.

More important than the roster is what the Packers as a community-owned team represent: an alternative to private ownership. Ask Green Bay's citizens how they would feel about "privatization" of the Packers. Appreciating that corporate priorities remain antagonistic to community and democracy, we know that if our team were fully subordinated to capitalism, we would lose it to some bigger city. Thus, a proto-socialist tradition continues in Green Bay. As one T-shirt declares: "The Green Bay Packers: Owned by the People, for the People."

Harvey J. Kaye
Green Bay, WI

I am bothered by Barnes's enthusiasm for violence and brutality in sports as qualifiers for the conservative label. The greatest conservative era in world history was the Victorian era, known for its high moral standards, respect for others, and exquisite manners and grace—not for its desire to brutalize opponents.

Kelly D. Johnston
Washington, DC

No Commies Here

In his review of *Arguing the World* (Jan. 26), John Podhoretz gets one crucial fact wrong: We (Daniel Bell, Irving Howe, Irving Kristol, and I) were not "members of a Communist cell that met in one of the school cafeteria's alcoves." We were never Communists, as that term is now understood, or Stalinists, as we would have said at the time—though two of the group were for a time members of a Trotskyist group that referred to itself as Socialist,

Correspondence

not Communist. We were certainly not part of any "cell"—cells did not meet in the alcoves, which were places of public disputation, not organization. Consequently, we never had to "break with communism"—another reference in the Podhoretz review. We in Alcove One began as anti-Communists, and so never had to "break." Joe Dorman did get all these details right, but it seems that for a younger generation these distinctions, which I think are still of consequence, get fuzzy or don't seem to matter.

NATHAN GLAZER
CAMBRIDGE, MA

JOHN PODHORETZ RESPONDS: ***Last I heard, Leon Trotsky was a Communist.***

IMMORTAL CAMUS

Christopher Caldwell's review of Olivier Todd's book on Albert Camus offers some fascinating new revelations about the writer's life but, of course, that is not very serious ("The Stranger in a Strange Land," Jan. 26). What is, alas, is the awful misjudgment about Camus's ongoing importance as a general man of letters.

What has the slimness of his output got to do with it? *Le Grand Meaulnes* is all Alain-Fournier is known for, but it remains almost as unshakable as the Mona Lisa (Leonardo's production was also notoriously slender). Mallarmé's writings fit into a single Pléiade volume, but I have devoted my life to him.

Camus will survive as the finest voice of his age because of the power and texture of his total vision. So what that he is not a philosopher? Neither was Mallarmé or Heidegger. George Steiner accurately sees these as the pivotal thinkers of the 20th century. Camus comes close to them (as do Valéry and Bergson) in sheer talent, fusing art and science (in the French sense) into a heady music of ideas.

I taught the modern French novel at Stanford for decades: My students always voted Camus their favorite. I saw no sign of a flagging in that regard, despite the scandalous drop in the humanities and literary interest generally.

Yes, his plays are boring (except *Caligula*), his journalism minor. But *The Stranger*, *The Plague*, *The Fall*, the wonderful late stories in *Exile and the Kingdom*, and the deeply honest and tender pages about his childhood in *The Last Man*, will never fade. Nor will his "lyrical essays"—from the very early *The Wrong Side and the Right* to *Helen's Exile*; the remarkably thought-provoking *Myth of Sisyphus*; and the enormously courageous, sane, and thought-provoking *The Rebel*.

The rest is just gossip.

ROBERT GREER COHN
STANFORD, CA

THOSE UBIQUITOUS ROACHES

As Dave Juday notes, "The real enemy of asthma sufferers is indoor pollution" ("EPA Dust in GOP Eyes," Jan. 19). Indeed, that is the real smoking gun. A new study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* addresses the question of how the incidence of asthma can rise, especially among inner-city children, as the air gets demonstrably and significantly cleaner. The culprit is the ubiquitous cockroach and the allergens it gives off via droppings and saliva.

Thanks to government regulations forcing increased energy efficiency, ventilation of air between the inside and outside of buildings has been reduced. That means less fresh air to dilute allergens. We might be better off arresting criminals, loosening some regulations, and putting out some roach motels.

DANIEL JOHN SOBIESKI
CHICAGO, IL

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK

William Tucker succumbs to a mild bout of "cosmic capitalism" in his "New York City, Economic Backwater" (Jan. 26). He ignores pre-George Gilder history and misconstrues much of the city's present situation.

New York's per capita income relative to the rest of the country probably peaked in the early 1930s at about 170 percent of the national average—and at about five times that of the poorest southern states. The gap has been narrowing steadily since then for lots of reasons, including those cited by Tucker.

Industry has been moving south and west out of the Northeast since the 1870s and '80s. Lots of southern textile fortunes have New England roots. Many industrial migrations of this kind are inevitable. The question is whether a local economy is dynamic enough to replace them.

Rapid aggregate growth and huge fortunes are not the only measure of economic prosperity. Vast chunks of financial, media, and legal activities have been pulled into the orbit of New York-based firms over the last generation. This has resulted in some great career opportunities for huge numbers of people. Though his saga may pale beside that of Larry Ellison, the 20-year veteran of Wall Street who has comfortably accumulated $20 million is unlikely to consider himself a failure stuck in a backwater. New York and its environs are full of such people. The huge base of skills and people in the fields for which New York is a major center is likely to give the region a major presence in those fields for a very long time.

Moreover, truly plutocratic taxpayers are generally more heavily taxed in California and Minnesota than in the New York region, outside the city.

The real damage is upstate, outside the city and its suburbs. An area as populous as Indiana—similar in culture, economy, and politics to the industrial Midwest—bears the true cost of New York's adventures in social democracy. Here the disadvantages are potent relative to other states, so old firms move and close, relatively few new ones start, and very few move in. The tragedy of New York's policies isn't really felt in the Bronx or Queens or even Suffolk, but in Syracuse, Johnstown, and Watertown.

PAUL J. ISAAC
LARCHMONT, NY

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the weekly Standard

Clinton's Corruption

We now know three things for sure that we did not know two weeks ago when the president of the United States categorically denied both a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky and an attempt to dissuade her from contradicting him.

First of all, we know he was lying.

When a political job came open at the Pentagon's public-affairs office in April 1996, six months after she first made personal contact with Clinton, Lewinsky was the only candidate the White House proposed. The West Wing was eager to get rid of her for what its spokesman has officially termed "inappropriate and immature behavior," a judgment that other aides, speaking on condition of anonymity, have since clarified: She was lingering around the president way too much, in a swoon, and making everybody nervous.

Eighteen months later, in October 1997, attorneys for Paula Jones caught wind of this young woman's existence and issued a subpoena to Linda Tripp, the friend with whom Lewinsky had shared details of a dalliance with Clinton. It suddenly became very important to lots of people that Monica Lewinsky get out of town. Clinton deputy chief of staff John Podesta —who, according to last week's *New Yorker*, is known at the White House, for his clean-up work on the president's personal scandals, as the "Secretary of Sh-t"—arranged a job interview for Lewinsky with Bill Richardson, the American U.N. ambassador in New York. Richardson claims to have been impressed by her "qualifications, initiative, and reputation as a hard worker."

But the position he offered Lewinsky paid only $24,000 and she was already making $32,736 at the Defense Department, so she turned it down. And now the situation got desperate. During the first week of December, the Paula Jones legal team notified their Clinton counterparts that they intended to call Monica Lewinsky as a witness at trial.

At this point, the president's best friend, Washington super-fixer Vernon Jordan, took charge of the Lewinsky portfolio. He arranged a series of contacts for her at New York-based corporations on whose boards he sits. When she was served her Paula Jones subpoena, on December 17, he got her a lawyer. And when Lewinsky got wobbly—jobless and panicky on December 28, she met privately with the president in the White House, where the *New York Times* has them discussing how she might describe all her past visits to the West Wing—Jordan redoubled his efforts.

YOW!

Ordinary Americans wish to think the best of their president. They shrink from the conclusion that he is, as Monica Lewinsky put it, a "creep."

Last month, in short order, the deed was done. On January 7, Lewinsky swore to an affidavit that said she had never had sex with the president. On January 8, Vernon Jordan got her a second interview with the Revlon corporation. On January 13, Revlon offered her a $40,000 salary. On January 14, Lewinsky gave Linda Tripp a set of written "talking points" on the Paula Jones case, which urged Tripp to be a "team player" and to consult with "Bennett's people"—the president's lawyers—before submitting an affidavit of her own. On January 16, Robert Bennett, on Clinton's behalf, filed Monica Lewinsky's affidavit with the court.

And on January 17, during a formal deposition by Paula Jones's attorneys, the president himself, under oath, insisted that his contact with Lewinsky was innocent. While, at almost the exact same instant, Lewinsky was being tape-recorded by the FBI, confirming that innocence had nothing to do with it.

In her chillingly audacious interviews with the NBC and ABC morning news shows last week, Hillary Clinton essentially rejected the material reality of

all this evidence. "We know very few facts right now," she said, though she presumably knows everything and refuses to divulge any of it. All there is to go on, Mrs. Clinton suggested, are "false allegations" and "hypotheticals" cooked up by Kenneth Starr, a "politically motivated prosecutor" in league with a "vast right-wing conspiracy." And what right-wing conspiracy might that be, exactly? It has something to do with Jesse Helms and Jerry Falwell, the mere mention of whom the First Lady believes should end the matter for good. "If you find a turtle on a fence post," as her husband likes to say, "it didn't get there by accident."

No, indeed. By a clear preponderance of the turtles, and beyond a reasonable doubt, Bill Clinton is lying about Monica Lewinsky.

The second thing we've lately learned is that the people closest to the president know he's lying, too. They *have* to know it. They have all the facts that we do, and more. "Everyone who knows Clinton knows that he has an Achilles' heel and it's located in his groin," one White House aide told the *New Yorker*. "The problem is that what we're hearing sounds true, it smells true."

And the third thing we've learned is the most depressing. We know he's lying. They know he's lying. They know we know he's lying. But the president's men have nevertheless decided to sign up for the deception. They don't care that we know they're lying. In fact, they want to implicate us in their deception.

They do not, it's important to note, seek to *persuade* us. No real exculpatory theory is offered to explain the president's attention to Lewinsky. He gave her a dress? He's just a friendly guy. Vernon Jordan's extraordinary assistance to this young nobody? Vernon Jordan, who is, according to a White House aide quoted by the *New Yorker*, John Podesta's private-sector doppelganger, "the off-the-books Secretary of Sh-t"? Vernon Jordan, who last month, at a party, told someone that he and Clinton do little more than "talk p-ssy" while they're playing golf? Well, Jordan, too, is just a friendly guy. A very friendly guy.

This is preposterous, and the White House does not really expect anyone to believe it. They expect instead, as they openly admit, that they can maintain the president's denial by stonewalling all future public questions about it. They expect, as a legal matter, that the president can never be indicted. They expect, as a political matter, that the president can never be

Sean Delonas

impeached. They expect, in short, that they can ultimately *survive*, that they can pretend away the truth. And they expect that public opinion will join them in the pretending.

They may be right about this. Ordinary Americans, in their good-natured, admirable way, wish always to think the best of their president. They shrink to the point of self-delusion from the conclusion that he is, as Monica Lewinsky put it, a "creep." Before they get mad at the presidential creep himself, voters will get mad at the people who report on his creepiness. The polls are fairly clear about this: It is happening already.

But it is deeply unhealthy, and it is Bill Clinton's fault. Other presidents have lied to protect secrets. Lies about secrets corrupt only the liar. This is something different. This president is lying, lying boldly and fabulously, about something everybody already knows. He has extended this corruption to his colleagues, by asking them to lie with him and securing their cooperation. And all of them together are attempting something unprecedented, almost unimaginable. They are attempting to corrupt the entire country—to make it complicit, by acquiescence, in a glaring, disgusting falsehood.

President Clinton has been searching for a legacy. This will be it.

—David Tell, for the Editors

In Defense of Our President

by P.J. O'Rourke

Bill Clinton has been accused of many things—so many that the current Clinton defense is: "The accused is presumed innocent, so the more I'm accused, the more innocent I presume I am." But there are some charges that cannot be made against the president, and we in the media must be careful not to make them lest we give the appearance of partisanship.

Bill Clinton is not a hypocrite. If a man believes that it is just and moral to redistribute wealth, there is nothing hypocritical in his attempts to redistribute some of that wealth to himself. When a man is an "A" student in the social sciences, he spins improbable fantasies to explain human events and wins good grades. There is nothing inconsistent about that man's continuing with his poli-sci research, spinning more and larger fantasies and winning elections. And a man who publicly declares that a broad range of sexual activities are acceptable cannot be deemed a fraud for indulging in one of them. Clinton, like the rest of us, may praise good while doing evil. But, to be a hypocrite, he'd have to know which was which.

Critics say Bill Clinton is guilty of inappropriate behavior. This isn't so. Bill is a humanist. He thinks man is the highest arbiter of right and wrong. And Bill's a man. It is appropriate to act as though you are above the law if you're sure the law is beneath you.

It is also appropriate to brand a respected federal prosecutor—acting under the aegis of one's own attorney general—a member of a "vast right-wing conspiracy." The truth is always appropriate. There *is* a vast right-wing conspiracy in America. Truly vast. Millions of voters conspired to put Republicans in control of Congress in 1994 and '96.

Furthermore, having sex with someone who is very young and wholly in your power is appropriate behavior—for a *Roe* v. *Wade* supporter. The abortion-rights movement teaches us that no one is ever too young to be sacrificed for the comfort and happiness of others.

Does Bill Clinton abuse power? I think not. He loves power, worships it, revels in it, nurtures it, coddles it, and spoils it rotten, maybe. But this is not abuse.

Does Bill Clinton lack self-control? He'd ask, "What is this thing called 'self,' anyway? Is it biological, psychological, sociological, or a political construct?" And the president knows what controls it—economic circumstances, early-childhood education, day care, and substance-abuse counseling. Does Bill Clinton lack self-control? Define your terms.

And finally, Bill Clinton cannot be accused of being morally unfit to run a Democratic administration devoted to increasing the size and scope of government, minimizing the roles of tradition and religion, politicizing daily life, diminishing personal responsibility, and furthering individual dependence on the state for everything—including job offers from Vernon Jordan. Bill Clinton is perfectly fit for that. Give the fellow a break.

P.J. O'Rourke is a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard.

The Fallback Guy

by David Brooks

Potomac, Md., 7:30 a.m. The clock-radio comes on. NPR has nothing new. The pundit reaches across his pillow for the remote control and flicks on the network morning shows. They're back to health and fitness stories. C-SPAN has some congressman on discussing telecom reform. The pundit's heart sinks. The scandal may be winding down. He gets up and retrieves the papers. The *Washington Post* has nothing. The *Journal*—nothing.

But then his eyes fall on the *New York Times*. A four-column hed! A new angle! The mid-level pundit snaps into action. "I'll wear the blue shirt!" This could be another five-channel day.

He drives to the think tank where he allegedly works and waves at the garage attendant (who once said he saw him on *Hardball with Chris Matthews*). His voicemail is empty, so he phones one of the cable news stations just to let them know he's available. Everything is up in the air, the young producer says. She suggests he come over and hang around in the "green room" in case they need him. He tries not to look at himself in the mirror as he heads off to their building.

At the station, production assistants have organized the pundits in groups of three and are taking them into the studio for 10-minute segments in wave after wave. It's like changing lines in a hockey game. They've brought four make-up ladies out of retirement just to keep up with the demand for powder puffers. Pundits who were skedded to talk about the "Is oral sex adultery?" issue are being pressed into service to explicate the *New York Times* exclusive. Media navel gazers who came here on the understanding that they would flagellate their fellow reporters for hyping the story are now going on the air to flagellate the reporters for not digging hard enough. In the control room there's a bank of TVs showing the other stations, and *Newsweek*'s Howard Fineman has apparently been cloned because he's on all of them. Our pundit notices that the analysts are moving on and off the set so fast the techies don't have time to clean the earpieces between groups. As he sits down for one of his spots he wonders whether Ann Coulter uses Q-tips. Probably, he concludes—with steel spikes at the end.

They put him on the air and he's enjoying himself. At its best, punditry has all the emotional rewards he used to experience when he served in the White House—adrenaline, fame, influence—with none of the work. Our pundit has modeled his on-air demeanor after the PBS historian Doris Kearns Goodwin. That is to say, his aim is to look like he's having more fun than he has ever had in his life. While the hosts are asking him a question, he wears a beaming smile. When he pauses in between his sentences, he puts on the beam. When he finishes, he beams again. He also tries to use his hands a lot, which the people in the control room seem to like, and if he's comfortable, he will first-name the host. "Sue, I've been talking to a lot of people around town, and the message I'm getting is that the voters made a tacit deal with Clinton back in '92 . . ." the pundit declares into the camera, launching into a thought nugget he hopes will make it into *Hotline*, the Washington dope sheet, the next day.

The producer hopes so too. Just as a lot of movers and shakers need to be validated with TV success, the TV producers crave acknowledgment in print. They want some newspaper to pick a quote off their show—to give corporeal permanence to the cloud of ether that flows through their equipment and out into the void. In search of that newsbreak, the producers at the cable station are going around the green room asking the milling pundits whether they've got any new information that can go on the air. Of course they don't, they've spent all morning in the green room. And besides, Michael Isikoff of *Newsweek* spent a year working this story. Reporting takes patience. You can't just call up a few of the standard sources and expect little scoops to fall into your lap. Some TV producers don't seem to understand this.

Our pundit used to remember why he did TV. He used to tell himself that being on TV would advance his career, get him in line for future administration posts, keep those panel-discussion invitations coming. He also liked meeting the other pundits and star journalists, palling around with Haynes Johnson and David Gergen, Bill Safire and Dee Dee Myers. But in the middle of his pundit career, something changed. His interest in TV became obsessional. It all started when many of the pundits in his peer group, and even some who were younger, rose into the A league. Now, a youngster like Elizabeth Arnold does that Friday night PBS show where they sit at that indented table and look at each other with nerdy earnestness. Howard Kurtz was just on a prime-time special with Peter Jennings (looking a bit like Jamie Farr). Don't even talk to him about Laura Ingraham.

Our pundit has been left behind. He's the guy the producers of the weekend shows call early in the week just in case they can't lock in one of the really big names. But when the producers get a bigfoot pundit they call him back and cancel: "Uh, we've decided to take the show in a different direction, so we won't be needing you this week. But we want to thank you for being available." Just once he'd like to tell the cancel-

ing producer to go to hell. But he never will. It's not his role. He's the Fallback Guy.

He knows that the 27-year-old TV producers think he's second tier, and this makes him feel inadequate. He doesn't respect them, but still he longs for their approval. He wouldn't ever watch their shows, yet he goes home miserable at night because there is some quality they prize that he doesn't seem to have. It's more than just polished jokes or confrontational zingers or even good looks that he apparently lacks. It's something ineffable. The Fallback Guy can't get his mind around what it is. Shields and Gigot seem to have it. Hunt and Novak seem to have it. It's like high school, when some kids were just popular and others, for no clear reason, were not. And in Washington the people who have it are treated like royalty, and the people like him who don't are treated like furniture.

Now he'll do anything to make it in the TV world. He never takes vacations in August, because that's when the bookers for the Sunday talk shows are desperate for analysts and he can get good slots. He'll never say no to a national TV gig, even if it means appearing on CNN's daytime puker, *Talk Back Live*. He'll fly up to Fort Lee, N.J., to do Charles Grodin. And when he gets a call from a producer at one of the big shows—*Meet*, *Face*, *Week*, Fox, the Group, or the Gang—he answers the phone in his deep TV pundit voice, praying that this is the time he won't be bumped.

He loves Monica Lewinsky because she's brought the thrill back into his life. The TV shows—even if it's only the second-tier ones—want him again. He's feeling delicious self-imposed pressure to come up with new opinions and witty formulations. It's just like those days when he worked in the White House: He goes around in a little cloud of frenetic self-importance. Maybe this will be his breakthrough scandal.

Back at the cable station, the pundits are hanging around the make-up room, which has the bustle of a kitchen during a dinner party. Things are so exciting the make-up people aren't even telling their usual facelift and toupee stories, they're talking about Bill Clinton. Among the pundit set, nobody believes Clinton, though a few think Americans are childish for caring about all this business. The Fallback Guy enjoys these moments. The members of the commentariat are extremely nice; that's how they got to be on-air talent in the first place. Moreover, the iron rule of green-room etiquette is that the more contentious and grave things are on air, the more you engage in happy talk off. You should never try to launch a serious discussion in the green room, unless it is about media gossip or somebody else's career prospects. You should never steal anybody's off-air ideas unless the person happens to be less famous than you. And a third of your remarks should be self-deprecatory, just to demonstrate that you are superior to the farcical punditry you engage in.

It's also important to call your office every five minutes and look serious while on the phone. The Fallback Guy listens to his few messages over and over again, pretending to take notes. German TV is looking for a commentator. Canadian Broadcasting wants someone this evening (they allegedly pay, but some-

times the check doesn't arrive). The other 24-hour news channels have also left messages for their nighttime shows. And Swedish TV is doing a piece today on the American child-care system.

The Fallback Guy decides to go over and try one of the other cable channels. He pretends to his fellow klieg-light jockeys that he's got somewhere important to go, so he's embarrassed a half hour later when some of them walk into the other cable station's green room and find him sitting there. The Einsteins at this station decide they're going to do something different. They're going to bring in diverse voices, so the Fallback Guy will be appearing with a rap musician in New York and a starlet in L.A. who couldn't find Washington on a map if her life depended on it. The floor producer sticks the Fallback Guy in a small windowless room with a dented photo of the White House on the wall behind him. A robotically controlled television camera pivots five feet in front of him.

A voice in his ear asks him to count to ten, and the starlet, who doesn't know her mike is open, informs the entire network staff about her sexual tastes. Suddenly the Fallback Guy is experiencing the greatest wave of self-loathing he has felt since the last time he was in that studio, debating the implications of the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue. He looks around him. The chair he's sitting on is scratched and wobbly. The floor has residue from a thousand masking-tape jobs. There's tattered black crepe paper hanging from the ceiling. And the Fallback Guy sits in the middle of all this supposed glamour and realizes it couldn't get any worse. But then there's a voice in his ear proving that it can: "Eric Alterman is going to be joining us from New York."

Alterman is one of those pundits who create a mood imbalance wherever they appear. Most people are genial on the air, regardless of their views, but Alterman comes from the Dark Side of the Force; he's always angry. And people appearing with him have to be angry too, or else get stomped. The Fallback Guy's only hope is that the starlet's stupidity will overwhelm Alterman's bile.

The intro music blares, and the host's deep voice emerges from the flatlands of New Jersey and blares in his ear. The Fallback Guy feels suddenly disoriented, and some make-up powder falls into his eye. He realizes that they're all waiting for him to speak, so he does what all pundits do when they have nothing left to say. He uses the word "endgame." He pauses dramatically and says, "I don't think the president and his staff have thought through to the endgame, Jim."

What happens next is kind of a blur. The starlet says something about Monica Lewinsky's high-school-yearbook picture. Alterman says something about right-wing philanthropist Richard Mellon Scaife, and the rap musician tries to rhyme philanthropist with philanderer, but it doesn't really work.

The pundit realizes something is happening to him that used to happen all the time during TV appearances but is less common now. He is having an out-of-body experience. His soul is hovering up near the ceiling looking down on him. When this used to happen, his soul would whisper naughty thoughts into his brain: "If you said something really offensive, you could destroy your entire career. You could commit auto-pundicide."

YOW!

In his fantasy, the pundit is about to go on Meet the Press. "Would you like a melon ball?" the imaginary David Broder asks?

But this out-of-body experience is different. It's a fantasy. This time he's imagining himself not in this cheesy discussion, but about to go on *Meet the Press*. He's sitting on the blue couch in the *Meet* waiting room. He's surrounded by big-name pundits who actually know what they're talking about. And they are nice to him. "Welcome to Nirvana. Would you like a melon ball?" the imaginary David Broder asks him. Then a solicitous waiter offers him a scone. He decides to lay off the food so he can save room for the brunch they have after the show. The big-name guests and the pundits hang around shooting the breeze like the off-the-record demigods they are. The Fallback Guy imagines himself getting a slap on the back from Russert, as they walk out onto the HDTV-ready *Meet the Press* set. But then the fantasy turns darker. A producer walks up to him just as he's about to sit down in his chair. "We've decided to take the show in a different direction," she says. "But I wanted to thank you for being avail . . ." The Fallback Guy sees Andrea Mitchell approaching.

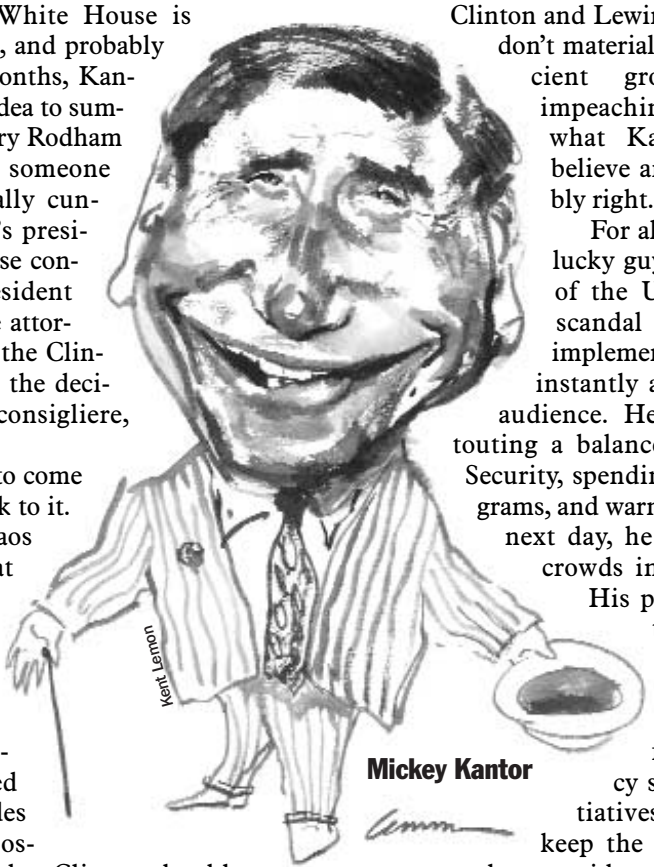
Suddenly he wakes up from his fantasy. He's not on *Meet The Press*. He's alone in a ratty studio and suddenly he realizes everything is silent. Then there's the voice of the host asking him a question: "And how would you respond to Mr. Alterman's very serious charges?"

David Brooks is a senior editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Inside the Clinton Bunker

by Fred Barnes

Erskine Bowles should have gone home. Two weeks after he reluctantly agreed to stay through 1998 as White House chief of staff, Bowles was supplanted. He kept the title, but his duties are now performed by Mickey Kantor, the Washington fixer-lawyer and ex-commerce secretary. Kantor was brought in to run both the political and legal sides of the sex-and-perjury scandal. And since these are all the White House is focused on at the moment, and probably will be for months and months, Kantor is the main man. The idea to summon him came from Hillary Rodham Clinton, who wanted someone smart, loyal, and politically cunning to save Bill Clinton's presidency—and someone whose conversations with the president would be protected by the attorney-client privilege. Now the Clintons and Kantor make all the decisions: king, consort, consigliere, together in the bunker.



Mickey Kantor

The first decision was to come up with a strategy and stick to it. Pre-Kantor, there was chaos at the White House that Bowles—in civilian life, an investment banker from North Carolina—couldn't contain. The president's lawyers (David Kendall, Bob Bennett, Charles Ruff) feuded with his political aides (Rahm Emanuel, Doug Sosnik, John Podesta) over what Clinton should say and do. "Bowles is a great peacetime consigliere," says Democratic strategist Bob Beckel, who's in touch with the White House. "But this is war, and they needed a wartime consigliere. That's Kantor." The scandal broke on January 21, Kantor arrived full-time on January 24, and the strategy was in place by January 27, the day the president delivered his State of the Union address.

The strategy, in White House argot, is "multi-layered." It has four parts: stress the Clinton agenda, stonewall on scandal information, trash the president's enemies, and let the press malign Monica Lewinsky, the former White House intern whose affair with the president is at the heart of the scandal. The entire strategy is based on two assumptions. One is that Lewinsky will reach a deal with Ken Starr, the Whitewater independent counsel, and testify that her relationship with Clinton was sexual, contrary to Clinton's denial. Whether she'll accuse Clinton of urging her to lie under oath about the affair is unclear (even to Starr). The second assumption is that Starr will wind up with a weak case. So long as eyewitnesses declaring they saw Clinton and Lewinsky in the heat of passion don't materialize, Starr won't have sufficient grounds to recommend impeaching the president. That's what Kantor and the Clintons believe anyway, and they're probably right.

For all his troubles, Clinton is a lucky guy. The timing of the State of the Union, six days after the scandal broke, allowed him to implement part one of the strategy instantly and before a national TV audience. He concentrated solely on touting a balanced budget, saving Social Security, spending more on domestic programs, and warning Saddam Hussein. The next day, he drew surprisingly warm crowds in Illinois and Wisconsin. His poll numbers, rather than tank, soared. The problem for the White House staff now is coming up with enough high-profile events, photo ops, policy statements, legislative initiatives, speeches, and trips to keep the White House press busy and to provide non-scandal fodder for the public. President Nixon tried this during Watergate, and it didn't work. At least in the short run, it *has* worked for Clinton.

Part two is all the more Nixonian: Say nothing. Under the Kantor regime, the White House quickly got good at this. The president's men claim they have an alternative storyline to Lewinsky's taped tale of sex and perjury. In other words, there's an innocent explanation. But they won't unveil it until they know the details of Lewinsky's account of her relationship with Clinton. Even then, the president will offer his own account only if he must in order to survive as president. Obviously, his refusal to talk now about

Lewinsky diminishes the credibility of anything he says later. But Kantor and the Clintons are willing to live with this.

The spearhead of part three is Hillary Clinton. Aides weren't kidding when they said she's in "battle mode." Her appearances on two morning TV shows were critical. Only Hillary—not some White House functionary or lawyer—would draw maximum media attention and thus inject into the national bloodstream the notion of Starr as a partisan attack dog and the scandal as the product of a "vast right-wing conspiracy." It worked, while also stirring the Democratic faithful and shifting the spotlight to other subjects besides Bill and Monica. As preposterous as Hillary's charges were, the media treated them respectfully and scarcely mentioned the gaping holes in her story. The biggest hole was her insistence the president, she, Clinton ally Vernon Jordan, and other Clintonites aren't allowed to give their side of the story in public during an investigation. "That's the way the system works," she told Lisa McRee of ABC's *Good Morning, America*. Of course, that's not the way it works. Grand jurors and prosecutors can't talk, but witnesses are free to, and so is everyone else.

The last element of the strategy involves Lewinsky. The White House figures the press will give her a full frisk. Indeed, that's begun. Unfavorable information about her is pouring out. The White House believes it would backfire if Clintonites zinged her, perhaps transforming her into an abused and sympathetic figure. That's the last thing Clinton wants. Still, if Lewinsky truly threatens the presidency, the Clinton camp is prepared to assail her as vigorously as it has attacked Starr. But the time for that hasn't yet arrived.

Credit (or blame) Kantor for all this. His strategy, concocted with the Clintons, has stabilized the president's situation. Kantor, 58, who was trade representative and commerce secretary in Clinton's first term, is skilled at coping with scandal. He helped Clinton deal successfully, if dishonestly, with Gennifer Flowers in 1992. More recently, he found consulting work for Webb Hubbell, the Clinton friend who was convicted of overcharging the government with his legal fees. Starr thinks the help Clinton loyalists like Kantor gave Hubbell amounted to hush money. Kantor says he merely came to the aid of a friend in trouble. Now, he's at it again, performing cynically but better than anyone else in Clinton's orbit.

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SHOOTING STARR

by Terry Eastland

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON is eager to turn the public against Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel, for the obvious reason that he might be intimidated and back off. But there's a less obvious reason, too. The public's view of Starr would be enormously important in either of two eventualities: a decision by President Clinton to fire Starr or a presidential pardon of those accused (or already convicted) of crimes. These possibilities may now seem far-fetched, but they're worth contemplating as this strange sex-and-perjury story unfolds.

The independent-counsel law provides for the removal of a counsel for, among other things, "good cause." And Mrs. Clinton's attacks lay the basis for just that. She has labeled Starr a "politically motivated prosecutor" who has spent four years "intimidating witnesses [and] doing everything possible to make some accusation against my husband." "Good cause" would mean abuse of power, in the sense of a prosecutor's using illegitimate means (such as the intimidation of witnesses) to generate accusations of criminality. This is something for which ordinary prosecutors can in fact be removed. While the law provides for judicial review of the removal of an independent counsel, it is probable that Clinton would prevail in the courts, if only because he *is* president.

Removing Starr, however, might prove practically difficult, and, in any event, it would not bring any part of his probe to a halt. Under the independent-counsel statute, it is the attorney general who would actually have to remove Starr. And Janet Reno might carry out the president's order even if she were at odds with it. On the other hand, she has had reasonably amicable relations with Starr and his office—indeed, she agreed to seek an expansion of jurisdiction in the Lewinsky matter—and she might find herself in such serious disagreement with the president that, as in the Saturday Night Massacre 25 years ago, she would quit. In that event, the deputy attorney general, Eric Holder, would have to decide whether to do the deed. Should he also refuse, the responsibility would fall to the next in line. Sooner or later, of course, somebody would be found to do the president's bidding.

With Starr banished, however, the panel of judges

that appointed him would name an acting counsel, as the statute provides. In all likelihood, that counsel would be one of Starr's deputies. And as in Watergate, the investigation would continue, on all fronts.

That is why the more likely of the two remote possibilities mentioned above is the exercise of the pardon power, which under the Constitution belongs entirely to the president. Congress may not regulate its use, nor may the judiciary intervene. A pardon may be granted even before an indictment is handed up, thus denying the government jurisdiction. Using the pardon power, Clinton could insulate his friend Vernon Jordan and other targets of Starr's probe. He could also nullify the prosecution of Susan McDougal, who remains in jail for contempt for her refusal to testify about the Clintons. (McDougal's resolve not to testify may rest in part on her belief—encouraged by remarks the president made in 1991—that Clinton will eventually pardon her.) Though pardons would not put Starr out of business, they would subtract from his investigation significantly.

Doubtless, there would be those in Congress who would regard such uses of the pardon power as corrupt, and grounds for impeachment. Republicans still control both houses. But given their often timid exercise of power, whether they would decide to take on the president in this scenario is an open question. If they thought that public opinion were on the president's side, they would be especially loath to step up.

We are, needless to say, getting well ahead of the story. For now, there is only an intense Democratic attack on Starr. The leaders of the organized bar don't seem to mind. Apparently, it's okay with them for Mrs. Clinton to throw out reckless charges—what is her evidence for "intimidating witnesses"?—and to mouth canards such as that North Carolina senators Lauch Faircloth and Jesse Helms "appointed" Starr. In fact, the three-judge panel—of which one member, another North Carolinian, is a friend of those senators—appointed Starr. The other two members were appointed by Presidents Johnson and Nixon. And a judge named by President Carter, Harry Edwards, is the one who rejected the argument that the panel, in its selection of Starr, had been improperly influenced.

But that hasn't stopped Hillary Clinton.

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Toeing the Lines

by Matthew Rees

When the Monica Lewinsky storm broke, many reporters wrote that Bill Clinton would lack for allies among congressional Democrats: He has always held them at arm's length. But by the time he delivered his State of the Union address, he had them in his hip pocket. Almost in lock step, Democrats had shifted from ambivalence about the allegations to acceptance of the president's denials. Even Richard Gephardt and David Bonior—top Democrats who have never been particularly close to Clinton—derided the charges.

The Democrats went to strange and amazing lengths to justify their loyalty to the president. What follows is a summary of the logic they employed after the president's address.

What will the Chinese think? Sen. Dianne Feinstein worried that media attention to Clinton's alleged affair had become "the O.J. Simpson saga of 1998, and I think with enormous damage being done to the institution of the presidency." Like what? Answered Feinstein, "I could look at President Jiang Zemin of China saying, 'And they tell me I need a democracy?'"

How do you know the Earth's not flat? Rep. Charles Rangel of New York had no trouble disarming reporters who inquired about the Lewinsky allegations: He demanded proof that such allegations exist. "I haven't heard the woman make any allegations, have you?" he asked. Well, what about quotes from the infamous tapes in *Newsweek*? Rangel burst into laughter: "Oh, goddamn, you got me that time! *Newsweek!* Now that's different!"

I'm not implying anything, but . . . Sen. Joe Biden showed that he'd learned something from the confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas, which he chaired. Back then, Republicans raised questions intended to undermine Anita Hill's character. And last week, Biden was saying, "Whether there's a causal connection between this woman and the right wing making it up, getting her to say it, if that's the implication, I've never heard anybody say that" (though he just had). Biden added, "I have no evidence or no knowledge of any causal relationship between the initiation of the charge [of right-wing dirty tricks] and whether it's true or not true." But thanks for bringing it up, Senator.

It's all Ken Starr's fault: Rep. Nita Lowey of

New York—not renowned as a critic of federal power—was full of concerns about the independent counsel. "I think Kenneth Starr is out of control," she said. "He's unelected, he's unaccountable, he's the Grand Inquisitor, and in fact I think we have to revisit the independent-counsel law as soon as we can." Rep. John Conyers of Detroit agreed: "Let's put it like this: I haven't noticed Kenneth Starr ever acting friendly toward anybody in the White House."

No, it's Richard Mellon Scaife's fault: Rep. John Lewis of Atlanta discerned what Hillary Rodham Clinton has described as a "vast right-wing conspiracy." "The girl [that is, Lewinsky] is a pawn," Lewis charged, "an extension of the right-wing, radical extremist element." Asked for some proof of his assertion, Lewis mumbled something about Linda Tripp's being "the Forrest Gump of the Clinton administration—she always shows up where there's trouble." He also had total faith in the president's veracity and observed that "the world is laughing at us." Had Lewis felt the same way at the time of the Thomas hearings? He didn't answer that one, declaring instead that Thomas's views made him unfit to serve on the Supreme Court.

There's sex and then there's harassment: Nita Lowey gained a measure of fame in October 1991 when she and six other Democratic women in the House marched over to a meeting of Senate Democrats to urge a delay in the Thomas hearings. At the time, Lowey made no secret of her sympathy for Anita Hill. But now that a Democratic president is under scrutiny, her rules have changed. "I'm going to continue the fight for women to have a fair opportunity to get a fair hearing," she said. "If a woman feels victimized in the workplace, she should be able to seek redress. But that isn't the case here."

One of Lowey's fellow marchers in 1991 was Pat Schroeder, who is also convinced that Clinton is getting a bum rap. "There are valid cases of sexual harassment and the use of power over subordinates—this is not it," the former congresswoman told the *Baltimore Sun*. Schroeder can't find anything wrong with the president's fooling around with a 21-year-old intern. "Wasn't she an adult?" she asked. "Wasn't she of age?"

Schroeder did, however, assure the *Los Angeles Times* that "if Clinton was calling women into the Oval Office and then attacking them, I think you would see a very different response, but that's not the allegation." Yet Schroeder conveniently overlooks another woman, Kathleen Willey, who has reportedly testified in a deposition that the president groped her in a room just off the Oval Office. Nita Lowey, questioned about Willey, shrieked in protest: "This is a rumor!" Besides which, "I don't like to deal with speculation."

Don't you have anything better to do? Rep. Barney Frank tried to scare reporters off the story and shame them into silence. Asked if the president could promote his agenda with the allegations hanging over him, Frank said, "Fortunately, very few people are as focused as you and some of your colleagues on the president's genitals. Most people think Social Security and Medicare are more important." When a *Washington Post* reporter persisted, Frank erupted: "I would much rather be talking to people about the substance of the public policy rather than answering your fifth question in a row about the scandal!" Later, Frank charged the reporter with having "an unhealthy obsession with other people's sexuality."

And Congress's Democrats, for their part, have developed an unhealthy obsession of their own: apologizing for Bill Clinton.

Matthew Rees is a staff writer for The Weekly Standard.

Will the Feminists Jump Ship?

by Michael Barone

At stake in the Monica Lewinsky affair is no less than the balance of forces in American politics. If the alleged events are conclusively proven—even if the scandal results merely in the airing of more and more unpalatable facts about Bill Clinton—there is a strong possibility that the whole business could dissipate the strength of the Feminist Left, which has been the greatest source of energy, enthusiasm, and elan in the Democratic party in the 1990s. (Its counterpart in the Republican party is the Religious Right.) The many millions of Feminist Left voters and their favorite politicians seem to be sticking with Clinton for now. But the unfolding events could ultimately leave them as demoralized and politically weakened as Richard Nixon's disgrace left his core constituency, the small town.

It's hard to remember now, but in the 35 years before Watergate, the Small Town Right was one of the dominant forces in American politics. Its champions were small-town lawyers and businessmen, with a cheerful service-club conviviality and conventional

religious beliefs, opposed to New Deal nationalized control of their local economies. The Small Town Right controlled Congress almost continuously from the 1938 off-year elections until the Watergate hearings of 1973 and 1974, and it controlled most state legislatures. Richard Nixon was its defender, and as the Watergate scandal unfolded, he counted on the support of the Small Town Right—Republicans from the Midwest and the back reaches of the Northeast plus Democrats from the South—to fight his impeachment. And so most of them did, often vigorously, until the evidence piled up and they were forced to conclude that he had betrayed the causes he and they had stood for.

Almost as soon as Nixon's helicopter took off from the White House lawn, the Small Town Right, already declining demographically, disappeared as a force in American politics. Control of Congress passed in 1974 to liberal Democrats, who maintained it with few exceptions for 20 years. Control of the Republican party in Congress eventually passed from the Small Town Right, personified by Bob Michel, to a new Right based in the metropolitan fringes of the Deep South, personified by Newt Gingrich. Control of large-state legislatures—New York, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois—passed to liberal Democrats.

In the 1990s, the Feminist Left has been a moving force in politics. Energized by the fight against the confirmation of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, the Feminist Left chalked up "year of the woman" victories for Democratic senators in 1992 and pressed the case against Sen. Bob Packwood. The one group that Bill Clinton addressed outside the hall at the 1992 Democratic National Convention was the feminist caucus; inside the hall, Clinton forces denied the podium to Bob Casey, the anti-abortion governor of Pennsylvania. Sen. Barbara Boxer proclaimed that Clinton and Gore would be the last all-male Democratic ticket.

But now, with its champion under attack, the Feminist Left faces signs that its demographic base may be declining, as that of the Small Town Right was 20 years ago. Opinion on abortion has shifted. As the partial-birth-abortion debate has developed, a triumphal determination to maintain "choice" has given way to a disapproving toleration of some abortions and an increasing desire to cabin in abortion with legal restrictions. The feminist project of encouraging mothers of young children to work outside the home is turning sour as the deficiencies of day care become clearer; there are signs that younger women may be more inclined to raise their children at home. And now comes Monica Lewinsky, and perhaps others, with testimony that the Feminist Left's own Bill Clinton has betrayed its cause.

The first reaction of the Feminist Left has been denial. But if the charges are finally shown to be true, there arises for the Democrats the danger that the next reaction will be withdrawal. In 1974, my grandmother said to me, "You were right about Nixon, and I don't want to talk about it anymore." I wonder whether she ever voted again. In any case, Republican turnout sagged in 1974 and 1976, as Nixon's Small Town Right lost its vitality. If this scandal similarly drains away the energy, enthusiasm, and elan of the Feminist Left, the balance of political forces in the next decade will be markedly different.

Michael Barone, a senior staff editor at **Reader's Digest,** *is co-author of* **The Almanac of American Politics.**

The Triumph of Clintonism

by Andrew Ferguson

Judged as rhetoric, State of the Union addresses are always failures, and the great flopping mess that President Clinton dropped on a joint session of Congress last week was no different. Like all previous efforts in the form—and indeed like his own presidency—the speech was themeless, meandering, and much too long.

Still, it was notable, maybe even history-making, for several reasons. The most striking fact is that it was delivered at all. For five days, millions of strangers had been discussing the most intimate and embarrassing aspects of Bill Clinton's personal life: his erotic tastes, how he defines adultery, and whether his wife hates his guts. Most normal men would take this as an invitation to fly to Madagascar and never return. But Clinton is not a normal man. He could stand before the world and speak of policy, knowing as he did so that his vast audience was staring at him and thinking: *How did he get it on her dress?* He may look soft and puffy, but if anyone doubted it, the State of the Union speech proved the truth: Bill Clinton is made of brass.

The speech was a historic occasion for reasons far beyond the personal, however. It suggested that Clinton's effect on the tone and substance of American politics may well be indelible. Clintonism is undemanding and incoherent and politically successful, all at once, and therefore highly infectious—so infectious that the president's political opponents have succumbed, too.

YOW!

It was called the Republican Response, but it is really the Republican Gloss, a slightly different take on the agenda defined by Clinton.

The essence of Clintonism is to trivialize the important and aggrandize the trivial. The State of the Union is thus the perfect vehicle for its expression: a riot of policies, a mob of initiatives. Each of these, taken individually, is small, even infinitesimal, in scope, and none bears any coherent philosophical relationship to the others; but they are served up with a rhetorical extravagance that obscures the dozens of internal contradictions.

The most obvious of the contradictions is also the largest, concerning the role of government. The president has told us before that the era of big government is over, and he repeated the point at the top of his address. "We have moved past the sterile debate between those who say government is the enemy and those who say government is the answer," the president said. "My fellow Americans, we have found a third way. We have the smallest government in 35 years, but a more progressive one. We have a smaller government but a stronger nation."

The assertion raises several questions. First, its premise is false. It is true that the federal government employs fewer people than it has in a long while, but this is a consequence of layoffs in the military since the end of the Cold War. The federal government in fact absorbs a larger portion of national income than ever before, and its regulatory power has been vastly extended in the last five years, as it had been in the previous four. And in his address the president sought to expand it further—through a tobacco settlement, for example, and in his demand for a higher minimum wage, and by roping large numbers of new recruits into the Medicare system. The third way, upon examination, turns out to be the regulatory leviathan.

If his premise is so patently false, what then could the president have meant? In a strict sense, he didn't mean anything. Words in a Clintonized politics are not used to convey an idea but to elicit favorable responses from the people who hear them. Focus groups have shown contemporary politicians that Americans are ambivalent about government. They hope it will be smaller while relishing the favors it dispenses. Hence the oxymoron: "smaller government" that can, and does, do anything.

Anything: Clintonism transforms your most parochial worries into matters of state. The president's address, like all State of the Union speeches, quickly devolved into a laundry list of initiatives. No overarching theme bound them together, except that each appears to meet some concern of some discrete group of constituents. Having trouble sending your kids to college? Worried they might start smoking? Can't find a good day-care center? Read the speech. Everything that might make you uneasy has been nationalized. The president is on the case.

Ideology is the animating force of politics, the thing that gives it significance and weight, but Clintonism has drained it all away. To see how thoroughly Clinton has triumphed, consider the speech Trent Lott gave immediately following the State of the Union. It

was called the Republican Response, but it is really the Republican Gloss, a slightly different take on the national agenda as defined by Clinton. All of the elements of Clintonism are here. Issues are chosen by polls, phrases are fashioned by focus groups, and any attempt to make an ideological point has been sunk.

Lott, too, disdained Big Government in his speech, before laying out a series of policies designed to make government the Third Parent—within, of course, the context of the traditional, two-parent, God-fearing family. Curiously, Lott opened his homily with an attack on the IRS. "We are going to stop the abuses the IRS is inflicting on American taxpayers," he said. "You've got our word on it." This broadside was unrelated to anything that came before or after. It was inserted at the top of the speech for a single reason: Two years of focus groups show that Americans hum with pleasure when a politician attacks the IRS. Lott's speechwriters wanted to begin on a positive note.

But there are problems. The majority leader then pledged to "eliminate the IRS as we know it today." And replace it with . . . what? The conventions of Clintonism do not require that Republicans answer the question. This is good for them, since their two alternatives, a national sales tax and a flat tax, carry difficulties of their own. The sales tax would require monitoring far more intrusive than the IRS, and the flat tax is politically unsustainable. Lott would never burden his listeners with arguments about either, though. All that matters, in Clintonism, is the assertion: If you hate the IRS, we'll get rid of it. "You've got our word."

Lott pledged as well that Republicans "would not spend any balanced-budget surplus on unnecessary government programs." But what is unnecessary? The Republican version of Clintonism—Clintonism Lite, if you can imagine such a thing—offers no guidance. Suppose that millions of children in low-income families go to bed at night without brushing their teeth. The threat of gum disease is very real—a national scandal—and the United States has the lowest flossing rate of any industrialized country in the world. Are toothbrush tax credits therefore necessary? We will have to wait and see. "We care so much about those families," Lott said.

Caring, now, is at the heart of our politics, thanks to Clinton. His mother had to work when he was a boy, so the president favors federally subsidized day care. Al Gore's sister died of lung cancer, so he knows the need to outlaw tobacco advertising. Republicans have learned the lesson. In discussing the Republican approach to education, Lott identified himself as a father, a "prospective grandfather," and a son. His mother, "God bless her, taught public elementary school for 19 years." If you have doubts about the Republican program, remember: Trent Lott is a father and a son. Q.E.D.

Immediately after the president's speech last week, members of Congress gathered in the Capitol to meet the press. I asked one of them, a Republican from the Northeast, whether the president's "program" had a chance of success in the coming months. "A pretty good chance," he said. "Remember, he laid out an agenda that probably polls at 70 percent."

Will the president resign? Will he be impeached or permanently crippled? It really doesn't matter. The president may come, the president may go, but Clintonism is here to stay.

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The Alternative Narrative

by Tucker Carlson

President Clinton may have finally denied flat out that he had a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky, but the country is still waiting for prominent Democrats to say they believe him. Strip away the qualifiers, and public support for the president has ranged from hesitant to amusingly tortured. Is there anyone in Washington who will take Clinton at his word? Ann Lewis will. "The president denied these allegations clearly, personally, directly," says Lewis, director of communications at the White House. "And I believe him. That's easy. When are we going to get to the complicated questions?"

Here's one: Who besides Ann Lewis can say the same thing? Lewis doesn't pause. "My phone has been ringing all week with people who are strong supporters of the president," she says. Fair enough. What are their names? Well, says Lewis, I'd love to tell you, "but if you called them up and said 'Ann Lewis told me to call,' they would call me back and say, 'Why did you give my name to that guy from that right-wing magazine?' It's a little hard. I'm trying to figure out how to do this."

Ann Lewis never called back. Nor were Democrats on the Hill much help. An informal survey of Democratic members of Congress taken after Clinton's State of the Union speech last week found only one—John Lewis of Georgia—who would state simply, "I believe him." Seconds after the words left the congressman's lips, one of his aides thrust a press release into a reporter's hand. "I believe the president is entitled to the legal presumption of innocence until proven guilty," read Lewis's official, clarified statement. It ended: "For those without sin, let them cast the first stone."

Rep. Loretta Sanchez of California wouldn't go that far. "That's not the question we're here to discuss," she replied when asked if Clinton's denials are plausible. "We're here to talk about the state of the union. I'm not up on the latest news and all." Who, then, will defend the president? Sanchez looked relieved—finally a question she could answer. "John Lewis," she said, "I heard him say it in a meeting."

So few people in Washington believe the president, says political writer Michael Barone, that being one of them "is like being a gay lineman on a football team. You just don't want to start discussing it." Democrats who don't believe Clinton are in an even tougher spot. "There are people in the administration I haven't called because I don't want to make them lie to me," says Jacob Weisberg, who is covering the Lewinsky story for *Slate* magazine. According to at least one person who knows him, even the ever-faithful Harold Ickes, recently summoned back to Washington after his humiliating post-election firing, is still "on the fence" when it comes to the Lewinsky matter.

Why the reluctance to defend the president? "People are cowards," says one former White House aide bitterly. "Washington is full of cowards." There are other reasons, of course, beginning with the lack of loyalty Clinton commands among Hill Democrats. But the biggest problem for would-be Clinton apologists is more basic: They don't know what to say. If Clinton's denials are true, then what exactly *was* his relationship with Monica Lewinsky?

An explanation from Clinton himself may be months away. A full accounting may never come at all. In the meantime, defenders of the administration will need a story to tell reporters—and themselves—about what, exactly, went on between the president and his intern. Simply denying the whole thing won't work; too much evidence exists to show that the two knew each other. Clinton will have to admit to something.

Interviews with current and former White House staff suggest a developing storyline. The president will ultimately concede—either directly or through intermediaries—that he and Lewinsky did indeed share an "emotional relationship," a perhaps unseemly but non-sexual bond of the kind that sometimes grows between young women and their middle-aged, emotionally needy employers. "All of it reflects bad judgment on his part," says one prominent Democrat who has been in close contact with the White House recently. "It is bad judgment for any older man to fall into that situation. But it is not criminal. And it is not sexual. It's a sustainable argument." Here is the full-length version of that argument:

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It is not surprising that the president would meet and come to know a 21-year-old intern. Thanks to Clinton's hastily conceived 1992 pledge to cut the White House staff by 25 percent, the West Wing is now teeming with unpaid volunteers doing work that used to be done by professional support staff. Most of these interns are young and ambitious. Some are starstruck, desperate to brush up against the president. Monica Lewinsky was all of these things, and she was spectacularly bad at her job. Lewinsky sent White House birthday cards to members of Congress on the wrong dates. She misidentified congressional committee chairmen in correspondence. In one famous snafu, she drafted a letter from the administration to the Hill that misspelled "public" by leaving out the *l*.

Lewinsky's superiors, former deputy White House chief of staff Evelyn Lieberman in particular, were aware of her shortcomings, and they told her so. Lewinsky sought comfort and protection in conversation with Betty Currie, the president's secretary, whom Lewinsky had met while delivering packages to the Oval Office. Currie is known to be a sympathetic and credulous listener with a weakness for people—women and members of minority groups, especially—who claim to have been discriminated against. Clinton, of course, has the same well-known soft spot for underdogs. Currie introduced Lewinsky to the president, and the two struck up a friendship.

The president often works alone in his office in the afternoons, and periodically he and Lewinsky would meet there to chat. He gave her advice about how to succeed at work. They traded stories about their backgrounds and broken families. Clinton probably paid more than attention to Lewinsky than appropriate. He may even have flirted with her. But his interest in her remained avuncular, not romantic. At some point, however, Monica Lewinsky's fantasies and desires clouded her perception of reality and she began to misconstrue the president's attentions. She sent him a letter addressed "Dear Schmucko" and a lewd cassette tape or two. By this time she had been moved to the Pentagon (despite her incompetence, Lewinsky's friendship with Clinton and her ties to Democratic contributor Walter Kaye had saved her from being fired outright), but Clinton continued to have contact with her. He didn't know what else to do.

Peter Steiner

The president was embarrassed. He had let the relationship go too far, and he knew it. Having already admitted past difficulties in his marriage, he also knew that if his relationship with Lewinsky were to become known, the public would be predisposed to believe the worst. Nervous, he confided in no one except Betty Currie. Meanwhile, he did his best to placate Lewinsky. He sent her presents, a dress, a book of poetry with a standard, formal inscription. Afraid to alienate her by breaking ties completely, he called her at home from time to time, even invited her back to the West Wing occasionally to chat.

Then, one day, crisis erupted. Lewinsky's delusions about her relationship with the president had reached Paula Jones's lawyers. Fearful of what Lewinsky might say in a deposition, Clinton called his closest friend, Vernon Jordan, for advice. Jordan spoke to Lewinsky. She told him truthfully that her relationship with the president had never been sexual, then signed a sworn affidavit stating the same thing. Yet with rumors about Lewinsky already leaked by the president's enemies to a scandal-hungry press, there was no stopping the media feeding frenzy. What happened next is probably the worst political smear in history, a tangled knot of false implications, Republican vendettas, and school-girl fantasies that has obscured the essential, innocuous truth of the matter. The president is not only innocent of any actual wrongdoing, his only real mistake was good intentions—he cared too much.

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That's the story, anyway. Never mind the obvious questions it leaves unanswered. (What woman, Kate O'Beirne of *National Review* asked the other day, would fantasize about an affair that consisted of performing hurried oral sex on a man who obviously didn't care about her?) "It's still the best alternative narrative I've heard," says one liberal columnist, who speaks frequently with the White House. It's likely to be the best alternative this administration ever offers.

But there is a larger problem with the story. In order to accept the Clinton White House's account of events, you have to accept that Monica Lewinsky is a narcissistic, self-aggrandizing sexual compulsive with a penchant for telling tall tales. To observers of Bill Clinton, that may sound too familiar to believe.

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All the President's Women

by Noemie Emery

Bill Clinton likes women, of a certain kind: women with briefcases, trim hair, and prim suits, who dress to disguise their feminine attributes and seem androgynous, by design or necessity. These are the women he names to high office, has meetings with, places conspicuously at signing ceremonies, and hails at awards banquets. This is the world of the Janets and Donnas and the diversity cabinet; of the wife who sits at the head of Clinton's table and is more than a life partner.

Unfortunately for these women, Clinton also likes women of another kind: the Gennifers, Paulas, and Monicas, all long legs and big hair, short skirts and small sweaters, who dress to exaggerate the traits that make women different from men. These women tend to annoy and embarrass the first kind of woman, who sees them as retrograde, and as terrible models. Even more annoying is that men—even men (especially men?) who support a feminist agenda—are drawn to the Gennifers, Paulas, and Monicas, a fact that the first group of women try very hard to deny. And most of the time, they do succeed in denying it, in the manner of their model, Hillary Rodham Clinton. The bad times for them occur when circumstances break down their denials, and the two worlds of Bill Clinton collide.

How, after all, is it possible that this man, who gets to spend his days with Janets and Donnas and is wed to the world's most wonderful woman, can be mauling twinkies after work? There has always been a cognitive dissonance between the natural supporters of Mrs. Clinton and the raunchy Bill, with his leering at female mummies and his comments on Astroturf. This dissonance has taken a tremendous amount of psychic energy to harmonize. The Donna-Hillary axis in the president's universe argues that sexual distinctions shouldn't matter—in the military, for example. And sexual harassment? An ever-present threat, to be vigorously hunted, prosecuted, and punished.

In 1992, the Clintons rode on Anita Hill's coattails: Women deserve more respect and protection, they said. "I believe Anita Hill," declared Gov. Clinton, clasping hands with his feminist followers. Hillary went a step farther, attending a luncheon in honor of Hill. "As women and lawyers," Hillary said, "we must never again shy from raising our voices against sexual harassment. All women who care about equality of opportunity—about integrity and morality in the workplace—are in Professor Hill's debt."

A year later, one woman in Arkansas took Hillary's advice and raised her voice—against Hillary's husband. Then, the dissonance became unbearable. The personal is the political, except when the personal clashes inconveniently with the political, in which case the political prevails and the personal is much too private to mention. No luncheons were held for Paula Corbin Jones.

From the beginning of time, of course, spouses have strayed and mates have stood by them, for reasons of convenience, money, or love. But very few mates have been asked to stand there as the dirtiest of their linen was aired in public—and to tell the entire world that everything was all right. "Liberation" was not supposed to lead to such a painful farce; indeed, it was intended to avoid it.

Feminists condemned Lee Hart and Joan Kennedy (who, unfortunate fools, were housewives, not lawyers) for not leaving their husbands. They were called doormats, collaborators, dupes. In her book *Running Mates*, Ann Grimes asked a question: Was Lee Hart a victim or a willing accomplice? "Her conduct," wrote Grimes, "was questioned by many and countenanced by few. . . . Her faithfulness in the face of infidelity, and her husband's hollow words—'She has always believed me, and she has a remarkable ability to detach her relationship to me as my wife from my roles as a candidate for the Senate or President'—hit women especially in the gut."

How, then, does one understand a Hillary Clinton, now the most humiliated woman in the world? Her husband is a joke, a lecher who can't keep his hands off women, willing and unwilling. Dick Morris—Bill Clinton's soulmate and closest adviser—has tried to "explain" the president's uncontrolled exploits by calling the first lady frigid or gay. Never has a woman been publicly used quite like this. Rose Kennedy suffered in silence when her husband brought home Gloria Swanson, but she was, to the world, the respected wife of the ambassador. Jackie suffered, too—went shopping and shopping—but she made sure her reputation was intact. In *Jack and Jackie*, his study of the curious Kennedy marriage, Christopher Anderson quoted family friends: "She would not accept being humiliated. . . . He was very careful that she should not be humiliated. . . . When things started to leak out, when she became threatened, she sent him a message." Jackie would not allow herself to appear the fool. But appearing the fool is exactly what Hillary Clinton has now allowed herself to do.

The enormous effort expended in psychic denial

has consumed Bill Clinton's feminist defenders for six long years. Early in 1992, Clinton's two kinds of women first crossed public paths: There was Gennifer Flowers at a press conference, with her blond hair, dark roots, red suit, and big jewelry. The Clinton feminists looked at her—Who *is* this woman?—and then looked over at grim little Hillary and then looked back at Bill. It was *Melrose Place* against *L.A. Law*, and they refused to change channels. *L.A. Law* won. Clinton went on to campaign on Anita Hill's ticket, locking hands with Patty Murray and Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, and also with Lynn Yeakel, who ran a one-note campaign against Arlen Specter, portraying him as a menace to women for saying things to Ms. Hill that were far more respectful than what was to spew out from the Clinton White House about Paula Jones.

When Jones made her charges against Bill—charges much more substantial and serious than any made against Clarence Thomas—the dissonance became louder: Could the co-partner of Hillary, the hero of countless NOW lunches, also be the creep of the Excelsior Hotel? The fury of the feminists—Friedan, Goodman, Quindlen—lashed into Paula Jones: She was a right-wing tool, or a slut, or out for the money. There were a few signs of the ongoing strain, but as long as the women making claims against Bill were so different—vixens from soaps or poor girls from the boondocks—denial was possible.

Kathleen Willey and Monica Lewinsky, however, pose a problem of a different sort. They are not lawyers from NOW with bad hair and worse dresses, but they are still women who were in the White House on legitimate business: bridges between Bill Clinton's worlds. They are not lounge singers and have never lived in trailers (although let us remember that the lounge singer, Gennifer Flowers, has all along been telling the truth). No, the defamation of Kathleen Willey and Monica is trickier. Even Ellen Goodman has begun to lose heart. How much longer will it be, then—as more and more slime is dredged up from the depths of this White House—before other defenders lose heart, as well? The two worlds of Bill Clinton are moving closer together. Soon, they will grind him to dust.

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Marriage and Taxes

The Case for Family-friendly Taxation

By Allan Carlson and David Blankenhorn

With the best of intentions, some Republicans are pushing to incorporate into the U.S. tax code the crowning achievement of Swedish social radicalism: the idea that the individual, not the family, is society's basic unit of taxation.

This convergence is unfortunate—but not entirely surprising. Over the past three decades, both here and abroad, policymakers have increasingly abandoned family-centered taxation in favor of individual taxation. In Sweden, the change came in 1971, when the Socialist government scrapped the tax system that had treated married couples as tax-paying units, in which husbands and wives essentially shared their income equally for purposes of taxation. The results of abandoning this marriage-friendly tax code were to raise the relative tax burden on one-income couples, cut taxes for two-career couples, and reduce the economic advantages of marriage. Indeed, the Swedish radical Annika Baude has described this individualization of the Swedish tax code as the turning point in the left-wing campaign to dislodge marriage as a meaningful institution in Swedish life (a campaign that has been startlingly successful: More than half of all Swedish children are born outside of marriage).

Individualizing the tax code—adopting the principle of "neutrality" toward (i.e., disregard of) marriage—has also been a frequently stated goal of the American Left. For example, Myra Strober of Stanford argued a decade ago in *Feminism, Children, and the New Families*, "In keeping with the notion that adult men and women are independent economic entities, we favor an income tax system such as the one in Sweden, where all persons are taxed as individuals, regardless of their marital status."

This position has now become conventional wisdom. In our current tax debate, it is endorsed at least as strongly on the right as on the left and is less a partisan argument than a shared (and largely unexamined) underlying assumption. Consider last year's influential Congressional Budget Office report "For Better or Worse: Marriage and the Federal Tax Code." This study has largely defined the terms of debate on how to purge from the tax code the "marriage penalty," the financial loss two people incur when, as a result of filing a joint income-tax return, they are pushed into a higher tax bracket, causing them to pay more as a couple than they would have if they had been taxed as individuals.

The CBO study focuses on one question: Does getting married make a couple worse off or better off, vis-à-vis the federal income tax, than they were as unrelated individuals? Because the study assumes that individual filing, or what the report calls "marriage neutrality," is the standard of fairness, the CBO concludes that the tax code now divides married couples into two categories: those receiving a marriage "bonus" (about half of all couples) and those receiving a marriage "penalty" (about 40 percent of all couples). The typical "bonus" beneficiary is a one-earner couple, while the typical "penalty" victim is a two-earner couple. The policy implication of this analysis is clear: Cut taxes for two-earner couples until the "penalty" disappears.

Yet this way of framing the problem makes it impossible to understand the deeper issues at stake: Should the tax code recognize the institution of marriage—or should it in effect recognize only individuals? Does getting married alter the economic status and decision-making of the spouses? If so, how should the tax code accommodate the change? For purposes of taxation, does a married couple's income belong equally to both spouses, or only to the spouse who earns it in the paid labor force?

These are the core questions. They concern nothing less than what we think marriage is. The CBO, however, answers all of them before they can be asked by adopting an individualistic bias as the study's guiding premise. Ironically, then, a report examining the marriage penalty for two-earner couples—a penalty, by the way, that virtually everyone, including us, would like to eliminate—has increased the chances that "pro-marriage" tax reform in 1998 will actually weaken marriage as a social institution.

To see why, consider the popular Marriage Tax Elimination Act, introduced in the House of Repre-

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sentatives by Republicans Jerry Weller of Illinois and David McIntosh of Indiana and built on the same premise of radical individualism. Weller-McIntosh is supported by over 200 members of the House, including the Republican leadership, as well as by many other political luminaries, including, most recently, Republican presidential candidate Steve Forbes.

Weller-McIntosh would permit married couples to file their returns either singly, as if they were unrelated individuals, or jointly—whichever results in the lower tax burden. The practical effect would be to give a tax cut to two-income couples, with most of the relief going to those with fairly high incomes. In short, Weller-McIntosh would replace the marriage penalty with a new "homemaker penalty," penalizing millions of at-home parents by shifting a greater share of the tax burden onto them. The proposal would also encourage millions of couples, in effect, to deny their marital partnership each April 15, seeking tax treatment as individuals rather than as couples.

Kevin Chadwick

The measure's advocates insist that it will strengthen marriage. Actually, just as in Sweden, the predictable results of introducing "marriage neutrality" as a guiding principle of federal taxation are reduced incentives to marry, reduced incentives to bear children, heightened incentives for the parents of young children to enter the paid labor force, and discouragement of all non-market and home-centered labor.

What Congress has forgotten is that two economies always coexist: the market economy, where exchanges take place primarily through money and where competition and efficiency drive decisions; and the home economy, where exchanges take place through the altruistic sharing of goods and services among family members, normally independent of cash calculations. It is precisely the home economy—acts of unpaid production ranging from parental child care and nursing of the sick and the elderly to gardening, home carpentry, and food preparation—that is the organizing principle of family life and the basis of civil society.

Every marriage creates a new home economy. These little economies are largely undetected in our measurement of the gross national product, just as they are usually beyond the reach of tax collectors. But they are vitally important. If they thrive, the well-being of children and of society as a whole improves. Despite its having arisen under the guise of ending the marriage penalty, the current push to weaken the recognition of marriage in the federal tax code—to move toward taxing all persons as individuals, regardless of marital status—will do little to strengthen marriage and much to undermine it.

The United States once had a pro-family tax code. It was crafted in the 1940s and lasted into the 1960s. From the introduction of the modern income tax in 1913 until 1943, the federal record on taxes was fairly dismal. The federal income tax largely ignored marriage in favor of efficiency of collection and progressivity of rates, achieved primarily by designating the individual as the main taxable unit. Perhaps not coincidentally, family trends were sharply negative during this period: The marriage rate tumbled, the divorce rate climbed, and the birth rate dropped by a third.

One catalyst for change was a 1930 Supreme Court decision, *Poe* v. *Seaborn*, holding that in community-property states (where by law husbands and wives are allocated equal shares of family assets, regardless of the assets' origins), married couples must be permitted to share or "split" their income for purposes of taxation. This change allowed married couples to file joint returns in which the marriage was treated as an equal partnership, with each spouse holding a claim to exactly half of the couple's total income, and with tax brackets for joint returns twice as wide as for singles. Within progressive rates, this measure provided a substantial economic benefit to marriage. (In those rare cases in which husbands and wives earned the same amount, the effect was nil.)

During the 1930s, the practice of income splitting spread, as state legislators found themselves able, by adopting community-property provisions, to provide their constituents with a pro-marriage cut in their federal taxes. To end this stampede, the House Ways and Means Committee proposed in 1941 to eliminate the joint return, so that married couples would pay the same tax on their consolidated income as they would

have paid as two individuals—a reform idea very similar in spirit to that of the Weller-McIntosh single-filing proposal. However, the proposal was beaten back in the House as "a tax on morality" and as "an incentive to divorce."

Instead, the Tax Reform Act of 1944 created for the first time a uniform tax exemption of $500 per person, granted only to household members related by "blood, marriage, or adoption." In 1948, the Republican Congress, overriding President Harry Truman's veto, passed a second Reform Act, raising the personal exemption to $600 and extending income splitting for married couples to all 48 states.

For the next 15 years or so, these "Principles of '48" had a powerful effect. This period was the only time in American history since 1840 when three things happened at once: The first-marriage rate rose, the divorce rate dropped, and the within-wedlock birth rate climbed. Again, these correlations between tax trends and family trends are almost certainly not coincidental. For example, the economist Leslie Whittington, using a sophisticated econometric analysis, has shown a "robust" relationship between the real value of the personal exemption and fertility: A 1 percent increase in the exemption's value coincided with a remarkable 1 percent increase in births. Researchers such as the sociologists Janet and Larry Hunt have also shown how the tax principles operating in this period directly strengthened the commitment of household members to home production, parental care of children, and civic activism. The legislators, it seemed, had finally gotten it right.

But they couldn't leave it alone. As part of the 1963 tax cut, instead of adjusting the personal exemption for inflation, Congress introduced the "minimum standard deduction," which carried its own modest marriage penalty. In 1969, responding to complaints that unmarried Americans were overtaxed and that the tax code was too pro-natalist, Congress took the damaging step of eliminating the ability of married couples to split their incomes. Among other things, this change created another and even larger marriage penalty—the one that policymakers are fretting about today. Finally, in the early 1970s, Congress crafted the Dependent Care Tax Credit, giving tax relief of up to $800 (now $1,440) to employed parents who put their children in commercial child care, thus implicitly assaulting the previously untouched home economy. Some tax theorists justified the new day-care credit as an indirect tax on the "imputed" income produced by at-home parents.

In the late 1960s, the United States began to experience a precipitous decline in marital fertility, a sharp drop in the rates of first marriage, and a surge in divorce. In essence, these trends are still with us. Obviously, federal tax policy has not been the only cause of the weakening of marriage over the past 30 years. But just as obviously, the steady de-emphasis of marriage and home in the tax code has made things worse.

Instead of strolling further down this path, Congress should change course now. And the direction it should take is obvious: To end the marriage penalty, Congress should reject the Weller-McIntosh individual-filing proposal and restore the right of married couples to split their incomes. A bill to do just that has been proposed in the Senate by Republican Connie Mack of Florida and others. Income splitting is the only pro-marriage way to end the marriage penalty. The further individualization of the tax code would be worse than doing nothing.

Does a policy of supporting marriage in the tax code smack of social engineering? In a sense, yes. We see no need to apologize for this. Marriage is more than a special interest: It is our primary social institution and a vital public good. Protecting it in the tax code ought to be a matter of common sense, not controversy.

In a larger sense, however, encouraging marriage is the opposite of social engineering. A certain type of individualism—the person stripped of family context—has always been a guiding principle of big-government ideologies. As the Swedish experience shows, "marriage neutrality" in the tax code has become a cornerstone of the post-marriage welfare state, with its heavy emphasis on government-sponsored social engineering. In contrast, protecting family bonds even while collecting taxes is a goal whose importance ought to be clear to anyone who favors democratic civil society and limited government.

For this reason, we should judge all tax-reform proposals now before Congress according to four basic family-support criteria. First, rather than hold up marriage neutrality as the ideal, tax policy should explicitly recognize and seek to protect marriage as a social institution. The main way for the tax code to safeguard marriage is to treat the married-couple household as a single unit of taxation. Second, tax policy should not create disincentives for within-wedlock childbearing or incentives for unwed childbearing or divorce. Third, tax policy should support the rearing of children through generous and universal per capita deductions, exemptions, and credits. And finally, tax policy should not create disincentives for parental care of children or for other unpaid labor in the home or community.

With these criteria in mind, take a case in point,

the Dependent Care Tax Credit. Earlier this month, President Clinton proposed a sharp increase in the value of this credit, which was originally conceived as a way to tax indirectly the unpaid labor of at-home parents and is available only to parents who use commercial child care. The president's proposal to make a bad program bigger is utterly irresponsible, a plain assault on parents who want to spend more time with their children. Congress should either eliminate this tax credit or make it fixed and universal—say, $700 per preschool child, regardless of whether the child receives commercial care.

In its handling of the marriage penalty and of measures like the Dependent Care Tax Credit, Congress has a chance to reverse the 30-year practice in the federal tax code of marginalizing marriage. With the approach of the first federal budget surplus in a generation, and exactly half a century after the now-forgotten but absolutely sound Principles of '48, Congress has an important opportunity to get it right. ♦

Leftism on the Right

Conservatives Learn to Blame America First

By Lawrence F. Kaplan

"It is an American illusion that other nations are eager to have pointed out to them what the U.S. government regards as their defects. . . . It is our little conceit that once other nations have learned how we feel, they will mend their ways." The author of this opinion is neither Susan Sontag nor Bertrand Russell nor any other icon of the New Left, but James Schlesinger, President Nixon's director of central intelligence and secretary of defense and still today a pillar of the GOP foreign-policy establishment. Schlesinger offered his critique of "American hubris" in the Fall 1997 issue of the *National Interest*, a conservative journal of foreign affairs.

This sentiment may seem peculiar, considering its author and the forum in which it was aired. Yet Schlesinger's remark echoes a growing chorus in Republican circles. And not just among policy experts: A casual animus against American power colors discussions in the larger conservative community, much as it colored talk among leftists a generation back.

The tendency shows up, for example, in the responses to recent U.S. military operations. Counseling patience with Saddam Hussein in the wake of the 1996 U.S. missile attack against Iraq, Jack Kemp lectured the Clinton administration, "Don't bomb before breakfast" (prompting Al Gore to warn Republicans not to "blame America first" and the *New York Times* to report that Kemp "attempted to cast foreign policy in . . . a feminine light"). And on Bosnia, respected military strategist and syndicated columnist Harry Summers condemned the U.S. mission as "imperialism." He observed that "the United States is doing in Bosnia what we would never permit being done at home." *Washington Times* columnist Richard Grenier agreed. He accused U.S. forces in the Balkans of "blatantly intervening in a country's internal affairs," while columnist Donald Devine suggested that the United States had "attempted a de facto coup" in Bosnia.

For those accustomed to fending off the protestations of leftist critics, it comes as some surprise to hear former Reaganites sounding like Noam Chomsky. Indeed, like the Left of a generation ago—and unlike the foreign-policy minimalists of the interwar era, many of them Republican senators—prominent conservatives are prescribing non-intervention in the affairs of others as a means to ensure the United States does no harm to the world. They offer reasons as varied as the camps that make up today's Right.

Though skepticism about American power cuts across many conservative factions, it comes in several stripes. The libertarians' is the most rooted in coherent beliefs. As Arch Puddington pointed out in a recent issue of *Commentary*, a central tenet of contemporary libertarianism is the suspicion that activist foreign and defense policies extend the domestic reach of the federal government. Thus, writes Doug Bandow of the libertarian Cato Institute, "The shift from republic to empire abroad sparked a related mutation at home. . . . The Cold War spawned McCarthyism, FBI surveillance of domestic dissidents, peacetime conscrip-

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tion, the sprawling Military-Industrial Complex, the Vietnam imbroglio, and unending executive arrogance."

Comparing America's international role to that of a certain mid-century power, Cato's Ted Galen Carpenter refers to our preferred candidate in recent Bosnian Serb elections as "Washington's quisling" and writes that "U.S. and NATO meddling in the internal politics of the Bosnian Serb republic has taken the form of actions that make a mockery of any meaningful concept of democracy." And according to Bandow, our efforts in the Balkans amount to nothing more than "Wilsonian war mongering."

Conservatives like Jack Kemp, Robert Novak, and Armstrong Williams see merit in the libertarian critique. When not recommending that the Right go easy on Louis Farrakhan, the disciples of supply-side guru Jude Wanniski can be heard urging a similar approach to Saddam Hussein. After all, as Williams put it, "Our hands aren't totally clean either."

Coming from libertarians, such stands are nothing new. Decades ago, prominent libertarian Murray Rothbard announced, "I favor immediate withdrawal from Vietnam, denounce U.S. imperialism, advocate Black Power and have just joined the new Peace and Freedom party." At the time Rothbard wrote, most conservatives dismissed libertarian positions on foreign policy. Today, those views receive a respectful hearing on Capitol Hill.

Perhaps more compelling, though certainly no less dissonant, are objections to an active American role in the world raised by some cultural conservatives. Their critique rests not on contempt for the federal government, but on cultural despair. The United States has become so decadent that, for many on the right, any attempt to export U.S. ideals is morally questionable. According to this view, a minimalist foreign policy cannot restore our status as a "city on a hill" or "New Jerusalem," but will at least temper America's tendency to inflict its depredations on others.

Samuel Huntington, perhaps the most accomplished American political scientist of the postwar era, is a leading proponent of this school. Huntington sees contemporary America as wracked, even defined, by moral decay and the impact of multiculturalism. Thus, having ceased to be a truly Western nation, the United States no longer remains fit to preach Western principles to the rest of the world. This conviction, however, has led Huntington and those who agree with him back to the relativism of the multiculturalists they condemn. Denouncing universalism as a form of "imperialism," he praises "Asian values" and writes that Western promotion of universal principles is "false," "immoral," and "dangerous." Indeed, "Western intervention in the affairs of other civilizations is probably the single most dangerous source of instability and potential global conflict in a multicivilizational world."

Discontent with the sagging moral fiber of American society—and with the government's enshrining of counterculture mores in public policy—has led other conservatives to similar conclusions. Perhaps the most articulate spokesman for this line of reasoning is A.J. Bacevich, a frequent contributor to *First Things* (and also to this magazine). He asked recently, "To the extent that basic national policies disregard the moral sense of the majority, to the extent that American government no longer embodies the popular will, what are the implications for the United States as a global superpower?" For Bacevich, the implications are clear, even if they "bear an uncomfortable resemblance to conclusions once touted by the Left." America should heed George McGovern's summons to come home.

That conservatives should invoke George McGovern and other leftist critics of American power is a stunning development. The Right, after all, spent decades fending off these same critics' efforts to give U.S. policies a name—"imperialism"—that was anathema to Americans. Cultural pessimism, however, has led conservatives to recall fondly their former antagonists.

Hence, Walter McDougall, who understands why "Confucians and Muslims laugh at the notion that our 'decadent' country should be a model for them," praises Vietnam critic William Fulbright for his condemnation of American arrogance. For McDougall, a Pulitzer-prize-winning historian and editor of the conservative foreign-policy journal *Orbis*, everything went wrong with American foreign policy about the time of Teddy Roosevelt, a president who used to rank high in the pantheon of conservative heroes. So too for Harry Summers, who quotes approvingly the 1899 platform of the Anti-Imperialist League, which assailed the evil of permitting the "weak" (Filipinos then, Serbs now) to be subjugated by the "strong" (Americans both then and now).

Finally, foreign-policy activism has been challenged by a group of "realists" whose rhetoric also owes a debt to the New Left. Their preferred forum is the quarterly *National Interest*, edited by Owen Harries. Its "realist" contributors seek to disabuse readers of the notion that U.S. foreign policy rests on a uniquely moral foundation. In doing so, however, many of those who write for the journal promote a certain moral stance of their own—one that derides America's "adolescent" predispositions.

Though the pages of the *National Interest* feature a wide variety of opinions, lately long essays bemoaning America's global "arrogance" and its "imperial" designs have become common fare. Alan Tonelson, for example, decries the fact that "a remarkable share of our foreign policy still consists of affluent internationalists searching for new opportunities for risking their countrymen's lives and resources." He goes on to envision "hardhats marching outside the United Nations, the State Department, the *Washington Post* editorial offices . . . carrying signs and chanting, 'Hell no, we won't go!'"

Tonelson's populist rhetoric puts him at odds with several other contributors to the *National Interest* whose perspective echoes the lingering European view of the United States as an uncouth upstart. The tendency to see America as an unexceptional and immature power has a long tradition in realist thought. Years ago, no less an American institution than realist George Kennan could be heard comparing American democracy to "one of those prehistoric monsters with a body as long as [a] room and brain the size of a pin." With the end of the Cold War, such complaints, muted during decades of East-West conflict, once again are common among realists.

In a passage worthy of Graham Greene, *National Interest* contributor James Kurth writes,

> Insofar as an American high culture even existed, it was lower than its European counterpart in every cultural genre. What might be called the "American empire style" of art was the always ugly and now discarded abstract expressionism. Its counterpart in architecture was the always banal and now tiresome international style, or modernism.

Kurth's attack on modernism precedes his assault on "the ideal human type of the American empire." According to Kurth, this type is characterized by "self-centeredness, energy, and aggressiveness." He adds, "As with the SS officer and the new Soviet man, these are not the qualities of a mature person." For his part, Schlesinger, opining in the same journal, attributes America's weaknesses to "the character of the American Constitution." He then scoffs that "Americans tend not to be much interested in history" and that "ruthless self-criticism has never been a principal characteristic of the American people."

Of these critiques, the anti-statist line of the libertarians has enjoyed the most success. Their positions on topics like NATO expansion, foreign aid, and Bosnia appear quite sensible to junior members of Congress who have made deficit reduction a fetish and express little interest in foreign matters. The libertarians' counsel of restraint, however, stems not from a desire to protect America from corrupting foreign influences, but from the conviction that the U.S. government plays a brutish role in international affairs. That policy advice grounded in such a belief should find a receptive audience in the Republican party signals, to say the least, a strange turn of affairs.

Far more persuasive is the critique put forward by the cultural pessimists. American culture, after all, has coarsened considerably in recent years. Their opposition to entanglement in the affairs of others, however, does not flow inexorably from their diagnosis of cultural decay. True, Hollywood and New York export an incredible amount of garbage: Jerry Springer, *Showgirls*, pornographic Calvin Klein ads. But this is not Washington's doing, apart from its role in promoting free trade. Similarly, it remains unclear how America can save itself by turning inward, when, according to the pessimists, America is the very source of the pollution.

As for some cultural pessimists' view that exporting democracy and political liberty amounts to cultural imperialism, their quarrel often seems to be less with the promotion of democracy than with democracy itself. It's difficult to take seriously the notion that America should stop promoting its values simply because democratic principles offend the authoritarian sensibilities of some civilizations. Overwhelming evidence suggests that the world hungers for political freedom. According to a recent Freedom House survey, the number of freely elected governments has grown to a record 117. But rather than applaud the triumph of the American creed, conservatives champion the very same "Asian values" that wreak havoc on the Pacific Rim.

The realist critique suffers from a similar flaw. It fails to credit the degree to which American interests and ideals overlap. The promotion of democracy is not mere "social work"; the United States does not advance its principles solely for the benefit of others. Peace, prosperity, and political freedom are also self-interested aims. For it has long been a truism of international politics that democracies would rather trade than go to war with one another. As democracy advocate Joshua Muravchik has put it, "The more democratic the world becomes, the more likely it is to be both peaceful and friendly to America." This assertion and the deeds it inspires may strike some as "adolescent" or "arrogant," but they have served Americans and millions of others around the globe quite well. It's too bad so many conservatives have made themselves forget this simple fact. ♦

Dueling with Hamilton

Why National Greatness Doesn't Mean Big Government

By David Frum

In the 1970s, odd-looking people with shaved heads used to hang around the edges of college campuses, searching for students who appeared lonely, hungover, or adrift. Offering a meal or a place to stay for the night, they would lead the student off to a building that looked like a church, toss garlands around his neck, and intoxicate him with the scent of incense. Unless the student quickly dashed out of the place, he would soon be selling flowers in airports.

Two editors of The Weekly Standard recently had a very similar experience. William Kristol and David Brooks published a set of articles here and elsewhere cautioning conservatives against strident attacks on the federal government. Liberals and Democrats had immolated themselves in the 1960s, Kristol and Brooks argue, by criticizing the U.S. government so bitterly that they verged on the unpatriotic. Conservatives and Republicans are in danger of repeating that error. The federal government is here to stay; instead of fruitlessly denouncing it, conservatives and Republicans should be thinking hard about how to use its immense powers to enhance the greatness of the nation.

At which there arose a great chorus of "Hare Krishna, Hare Rama," from liberal columnists and television pundits. Kristol and Brooks were lavishly complimented by the Left for separating themselves from Timothy McVeigh, Newt Gingrich, and other right-wing extremists—for awakening at last to the splendor and magnificence of the past sixty years of liberal politics.

It was an awkward moment for both would-be proselytizers and the proselytized, and rather more awkward because Kristol and Brooks had been so badly misunderstood. They weren't surrendering to the liberal traditions of the Democratic party; they were trying to reinvigorate the activist traditions of the Republican party. Despite the courtesies paid by their articles to Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and Lyndon Johnson, they were looking past those men to another tradition: the tradition of Theodore Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, and, beyond them, of the Whigs and Federalists.

W. W. Norton

Historically, it was the Republicans who were the party of activist government. As the elder Henry Cabot Lodge—like his son, a Republican senator from Massachusetts—put it in his 1885 introduction to the collected works of Alexander Hamilton, "Two schools of political thought have existed in the United States, and their struggle for supremacy has made the history of the country. One was the national school, the other was the school of states rights. . . . One was founded by Alexander Hamilton, the other by Thomas Jefferson."

As if to confirm Lodge's point, at nearly the same time Lodge was writing, a Democratic president, Grover Cleveland, was vetoing a federal appropriation for stricken Texas farmers—because, he thought, the Constitution did not explicitly grant the federal government the power to do it. The Democratic party before 1933 stood for free trade, states rights, and strict economy in government, while the Republican party championed protectionism, pro-business federal activism, and a strong and costly navy.

In this, the Democrats between the Civil War and the Depression saw themselves as the heirs of Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson—it was Jefferson, not Ronald Reagan, who quipped that if we waited for the government to tell us when to plant, we should soon lack bread—while

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the Republicans traced their ancestry instead to the Federalists and the Whigs. During the 1790s, Federalists were the ones who argued that the United States was a nation, not a federation of sovereign states: They championed America's first central bank, the creation of a navy, and vigorous federal protection of property. During the 1840s and 1850s, Whigs were the ones who defended high tariffs and federal aid for roads and canals, while insisting that states could not nullify federal laws.

Nationalist Republicans versus states-rights Democrats—this was the fundamental division of American politics before the New Deal. But the Federalist-Whig tradition of nationalism that once belonged to the Republicans has been claimed far more often by the Left than by the Right over the last sixty years. Even before the 1930s, back at the turn of the twentieth century, the progressive Herbert Croly had dreamt of somehow using "Hamiltonian means for Jeffersonian ends." And liberals and Democrats have been trying, fitfully, to apply that slogan ever since.

Michael Lind's new anthology, *Hamilton's Republic*, brings the Croly theory up to date. In the introduction to this artfully edited selection of readings, Lind proposes a political line of descent that begins with the Federalist Hamilton and the Whig Clay, proceeds through Abraham Lincoln, and then—ever more exotically—reaches out to include Frederick Douglass, Franklin Roosevelt, Lyndon Johnson, and, finally, Lind himself. Lind's justification would have been familiar to Croly:

> Throughout American history, Hamiltonian democratic nationalists have favored intelligent activism by both the federal and state governments to promote the public interest. At different times government activism has taken the form of sponsoring internal improvements or infrastructure projects like the construction of turnpikes, canals, railroads, the airline industry, and the Internet; raising tariffs to protect infant industries, and then pressing for reciprocal free trade with other countries when those industries had matured; and establishing national social insurance programs like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid to cushion workers against fluctuations in the economy.

Later in his collection (in an essay co-written with John Judis), Lind goes further still: "We think the goal of social policy should be to reduce the growing disparity among economic classes."

Hamilton approving of Medicaid? Hamilton advocating the redistribution of income from rich to poor? These are unlikely thoughts, and Lind properly confesses a nervous awareness that "attempts to project contemporary viewpoints on historical figures can become ventriloquism in a cemetery." That doesn't stop him from trying, but it should at least have given him pause.

Michael Lind
Hamilton's Republic
Readings in the American Democratic Tradition
Free Press, 320 pp., $25

Fascism and other horrific abuses of nationalism in this century very understandably cause today's nationalists to assert that what they have in mind is a specifically "democratic" form of nationalism. But the truth is that devotion to democracy loomed very small in the minds of Alexander Hamilton, John Quincy Adams, Daniel Webster, and the other advocates of vigorous government in the first sixty years of the republic. "The people, sir, is a great beast!" Hamilton once exclaimed in a moment of exasperation.

The truth is that Hamilton and his admirers were nationalists in large part precisely because they *opposed* democracy. In 1804 (by which time the Federalist party was visibly dying), Hamilton was approached by a group of Bostonians seeking support for their plan to withdraw New England from the Union. He fiercely rebuffed them: Divide the Union, he warned, and the democratic "fever" will burn hotter than ever within the broken bits. The Constitution, though still too democratic for Hamilton's liking, at least ensured that the president (elected, in those days, by an electoral college chosen by state legislatures), the Senate (likewise elected by state legislatures), and the judiciary were insulated from popular control. An independent New England, adopting a constitution in the opening years of the nineteenth century, would be unable—Hamilton seems to have feared—to defy the new spirit of direct democracy.

And as for Lind's suggestion that the Federalist tradition would look with favor upon economic redistribution—nearly all that can be said is that it would have left the original Federalists gasping. True, John Adams (a very heterodox Federalist) expressed great distrust of the political ambitions of the rich, and his son, John Quincy Adams, was prepared to accept the presidential nomination of the bizarrely populist Anti-Masonic party in 1832. But most Federalists unashamedly regarded themselves as the party of the natural leaders of society, and it was candor on this point, as much as anything else, that led them to disaster in the election of 1800.

The Federalist Hamilton—like the Whigs John Marshall, Clay, and Daniel Webster—believed in the strictest protection of property, which they all regarded as the touchstone of civilization. They so revered property that they defended its rights even under the most disturbing circumstances: Hamilton insisted on paying Revolutionary debts at one hundred cents on the dollar, even though the bulk of them had long since been bought by foreign speculators; Marshall ruled in the 1810 Supreme Court case *Fletcher* v. *Peck* that the Georgia legislature could not retract land grants it had made, even when it was beyond dispute that the claims had been obtained by blatant and

wholesale corruption.

The most eloquent of all nationalists, Daniel Webster, earned his greatest fame with a series of Supreme Court cases—the *Dartmouth College* case, *McCullough* v. *Maryland*, and *Gibbons* v. *Ogden*—that defended the rights of corporations to go about their business without interference by state legislatures. (It's true that *McCullough* did establish the constitutionality of a central, national bank, but it must be remembered that the bank in question, the Second Bank of the United States, was 80 percent privately owned.)

These are not men to look to for arguments on behalf of redistributing wealth. Indeed, they saw resisting demands for the redistribution of property as one of the principal justifications for the Union. As Hamilton observed in the eleventh of the *Federalist Papers*: "A rage for paper money, for an abolition of debts, for an equal division of property, or for any other improper or wicked project, will be less apt to pervade the whole Union, than a particular member of it."

Similarly, though Lind claims Whig support for his own desire to expand current federal civil rights laws to reach gender and sexual orientation, Jean Edward Smith—in the careful and useful new biography *John Marshall: Definer of a Nation*—points out that Marshall held in 1830 that the Constitution "was not intended to furnish the corrective to every abuse of power which may be committed by state governments. The interest, wisdom, and justice of the representative body and its relation with its constituents"—a polite nineteenth-century reference to the power of electors to give their politicians the boot—"furnish the only security against unwise legislation generally."

The point might be put even more strongly: From the fact that the Federalists and the Northern Whigs from 1790 to 1850 wanted a more centralized Union than the one they had then, it must not be concluded

that they would also want a more centralized Union than the one we have today.

To advocate "Hamiltonian means for Jeffersonian ends" is to assume that public policies are like screwdrivers that can twist clockwise or counter-clockwise with equal ease. In fact, the means we choose in politics determines the ends we reach. Revolutionaries used to believe that you could achieve perfect freedom via a brief detour through absolute dictatorship. The error of both Croly and Lind is of course by no means as sinister; but it is every bit as mistaken.

Hamilton was an astute man, with a practical turn of mind, and he understood the connection between ends and means. His program formed a coherent whole, and he advocated it with his eyes open to all its costs. He knew that protectionism would depress the incomes of farmers and consumers, and he was prepared to live with the consequences.

Lind, perhaps to his credit, is not so ruthlessly realistic. He favors protectionism, but only because he is under the illusion that it will advance economic equality. Its malign consequences—exacerbating political tension between those with the clout to get protection and those who lack it, upending the world economy, and binding business and political leaders together in unwholesome combinations—are not so much accepted by him as left unrecognized.

If the Federalist-Whig tradition is troublesome for today's Left, however, it is equally a problem for today's Right. Kristol and Brooks are right to argue that the language of national unity and greatness inherited from Hamilton, Marshall, Quincy Adams, Webster, and Lincoln is the mode in which conservatives should speak. The problem that those great men faced—national disintegration along sectional lines—is very similar to the problem that Americans face today: national disintegration along ethnic lines. Their ideas deserve remembering at a time when the ideal of citizenship with equal rights for all and special privileges for none is under attack again, this time from advocates of group rights, multiculturalism, and reverse discrimination.

But it is also worth remembering the mistakes that destroyed the Federalists and Whigs, for those too resonate today. The Federalists mistrusted spontaneous action, in politics as well as economics. Their insistence on top-down direction of the national economy suited the American condition as poorly as did their insistence that party leaders should lead and party members merely obey. The Federalists never accepted the democratic destiny of America, and it killed them. It is a message the Republican National Committee needs to consider: When, even before party members had actually voted in the primary, Newt Gingrich gave his blessing last year to Brooks Firestone, a Republican congressional candidate in California, you could almost see the ghosts of old, "our-leaders-know-best" Federalists like Oliver Wolcott and Rufus King nodding—and the ghost of Thomas Jefferson smirking.

The Whigs in turn were wrecked by their determination to hold together at any cost their coalition of Southern slaveholders and Northern industrialists. Jeffersonian doctrine had regarded Congress as supreme. Jackson fiercely asserted presidential prerogatives. The Whig party was formed by uniting the primarily Southern ultra-Jeffersonians, who feared Jackson's ambitions, with the mostly Northern former Federalists who objected to Jackson's policies. The only way to keep them together was to ban all discussion of the moral issue of slavery: They were the ultimate "no litmus test" party. And the price paid for this ideological vagueness, even before the Supreme Court's *Dred Scott* decision smashed the Whig coalition to smithereens, was repeated political defeat and nearly complete ineffectuality on the rare occasions when they did win.

This is not to argue that conservatives should allow themselves to be fooled by the congeniality of Jackson's and Jefferson's libertarian oratorical flourishes. The Whigs were to a great extent right about the high-handed and arbitrary Andrew Jackson. The Constitution was only forty-three years old when General Jackson became president, and during the years of his presidency, the free institutions of the other newly independent republics in the Americas were collapsing—unable to survive a popular military hero. Jackson's authoritarianism was unnerving in a new and untested political system, and his financial ideas were truly crackpot.

Likewise, Jefferson was no unspotted hero. He prosecuted newspaper editors who criticized him just as ferociously as the Federalists ever had, and—for all his interest in science—his mind could veer off in alarmingly hare-brained directions. In 1790, while Hamilton was exhaustively studying the money markets of London and Amsterdam before establishing the gold content of the new American dollar, Jefferson thought the United States should peg its currency to the value of an ingot of silver equal in weight to a thousandth of a cubic foot of rainwater.

But weirdly enough, and often by accident, Jefferson and Jackson turned out to be right on the big economic issues of their day. By quashing Hamilton's tariff plan, Jefferson may have slightly slowed American industrialization. But he also ensured that American farmers and workers continued to enjoy the highest standard of living on earth—which gave them the purchasing power to fuel a self-sustaining industrial boom after 1820. By destroying the Bank of the United States, Jackson disarranged the monetary policy of the United States for thirty-five years. But he also established once and for all that America's financial system would be decentralized and highly competitive.

The Federalists built the institutions of the American Republic, while the Jeffersonians provided its rhetoric, and it is true that even today the issues that divided them can resurface. But most of the time, we have to reckon with the truth that the rise of the welfare state has changed forever the terms on which politics is conducted in the United States.

It is simply no longer true that the great dividing line in American politics is states rights. Since 1933, American politics has instead pitted those who want to expand the power of all government—federal, state, and local—against those who want to circumscribe and contain that power.

Like quarreling cousins, both sides of today's political argument have inherited traits from both their Federalist and their Jeffersonian ancestors. The Left got the Federalists' faith in the power of top-down control and the Jeffersonians' utopianism; the Right got the Federalists' sympathy for business and the Jeffersonians' faith in economic freedom.

Sometimes there are elements of this background that need rediscovery: As Kristol and Brooks argue, it would be well for the Right to remember that there are times (when the federal government tries to impose bilingual education, for example) when it is necessary to argue against the actions of the national government in the name of national cohesion rather than individual freedom. But there is no escaping either side of the family tree. Jefferson himself knew it would be so. As he said in his first inaugural address: "We are all Federalists. We are all Republicans." ♦

B&C

Trust the Tale

The Posthumous Life of Isaac Bashevis Singer

By John Wilson

Winning the Nobel Prize for Literature is all to the good, but if a writer can't find actual readers in each new generation, his works do not survive. When was the last time you read something by the 1977 Nobel laureate, Vicente Aleixandre?

The Yiddish storyteller Isaac Bashevis Singer won the Prize in 1978, and if the record of recent publication is any guide, he at least has continued to acquire new readers. *Shadows on the Hudson*—his fourth novel to appear in English translation since his death in 1991—has just been issued, and recent months have seen as well both Janet Hadda's new biography and Dvorah Telushkin's extraordinary account of her years as Singer's secretary and translator.

Given this splendid conjunction, it seems churlish to report that *Shadows on the Hudson* is not good. But the novel is at least instructive about Singer's improbable transformation from someone known during the 1940s only to America's steadily shrinking audience of Yiddish speakers to a fixture during the 1970s in the *New Yorker*, a writer whose stories and novels were regularly translated into English and then into most of the world's other major languages, and whose international success in turn helped spur a modest Yiddish renaissance.

Singer routinely published his novels first in serial form, and *Shadows on the Hudson* originally appeared in the Yiddish version of a New York City newspaper, the *Jewish Daily Forward*, between January 1957 and January 1958. Set largely in New York immediately after World War II, the central story involves a comically doomed adultery between a former mathematics prodigy, Hertz Dovid Grein, and a woman named Anna. As the many characters' lives diverge and intersect, Anna remains the link: daughter of the real-estate developer Boris Makaver, who seeks to return to the harsh religious life of his childhood; wife of the unappetizing brooder Stanislaw Luria, who is seeking self-destruction; and former wife of a rogue, Yasha Kotik, who eluded the Nazis in Europe to reappear suddenly in Anna's Americanized life.

The conflicts that animate the book—and give it, despite its creaking machinery, a flickering of life—are the same obsessions that fueled Singer throughout his career. In *Shadows on the Hudson* they are most clearly embodied in the character of Grein, the former prodigy now in his mid-forties and, after some hard immigrant years, enjoying considerable financial success in America as a mutual-fund manager. Like most of Singer's protagonists—Yasha in *The Magician of Lublin*, Herman Broder in *Enemies*, Aaron Greidinger in *Shosha*—Grein shuttles among several women. And like most other Singer heroes, Grein is a divided soul.

In this he closely resembles his creator. Singer was always something of a divided man. Born in 1904, he grew up in the strangely mixed world of Polish Jews before World War II: almost medieval *shtetls* in rural villages matched with thriving modern ghettos in the cities. He published his first stories in the Yiddish press in Poland. In 1935, he followed his brother, the novelist I. J. Singer, to America, escaping the Nazi slaughter that would obliterate Eastern European Judaism and haunt his fiction—even his happiest tales of pre-war Jewish life rendered poignant by

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knowledge of the looming Holocaust.

His first American success came in 1950 with the simultaneous publication in English and Yiddish of *The Family Moskat*. Before his death, he would produce numerous plays and children's books, nine volumes of short stories, and twelve more novels. His best-known works include "Gimpel the Fool," "Yentl," *The Magician of Lublin*, and *Enemies: A Love Story*.

Much to the discomfort of his secular interpreters, Singer did in fact continue to believe in God during his life in America. But his philandering revealed him to be a man who had little patience for the ethical teachings of his pious parents—just as his occasional public musings on God revealed his lack of patience with their theological teachings. Though his father (whose memory Singer lovingly preserved) devoted his life to the study of Torah, Singer denied God's presence in Scripture: "All my probings led to the same conclusion—that there was some scheme within Creation, someone we call God, but He had not revealed Himself to anyone nor was there even the slightest indication that He desired love, peace, and justice."

In *Shadows on the Hudson*, Grein and all the principal characters are under the shadow of the Holocaust. To Grein it seems that in America he and his fellow Jews are living in the underworld, like spirits of the dead. The typical Singer mix of an atheist lecturing God on His non-existence—"an unbeliever" compelled "to raise his eyes to heaven and appeal to the God whose existence he denied"—Grein ends by going to Israel and living the life of an Orthodox Jew. "What difference does it make who gave us the Torah?" he writes to a friend in America (in a creaky and over-explanatory letter with which Singer ends the book). "The Torah is the only effective teaching we have about how to bridle the human beast."

The 1950s *Shadows on the Hudson* appears in English translation only now, probably in part because the author realized that it was not one of his strongest books. As he became increasingly adept in English and increasingly active in the translation of his works during the 1960s, Singer reinvented himself as a novelist, shifting to a tighter narrative style with a clear focus on a single central character. Janet Hadda's *Isaac Bashevis Singer: A Life* is far from the definitive biography we need, and the dead hand of psychoanalysis lies heavy on it. But it is the best overview of the writer's life we currently have, and she is certainly right that Singer was shrewd in creating an image for himself among English readers.

Isaac Bashevis Singer
Shadows on the Hudson
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 548 pp., $28

Janet Hadda
Isaac Bashevis Singer
A Life
Oxford University Press, 272 pp., $27.50

Devorah Telushkin
Master of Dreams
A Memoir of Isaac Bashevis Singer
Morrow, 350 pp., $25

Only after he was fully established as the chronicler of life in the *shtetl*—"the world and life of Eastern European Jewry, such as it was lived in cities and villages, in poverty and persecution, and imbued with sincere piety and rites combined with blind faith and superstition," as the Nobel Prize committee put it—did Singer oversee the translation into English of novels such as *Enemies* that explicitly acknowledged the Holocaust and offered harsh judgments on assimilated Jews in the United States.

By the time Singer was determined to see all of his novels translated into English, including potboilers such as *Scum* (serialized in Yiddish in the early 1970s and published in English shortly after his death), he was in decline, probably suffering from Alzheimer's, the effects of which his secretary Dvorah Telushkin recounts with tact but with harrowing power. (Her memoir of the writer, *Master of Dreams*, is a moving book: the most fully realized portrait of a writer since Nadezhda Mandelstam's memoirs of her husband, Osip Mandelstam, the Russian poet murdered by Stalin in the 1930s.)

In the early stages of his decline, Singer frequently and capriciously changed his mind about projects, and there was a sad comedy to his tantrums: "May 30, 1986," Telushkin records, "Isaac came into my house and dropped his entire manuscript of *Shadows on the Hudson*, which had been published in Yiddish in the 1950s, on the table, and yelled out, 'I cancel this whole project! Do you hear? I don't vant to owe translators any money. They vill all sue me. This is their real aim. To sue.'" Singer's paranoia was the product of his illness, but long before that he had been guilty of understating the contributions made by his translators and editors, as if he were fearful that by giving them due credit, he would be somehow diminished.

Those fears were not entirely unfounded, as the malicious portrait of Singer in Cynthia Ozick's story "Envy, or, Yiddish in America" makes clear. In that story, first published in *Commentary* in November 1969, one of the translators of a Singeresque figure named "Ostrover" declares the man to be indifferent to the quality of his works in Yiddish; what matters to him is "what will it turn into when it becomes English? Transformation is all he cares for—and in English he's a cripple."

Unaccountably, Hadda does not refer to this notorious story in her biography. Although in the acknowledgments she thanks "Cynthia Ozick, who answered my candid questions," she touches on the issue of Singer and his translators only in passing. It is rather Telushkin's intimate and persuasive memoir that

gives the best account we are likely to get of Singer's working methods—showing both Singer's individual genius and the collaboration of his translators and editors. (She shows in particular the way Rachel MacKenzie, Singer's editor at the *New Yorker*, performed radical surgery on the opening of *Shosha* and made the novel one of Singer's best.)

One thing is certain: Were Singer in his prime and collaborating with the translator and editors, we would be spared such dialogue in *Shadows on the Hudson* as "If you're so attached to that middle-aged hag, why are you giving me the runaround? How much longer do you think I'm going to tolerate you and your false promises? How long do you propose to go on playing this disgusting farce with me?"

And yet, such poorly rendered dialogue does in fact capture something present in the book, regardless of its translation. *Shadows on the Hudson*'s large canvas and big cast of characters bring to mind such earlier works from Singer as *The Family Moskat* and *The Manor*. But it unfortunately overlays the typical Singer story with something else—signaled by characters, all-too-obviously designed to represent a spectrum of worldviews, mingling in tedious set-pieces and exchanging lengthy philosophical orations utterly lacking in verisimilitude.

This is proof, in its way, of just how large loomed the example of Thomas Mann for an entire generation of writers, but it is also proof of just how good the German novelist was: *Shadows on the Hudson* recalls nothing so much as the innumerable, interminable, and rightly forgotten imitations of Mann that dominated 1950s European fiction. Singer's hope of finding yet another generation of readers is better served by Janet Hadda's biography—and virtually guaranteed by Dvorah Telushkin's reminder in *Master of Dreams* that the author's life itself was as fascinating as his best fiction. ♦

B&A

Now More Than Ever

California, Communism, and the "Dreadful" Richard Nixon

By Christopher Matthews

Until the 1960 presidential race soured things between them, Jack Kennedy would often side with Richard Nixon against the Left. When a prominent socialite at a dinner party sneered at the "dreadful" Republican from California, the young Democrat from Massachusetts savaged her: "You have no idea what he's been through. Dick Nixon is the victim of the worst press that ever hit a politician in this country. What they did to him in the Helen Gahagan Douglas race was disgusting!"

Greg Mitchell
Tricky Dick and the Pink Lady
Richard Nixon vs. Helen Gahagan Douglas—Sexual Politics and the Red Scare, 1950
Random House, 320 pp., $25

There is a certain world, however, in which not even a Kennedy can make the sneer at Nixon go away. Publication of Greg Mitchell's *Tricky Dick and the Pink Lady* shows the Nixon haters returning to the scene of one of his earliest crimes: that "low . . . diabolical" California campaign—as the defeated Mrs. Douglas later called it—for the Senate in 1950.

To his credit, Mitchell has exhumed one of the most colorful political campaigns in modern American history. Even Hollywood was divided, with Humphrey Bogart talking on the radio for the Democrat while Hoagy Carmichael gave concerts for the Republican. And the candidates themselves were more dramatic than any casting director could have found. Two-term congressman Richard Nixon had won fame helping expose Alger Hiss—the Soviet agent who had presided over the founding of the United Nations in 1945 and accompanied President Roosevelt to Yalta earlier that same year. Three-term congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas had won hers as a glamorous Broadway actress who married Melvyn Douglas—himself a famous matinee idol who, in the 1939 *Ninotchka*, had romanced a lovable Soviet agent played by Greta Garbo.

By 1950, however, the Soviets were not so lovable. When Greece and Turkey were threatened in the spring of 1947, Truman did something Roosevelt had failed to do: halt the Soviets' westward expansion. But the eastward spread of communism continued with the 1949 triumph of the Red Army in China, and the early months of 1950 saw the global Communist threat reach into America itself. A federal jury convicted Alger Hiss of perjury. Physicist Klaus Fuchs admitted carrying atomic secrets to Russia, possibly with the help of an American spy ring. Adding to the ruckus, Wisconsin senator Joseph McCarthy claimed the State Department was riddled with Soviet sympathizers. And then, in June, Communist North Korean forces invaded South Korea. The Cold War had suddenly turned hot.

For politicians like Helen Gahagan Douglas, the sending of American GIs to fight the North Koreans would prove catastrophic. While she

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was in Congress, Douglas would meet regularly with Eleanor Roosevelt, Henry Wallace, and others who objected to Truman's anti-Communist line. While she stopped short of backing Wallace's third-party presidential run in 1948, her vote against aid to Greece and Turkey was telling. To be fair, she (like Mrs. Roosevelt) never showed the passion for foreign policy that she had for domestic issues: She was far less interested in battling communism than in maintaining federal irrigation support for small farms, the issue that drove her into the 1950 Senate race in the first place.

There were Democrats, of course, who had little patience for her stands, among them the man she had targeted for defeat—incumbent senator Sheridan Downey, who roared, "Mrs. Douglas gave comfort to the Soviet tyranny by voting against aid to both Greece and Turkey. She voted against the President in a crisis when he most needed her support and most fully deserved her confidence." Before withdrawing from the Democratic primary, Downey would make, for the Republicans' later use, a devastating attack on his challenger: accusing her of "a consistent policy of voting along with the notorious Vito Marcantonio," the congressman from Harlem who voted the Communist line all too consistently. And it was another Democratic opponent, Manchester Boddy, publisher of the *Los Angeles Daily News*, whose tabloid gave Douglas that uncharitable but unavoidable sobriquet "The Pink Lady."

Douglas's victory with almost exactly 50 percent of the primary vote in California reflected divisions about her candidacy among Democrats elsewhere. Harry Truman would refuse even to have a campaign picture taken with Douglas, and Jack Kennedy would go so far as to deliver a substantial check to his Republican colleague, leaving Nixon, as a secretary later recalled, "flabbergasted."

The stage was set for the November election. As Greg Mitchell neatly puts it in *Tricky Dick and the Pink Lady*, "She was a progressive Democrat, he a moderate Republican. She was effervescent, he was intense. She was wealthy, a famous actress from the East; he was an attorney of moderate means from Whittier. She declared that Communist sympathizers posed no serious threat to America; he had helped send Alger Hiss to prison." But this fair summary of the candidates doesn't stop Mitchell from a clear preference. The California Senate election, he writes, would end "the career of one of the most impressive women ever to appear in American politics," while "Nixon would forever remain Tricky Dicky," the tag coined for him during the Douglas campaign.

AP/Wide World

The Pink Lady draws California's press. . .

Mitchell shares Douglas's opposition to the Cold War and lampoons the motives of those who opposed communism in the 1940s and '50s—writing of the "hysteria" over communism as though the "hysteria" itself were the threat. Despite all the recent evidence of Alger Hiss's guilt, in Mitchell's recording of history, Hiss still "allegedly" passed those documents to the Soviets. Nixon investigated merely "alleged" Communists. When FBI agents followed the trail of confessions leading to Julius Rosenberg, they were merely fulfilling some bureaucratic need "for more arrests." Does Mitchell find catching spies and traitors a seedy pursuit, a pastime beneath a gentleman of good manners? Was it bad form for the people protecting this country to find and apprehend the crowd who carried the A-bomb secret to Moscow? The question is not why people like Truman, Nixon, and Kennedy were worried about communism, but why people like Mrs. Douglas then—and Greg Mitchell now—were not.

The other fault of Mitchell's book is that it doesn't do what good campaign books must: convey the sound and the fury of an actual campaign. The little taste Mitchell does give us of the battle whets our appetite for more: Furious at his rival, Nixon once shouted "I'll castrate her"; informed of the threat's clinical infeasibility, he continued, "I don't care. I'll do it anyway."

Mitchell subtitles his book "Richard Nixon vs. Helen Gahagan Douglas—Sexual Politics and the Red Scare, 1950," and he's right that sex and personality would play as big a role in the election as the candidates' ideologies. With the notable exception of Lyndon Johnson, Helen Douglas's colleagues in Congress found her galling. After the election, Jack Kennedy would tell a Harvard seminar that she was "not the sort of person I'd like to be working with on

committees." An example of her off-putting manner was her calling a "cheap gimmick" Senator Downey's withdrawal on the grounds of poor health from the Democratic primary—alienating Downey's supporters in the party. Even Vito Marcantonio would lend a hand to her defeat, encouraging Nixon to repeat Downey's connecting of Douglas and Marcantonio's voting record. Given such venom from her Democratic colleagues, Nixon's account of his rival, rendered in his own post-Watergate memoirs, seems fair: "Mrs. Douglas was a handsome woman with a dramatic message. She had many fans among the public and many admirers in the press and in the entertainment industry, but she was not, to put it mildly, the most popular member of the House of Representatives."

Nixon, as it turned out, needed no prodding from Marcantonio. Douglas, he told voters again and again, was "pink right down to her underwear," and he sent out a leaflet the same color as her alleged underwear. Here Mitchell makes a sound point about the Douglas predicament. "Gender," he writes, "perhaps as much as Cold War politics, played a crucial role in her defeat." As the author notes, only six women had been U.S. senators before 1950. And only one of them, Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, had first come to the Senate by election.

But the difficulty of Douglas's position makes Nixon's unforgettably nasty tactics all the more perplexing. "There is only one way we can win," he declared early in his barnstorming. "We must put on a fighting, rocking, socking campaign and carry that campaign directly into every county, city, town, precinct, and home in the state of California." In fact, Nixon would have won easily regardless. The conviction of Hiss and the invasion by North Korea made him the early leader; the entry of Communist China into the war made him the prohibitive favorite.

Nixon would later write in his memoirs that he had attacked Douglas's judgment but "never questioned her patriotism." He did, however, do just that in a broadcast on election eve: "Right at this moment, as I speak to you, the lives of American boys are being snuffed out by the ruthless aggression of Chinese Communist forces in North Korea. . . . It seems incredible that a candidate for the highest legislative body in the land . . . would ask you for your votes tomorrow while flatly refusing to tell you which side she is on in this conflict." Basing his charge on Douglas's failure to oppose U.N. membership for the new Chinese regime, Nixon converted a legitimate difference of opinion into grounds for treason.

AP/Wide World

. . . and Tricky Dick draws California's voters.

Nixon won the 1950 senatorial election with 59 percent of the vote, much the same percentage he received in his landslide in the 1972 presidential campaign against George McGovern. As he would again in 1972, he based his campaign in 1950 on dirty tactics and outright lying—turning a huge victory into a tainted one. And by lumping together the entire American Left (from one-worlders like Douglas to popular frontists like Henry Wallace to fellow travelers like Vito Marcantonio), he made enemies who would haunt him to the grave and past it.

In sounding the alarm with his courageous exposure of Alger Hiss two years before, Nixon proved well-positioned on communism. Douglas, however, was caught hopelessly off base—and stayed off base the rest of her life. In the memoirs published after her death in 1980, she wrote:

> I'm told I had a chance even after the Korean War started, but that when the Chinese communists started fighting Americans, I was dead. I know that's true. There was the United States fighting communism and I was the person who said we should limit the power of the military and try to disarm the world and get along with Russia. Korea was the critical element in Nixon's victory. I think that with it, he didn't need his smear tactics; he would have won anyway without character assassination and misrepresentation of my record. I had been all over the country talking about the United Nations and what it could do to avert war—and here we were at war in Korea under a United Nations flag. I talked about world cooperation—and men of many nations were killing one another in Korea. I had warned about the arms race—and now we were rushing guns to Korea. I said we had to live together—and men were dying together.

It was her record, not how Nixon characterized it, that made her vulnerable.

That is, however, precisely why we must—in revisiting the 1950 California Senate race—do what Greg Mitchell recommends but fails to do in *Tricky Dick and the Pink Lady*: distinguish the question of what the reasonable foreign policy was at that moment from the question of what we make of Richard Nixon's political tactics and what they foretell about his later campaigns. While I do not demand latter-day confessions by those who were wrong about the danger of communism, I refuse to cheer Mitchell's late hit at a figure who, for all his tragic sins of character, was so defiantly and loudly right. Nasty, but right. ♦

The Rules, Time-tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr. Right, *by Ellen Fein and Sherrie Schneider, has sold more than a million copies. As might be expected from its title, the book has been popular among young, single women. We at* The Weekly Standard *are told that a certain young, single woman—lately the subject of much journalistic attention—has read* The Rules*; indeed, we have acquired her annotated copy of the book. The following precepts are quoted directly from the book. The material in brackets was hand written in the margins of the copy we obtained.*

The Rules

Rule 1
Be a "Creature Unlike Any Other"
[Be better-looking, for instance, and much, much younger.]

Rule 2
Don't Talk to a Man First (and Don't Ask Him to Dance)
[or hug you on CNN]

Rule 3
Don't Stare at Men or Talk Too Much
[to special prosecutors, in particular]

Rule 4
Don't Meet Him Halfway or Go Dutch on a Date
[French, however, is okay.]

Rule 5
Don't Call Him and Rarely Return His Calls
[if your recording equipment isn't in working order]

Rule 6
Always End Phone Calls First
[so he can say the phrase "hung up on me" without perjuring himself]

Rule 7
Don't Accept a Saturday Night Date after Wednesday
[specifically Wednesday, January 21, 1998]

Rule 8
Fill Up Your Time before the Date
[Have breakfast with Bill Richardson, go for a car ride with Vernon Jordan, get a job at Revlon.]

Rule 9
How to Act on Dates 1, 2 and 3
. . . In fact all you really have to do on the first three dates is show up, relax, pretend you're an actress . . .
[Sharon Stone comes to mind.]

Rule 10
How to Act on Dates 4 through Commitment Time
On the first three dates, you showed up and acted sweet. On the fourth date, you can show more of yourself.
[Enough said.]

Rule 11
Always End the Date First
[unless you're interrupted by a Secret Service agent]

Rule 12
Stop Dating Him if He Doesn't Buy You a Romantic Gift for Your Birthday or Valentine's Day
[A Pentagon top-secret clearance counts.]

Rule 13
Don't See Him More than Once or Twice a Week
[Give the other interns a chance.]

Rule 14
No More than Casual Kissing on the First Date
[As to what it is that's being kissed . . .]

Rule 15
Don't Rush into Sex
[Consult legal and public-relations experts for the technical definition of the term "sex."]

Rule 16
Don't Tell Him What to Do
[That's Hillary's job.]

Rule 17
Let Him Take the Lead
[You take the fall.]

Rule 18
Don't Expect a Man to Change or Try to Change Him
[This is what pollsters are for.]

Rule 19
Don't Open Up Too Fast
[Ken Starr may offer you immunity and a CBS Movie of the Week deal.]

Rule 20
Be Honest but Mysterious
[Check with Vernon about this rule's fine points.]

Rule 21
Accentuate the Positive and Other Rules for Personal Ads
[Also explore the possibility of getting free media exposure.]

Rule 22
Don't Live with a Man (or Leave Your Things in His Apartment)
[or his DNA in yours]

Rule 23
Don't Date a Married Man
[Consult legal and public-relations experts for the technical definitions of the terms "date" and "married."]

Rule 24
Slowly Involve Him in Your Family
[including your family's lawyer]