the weekly
Standard

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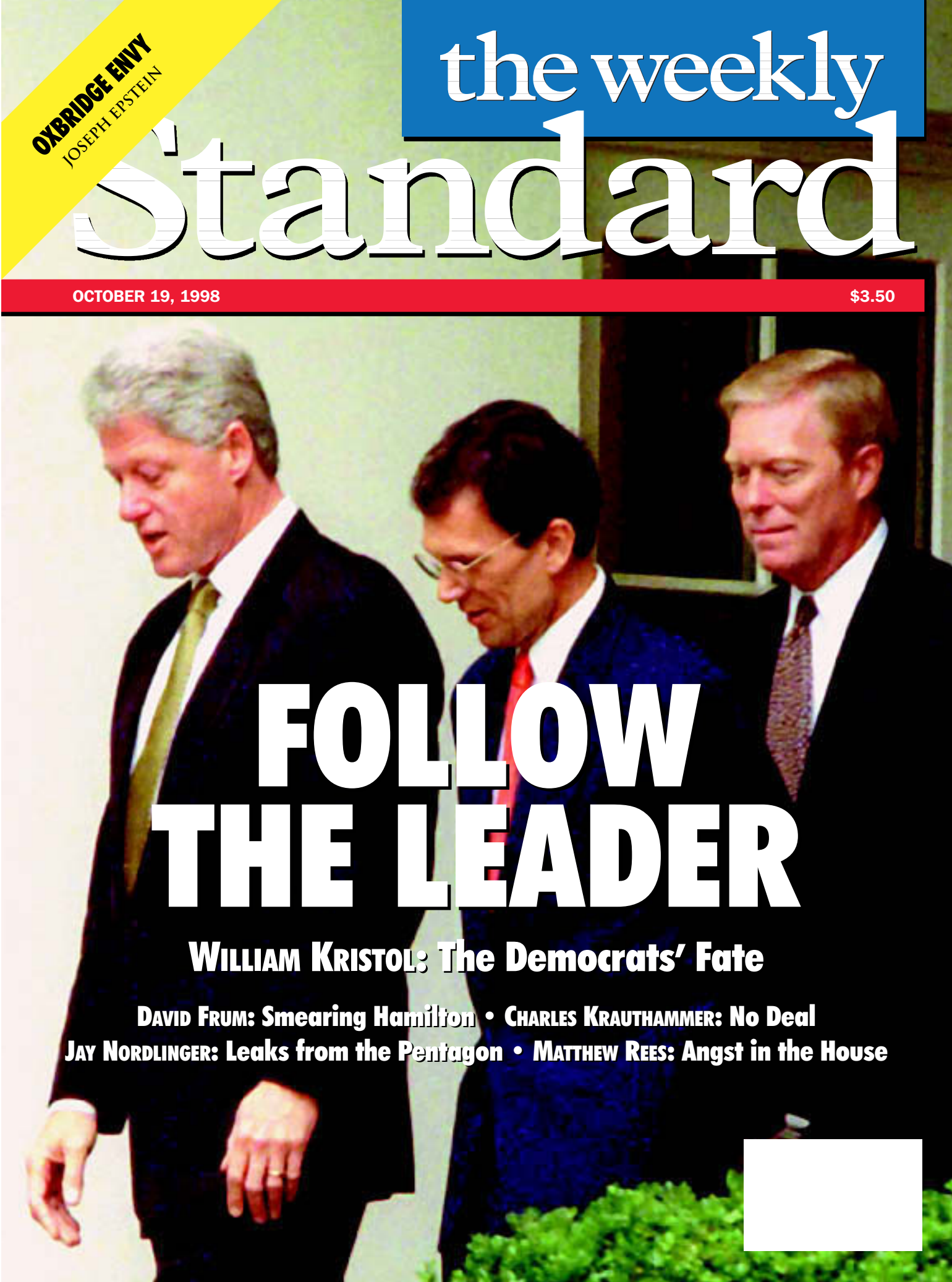

FOLLOW THE LEADER

WILLIAM KRISTOL: The Democrats' Fate

DAVID FRUM: Smearing Hamilton • CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: No Deal
JAY NORDLINGER: Leaks from the Pentagon • MATTHEW REES: Angst in the House

the weekly Standard

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Books & Arts

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

The President's Jokes

Who says Bill Clinton's not a lucky man? The House Judiciary Committee, in its release of supplemental materials from Kenneth Starr's inquiry, publishes any number of embarrassing confidences of Monica Lewinsky, but it delicately and prudishly "redacts" the equivalent material from the president, citing "privacy."

Case in point: Monica and the president swapped off-color jokes. Monica's ethnic humor makes it into the transcript. But the president's JAP joke (as in Jewish American Princess) is blacked out by the Judiciary committee. Let's roll the tape:

"MS. LEWINSKY: I told [the president] this joke my dad just told me. . . . Why do Jewish men like to watch pornos backwards?

"MS. TRIPP: Pornos backwards? I have no idea.

"MS. LEWINSKY: So that they can watch the prostitute give back the money. (Laughter.)

"MS. TRIPP: You idiot. Did he laugh?

"MS. LEWINSKY: Yeah, he laughed. And then he . . ."

and at this point in the transcript, a long joke-length section, no doubt reflecting poorly on the liberal sensitivities of the president, has been deleted with magic marker.

This is the second time that Bill Clinton has had a close encounter with politically dangerous humor. In 1991, Clinton was swapping jokes with his Democratic primary opponent Bob Kerrey. The exchange was partially captured on C-SPAN, and Chris Matthews wrote up Kerrey's half of the exchange for the *San Francisco Examiner*—a crude joke about lesbians and Jerry Brown—damaging Kerrey's chances for the 1992 Democratic presidential nomination.

What wasn't reported at the time was that Clinton told the first dirty joke but only Kerrey got caught. According to Matthews, Mike McCurry, who was then Kerrey's press secretary, urged his boss to expose Clinton, but Kerrey said, "I'm not gonna rat on a buddy." Clinton, ever slippery, remarked of Kerrey's troubles at the time: "As far as I'm concerned, it was an off-the-record conversation." No wonder.

And there's still more on the Lewinsky-Tripp tapes. According to Lewinsky, Clinton told her "the Jewish American princess and apple one." This somehow doesn't sound likely to be a very presidential joke, though The Scrapbook must admit it has never been privy to this particular joke and may be mistaken. Linda Tripp tells Monica that President Clinton "and Bruce Lindsey tell raunchy jokes all the time to each other. That's not a big deal." But a duty is owed to the historical record. Readers (or Bruce Lindsey) are invited to mail in the one about the apple to Scrapbook, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. Or fax to 202-463-6656.

The Wages of Sid (I)

This past February, Gene Lyons, a columnist for the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* and the most zombie-like member of the Clinton cult, went on *Meet the Press* to clear up a few misconceptions about what he called the president's "totally innocent" relationship with Monica Lewinsky. Far from a seducer of interns, Lyons explained to Tim Russert, Clinton is merely "the Alpha male of the United States of America," a man so sexually appealing to females that "a certain irreducible number of women are going to act batty around him." Some of them go completely bananas. Monica Lewinsky, for instance—who, Lyons said, had been transformed by the president's sex appeal into "someone rather like the woman who followed David Letterman around."

That would be Margaret Ray, whose career as a professional celebrity stalker came to an abrupt end last week when she kneeled in front of an oncoming train in western Colorado. Ray's sad death seems as good an excuse as any to take a closer look at Gene Lyons's comments on *Meet the Press*. Monica as stalker? Clinton as hapless stalkee? Where could Lyons possibly have come up with ideas that ludicrous?

If you guessed Sidney Blumenthal, you must be a close reader of this magazine. (Or else you know Sid personally.) Thanks to recently released grand-jury testimony, we now know that shortly before Lyons went on *Meet the Press*, Clinton himself was laying a similar explanation on Blumenthal. "Monica Lewinsky came at me and made a sexual demand on me," Blumenthal says the president told him. Blumenthal warned the president to stay away from Lewinsky, but the big-hearted Clinton protested that the cold shoulder is easier said than given. "It's very difficult for me to do that," Clinton explained. "I want to help people."

Scrapbook

Blumenthal also wants to help people, especially shills for the White House like Gene Lyons. According to someone who knows them both, Blumenthal's explanation quickly reached Lyons, and then, by the magic of network television, millions of Americans who happened to be watching NBC on Sunday morning. The left-wing conspiracy creaks onward.

The Wages of Sid (II)

Speaking of Sidney Blumenthal: For all that most working journalists in Washington professed to loathe their former colleague when he went to work for Bill and Hillary, they sure did allow themselves to be manipulated by him last February.

Subpoenaed by Kenneth Starr, Blumenthal disingenuously whipped up a frenzy over endangered civil liberties in America—and most of the press uncritically took his word for it. Thanks to Blumenthal's agitprop, the White House had one of its few good PR weeks. The *New York Times* headlined its story "President's Adviser Ordered to Divulge Contact With Press" and quoted Blumenthal as saying his subpoena represented "an outrageous attempt to silence all reporting that might be skeptical or critical of Ken Starr." Clinton spokesman Mike McCurry weighed in that Starr's questioning of Blumenthal was "potentially dangerous."

And Blumenthal poured it on when he emerged from his grand-jury testimony on February 26. "I never imagined," he hyperventilated, "that in America I would be hauled before a federal grand jury to answer questions about my conversations with members of the media. But today, I was forced to answer questions about conversations, as part of my job, with the *New York Times*, CNN, CBS, *Time* magazine, *U.S. News*, the *New York Daily News*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *New York Observer,* and there may have been a few others."

It was a lie. Blumenthal was asked before the grand jury if he had ever distributed White House talking points on Monica Lewinsky to "anyone outside the White House." Lawyers typically advise their clients to give "yes" or "no" answers under oath. But Blumenthal was warming up for his fascism-in-America press conference later that afternoon, and so volunteered this gratuitously loquacious answer: "If reporters called me or I spoke with reporters, I would tell them to call the DNC to get those talking points, and those included news organizations ranging from CNN, CBS, ABC, *New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, *Chicago Tribune*, *New York Observer*, *L.A. Times*." Yes, Sidney volunteered the names of all those news organizations. He wasn't "forced to answer questions about conversations" with any of them.

It's easy to sympathize with the anger of grand jurors when they saw Blumenthal's dishonest performance after his February questioning. When he returned on June 25, the foreperson took the unusual step of rebuking him:

> The work that we are doing here is very serious, and the integrity to our work as representatives of the people of the United States is very important to us.
>
> We are very concerned about that fact that during your last visit an inaccurate representation of the events that happened was retold on the steps of the courthouse.
>
> We would hope that you will understand the seriousness of our work, and not in any way use it for any purpose other than the purpose that is intended, and that you would really represent us the way that events happened in this room.

Blumenthal responded: "I appreciate your statement." Yeah, right. But that's Sid: dishonest to the last drop.

Casual

Family Tripp

"All Clinton, all the time," is how the editors sometimes jokingly refer to our extensive coverage of the presidential scandal at The Weekly Standard. No wonder America—if the Democrats are to be believed—is sick of hearing about Monica Lewinsky.

But as sick as the public may be of hearing about this business, there can be few who are as tired of *seeing* it as I am: in particular, of seeing Bill Clinton's face at very high magnification on my computer screen, as I compose cover after cover relating to Scandal Lewinsky.

In an attempt to escape the terrible visage of the Adulterer in Chief, the other Saturday I took my wife and children out to the 55th Annual Waterford Homes Tour & Crafts Exhibit. As in past years, the festival delighted us. The streets and open spaces of this historic village are the perfect setting for Civil War reenactments, bluegrass performances, folk dancing, and displays of arts and crafts.

Planning to return to the festival on Sunday, we'd arranged to spend the night in a log cabin near Middleburg. On the way there, we drove down winding roads lined with stone fences. We arrived in the early evening, feeling about as far from Washington as you can get.

We had fruit and cheese and a glass of wine for dinner by a roaring fire. Utterly relaxed, I picked up the *Gästebuch* and browsed through the entries, many of them written—as I might have predicted from our host's accent and the spelling of "guestbook"—in German.

The entries I could read perfectly echoed our sentiments about the cabin, though they used up an extensive inventory of clichés:

> It was great! FABULOUS!
> It is a little piece of heaven!
> This is paradise!
> Loved the cabin—a perfect retreat from the city.

One, from some months back, was faintly suggestive:

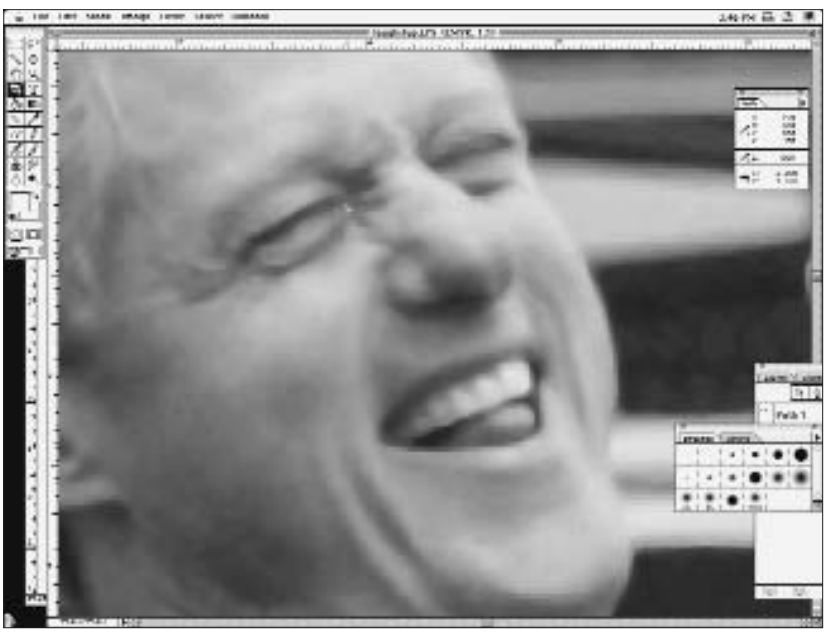
> I think we came here searching for something and here is where we found it. We found love in our hearts, care in our eyes, and that 'spark' in our touch. This cabin will always be home to us both. Thank you for what will be a great memory! K&T

And I was intrigued by the second-to-last entry, written by someone who really did seem to have found a needed refuge:

> 23 Aug. 98
> Your delightful cabin in the woods brought back fond memories of our homes in Vienna & Graz & the wonderful experiences of our childhood.
>
> Thank you for your gracious hospitality, particularly on such short notice! Overnighting in relative seclusion in your lovely cabin was a true escape from the scrutiny of everyday life, these days.
>
> Thanks again, we hope to return for a longer stay!
>
> *Alles Gute*,
> Linda Tripp

Who knows whether our predecessor in the cabin was *the* Linda Tripp? Underneath the signature was something illegible that could have been "& Lanidri." What I can say for certain, though, is that when I read this, the cigar I was smoking—my favorite brand, always dependable, bought at the tobacconist in Old Towne Alexandria with this much-anticipated getaway in mind—suddenly no longer tasted quite the same.

Kent Bain



Embracing Cloning

The day we see the first child born through the process of cloning will shatter the myths and hysteria that Adam Wolfson ascribes to this idea ("Liberalism and Cloning," Oct. 5). And with them will be gone the fear that our technology has outpaced our ethics. What will be left is the knowledge that the reasoning mind has understood the world around it and has used that understanding to create benefits for everyone.

This realization will be accompanied by the knowledge that only a social system based on the principle of protecting freedom of action will yield such benefits.

William Van Nest
Wayne, NJ

Nixon and Clinton

David Frum writes that "Nixon stonewalled because he knew that full disclosure of his role in the Watergate burglary would lead to the exposure of even more glaring illegalities: the wiretapping of journalists and mistrusted staffers, the illegal campaign donations, the Ellsberg break-in" ("Yes, It *Is* Like Watergate," Sept. 28).

From the massive record about Watergate (including the last batch of Watergate tapes that was released in 1996, thanks to the Nixon family) we know: that the president did not have a role in the Watergate burglary; that he probably did not know about the Ellsberg break-in until the spring of 1973; and that wiretapping and campaign donations rarely, if ever, came up in the White House discussions about the Watergate investigation. And yet Frum joins Clinton attorney David Kendall—who also recently accused President Nixon of being involved in the Watergate burglary—in making Watergate appear far, far worse than it was. Why?

One clue may be that Frum's analysis, like most from the Left, fails to mention Watergate's sine qua non: Vietnam. In certain respects, Watergate began with the commander-in-chief's justifiable anger at Daniel Ellsberg's massive, illegal, wartime leaking; it ended in the anti-war Left's bacchanal at the president's demise. Since The Weekly Standard also has persistently underrated President Nixon's wartime challenges, its continued attacks on him may well have ideological roots comparable to the Left's. After all, Nixon revisionism would inevitably lead to Vietnam revisionism—and, as President Nixon always used to say, during that difficult war in that tumultuous time, the neo-cons were "squishy."

John H. Taylor
Executive Director
Richard Nixon
Library & Birthplace Foundation
Yorba Linda, CA

David Frum responds: ***The first illegal wiretappings by the Nixon administration were ordered as early as 1969. Exactly which illegal break-ins were ordered by Nixon will always be something of a mystery—thanks in very large part to the famous 18-minute erasure in the White House tapes. But there can be no doubt that Nixon ordered, approved, and illegally raised the money to fund a large and illegal scheme to harass and spy on his domestic opponents. Were those opponents serving bad causes? Yes, of course. All the more dishonor to President Nixon for aiding those causes by wrecking his administration with his lawlessness and deceit.***

Finally, John Taylor might want to reflect that the practice of seeking out a personal motive for every criticism was one of the habits that clouded Nixon's judgment and destroyed his presidency. Does he really want to follow that closely in the late president's footsteps?

Love of God and Country

Charles Krauthammer has great credibility, but I beg to differ with his psychological analogy of Presidents Nixon and Clinton ("The Solipsist-in-Chief," Sept. 28).

There are very great differences between Nixon and Clinton, notwithstanding the many similarities of their respective scandals. Nixon committed impeachable offenses for which he expressed sincere regret to the nation. He was never a narcissist or "solipsist." He was a devoted husband and father, and despite his egregious errors he loved this country and did not put his personal comfort ahead of the well-being of America and his family.

Nancy Jancourtz
Brooklyn, NY

Unimpeachable Offenses

The editors seem to be indulging in premature glee ("Impeach the Perjurer," Sept. 28). It looks as if the masses have better judgment about the Clinton matter than Kenneth Starr, who had no warrant to concern himself with Monica Lewinsky in the first place (she admits that she started the "flirting" that initiated the affair). The Starr report reveals Clinton as a philanderer and a liar. Of course he lied. In such a situation every man, unless he is a poolroom boaster loving cheap display, should lie. It's too bad Clinton got mixed up with these flap-tongued bimbos, who look more and more like mercenary harpies, but I can't believe that he has done any great damage to the presidency or to the country.

I did not vote for Clinton as a Boy Scout or as a role-model for children, and concerning impeachment, Clinton is not guilty of treason, accepting bribes, or high crimes. He says he has sinned, but there is no constitutional punishment for sinning. The silly congressional Republicans ought to forget

Correspondence

about their foolish fuss and try to earn their salaries by doing something positive for the nation.

NORMAN A. BRITTIN
AUBURN, AL

Scholastic Porn

Matt Labash does a fine job of skewering the recent phenomenon of academic pandering to the porn industry ("Among the Pornographers," Sept. 21). It is indeed a strange and unsettling terrain to negotiate. I was reminded of the notorious incident at the State University of New York's New Paltz College that was alluded to by Labash.

In November of 1997, the women's-studies department of SUNY-New Paltz threw a weekend seminar under the guise of "exploring human sexuality." Of course, it was never intended to be an objective academic study of the subject. In practice, it was an unabashed, celebratory porn-fest with posturing academics indulging their tawdry sexual curiosities under the aegis of serious scholarship. With taxpayers' dollars and facilities, the promoters featured all manner of alternative sexual inclinations, the least objectionable of which was homosexuality. Young minds were exposed to forums about the use of sex toys, and any taxpayer's daughter was welcome to attend a lecture entitled "Sage, Sane, Consensual S&M." (Perhaps sage and consensual are applicable, but it's proponents are apparently unaware that the American Psychiatric Association categorizes sadomasochism as a mental illness and that Medicaid will pay for its treatment.) After the lecture, students were invited to spend their book money on S&M gear sold in the lobby. Surprisingly, a spirited public outcry ensued, and the college president, Roger Bowen, displayed his sense of proportion by defending his institution's bold intellectual experiment and by contemptuously labeling his critics "philistines."

Of course Bowen weathered the storm and still occupies his esteemed position. A year later, the tax-paying public responds to the subject of academic degeneracy with a surge of apathy. The issue in the SUNY system has completely subsided until the next time the real philistines further test the boundaries of academic freedom.

STEPHEN HERUBIN
ALBANY, NY

No Way on the Third Way

I was dismayed by a statement included in Irwin M. Stelzer's piece "There's No Way Like the Third Way" (Sept. 21). In the penultimate paragraph, he writes: "But the Right is hardly in a position to dismiss the Third Way as an interference with a perfectly functioning allocation of rewards in proportion to merit. Republicans propose to lower inheritance taxes, to give the sons and daughters of the wealthy an even bigger head start in life; they are unoffended by universities that grant preferential admission to the offspring of alumni; and they systematically refuse to recognize that when markets fail to function—as is the case in the presence of monopoly power or environmental degradation—government has a corrective role to play."

This sounds like the class-warfare drivel one finds in ultra-liberal publications, not in a conservative weekly. Most conservatives regard the estate tax as the "unfairest of them all," in that it involves double taxation. It is immoral and economically counterproductive.

Surely Stelzer could have found a better example to make his point, such as corporate welfare (the ethanol subsidy comes to mind).

W. D. SEYFRIED
AUSTIN, TX

Irwin M. Stelzer addresses the important issue of the need for an economic perspective. He aptly demonstrates how the Third Way, which attempts to balance the command and free-market economies, has consistently failed. Moreover, he indicates some of the failure mechanisms, such as: Sweden's inability to maintain incentives; the costs of Germany's worker absentee rate; and Japan's impoverishment of its consumers. However, by not providing a theoretical perspective he gives no insight as to why the Third Way leads us astray, or what the alternative should be.

Thus, Stelzer attacks the free-market system as not distributing rewards fairly and preventing "solutions," such as inheritance taxes, monopoly control, and environmental protection. I doubt he is aware of the case for the free market made in *Human Action* by Ludwig von Mises. Rather, Stelzer merely presumes the socialist outlook that all of us have been educated to take—that a fair distribution should be somewhat equal, that there is a serious problem of monopoly prices, and that environmental problems cannot be handled within a legal system that respects private property. But logic shows that there is little doubt that the motivation of reward through merit is a far better provider than that of reward by political means.

Government has hampered the economy by removing incentives for working while providing incentives for not doing so. However, these losses pale in comparison with the social costs of punishing responsibility while rewarding irresponsibility. Inheritance taxation goes one level lower, by attacking part of the framework needed to support civilization. The consideration has to be: Who owns one's property (and life), the individual or the state?

ALLEN WEINGARTEN
MORRISTOWN, NJ

Correction

In an article last week ("The Cabinet He Deserves," Oct. 12), Ms. Patricia Dempsey was mistakenly identified as the mother of former Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy's children. We apologize for the error.

THE EDITORS

THE WEEKLY STANDARD
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the weekly Standard

"When You Take an Oath, You Must Keep It"

Last Thursday, for only the third time in the nation's history, the House of Representatives approved the beginning of a presidential impeachment inquiry. At issue was Bill Clinton's grotesque and illegal manipulation, in the Monica Lewinsky matter, of the English language, the Oval Office, and the executive and judicial branches of the federal government generally.

All 227 Republicans present in the House chamber voted in favor of this necessary inquiry, Resolution 581. They were joined by 31 of the House's 206 Democrats. Among those 31 were the only two congressional Democrats who have so far proved honorable enough to call on the president to resign—Gene Taylor of Mississippi and Paul McHale of Pennsylvania. McHale, for his part, was the only House Democrat, during Thursday's two hours of debate, to offer unqualified criticism of Clinton's appalling conduct.

Because he refused to excuse the inexcusable, and because he spoke for principle and not for party, Rep. McHale also spoke for this magazine.

In the House of Representatives
Thursday morning, October 8, 1998

Mr. Speaker:

Franklin Roosevelt once said that the presidency "is preeminently a place of moral leadership."

I want my strong criticism of President Clinton to be placed in context. I voted for President Clinton in 1992 and 1996. I believed him to be the "Man from Hope" as he was depicted in his 1992 campaign video. I have voted for more than three-fourths of the president's legislative agenda—and would do so again. My blunt criticism of the president has nothing to do with policy. Moreover, the president has always treated me with courtesy and respect, and he has been more than responsive to the concerns of my constituents.

Unfortunately, the president's misconduct has now made immaterial my past support or agreement with him on issues. Last January 17, the president of the United States attempted to cover up a sordid and irresponsible relationship by repeated deceit—under oath—in a federal civil-rights suit.

Contrary to his later public statement, his answers were not "legally accurate"; they were intentionally and blatantly false. He allowed his lawyer to make arguments to the court based on an affidavit that the president knew to be false.

The president later deceived the American people—and belatedly admitted the truth only when confronted, some seven months later, by a mountain of irrefutable evidence. I am convinced that the president would otherwise have allowed his false testimony to stand in perpetuity.

What is at stake is really the rule of law.

When the president took an oath to tell the truth, he was no different at that point from any other citizen, both as a matter of morality and as a matter of legal obligation. We cannot excuse that kind of misconduct because we happen to belong to the same party as the president, or agree with him on issues, or feel tragically that the removal of the president from office would be enormously painful for the United States of America.

The question is whether or not we will say to all our citizens, including the president of the United States: When you take an oath, you must keep it.

Having deliberately provided false testimony under oath, the president, in my judgment, forfeited his right to office. It was with a deep sense of sadness that I called for his resignation.

By his own misconduct, the president displayed his character and defined it badly. His actions were not "inappropriate." They were predatory, reckless, breathtakingly arrogant for a man already a defendant in a sexual-harassment suit—whether or not that suit was politically motivated. And if, in disgust or dismay, we were to sweep aside the president's immoral and illegal conduct, what dangerous precedent would we set for the abuse of power by some future president of the United States?

We cannot define the president's character. But we must define our nation's. I urge an affirmative vote on the resolution.

—Rep. Paul McHale
Democrat of Pennsylvania

The Democrats' Fate

by William Kristol

The Democrats are doomed.

They're doomed because Bill Clinton is their leader, and because they are Bill Clinton's party. On Thursday, October 8, only 31 House Democrats broke with Clinton to support an inquiry that would explore "fully and completely whether sufficient grounds exist for the House of Representatives to exercise its constitutional power to impeach William Jefferson Clinton."

But Monday, October 5, was the day the Democratic party died. On that day, every Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee voted against the full and complete inquiry. Not one of them was moved when an old-style Democrat, chief counsel David Schippers, explained that acts of perjury and obstruction of justice by the president—a man who has taken an oath to "preserve, protect, and defend" the law—cannot be allowed. Indeed, when Schippers concluded by speaking briefly as "a citizen" and invoked Sir Thomas More on respect for the law, the committee's Democrats complained that such talk was out of order and should be stricken from the record. (They prevailed.)

Also on that Monday, the Democrats' counsel, Abbe Lowell, dismissed the idea that lying under oath and obstruction of justice should be thought impeachable offenses. The key question, he explained, is not whether Clinton's statements "were or were not truthful," but rather "what were their context, what were their impact, and what were their subject matter." Meanwhile, Democratic leaders Dick Gephardt and Tom Daschle trooped down to the White House to stand behind Clinton in a display of solidarity—united in a manufactured fight over a possible government shutdown.

There will be a price to pay for all this on Election Day. But Democrats have already paid a high price for Bill Clinton. In the first six years of his presidency, that price has been the loss of longstanding majorities in the Senate and House, and in governorships and state legislatures. After the voting this November 3, the Democrats are likely to be down to about 40 senators and fewer than 200 House members, their lowest totals in 70 years. And the devastation will continue at the state and local levels.

Thanks to Bill Clinton, Democrats are no longer the majority party in America. He has managed to undo the political accomplishment of Franklin Roosevelt. Toni Morrison can worry all she wants about "feral Republicans" and their "sustained, bloody, arrogant coup d'état." But the truth is Republicans will never be able to inflict as much damage on the causes that she and other liberals allegedly believe in as Bill Clinton has done.

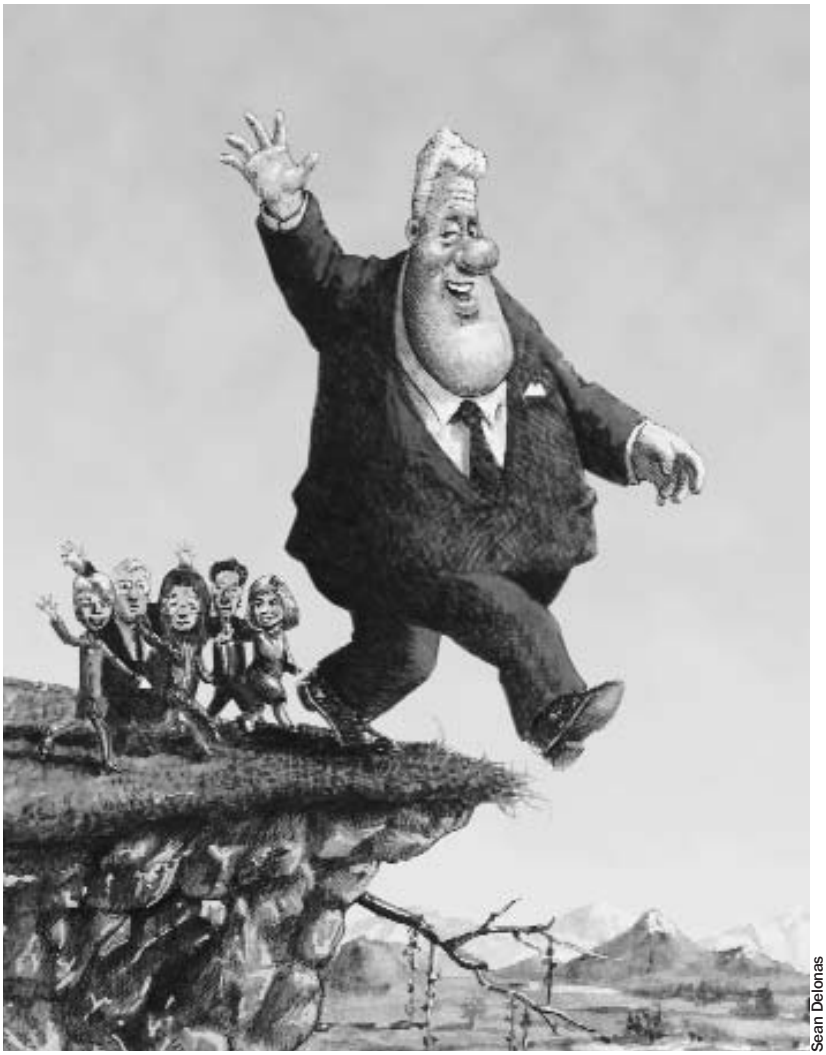
And what will happen after November 3 if Clinton is given two more years? That should be the true Democratic nightmare. After Republicans do well at the ballot box, the House will move to impeach Clinton. The Democrats will presumably stick with him, reassured by opinion surveys that may continue to show most Americans opposed to his removal. There will be charges of partisanship on both sides. Democrats may even do some short-term damage to Republican approval ratings.

Still, for the next couple of months, the face of the Republican party will be Henry Hyde. Arguments for impeachment will be made by a traditional Democrat, Schippers, who will remind Americans why the Democrats were once the majority party. The faces of today's Democratic party will be the partisan John Conyers and the glib Barney Frank. And their arguments will be the sophistic legalisms of Abbe Lowell and the White House. In the debates, Republicans will cite old-fashioned Democrats like Jerome Zeifman, who was chief counsel to the Judiciary Committee at the time of the Watergate hearings. Zeifman wrote recently that Clinton "has personally brought his office to scandal and disrepute. He has lied repeatedly to the American people, has lied under oath in the Paula Jones case, has committed perjury several times before a criminal grand jury."

Democrats will have to concede, if only *en passant* (as they did last week), that Clinton's behavior was disgraceful and that he lied about it. But Democrats defending Clinton will then have to explain why such behavior should not result in impeachment—why, as Bill Buckley has put it, "who says A need not say B." Nonetheless, by the end of the year, the House will impeach Bill Clinton.

From there, the case goes to the Senate. Assume that Senate Democrats indicate they will stick with Clinton. Assume public opinion has not moved dramatically as a result of the impeachment hearings and debates. Assume that Senate Republicans fail to persuade enough Democrats to convict the president—or that they decide to negotiate some sort of censure or rebuke. In some sense, Democrats will have won. But they also will have made the decimation of the Democratic party more certain. For then Clinton will remain president—an impeached president, still in office, still the leader and spokesman and representative of the Democratic party, saved only by the exertions of that party.

It will be as if Nixon had remained president



Sean Delonas

through 1976. If he had—if he had not been driven from office in 1974—Republican losses in the '74 congressional elections might have been diminished. But the damage in '75 and '76 would have been far greater: no fresh start for the party under President Ford; Nixon, the incumbent president, trying to hand the succession to his favorite, John Connally; Nixon the honored guest at the '76 GOP convention, that year's nominee having to pledge a degree of continuity with and fealty to him.

In fact, Republicans almost won in 1976, and they came back strong in '78 and '80. But that was possible only because Nixon had resigned (owing in part to Republican insistence). Richard Nixon was not at the 1976 and 1980 Republican conventions. His ghost did not hover over the party. That's what permitted Reagan and Reaganism to come forward. And it's surely no accident that 1980's most disastrous candidate was Nixon's designee: Connally.

Nixon went and stayed gone. But Bill Clinton will still be there. The president who had sex with an intern in the Oval Office and then lied about it repeatedly, both under oath and to the public, will never have been repudiated by his own party. Republicans won't ever have to suggest that the Democratic party is tolerant of adultery, indifferent to perjury. This will suggest itself—and this is the burden the Democrats will have to bear once they have kept Clinton in office.

Lacking any Republican support—as the GOP will have rendered a formal judgment against the president's fitness for office—everything Clinton does over the next two years will reinforce the identification of the man with his party. Clinton's policies will move left as he seeks to ensure Democratic support (which will tend to undermine his approval rating). The scandal won't go away, what with the Paula Jones case possibly coming back to life or indictments flowing from the Kathleen Willey matter. And there will have been no resignations on principle by Clinton's cabinet officers and staff; almost no calls from Democratic officeholders for Clinton to resign; no stands like those of Howard Baker and James Buckley during Watergate that would serve to separate the party from its law-breaking standard-bearer. So as we move through 1999 and 2000, the Democratic party will be held ever more responsible for keeping before us an ever more disgraced president.

At some point—perhaps as early as November 4, perhaps after Clinton's impeachment at the end of the year, perhaps in early or mid-1999—Democratic leaders will see this horrible future stretching before them. They will realize that they are locked in an embrace with the agent of their doom. Then, perhaps, they will try to free themselves from that embrace. They will decide that Clinton does need to go, after all. They will try to pull back from the abyss, in an effort to save themselves rather than their president. But it will be too late.

William Kristol is editor and publisher of THE WEEKLY STANDARD. *His pieces "Clinton's Fate" and "Clinton Is the Issue" appeared on May 4 and May 25.*

No Deal

by Charles Krauthammer

At first it was just panicked Democrats looking for some way to get off the impeachment hook without appearing to exonerate the president. But then the wise men—that motley crew of eminent fixers and formers (Former Secretaries of this, Former Counsel to that)—weighed in. And that's when you knew for sure it was a terrible idea.

It all began with Joe Lieberman's speech on the floor of the Senate on September 4, the first major Democratic denunciation of the president. After that, no Democrat dared duck or defend. But since none wanted to impeach, there had to be a middle way.

The first idea was censure, a resolution of Congress criticizing the president and putting its official stamp on the national verdict that he done wrong. It was the briar patch the president passionately pleaded he not be thrown into. Unspun, it was his most fervent hope for a soft landing. It was therefore talked up incessantly by Democrats and others looking for the easy way out.

When the Republicans wouldn't buy, the ante was upped. George Stephanopoulos floated "censure plus": The congressional parking ticket would be accompanied by a fine. Presumably this would give weight and substance to the gossamer of mere censure.

There are two problems with this proposal. First, it is flatly unconstitutional. The Congress cannot levy a fine on anyone. That is a bill of attainder, forbidden by Article I, sections 9 and 10, of the Constitution. And second, there is the practical issue. The Clintons are not just penniless. They are millions of dollars in debt. There is no way they can pay a fine. However, they certainly have enough rich friends who could pay it for them. Censure plus therefore means, in reality, censure plus a couple of Clinton phone calls to find a fatcat to pay the bill.

Not good. So the search for an even better middle way continued, culminating in the ultimate, the Platonic ideal of sage moderation. It came with the imprimatur of a wise man eminent, wholly irreproachable, and of such advanced age (85) as to have no possible personal interest in the matter. This was no mere Leon Panetta or Lloyd Cutler or Howard Baker. This was former president Gerald Ford.

Ford weighed in for what can only be dubbed "censure squared": that the president be ordered to the well of the House before a joint session of Congress where he would be personally and publicly rebuked.

Ford is right that this would have a dramatic effect. It would be televised. And would end up as the single most remembered moment of the Clinton presidency, condign punishment for a president who so lusted for a legacy—any legacy—that he cared not a whit what it might consist of. If Ford is followed, it will consist of this one humiliating video clip.

II

Yet this too will not do. Condign it might be, but constitutional it is not. Congress has no right to order the president to go anywhere, let alone appear before it in the well of the House. For Clinton to come, he would have to voluntarily submit to the summons of Congress. No president should do that. Clinton, of course, would, as a way to save his own skin. It would be yet another example, indeed the paradigmatic example, of a career spent putting personal welfare first—ahead of the office and of the country.

The office cannot and ought not be so demeaned and diminished. Which is why the censure of a president has not been tried since 1834. Three years later that censure (of Andrew Jackson by the Senate over a dispute about the Bank of the United States) was not just revoked by the Senate but expunged from the record.

Ours, after all, is not a parliamentary democracy. If we ever have one, the Ford proposal would be a splendid way to reprimand a prime minister short of canning him. But we don't have a prime minister. We have a president. Under a system that has succeeded for two centuries in preventing tyrannical rule by the brilliant and unequaled device of separating power, the legislature has no role in judging the chief executive.

With the single exception of impeachment. If the president acts criminally, the Congress may remove him. There is no provision for anything else. Removal is the job of Congress. Rebuke is the job of those who chose him: the people.

The proposals for censure or censure plus or censure squared are an attempt to satisfy what is called the proportionality issue. In this particular scandal, it is argued, the level of offense simply does not merit the remedy of removal. That may be right. In which case, the legislature should cease and desist and let the government go on.

Censure is an exercise in calibration. But the Founders would have nothing to do with calibrated critiques or proportional remonstrances, with slaps on the wrist or slaps in the face. The job of the legislature is not to correct or remonstrate or improve the chief executive. Its job is to remove him—or stick to legislating.

The Ford version of censure, moreover, presents an additional problem. It is, dare I say, aesthetic. Ford seeks to improve on censure, a mere piece of paper, with the high theater of a public congressional rebuke. It is this very theatricality which is disturbing. On the one hand, it is the kind of thing one expects in a banana republic, or perhaps in a banana republic as imagined by Woody Allen, with the dictator hauled before the baying assembly for a tomato throw. Ours would no doubt be solemn, with homilies hurled instead of fruit and with grave voice-overs by network anchors intoning about the grandeur of the moment. But given the sordidness of the whole affair, this remedy has more the feel of an improvised exorcism.

But it is cheap in yet another way. It lends itself perfectly to Clintonian cynicism. It brings to mind two great moments in ostentatious (self-) flagellation: Henry II having himself flogged for the murder of Thomas à Becket and Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV standing in the snow for three days to beg absolution from Pope Gregory VII. These are remembered not as exercises in true repentance, but as supremely manipulative acts of political theater by rulers desperate to regain legitimacy.

III

There is yet a third problem with censure in all its varieties. The problem is neither constitutional nor aesthetic but practical. The practical effect of censuring Clinton will be to establish a precedent. In any future presidential scandal or violation of the public trust, Congress will be called upon to calibrate some punishment, to judge the president through censure or rebuke or whatever combination of humiliation and/or fine it deems fitting. The effect would be to gravely alter the balance of power between the branches.

It will surely weaken the presidency, yet, ironically, it will not weaken *this* president. On the contrary, it will save him. The point of censure is to mark the official *end* of the Clinton scandal and signal a return to normal business—which is precisely why Clinton so desires it.

Look: Clinton today stands already humiliated and ridiculed. No private conversation, no public event takes place today without the inevitable, often inadvertent, Clintonian double entendre. (At a recent performance of Oscar Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance* at Washington's Shakespeare Theater, a line about a politician's "lacking that fine faith in the nobility and purity of life" received a huge roar of knowing laughter.) Censure does not add to Clinton's discomfort. Censure ends it. True, it puts yet one more stain on a ruined historical legacy, but for the here and now it revives Clinton by giving him two years in office with the affair now officially "behind him."

Reviving this particular president while debilitating his successors: This is exactly the opposite of what a wise resolution to this scandal should achieve. An end to the saga and the return to business is, of course, an excellent idea. But it needs to be done the right way. When faced with a scandal, one's objective should be to deal with the president in office without damaging the office itself. Which is why the Congress should adhere not to what Democrats incessantly call

"the wisdom of the American people"—a euphemism for the polls—but the wisdom of the Founders. No censure, no fine, no president sitting in the well like a naughty boy waiting for a spanking. In a system of separated powers, the legislature should vote up or down on removing the executive. Nothing more, nothing less.

Charles Krauthammer is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

SMEARING ALEXANDER HAMILTON

by David Frum

"WHAT PRESIDENTS did you just smear then?" That was Chris Matthews's memorable reply to a guest on *Hardball* who argued that, after all, Dwight Eisenhower might have had an affair with his wartime driver. The reply shut the guest up: For a brief moment, the viewer wondered, Has a Clintonite been shamed? Is it possible? And then the viewer realized, No, he's not shamed. He's thinking. Hmm. Who *are* we going to smear next?

This week's leading candidate for smearing by the Clinton legal tag team is not quite a president. It's Alexander Hamilton, the nation's first secretary of the Treasury and also the first officer of the new republic to be ensnared in a sex scandal. In 1791, Hamilton, married and the father of four children, started an adulterous affair with a woman named Maria Reynolds. Soon Hamilton was being blackmailed by Reynolds's swindler husband, James. Hamilton paid several hundred dollars (an impressive sum in those days) before finally ending the affair in the summer of 1792. After their success with Hamilton, the two Reynoldses expanded their criminal careers, this time trying to defraud the U.S. Treasury. When they were caught, they attempted to escape prosecution by offering Hamilton's political opponents in Congress proof that he was involved in their scheme: the record of the money he had given them. Confronted with the evidence by a select congressional committee, Hamilton cleared his name of corruption charges by confessing the affair.

AP/ Wide World Photos

In their brief to the House Judiciary Committee, Bill Clinton's lawyers draw a convenient moral from this episode:

> It is apparent from the Hamilton case that the Framers did not regard private sexual misconduct as creating an impeachable offense. It is also apparent that efforts to cover up such private behavior, including even paying hush money to induce someone to destroy documents, did not meet the standard. Neither Hamilton's very high position, nor the fact that his payments to a securities swindler created an enormous appearance problem, were enough to implicate the standard. These wrongs were real, and they were not insubstantial, but to the Framers they were essentially private and therefore not impeachable.

The Clinton White House has its vices, but let nobody say that one of them is a lack of ingenuity. Quite unmentioned here is the detail that none of Hamilton's "efforts" to cover up his affair involved the violation of any laws. Hamilton was not tampering with witnesses in a case against him, he did not indicate to his friends and employees how they might most usefully lie for him before a federal court, and he did not perjure himself. Those differences are breezily ignored in the Clinton brief. Watching David Kendall, Charles F.C. Ruff, et al., turn the Maria Reynolds story inside out, one has to wonder what feat of legal imagination will come next. Reinterpreting the Benedict Arnold story to prove that none of the Framers would have objected to taking campaign donations from the Chinese military?

Actually, the Maria Reynolds story clarifies the precise point at which personal misconduct is transformed into a public offense. Hamilton came to that

point and, at immense personal cost, refused to cross the line. Clinton came to that point and, fully understanding what he was doing, charged past it.

At the moment that the congressional committee came to call on him in 1793, Alexander Hamilton faced a choice exactly like the choice Bill Clinton faced at the Paula Jones deposition this past January. A humiliating sexual secret had come into possession of his political enemies. (One of the committeemen investigating Hamilton was James Monroe, a leading member of the vast Jeffersonian conspiracy. Anything that Monroe knew, Jefferson knew.) Hamilton could keep his secret only by a betrayal of public responsibilities.

For Hamilton the choice was, if not easy, then inevitable. He admitted the full embarrassing story, convincing the congressmen that he was entirely innocent of the corruption charges but putting a deadly political weapon into the hands of Monroe. Four years later, Monroe leaked the story to a newspaper, and Hamilton took an even more extreme step to vindicate his reputation for public integrity: He wrote and published a pamphlet confessing the entire affair. For Clinton, too, the choice was inevitable. He lied. Once to a civil court, and then again to a federal grand jury, starting the chain of lies that has brought the country to the brink of the second impeachment in 200 years.

It's worth stopping to think what would have happened if the White House counsels were right—if Clinton really had followed Hamilton's precedent. Suppose, when asked by the Jones lawyers about the Lewinsky affair, Clinton and Monica had told the unflinching truth. The ensuing news leaks would surely have been unpleasant for the president. But the truth would not have helped Jones's case very much—a consensual affair initiated by the woman does not prove a propensity to harass—and after a week or two of jokes by Jay Leno, the story would have blown over. Clinton today would be happily chatting on the telephone to congressmen about Kosovo while under the ministrations of one of this year's crop of interns, and the Starr investigation would be limping its way to an anticlimactic end.

It's worth bearing this alternative in mind when friends of the president say his scandalous behavior is "just about sex." It was within Clinton's power to keep the story strictly about sex, and if he had done so, there would have been no scandal, no Starr report, no impeachment hearings. We have all three because Clinton chose the opposite course from Hamilton's: He disdained his public trust and broke the law, rather than suffer the exposure of his false pretenses as a father, husband, and national leader.

What would Alexander Hamilton himself say about all this? As it happens, we can hazard a reasonably well founded guess. At Philadelphia in 1787, Hamilton unveiled his own preferred version of a federal constitution. Article IV, Section 13, of the Hamilton draft expressed Hamilton's own preferred grounds for impeachment: The president, he suggested, should be impeachable "for any crime or misdemeanor."

If it were up to Hamilton, of course, a character like Clinton would never rise to the presidency in the first place. But if he somehow did make it, there would be no bizarre debate over precisely how many felonies a president must commit before he can be removed. The very first one would do it.

David Frum is a contributing editor to **THE WEEKLY STANDARD.**

SAVING CLINTON'S BACON

by Jay Nordlinger

LINDA TRIPP MAY NOT BE America's sweetheart, but one fact remains: The Clinton Defense Department—her own employer—played a rotten trick on her. And no one has yet been held responsible.

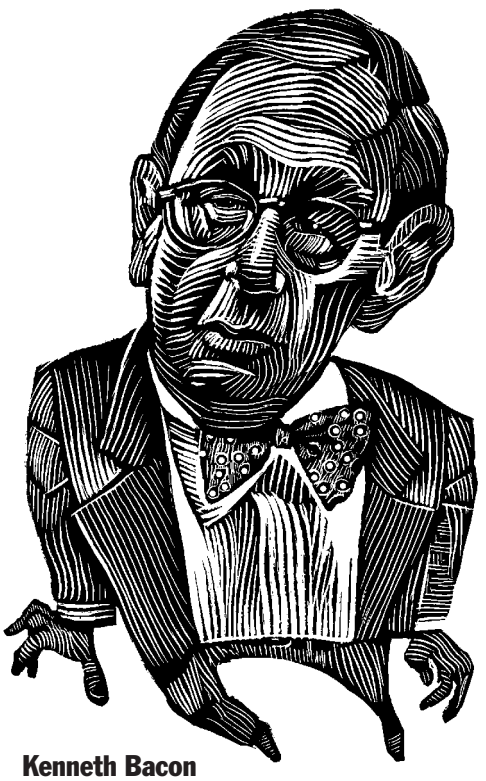
The matter has been investigated ad nauseam—in a lawsuit brought by Judicial Watch (the conservative public-interest group); by the Pentagon's inspector general (who has issued no report, despite promises to Congress to do so); and by the Office of Independent Counsel. The facts are well established. Virtually all disinterested parties agree that Clinton appointees broke the law. And still the administration—whose long-ago pledge to be the most ethical in history is now a joke—does nothing.

A quick refresher: In mid-March, Jane Mayer of the *New Yorker* put in a call to an old colleague, Ken Bacon, the Pentagon's chief spokesman. She had learned that Tripp, when a teenager, was arrested. Could he find out how Tripp had answered a question about prior arrests on a security form—number 398, to be exact? Bacon was happy to oblige. He directed his deputy, Cliff Bernath, to satisfy the reporter's

request. Bernath worked the phones, muscled skeptical career officers, and did so—on deadline.

Tripp had not, in fact, disclosed on Form 398 her 1969 arrest. She appeared to be in hot water. Bernath told the *New York Times* that Tripp (his subordinate) faced the "very serious charge" of misleading the government. Secretary Bill Cohen—who did not yet know of his department's leak to Mayer—declared on CNN that Tripp was guilty of "a contradiction of the truth," which would be "looked into." But it soon became clear that Tripp's arrest had been the result of a juvenile prank, perpetrated against her. The Pentagon dropped the idea of investigating Tripp. Instead, Congress demanded that it probe Bacon and Bernath, for violating the Privacy Act in their zeal to wound a troublesome employee.

The two men gave slightly different accounts to Ken Starr's prosecutors. Bacon maintained that he did not ask Bernath to "release information" from Tripp's confidential file. Bernath insisted that he made no move other than on Bacon's instructions. Bacon recalled that he was immediately seized by Privacy Act concerns—even to the point of sharing them with Mayer. Bernath swore repeatedly that "we did not consider the Privacy Act." Bacon admitted he knew without doubt that Mayer was planning a hit on Tripp. Bernath claimed innocence of such knowledge. Both men, however, were clear on one point (even if inadvertently): Mayer asked them to do an extraordinary thing; and when she called, they hopped to.



Kenneth Bacon

Kevin Chadwick

According to Bacon's testimony, he had not even heard of Form 398 before Mayer phoned him (although he guessed he had been required to fill one out himself). It was Mayer who advised him of the form's existence; she did not volunteer how she had come to know to check it. Bacon, on a Thursday night, told Bernath that Mayer needed the information the next morning—she had even extended her deadline for it.

Early on Friday, Bernath called Mayer, simply to assure her that he was on top of the case. He quickly put his hands on a Form 171 (which serves as an employment application in government), but that would not suffice: It asked about convictions, not arrests, and did not reach far enough into history. As Bacon explained to the grand jury, "Jane Mayer had asked me for something very specific, and what Cliff brought me was not what Jane Mayer had asked for." So Bernath procured from a hesitant, questioning document-keeper—Les Blake, an official with the Privacy Act Branch of the Defense Security Service—the other, highly sensitive form. Within minutes, Bernath had divulged its prized item to Mayer.

And yet Bacon testified that his office treated Mayer's inquiry no differently from any other—an absurd contention, as anyone who has ever tried to wring even routine information from the Pentagon can attest.

Did Bacon pause to consider the effect of the disclosure on Tripp? "I did not think about that," he answered, though he conceded that a story like Mayer's "certainly is not one you would like to have published about you." Asked by the inspector general whether he felt "culpable," Bacon responded, baldly, "Not at all." Even so, he offered Secretary Cohen his resignation for the embarrassment he had caused the department. (Cohen declined it.) In front of the grand jury, Bacon was careful not to make Bernath a scapegoat, insisting, "I was very aware of what Cliff was doing. . . . I mean, I didn't just send Cliff off . . . I knew what was happening."

As for Bernath, he allowed that he himself had noticed a Privacy Act warning when filling out his own Form 398. And what did that mean to him? That "it would not be released without consideration of the terms of the Privacy Act"; that "nobody would ever see that information." Bernath also acknowledged that Cohen's chief of staff, Bob Tyrer, was "irate" about the play against Tripp. (Tyrer later opposed a significant promotion for Bernath, which Bernath nevertheless received.) Even months after the fact, Bernath expressed amazement that his action had created such a stir. "We responded to a query," he said. "It was not a significant event in our lives." Yet, "you

know, in retrospect, this has been the *most* significant event in my life."

The grand jurors themselves were utterly incredulous at Bacon's and Bernath's denials, rationalizations, and shadings. One of them said to Bacon, "What would make you think that it would be all right to release that kind of information . . . knowing it was a confidential question in files that were locked up?" Bacon could only reply, "I think this incident has sensitized everybody in the office." The grand jurors were particularly contemptuous of the claim—made by both men—that they were operating "on the fly," unthinkingly, noting that the two had had an entire night to reflect on their complicity with Mayer.

The great question hanging over the whole affair is, Did Ken Bacon act entirely on his own? Or did he act at the prompting of the White House (which had ample reason to want to cook Tripp)? Bacon has steadfastly denied that he carried out another's orders. "I never discussed this issue with anybody at the White House," he told Starr's men. That would seem an unambiguous statement—made in any other administration. The independent counsel's office has been especially interested in Bacon's contacts with Harold Ickes, the faithful Clinton operative who has played an off-the-books role for the president throughout Monicagate. Both Bacon and Ickes testified that their encounters have been innocuous—a little Chinese food, a shared Passover seder, a wave in a restaurant.

A source familiar with the Pentagon's public-affairs unit argues that Bacon and Bernath engaged in a "pathetic bending to political pressure." Bernath in particular, says the source, strongly disliked Tripp, especially after she accused him of cutting ethical corners. And did Bacon act on his own? Says a veteran Pentagon hand, "Couldn't happen, didn't happen, no way, no how. Remember," he continued: "Everyone who comes into public affairs is told Privacy Act rules. You don't release someone's confidential information—to anyone, much less the media. This is Public Affairs 101. And Bacon is perpetrating a shameful lie. Any professional in the building will tell you the same thing."

One investigator on Capitol Hill doubts that the Pentagon inspector general will issue a report any time soon: The judge in the Judicial Watch case ordered Cliff Bernath's computer files seized, "and who knows what's in there? The Pentagon is far too nervous to do anything about Trippgate now. They don't know what other shoe will drop on them." Tripp herself is contemplating a lawsuit, based not only on the Privacy Act but on statutes designed to protect whistleblowers.

Nothing—but nothing—incenses a Clintonite more than the suggestion that this administration is like Nixon's: devious, vindictive, mendacious. But Trippgate is markedly Nixonian. Back in 1974, Charles Colson pleaded guilty to releasing information from Daniel Ellsberg's FBI file to the Copley Press (at a time when Ellsberg was a defendant in the Pentagon Papers case and a major irritant to the administration). Colson went to jail for it. Special prosecutor Leon Jaworski remarked that Colson's plea had set a sterling precedent—one that would serve as a deterrent to future custodians of government files.

The Colson precedent is obviously lost on the Clintonites. And we now see that there is a critical difference between Nixon's men and Clinton's: Nixon's, when caught, paid a price. Clinton's? They just glide on.

Jay Nordlinger is associate editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

BREAKER MORAN

by Matthew Rees

LATE IN THE EVENING OF SEPTEMBER 5, Rep. Jim Moran, a Virginia Democrat, received a phone call at home from Rahm Emanuel, a senior White House official. Emanuel wanted to discuss what Moran—who had emerged as a vocal critic of President Clinton—was going to say the next morning on *Fox News Sunday.* In no time at all, Emanuel lobbied Moran not to be too tough on the president, assuring him the White House could "beat" the independent counsel's rap. Moran told Emanuel he had it all wrong: "The issue isn't beating the charges; it's restoring the moral authority of the presidency"—the very message he repeated on Fox 10 hours later.

Of all the House Democrats who have spoken out against the president, Moran has carried the most weight. He's been a Clinton ally on a range of White House priorities, from the 1993 budget deal to the renewal of fast-track trading authority. Moreover, he's one of the few congressional Democrats who qualify as Friends of Bill. The first weekend after Monica Lewinsky became a household name, Clinton invited Moran and his wife to the White House for dinner and

a screening of *The Apostle* (whose stars, Robert Duvall and Farrah Fawcett, were also there). Less than a month later, Clinton broke with his practice of not appearing at individual fund-raisers for House candidates when he showed up at a party for Moran in Georgetown. "I like the guy," said Moran at the time. "I find it easy to support him."

But Moran has sung a different tune since Clinton's August 17 speech admitting the Lewinsky liaison. The congressman says he's "deeply disappointed" in Clinton's behavior and predicts that if he's not removed from office, "he will survive as a flawed man and quite possibly a failed president." In mid-September, Moran made news when he warned that "the president has to come up with a way . . . to put an end to this, and I'm just not creative enough to think of a way other than resignation." Last week, Moran had contempt for Clinton's lobbying of House Democrats against the GOP-sponsored impeachment inquiry. "A true leader," he told me, "says, 'Put down your swords, don't fall on them.'" The culmination of Moran's effort came on October 8, when he published a piece in the *Washington Post* explaining his support for the inquiry and zinging the White House for trying to tar the exercise as partisan.

Jim Moran

Kent Lemon

Moran is almost as angry with his Democratic colleagues as he is with Clinton. Their judgment, he says, "is clouded by their antipathy toward Ken Starr, Newt Gingrich, and Tom DeLay." The day before last week's votes on the inquiry, Moran spoke at a meeting of the House Democratic caucus and explained that an overwhelming Democratic vote against the Republican proposal would make the party look like it wanted to short-circuit the investigation. He added that such a vote also risked turning the November election into a referendum on the president—a referendum he argued "we can't win." But Moran didn't gain many converts: Just 30 of the 206 House Democrats joined him in voting for the Republican inquiry.

Moran's apostasy is noteworthy because there's no obvious political motive involved. Unlike many other Democrats who voted for the GOP-proposed inquiry, he's not retiring, he's not a conservative, and he's not in a close race for reelection. Indeed, his suburban Washington district is a Democratic stronghold: 21 percent of its residents are federal employees—the second-highest percentage of any congressional district in the country—and 90 percent of his calls have supported the president (even his own daughter called in to complain about his stance). Moran got a taste of local opinion last week when he ventured to a county Democratic meeting and was berated for crossing Clinton. Yet some of the district's conservatives are so pleased with his candor they're planning to vote for him.

That's small consolation considering the pressure on Moran to pipe down. His fundraising took a hit last month when the pro-Clinton Irish-American Democratic Caucus withdrew a $5,000 contribution. And he's been lobbied not only by Emanuel but by other senior White House aides, like Paul Begala and Susan Brophy. When their cajoling didn't move him, Hillary Rodham Clinton herself placed a call in mid-September. During their 30-minute conversation, she assured Moran her husband hadn't committed any impeachable offenses and that he wasn't guilty of perjury. She also said that because she and her husband were a partnership, she interpreted any criticism of him as being a criticism of her. Even this extraordinary effort fell flat.

It's probably too late for Clinton to weigh in, though that might be the one thing that would prevent Moran from taking the logical next step: calling on the president to resign. So far, Moran has said that's a decision for the president alone to make, though Moran has made clear he doesn't want him to slither away scot-free. He has floated the idea of stripping Clinton of his post-presidency pension of $152,000 a year. But neither Republicans nor Democrats have warmed to the idea.

There's one sense in which Moran's criticisms are political: He recognizes that Clinton's behavior, and subsequent lies about it, undermines his authority to push the party toward policies promoting personal responsibility. As co-chairman of the centrist New

Democrat Coalition in the House, he'd like to have more Democratic colleagues who agree with his assertion that "there's only one person responsible for the mess we're in. It's not Ken Starr, it's not Janet Reno, and it's not Richard Mellon Scaife. It's the man who resides in the White House."

Moran's greatest concerns are moral. He simply can't believe Clinton would humiliate his family by having an affair with Lewinsky. "Where's the sense of right and wrong?" he asks. "Where's the sense of shame? the sense of honor?"

If other Democrats begin to talk like that, the president will have more trouble than he can handle.

Matthew Rees is a staff writer for THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

STATES OF SIEGE

by Fred Barnes

TOM EDSALL OF THE *Washington Post* has picked eight House districts in the Ohio River Valley—some open seats and some held by embattled incumbents, in Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio—as bellwethers in the 1998 election. These are "ground zero in the battle for control of the House," says Edsall. Ron Brownstein of the *Los Angeles Times* is playing up a dozen House Democratic candidates who happen to be social conservatives. Should some capture Republican seats, the thinking goes, then it'll be a favorable cycle for Democrats. Both the Edsall and Brownstein yardsticks are good ones, but I've got another: Michigan and North Carolina. You can calibrate the level of Republican success (or failure) by how things go in those quite different states.

Republicans have a ripe opportunity in both, though not quite as ripe as in 1994, when the GOP gained four seats in North Carolina, one in Michigan. Those pickups were part of a 52-seat Republican gain nationally. This year, there are four possible scenarios. If the GOP adds four more seats in North Carolina and two or three in Michigan, that will indicate another blowout—25 or 30 seats overall, maybe more. Next scenario: A gain of one or two seats in North Carolina and no more than one in Michigan will translate into a 10-to-15-seat Republican pickup nationwide. Third, if Republicans pick up only the single open seat in North Carolina, that will coincide with a gain of zero to five seats nationally. And, finally, if Republicans win no new seats in either North Carolina or Michigan—the backlash scenario—they'll hold their own in the House, at best, or lose a handful of seats. My guess is neither blowout nor backlash is likely.

Why North Carolina and Michigan as weathervanes? North Carolina was the heart of the Republican revolution in 1994 (only Washington state, with five, had more House pickups). And it's still trending Republican. The open seat of retiring Democrat Bill Hefner is all but certain to fall to Republican Robin Hayes, who announced early and has plenty of money and a weak Democratic opponent. Two others are marginal seats that flip-flopped in 1994 and 1996: Democrat David Price lost the Raleigh seat, then won it back, and Democrat Bill Etheridge grabbed the Durham seat his party had lost two years earlier. A fourth seat, held by black Democrat Mel Watt, is essentially a new district. The old one ran narrowly along I-85 to maintain a black majority (56 percent). But it was tossed out by the federal courts as unconstitutional. Watt's new district reaches into the Charlotte suburbs and is only one-third black.

If Republicans manage a breakthrough in North Carolina, it will be thanks to President Clinton. Both state legislator Dan Page, who's challenging Etheridge, and businessman Tom Roberg, Price's foe, have broadcast anti-Clinton TV ads. Page has an especially receptive audience. Democrats concede the district leans Republican, and they note that former congressman David Funderburk lost to Etheridge in 1996 not because of ideology but because he was involved in a highly publicized traffic accident. A GOP poll in August showed voters prefer a Republican congressman by 45 percent to 35 percent. Not surprisingly, Etheridge voted for the Republican impeachment resolution on October 8.

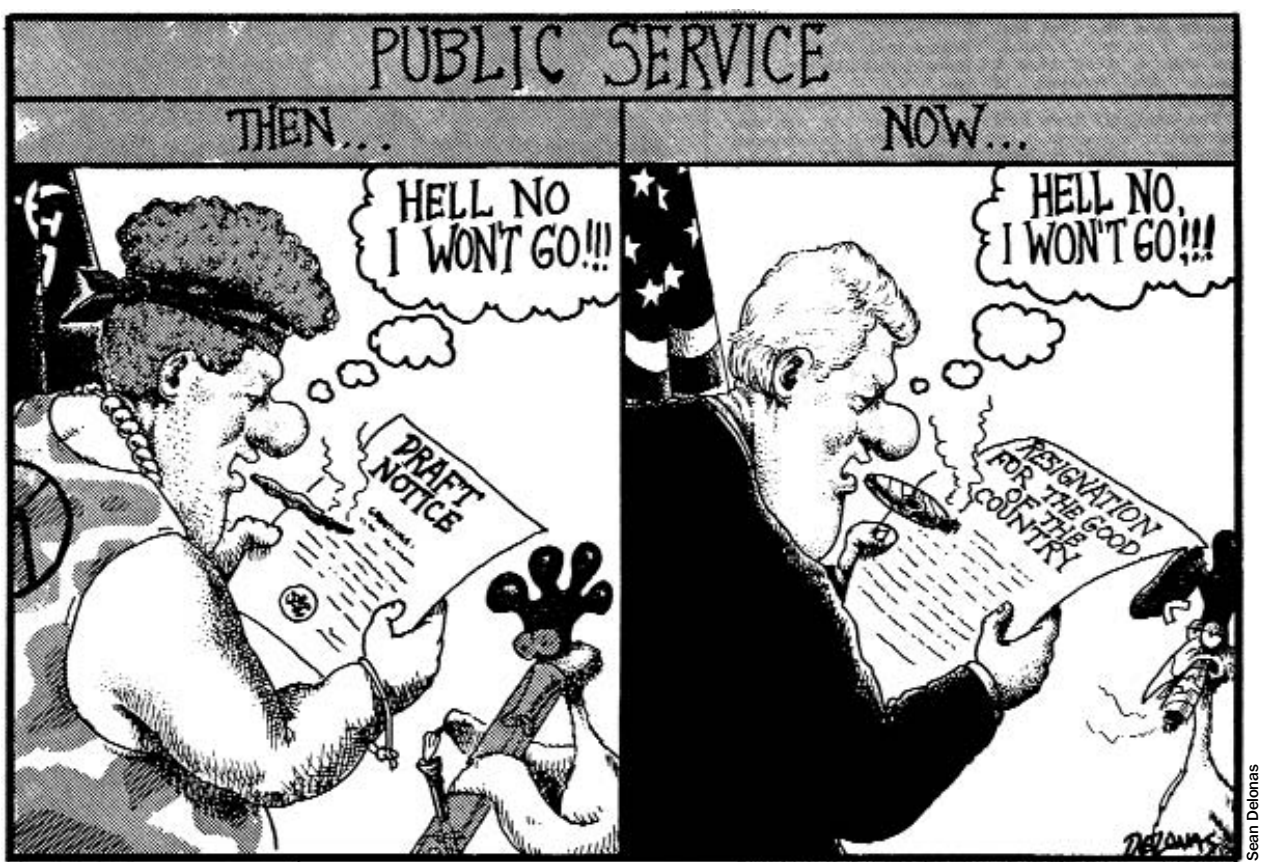
Price didn't, and that could cost him. Roberg ran one TV spot demanding Price declare whether he thinks Clinton should resign. Price didn't respond. Then, after the impeachment vote, Roberg changed the ad to insist that Price end his silence and join in calling on Clinton "to do what's right"—resign. Also, the National Republican Congressional Committee, in its initial $7 million wave of ads on "Republican solutions," has targeted the Price and Etheridge districts and touted Roberg and Page. And Watt is singled out in another NRCC ad as an opponent of tax cuts. It mentions the "first tax cut in 16 years," passed in 1997, and shows a picture of Watt with a big "NO" on it. For Watt, 55 percent of the district is new. Still, the odds on beating him or Price are less than 50-50.

In Michigan, Democratic incumbents are stronger, but they've got an additional problem: Geoffrey Fieger, the party's nominee for governor. He's the lawyer for Dr. Kevorkian, but that's the least of it. His comments have enraged Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, and only 24 percent of Michigan voters had a favorable opinion of him in a recent poll. He trailed Republican governor John Engler by 67 percent to 20 percent in that survey. Worse, he's divided Democrats. Democratic House members David Bonior and Debbie Stabenow have endorsed him, Bart Stupak has publicly refused to, Sander Levin and Dale Kildee say they haven't decided, and Lynn Rivers won't say. "There is a Fieger effect," claims GOP congressman Pete Hoekstra. "It put a lot of my Democratic colleagues in a hole they've got to dig themselves out of. If they don't endorse Fieger, it irritates their base. If they do, it energizes the other side."

Republicans are already energized. Rep. John Linder, the NRCC chairman, talks up the prospects of defeating Levin, whose district is in suburban Detroit. State chair Betsy DeVos says that Bonior, the House Democratic whip, is also beatable. The best GOP shot is probably Stupak, who represents the upper peninsula. He's pro-life and pro-gun, and thus in sync with his district, but still vulnerable. "Between Clinton at the top and Fieger, Democrats are getting double whammied," says pollster Gene Ulm. Among voters most interested in the campaign, Republicans have a 17-percentage-point advantage, which suggests a massively depressed Democratic turnout.

Republicans shouldn't get their hopes too high. A Democratic turnout that's only moderately weaker is likely. Even taking this into account, Democratic polls show all their Michigan and North Carolina incumbents ahead. And Republicans have been excited about the chances of ousting Levin and Bonior before. In 1996, Engler was convinced GOP challenger Susy Heintz would whip Bonior; she lost 54 percent to 44 percent. On the other hand, October is the month when Republican ads flood the airwaves, trumping the free media. Democrats understandably fear this. A Democratic strategist told me to check back in mid-October, when polls will show the effect of the first wave of GOP ads in Michigan, North Carolina, and elsewhere. Reason enough, I think, to keep an eye on both states.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of **THE WEEKLY STANDARD.**



My School Choice: Literacy First

By John J. Dilulio Jr.

Ever since she became an Immaculate Heart of Mary nun two decades ago, Sister Carmela has longed to teach organic chemistry. "I've loved organic since high school," she says, "but I've been needed to teach other things—and I've loved every assignment." For the last few years, she has been educating eighth graders at the Gesu School, a Catholic elementary and middle school with just 420 pupils located in one of Philadelphia's poorest and roughest neighborhoods. The Gesu is your quintessential inner-city miracle school. Over 80 percent of its children are non-Catholic, 95 percent are black—and 95 percent go on to complete high school, several at the region's most competitive college preps. Its annual tuition is only $1,500, subsidized by private donors, and virtually all the students receive financial aid.

Both in her attitude and in her educational priorities, Sister Carmela manifests the wisdom that underlies the Gesu's solid performance. "I'm joyful when our children succeed," she told me, "but they're all our children. . . . I think I understand the arguments for broader [school] reforms. But I don't understand why we can't all work in common to help inner-city children achieve literacy, with or without any broader reforms." The school's principal, Sister Ellen, holds the same view: "We have all sorts of programs, extracurricular activities, sports and clubs. . . . We work hard to impart good values and maintain a loving yet demanding environment. . . . But literacy is the cornerstone of academic success and a prerequisite for almost everything else they'll do later in life. . . . Here at the Gesu, all our kids can read."

And so they can, as I discovered last year when I taught at the Gesu as a volunteer. For two hours on Friday mornings, I introduced Sister Carmela's three-dozen eighth graders to American government. Most weeks I assigned LaTanya, Jennifer, Kareem, and the others four or five pages from the sixth edition of *American Government*, the textbook I co-authored with James Q. Wilson. Over the years I had assigned earlier editions of the same textbook, along with the *Federalist Papers* and lots of other reading, to hundreds of undergraduates at Harvard and Princeton. But this was the first time I had ever taught middle schoolers—much less attempted to bring Madisonian democracy to life for inner-city teens, some of them adept at dodging stray bullets, avoiding sexual predators and drug pushers, filling in at home for absent or dysfunctional parents, and coping with peers who equate studying with "acting white." Still, our Friday mornings worked, for at least four reasons.

First, these students know about the dark side of human nature. They need no persuading that Madison was right when he argued that men are "not angels." The hard part, in fact, is getting them to believe that there are governments based on rosier assumptions about human nature and centralized power. "Dr. D," asked Timothy, a prize pupil, "you mean there's folks who really think that if one person or one part of government gets lots of power they won't try to get over on everybody else, won't rip them off and stuff? Where do they live? . . . What do they say about Hitler or Russia and all that mess?"

Second, I did my best to adapt my pedagogy to my students' age and real-life circumstances—without dumbing down the subject matter or adopting an all-fun, no-work policy. The class laughed but learned, as I turned my opening discussion of the dispersal of power into an amateur martial-arts spectacle: for the separation of powers, three air-slashing vertical karate chops dividing executive, legislative, and judicial branches; for federalism, three horizontal chops, dividing national, state, and local levels of government. After our unit on civil rights and the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, our class trip to Washington, D.C., included a hushed visit to the Lincoln Memorial and informal on-the-spot quizzes (How many members are there in the House? What's a line-item veto?), as well as lunch at Planet Hollywood by popular demand and a stop at the National Air and Space Museum.

Third, my volunteer teaching was heavily depen-

Contributing editor John J. DiIulio Jr. is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and directs the Jeremiah Project, which studies and assists faith-based programs for inner-city youth.

dent on the intellectual and moral authority of Sister Carmela, Sister Ellen, and the dozen-plus full-time lay teachers who are the Gesu's valiant staff. Normally, a mere glance in the direction of Sister Carmela's desk or a casual sigh attending a comment about "how disappointed Sister Ellen would be to hear . . ." was enough to quiet the class or correct an unruly individual. Before long, I could count on the informal student self-policing and regard for teacher authority ("Yo man, knock it off for Dr. D! We want to hear this") that ultimately mark the difference between an orderly school where learning is possible and one where, as at the Gesu, learning is likely.

But fourth and foremost—and just as Sister Ellen had promised—all of the kids could read. Some read better than others, to be sure, and three or four struggled with simple sentences and reading comprehension. But all of them could read. They could read the textbook. They could read the newspapers and identify stories about "federalism in action." They could read billboards on the road to Washington, D.C., and books on the way home. They could read the menu at Planet Hollywood. They could read the Gettysburg Address incised in the wall of the Lincoln Memorial. At home, school, or church, they could read the Bible. They could read about W.E.B. Du Bois in preparation for their spirited intra-class African-American history competition. And as early as the sixth grade, they could read and enjoy fiction like *The Hobbit*.

Although my pupils could read, many of them had relatives, public-school peers, or neighbors who couldn't, and they knew how debilitating illiteracy is. "Maybe with older people, or the immigrants, you could get by without reading," remarked a girl named Erica. "But today if you can't read, you can't learn what you need to learn, you can't get a good job, you can't communicate like you should with other people. . . . You miss so much. It's a sin that we don't help all children to read."

It shouldn't be necessary to defend the educational primacy of literacy. The ability to read is an obvious precondition for other intellectual pursuits and skilled activities. Nor should it be necessary to point out the social value of literacy, starting with increased economic productivity, or to catalogue the social costs of illiteracy, such as increased rates of repeat criminality. Nor should it be necessary to make the case, on both practical and moral grounds, that every American child without profound learning disabilities can and should be taught to read, and that any school or school system that fumbles basic literacy is a failure.

It would hardly seem necessary to make the case for literacy first—but apparently it is. In *A Nation Still At Risk*, published in May 1998, Chester E. Finn and a number of other expert education reformers reported that in the last 15 years "over 10 million Americans have reached the 12th grade not even having learned to read at a basic level." Mind you, they *reached the 12th grade*. How many more young Americans have dropped out since 1983 without ever achieving literacy? For all the school reforms that are in the works or on the horizon, how many of today's juveniles are at risk of reaching young adulthood barely able or unable to read? And what, if anything, will today's education mavens do about it *now*?

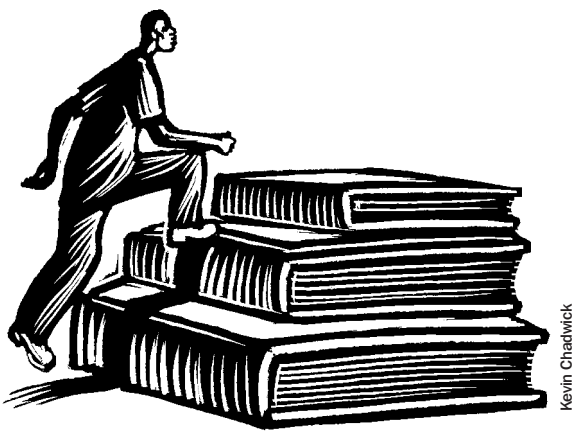
They should start by acknowledging that America does not have a public-school crisis, it has an urban-literacy crisis. In the mid-1990s American taxpayers spent roughly $300 billion a year on public schools. Most of those schools were fair to excellent. As Princeton economist Alan Krueger argues in the March 1998 *Economic Policy Review*, over the past two decades "the public school system has not deteriorated" for most students. Similarly, education expert Diane Ravitch documents in a recent Brookings Institution report that public-school reading scores and other measures of academic performance have been "mainly flat over the past 25 years."

America's public schools are not broken, but our urban schools are plagued by high rates of illiteracy. Urban districts serve one quarter of all public-school students, a third of low-income students, and nearly half of minority students. Nationally, most urban public elementary-school students cannot read a simple children's book. Under chancellor Rudy Crew, New York City public schools have begun to improve, but half of the system's children are still reading below grade level. Under schools superintendent David Hornbeck, Philadelphia has instituted full-day kindergarten, a new teacher-accountability plan, and other promising reforms. Still, analyses of test data by local newspapers indicate that barely one in ten of the city's grade schoolers is proficient in reading.

The problem originates not in the urban schools but in the homes of their students. Since the famous 1966 study by sociologist James Coleman, social science has consistently found that home environment is the single most important factor in explaining differences in reading proficiency and other measures of academic performance. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, of the 4 million children born in 1997, nearly one out of eight was born to a teenage mother, and one out of four to a mother with less than a high-school education. According to a

report by the Philadelphia School Readiness Project, last year 37 percent of the city's public-school first graders were born to mothers under age 18 who had not graduated from high school. Many of these children enter public school without ever having been read to by an adult or held a book in their hands, much less having been taught their ABCs.

Still, there are some notable big-city literacy success stories. In their 1990 pro-school-choice classic *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools*, John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe spotlighted Manhattan's School District No. 4, in low-income, minority East Harlem. Its schools' "dynamic leaders," they reported, broke free of the usual bureaucratic constraints and educated "some 14,000 students from pre-kindergarten through the ninth grade. . . . While only 15.9 percent of the district's students were reading at or above grade level in 1973, 62.6 percent were doing so by 1987." In her 1995 book *The Power of Their Ideas*, educator Deborah Meier argued that the East Harlem experience demonstrated how "all children could meet high standards of intellectual achievement within a public school setting. . . . Defending public education is difficult, but the best defense is by example."



Kevin Chadwick

Even in East Harlem in 1987, though, nearly 40 percent of the students were reading below grade level. Examples of public schools that have conquered illiteracy among inner-city minority students remain few and far between.

The reason is that well-intentioned defenders of public schools have never accepted the literacy-first challenge. Instead, they promulgate "comprehensive" reform plans. They tinker endlessly with teacher selection, salaries, testing, and training. Even though between 1970 and 1996 public-school budgets rose by over 85 percent in constant dollars, the public-school lobbies continue to demand greater funding and litigate to equalize urban and suburban per-pupil expenditures.

They do everything, it seems, but dedicate themselves to teaching children to read. They do not embrace the proposition that, despite the undeniable difficulties of teaching children from truly disadvantaged backgrounds, every child who is not genuinely learning disabled can and should become literate. The debate over phonics versus whole-language instruction is irrelevant: Research suggests that most children learn regardless of which method is used.

They learn, that is, if one condition is met: Some literate adult concentrates on teaching them how. As Sandra Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers, has argued, summer "intensive-reading" programs in several urban districts have proven quite successful. Such special programs, however, need to be repeated and replicated widely, and regular inner-city public-school curriculums need to become much more reading intensive.

Defenders of public schools are not the only ones who should heed the literacy-first call. "More school choice," proclaim the authors of *A Nation Still At Risk*, "must be accompanied by more choices worth making. America needs to enlarge its supply of excellent schools." To some extent, that's happening. Between 1990 and 1998 enrollment in Catholic schools, other Christian schools, and home schools grew by 1.4 million to nearly 5 million. In addition, today there are over 800 publicly financed but deregulated "charter" schools—and nobody knows how many unchartered, unaccredited "church basement" schools (estimates range up to 400).

As virtually every study has shown, Catholic schools normally succeed at teaching reading and other subjects, where inner-city public schools commonly fail. But in many cities, the supply of inner-city Catholic schools is contracting, not expanding. The Gesu itself ceased to be a parish school in 1993 and was kept open as an "independent Catholic school" only after it attracted financial support from local businessmen. The educational efficacy of other religious schools has not been studied systematically. Home schooling is not an option for kids in dysfunctional mother-only homes. Charter schools are multiplying, but as Finn and others point out, in terms of academic performance, they are a mixed bag.

Advocates of vouchers and school choice (and I am one) believe that in due course these policies will

increase substantially the supply of good schools, both public and private, secular and religious, and thereby increase the supply of literate people educationally equipped to hold jobs and become productive, self-sufficient adults.

But as Harvard's Paul E. Peterson explains in the September/October 1998 issue of *Philanthropy*, only in Milwaukee are data available from a randomized experiment with school choice. The Milwaukee data indicate that participants in the voucher program

> had limited positive effects during the first two years a student was in the program, with larger gains in years three and four—as much as one quarter of a standard deviation in reading. . . . To put that in plain English, if such gains can be continued at this rate throughout a student's educational career, existing differences in test performances of whites and minorities could be eliminated. Choice schools are not magic bullets that transform children overnight. It takes time to adjust to a new teaching and learning environment.

That is undoubtedly true: It could take years before even a successful voucher movement transformed the educational landscape. This obstinate fact should lead all save diehard school-choice Pollyannas to concentrate on exploring what we, alongside public-school reformers, can do immediately to prevent tens of thousands of today's inner-city first graders from becoming the next generation of high-school dropouts.

Back at the Gesu, we're in the early stages of recruiting other nearby religious schools, public schools, nonprofits, and universities to join us in launching a "summer of literacy" program open to all the children in our neighborhood. Unfortunately, we don't have Sister Carmela to help us. Named Teacher of the Year by the Philadelphia Archdiocese, she finally got her wish and is teaching organic chemistry at a Catholic high school. But those of us who used to watch her in action are still buoyed by her example—both the love and the clarity about the importance of teaching children to read. ♦

Russia: An Economic Success Story?

By Leon Aron

Is there a usable free-market past somewhere under the debris from Russia's financial meltdown? If the recent flood of media pontificating is to be believed, the answer is a resounding no. This summer's financial crisis, we are told over and over, means the obliteration of all that has been accomplished in Russia in the past five years. Like the Great Depression as depicted in Comintern propaganda, the crisis of August 17—the day that Moscow devalued the ruble, defaulted on domestic treasury bonds, and froze private foreign debt—is portrayed as an epochal event, a final verdict of failure on the Russian capitalist experiment.

To be sure, the advent of the Primakov-Duma government marks a fundamental leftward shift of economic priorities. Already the old policies of low inflation, painful fiscal austerity, and tight money are being replaced by the printing of money, expansion of the public sector, state support for industry, and bloated government budgets. Yet both the radicalism and the staying power of the new economic policies will depend—assuming that Prime Minister Primakov et al. maintain the democratic institutions installed by the most open and tolerant regime in Russia's history, the Third Russian Republic, 1993-98—on how far back toward a socialist economy the public is willing to go.

In most pundits' view, market reform brought Russia only misery. The country's industrial production and GDP have shrunk to half what they were in 1991. Everyone but the handful of super-rich is worse off. In this telling, subtle as agitprop, Russia amounts to seven fatcat oligarchs in a sea of starving children. Yeltsin took over a Switzerland and, by his drastic and heartless free-market reforms, turned it into a Somalia.

The point about the decline of Russia's industry and GDP is especially embarrassing. Under the Soviet

Leon Aron is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. His biography of Boris Yeltsin will be published next year.

regime, a huge portion of the Russian economy was militarized—70 percent, according to recent statements by two of the most knowledgeable Gorbachev officials, Yevgeny Primakov (speaking before he became prime minister) and Alexander Yakovlev. Even if their figure is high, it should be obvious that after Yeltsin slashed defense funding by *90 percent*, Russia's industrial production and GDP were bound to shrink. But if in 1991 Russia rolled out between 5,000 and 7,000 heavy tanks at a cost of over $1 million each, and in 1997 it produced none, is the attendant "economic decline" or "de-industrialization" to be bemoaned—or celebrated?

During the glasnost years of 1988-91, it emerged that most of the Russian economy was operating at a loss. Horrendous waste, obsolete equipment, and exceedingly low productivity left enterprises taking in more in raw materials and labor than their end product was worth. It is true that Soviet Russia's GDP grew annually, as the country churned out millions of tons of steel for tanks, thousands of giant harvesters that cost a million rubles each and fell apart after one season, and fertilizer dumped in the millions of tons on exhausted fields to no effect whatsoever. (Every third loaf of bread was made from imported grain.) But the enterprises that produced all this "wealth" could not survive without government subsidies. Indeed, once market prices were introduced in 1992, 80 percent of these companies became bankrupt overnight.

But what about the sunny garden of Soviet socialism, in which there were no poor and hungry, we are told, and which Boris Yeltsin inherited, then wantonly despoiled? In 1989 the average Soviet salary was 200 rubles a month—$33 at the official exchange rate, $13 on the street. A refrigerator cost 800 rubles. A pair of women's winter boots and a sheepskin parka (necessities in the Russian winter) cost 120 rubles and 800 rubles respectively. An average Soviet family with two full-time earners spent 59 percent of its income on food, at a time when the comparable U.S. figure was 15 percent.

At the end of the 1980s, what was delicately called the "underprovisioning" threshold (the line between those who had enough to eat and those who did not) was set at 70 rubles a month. In all, 57 million Soviet citizens were at or below the level of "underprovisioning." Pensioners were especially hard-pressed. A nurse after 40 years of work received a 70-ruble pension, but 31 percent of pensioners in cities and 84 percent in the countryside received less than 60 rubles a month. In 1989 the minimum pension was raised to 50 rubles in cities and 40 rubles on collective farms.

In personal consumption, the Soviet Union was 77th in the world in 1989. That same year, of 211 "essential" food products, only 23 were available in state stores. With fish and poultry rare in most Russian cities, the main sources of protein were meat and butter. Ration cards in Novosibirsk entitled people to 150 grams of butter a month. In Sverdlovsk the meat ration was one kilo every six months. For most Russians most of the time, awful sausage substituted for meat. In the city of Kirov, the sausage ration was 800 grams a month.

In Irkutsk and Novosibirsk, rations included 340 grams of soap every three months. In Kostroma, only those with children under three could buy children's soap, and they had to show an internal passport stamped with their children's names and ages. In Archangel, the toothpaste ration was a tube every two months.

And then there were the lines, that humiliating curse that turned men and women into animals. Russians stood in lines for many hours daily, lines that ran around the block: for milk and shoes, fruit and cigarettes, pantyhose and toothpaste. Wrote one columnist in the popular magazine *Ogonyok* in the summer of 1989, "We have become accustomed, hungry and tired after work, to tour the stores and scour their eternally bare shelves, our eyes and stomachs yearning."

A Russian scholar estimated that his compatriots spent 40 to 68 hours in line every month. In December 1990, the news agency TASS reported that two women were trampled to death when a line of several thousand people in Khabarovsk turned into a mob. On the days when food was delivered to the major Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk, ambulance calls increased tenfold or more. In a single week in November 1990, 200 people were hospitalized in Krasnoyarsk with frostbite and another 63 after fainting in lines.

Back in the days of perestroika, critics of the Soviet economy liked to quote a statement they attributed to Helmut Schmidt, the Social Democratic chancellor of West Germany. After visiting Russia in the 1970s, Schmidt had supposedly called it "Upper Volta with missiles." The very least that can be said about Russia under Yeltsin is that it became Upper Volta (or rather, Burkina Faso) with far fewer missiles—much to the benefit of the rest of the world.

But even apart from the question of demilitarization, views of the country's economic performance in the last seven years have been badly distorted by the deliberate understating or outright concealment of income by corporations and citizens alike in an effort to avoid the taxman and organized crime.

Both Russian and foreign experts agree, for instance, that at least 40 percent of Russian GDP is in the shadow economy and never reported. The same is true of between 50 and 70 percent of trade transacted in cash. This means, some argue, that the Russian economy actually may have grown by 6 percent to 8 percent between 1994 and 1997, instead of the official 0.7 percent.

It is further estimated that Russian families underreport their income by the same amount—40 percent—and that as much as 90 percent of all private-sector production is concealed from the tax authorities. Millions employed by the state (teachers, physicians, scientists) rely on a second job (or jobs) for most of their income. According to the Russian government, "off-the-book" earnings for 1996 were $46 billion—or one-tenth of GDP.

In addition to the absence of reliable statistics, the lack of analytical categories strictly comparable to those used in the West impedes a search for the Russians who have profited from reform. Any comparison with European, let alone American, patterns is meaningless. As in every developing nation, only the very rich (the top 3 percent at most in Russia) approximate the living standard of the Western upper-middle class. Their minimum income ranges from $4,000 a month in Nizhny Novgorod to $10,000 a month in Moscow.

As for the middle class, its most prized possessions are roughly those of the European middle class immediately after World War II: an apartment of one's own, perhaps fitted out with modern conveniences, a small car, a *dacha* (a shack in the country), and an annual trip abroad. In pre-August 17 Russia, such possessions and pursuits were within reach of those making over $300 a month (or over $1,000 in Moscow). Russian experts estimate that at least one-fifth of the population fell into this income category. As Georgetown University's Harley Balzer noted recently in an excellent article on the new Russian middle class, this category included skilled workers in "successful industrial and commercial enterprises," small and medium entrepreneurs, middle-level managers, lawyers, accountants, teachers, journalists, programmers, drivers, and tailors.

The gap between the middle class and the rest of the country was narrow. Officially, the average monthly family income was between $120 and $130. Yet, according to extensive regional surveys conducted by the Russian Market Research Corporation, a Western firm in Moscow, the average household reported spending more than that each month on food and utilities. The firm estimated the actual average income to be about twice the official figure—an estimate corroborated by the fact that the value of trade in goods and services in regions surveyed by the firm was 1.5 to 2 times the official figure for total wages.

Car ownership in Russia grew from 18 per 100 families in 1990 to 31 in 1997—an increase of 72 percent, or about 10 percent annually. As for foreign travel, in 1997, between 16 and 20 million Russians went abroad for business or pleasure (up from below 100,000 in Soviet times)—or between one in eight and one in ten Russians. According to the World Tourism Organization, of 25 nationalities, Russian tourists were the tenth-highest spenders in 1996, behind Americans, Germans, and the Japanese, but ahead of South Koreans, Brazilians, Spaniards, and the Chinese.

Most of the growth in personal incomes has taken place in large and middle-sized cities, where about half the Russian population lives. Prosperity has been slow to reach both the perennially depressed and de-populated countryside, which never recovered from Stalinist collectivization and the losses of World War II, and the small towns, especially in the "rust belt." Yet, where it did occur, the urban revival in pre-August 17 Russia was nothing short of spectacular, as any visitor with memories of Soviet times can testify. The lines were gone, and so were the streams of shabbily dressed people shuffling along cracked pavements, their heads down—briefcases, sacks, or the ubiquitous nylon knitted bags in hand—from one filthy store to another in search of fruit, sausage, or cottage cheese, like gray herds of foraging beasts. In their place were brightly dressed, leisurely pedestrians, munching on a cake or sandwich bought on the street, browsing past clean and colorful displays of produce and goods in shop windows. As Yogi Berra said, sometimes you can see a lot just by looking.

Hundreds of ATM machines sprang up across Russia in 1996 and 1997—20 of them in the single smokestack city of Chelyabinsk, 900 miles east of Moscow in the Urals. The book business thrived. Publishers were free to print anything they wanted—from the Bible to romance novels, from Bill Gates's book to biographies of Brigitte Bardot, and several thousand new titles, with a total print run of 5 million, went on sale every month in Moscow alone. Between 1994 and 1997, Russia's personal-computer market grew by 115 percent. Another typical middle-class pursuit, charity, also took root: In the past 10 years, the number of independent charities in Russia grew from zero to 60,000. Private high schools multiplied: There were 177 in 1991, 1,606 in 1997.

Milk, often scarce in Soviet times, became available to Russian children everywhere, without lines or rationing; but so did produce formerly exotic and

available only from the hidden stores reserved for the *nomenklatura*. In June 1992, six months after Yegor Gaidar freed prices, I saw something in Ekaterinburg that I had never seen before in my 37 years as a resident or student of Russia: perfect, ripe, yellow bananas sold on the street in a Russian provincial city. And as mothers proffered these delicacies to their children, I saw some draw back in surprise from the unfamiliar fruit.

In today's Russia, one would have to search long and hard to find such a scene. As one of the most objective veteran Western reporters in Russia, Chrystia Freeland of the *Financial Times*, put it,

> After seven years of painful market reform, Russia has not made much progress in restructuring the industrial behemoths that were the foundation of the Soviet economy. But in the retail and consumer sectors, the transition has been a dazzling success. Once a country in which oranges were a rarity, Russia has become a place where even the most obscure Siberian village has access to the full capitalist cornucopia of goods, ranging from computers to kiwi fruit.

In the words of a popular Russian magazine, capitalism brought Russia "sneakers, jeans, modern clothes, television sets that did not explode, automatic washing machines, personal computers, effective medicines, and much more . . ."

In short, while market prices, the waning of government subsidies, and privatization have hurt or impoverished millions of Russians, capitalism has significantly improved the lives of millions of others. In 1995, a leading Russian sociologist cited by Balzer, Tatyana Zaslavskaya, estimated that a third of the population was doing "reasonably well," a third had suffered "enormously," and a third was "coping." Two years later, the iconoclastic Russian economist Igor Birman, who has chalked up an exceptionally good track record countering the conventional wisdom of Washington, concluded that "nearly three-fourths of Russian citizens live better today than they did under the Communists." It is indisputable that from 1995, when deputy prime minister Anatoly Chubais brought inflation under control, to August 17 of this year, more Russians had greater access to quality food, goods, and services than at any other time in history.

A sizable part of the Russian population thus stands to lose a great deal from a return to a socialist or semi-socialist economy. With the crisis deepening (as it must, given the poisons being administered by the Primakov-Duma government), the new policies will collide sooner or later with expectations bred in the past few years: low inflation, the ready availability of food and goods, and, for many, the hope of seeing their standard of living rise. The new policies are likely to bring instead a growing black market, an unconvertible currency, hyperinflation, and shortages. Resistance to the new regime will be the stronger, and come the sooner, among Russians who remember the late 1980s—the worthless ruble, the lines around the block, the bare shelves in state stores, and the sacks of potatoes hoarded on apartment balconies.

The crucial test of Russian capitalism and democracy is still ahead. As Russia is convulsed by yet another of its perennial cycles of reform and reaction, Americans will be better equipped to predict and even marginally influence the next stage if we appreciate Russia's complex reality and refuse to accept caricatures as a fair representation of what is going on in Russia. ♦

Oxbridge Envy

A Don's Life

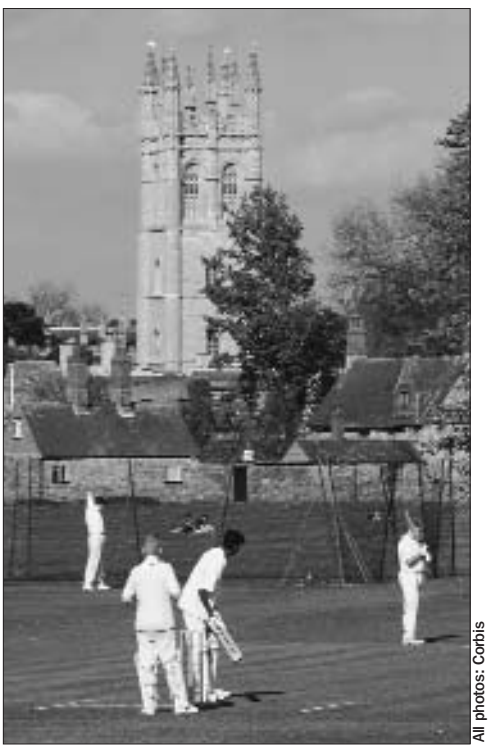
By Joseph Epstein

Some years ago, in a Polonius-like mood, I offered my son a bit of advice. I told him that I hoped he would go to a university of which the world has a high opinion. He would find the world wrong, of course, for the school, whichever one it happened to be, wouldn't be all that good. With perhaps a few exceptions, contemporary universities are most pertinently judged in the realm of snobbery.

When one sends one's children to Harvard or Yale, Princeton or Stanford, one has to be a considerable ninny to believe that they will receive a serious education. Political correctness, the lowering of standards generally, and other educationally deflationary measures of our day have done a good bit to shrivel the adjective "higher" in higher education.

What one can safely believe is that, barring serious breakdown or illness or infection with a political virus, sending one's children to one of the seven or eight schools with social cachet in this country will set them socially and professionally on their way. They will have a credential, they will make useful connections, they will be launched. I know a man who got three high-level jobs and met his wealthy wife through his Princeton connections. Had he gone, say, to Ohio State, his income would probably be half of what it is today. One of the earliest uses of the word "network," after all, was in "old-boy network," and the old boys in question were those who had gone to one of three or four Ivy League schools. Today Stanford and Berkeley, and perhaps Duke, Virginia, Georgetown, and Vanderbilt, have joined the network. All ring the snobbery gong.

I myself went to the University of Chicago, and if it rings the snobbery gong at all, it scarcely gives off more than a ping. Chicago graduates (I speak here not of the graduate or professional schools) do from time to time distinguish themselves, but their worldly success rate is low, perhaps because they are taught a certain contempt for such success. Snobbery is not part of the deal at Chicago, unless it be intellectual snobbery. It was the right place for me when I went there, and I never yearned to be elsewhere. Besides, given the quotas against Jews at most Ivy League schools at the time—the middle 1950s—I, not all that powerful a student to begin with, was unlikely to have been allowed into the various yearn-worthy schools anyhow.



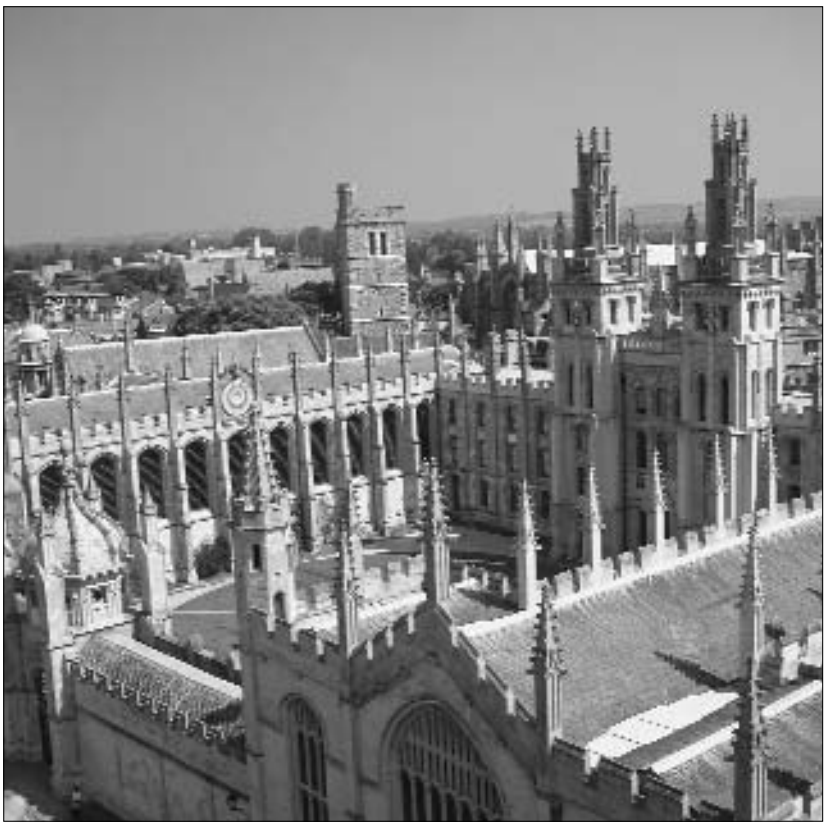
All photos: Corbis

John Lowe
The Warden
A Portrait of John Sparrow
HarperCollinsUK, 258 pp., £19.99

Not until I first saw Oxford did I feel a deep yearning to have gone to another university. I was already in my thirties when I first visited Oxford. As I walked through the various colleges—Balliol, Merton, New College, Wadham, All Souls—I felt as if I had missed out on something momentous. Paul Theroux has recently described feeling very differently when first confronted by Oxford. "I knew I did not belong, that I would never belong. . . . Being a student here seemed to me like my being an actor in a pageant in which I did not know any of my lines." I myself should have liked even a very small part in the pageant.

Over the years I have read a vast number of Oxford and Cambridge memoirs and loved especially those chapters set at Oxford in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, in some ways the greatest Oxford novel of them all. All writing about Oxbridge—the portmanteau word combining Oxford and Cambridge—suggests easy intelligence, elegant indolence, high wit, and sometimes great intellectual firepower. My reading has given me a fair amount of information about the leading Oxford

Joseph Epstein is a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard.



The rear quadrangle of All Souls College at Oxford University.

characters, beginning with John Henry Newman and Mark Pattison and Benjamin Jowett in the nineteenth century.

The twentieth century continued to toss up interesting Oxbridge characters. Professor William Spooner, warden of New College who gave his name to the oral tic known as Spoonerisms ("a half-warmed fish" for "a half-formed wish" was only one among several notable examples). F. F. Urquhart, a Balliol history tutor known as "Sligger," who cultivated undergraduates at his Alpine chalet on the slope of Mont Blanc, was another famous Oxford character. In the last generation, the generation now all but gone, Maurice Bowra was an authentic Oxford character (someone remarked that he gave up smoking and listening at the same time), and so was Isaiah Berlin, the worldly historian of ideas and famously loquacious talker, who died this past year and represents perhaps the end of this remarkable generation.

Owing to my having edited the *American Scholar*, I came to know—sometimes in person, sometimes through correspondence—some of this generation of notable Oxbridgian figures, among them H. R. Trevor-Roper, Hugh Lloyd-Jones, and John Sparrow. Vastly different though they were, the one quality they had in common was a certain appealing boyishness. Perhaps this came from the fact that they were so successful as students when boys; perhaps it came from their never really having left school. All seemed much merrier than American academics, who retain their immaturity but usually combine it with a weighty wet blanket of gloom and depression.

I met John Sparrow—the subject of *The Warden*, a fascinating new book by John Lowe just published in Great Britain—through my friend Edward Shils, who himself lived half the year in Cambridge and was a fellow at the college called Peterhouse (but never, for reasons still unknown to me, Peterhouse College). Edward had brought Sparrow to the University of Chicago in the hope of setting up an appointment for him. A black-tie dinner at the faculty club was given for Sparrow, and after the dinner, Edward and I joined him in his rooms at the faculty club. He was a man of middling height, square-shouldered and broad-chested—as a boy he was a serious footballer—with thick, dark hair.

More than a touch drunk, still in his dinner clothes, Sparrow reclined on his bed, a bouquet of roses in his arms, and began to attack dogs.

"So uncritical," he half lisped, "so sycophantic, so loathsome in their unabashed adoration of their owners. Odious creatures, really."

"Mr. Sparrow," I said, "I hesitate to bring this up, but as it happens I own a dog. He is a very small dog, to be sure, but I have grown greatly attached to him."

"How old is he?" Sparrow asked.

"Nine years old."

"I see," he said. "Well, keep him till he dies. But, pray, do not replace him."

Funny stuff, I thought. And there were other amusing bits. During the Suez crisis, he described his own college, All Souls, as "a hotbed of cold feet." Informed that a junior fellow was giving up his rooms to marry, Sparrow remarked: "Fancy giving up All Souls for one body." Write five or six great poems, Randall Jarrell once said, and you become a great poet. Make five or six remarks such as John Sparrow's, and you become known as a great Oxbridge wit.

One of the small penalties of growing older, of having been around the block a time or two, is the loss of awe. I have lost much of my awe of Oxbridge. Unlike Richard Ellmann, the biographer of James Joyce and Oscar Wilde, I would not accept a teaching job there—not that one is in the offing—at less money and at greater physical discomfort, merely

because, as in Ellmann's case, Oxford beckoned.

Poor Oxford and Cambridge, even they have suffered devaluation in recent years. It hasn't helped that William Jefferson Clinton—along with Robert Reich and George Stephanopoulos—won Rhodes scholarships to Oxford. (Yes, Cecil, no need to tell me it isn't what you had in mind.) Handsome résumé entry though it may be, attendance at that ancient university appears not to have laid a glove on them, so untouched by it do they all seem, either intellectually or socially. I know other gringos who have come away from a few years at Oxbridge similarly unchanged.

I still wish I had gone to Oxford or Cambridge, but I wish I had done so thirty or so years before it was possible for me to have done so. My reverence for Oxbridge is now chiefly for its past. Such figures as Berlin, Sparrow, and Trevor-Roper represented that past, at least in this century, at its most interesting. Education in classical languages still prevailed; learning itself seemed, somehow, classical. "What do you call a 'good Latinist'?" Hugh Lloyd-Jones, a former Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford once asked me. "Someone who doesn't know his Greek," he replied to his own question.

Most of these men, being academics and having lived sedentary lives, are not quite worthy of full-dress biographies, but that scarcely means that their lives are devoid of interest. A biography by Michael Ignatieff of Berlin, who was more worldly than most of the Oxbridge figures, will soon be published. Meanwhile, John Lowe's *The Warden* is not a biography but what its author calls "a portrait," which relieves Lowe of the burden of exhaustiveness that contemporary biographies seem to require.

What arises from Lowe's excellent book is not only a strong sense of a remarkable man who, in his own judgment, was a failure, but a clear view of non-scientific intellectual talent in a society that, in its day, cultivated and revered such talent much more than it has ever been cultivated and revered in the United States.

John Sparrow was born in 1906, the oldest of five children, near Wolfver-Hampton, in the Midlands, the son of a wealthy scion of ironmasters. His father, Lowe reports, "was a disagreeable man, and all his children disliked him and were afraid of him." The important figure in Sparrow's life was his mother, an intelligent and unsentimental woman to whom he was always devoted. He was a notably

Christopher Wren's sundial at All Souls.

precocious child: "talking at six months," Lowe reports, "an early reader, and always clever beyond his years." As a boy, he became a serious book collector.

How far beyond his years soon becomes, as Lowe recounts it, astonishing. A naturally good student, he made his way to the top at every school he attended, including Winchester, where two later-famous classmates were the political journalist and Labour-government cabinet minister R. H. S. Crossman (or "Double Crossman," as Maurice Bowra called him) and Hugh Gaitskell, the leader of the Labour party from 1955 until his death in 1963. Winchester was a forcing house for left-wing politicians, but its reigning political climate seems not to have touched Sparrow, whose conservative views emerged from the school quite unimpaired. He proceeded from Winchester to New College, Oxford, but not before a stellar example occurred of the astonishing precocity I have just mentioned.

At seventeen—please note: *seventeen*—Sparrow published, with Cambridge University Press, *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, by John Donne, edited by John Sparrow, Scholar of Winchester College, with a Bibliographic Note by Geoffrey Keynes, Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. (Keynes, brother of John Maynard Keynes, was perhaps the great bibliographer of his age.) Later, while still an undergraduate, young Sparrow edited for the Nonesuch Press Abraham Cowley's *The Mistress and Other Select Poems*. Still in his early twenties, he wrote essays and reviews for various London literary journals.

Sparrow was supposed to write a biography of John Donne; it never got done. He was also supposed to write a biography of Mark Pattison; it, too, never got done, though he did give a series of lectures on Pattison that now exists as a slender volume entitled *Mark Pattison and the Idea of a University*. But for the most part John Sparrow smoked what Balzac called "enchanted cigarettes"—that is, he planned books that never got written. The verdict appears to be that he squandered his considerable intellectual gifts on occasional intellectual journalism, controversy, and happy sociability.

Edith Wharton, in her memoir *Backwards Glance*, says that it is probably best never to have been considered promising. John Sparrow was considered extremely promising right out of the gate. Doors kept swinging open for him: scholarships, member-

ship in exclusive cliques, publishers' contracts, excellent job offers. At Oxford, he studied "Greats," the arduous course of classical and philosophical subjects then at the heart of Oxford undergraduate education. His senior philosophy tutor was H. W. B. Joseph, a man famous for his logic-chopping rigor, who brought out the already considerable analytical power of the young John Sparrow, though Maurice Bowra thought that Joseph brought out the pedantic and arid side of his friend John, killing the would-be poet in him. Sparrow's perfectionism probably finished off the scholar in him.

One gets the sense, reading John Lowe's book, that Sparrow would have preferred above all to be a poet. He wrote a small number of poems, all solidly made and many highly amusing, but none attaining to the magic of great poetry. "He would have given his soul," Lowe notes, "to have written one great poem." Yet he knew he hadn't it in him to do so. "Self-knowledge," Sparrow wrote the art historian Kenneth Clark, "at least saves me from being a not-quite-first-rate something-or-other in the world of art or letters."

Instead he decided upon the law. By all accounts Sparrow was on his way to a brilliant career as a barrister. The way had been largely paved for him through his reputation at Oxford, where he quite naturally won a first, and he was taken up by one of the most successful of London firms. He was good at law, temperamentally and intellectually suited to it, but then he was good at just about everything he attempted. His problem may have been that of drowning in a sea of possibilities.

In 1929, at the age of twenty-three, Sparrow was elected a prize fellow of All Souls. Sparrow's fellowship allowed him to keep one foot in London, where his law practice was, and one in Oxford, where his heart remained. In later years, he would write: "I think my greatest desire is to be really learned: to know all about history and literature and thought. Not to write or teach; just to know. And I think that the best thing I could make of myself could be a learned man, in accordance with the ideal of Newman or Mark Pattison." All Souls offered the perfect conditions in which to achieve this.

"My idea of heaven," opined Sydney Smith, "is eating pâté de foie gras to the sound of trumpets." My own idea of heaven is a college without students—and this is precisely what All Souls is. Perhaps its closest model in the United States is the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, with All Souls having the advantage of not being occupied exclusively by scholars. Many of its fellows—prize and honorary—have been men in public life, known by the academic

The closed gate to Ratcliffe Square, Oxford.

members as "Londoners." The result is an institution devoted to the highest learning but nicely leavened by the metropolitan spirit.

Sparrow himself spent his week in London, his weekends in Oxford, enjoying what certainly seems the best of both worlds. Yet his happiest days seem to be those when he was an infantry officer during World War II. He loved the camaraderie and the responsibility. In 1951, when the wardenship of All Souls became vacant after the death of then-warden Humphrey Sumner, Sparrow decided after much dithering that he wanted to become warden. Isaiah Berlin—who got off the mot that "one Sparrow does not a Sumner make"—thought him unsuited for it and claimed that he would vote for Sparrow for prime minister of England or president of the United States but not for warden of All Souls. Sparrow failed to be elected the first time he sought the job, and a figure from outside the college, an economist named Hubert Henderson, was named warden. But ten days later Henderson had a stroke, and another election was held, and this time Sparrow triumphed.

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William Kristol, Publisher

Sparrow was warden from 1952 until 1977, and did as little as possible to change anything in the college. He brought out and hung some of college's finer paintings. He made some quite decent appointments. He kept up the college's Codrington Library. Yet, as John Lowe writes, "he had no plans for the academic future of the college, since he had no interest in academic life." He viewed All Souls as the best of all private clubs—men's clubs, let it be added—and was intransigent about any change that might disrupt the tenor of the place. Whenever reform raised its insistent head, "John confounded his enemies, within and without the college," Lowe writes, "mainly through delaying tactics which allowed enthusiasms to cool and majorities to wither away."

John Lowe, who is more progress-minded than his subject, notes that, "like so many of his generation, John hated the modern world." All Souls was, for the most part, a damn fine place in which to hide not only from the asperities of the modern world but also from those even of Oxford. Sparrow was happy as warden—from every indication, extremely happy. It carried a light load of work and a heavy load of prestige, a tidy cachet in snobbery. Lowe notes that "there are seventy-two letters [to Sparrow] from Edith Sitwell, carefully preserved by John. She did not keep one of his replies. Ironically, from the moment John was elected warden of All Souls, she kept all his letters, while he ceased to keep hers."

Sparrow had a genuine gift for sociability. Being warden allowed him to exercise that gift, playing the perpetual host, a role he adored, and at no cost to himself. Witty, charming, provocative, he had a taste for controversy, both in person and in print, and published a slim volume, *Controversial Essays*, on such subjects as the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, the private life of A. E. Housman, and what the gamekeeper was really doing to Lady Chatterley. John Sparrow, as you may already have surmised, was a homosexual—a fact that his biographer does not in the least scamp but treats with delicacy and in just proportion. Sparrow seems to have had only one long-lasting homosexual relationship, and, later in life, he had a love affair with an Italian woman about which not all that much is known.

Many though the pleasures of being head of an Oxbridge college must be, there is nonetheless something unreal about it. One lives for years in a grand setting in beautiful surroundings with lots of servants, a continual social stir, and the regular companionship of learned and often witty people. The cruel twist is that, at retirement, it is all withdrawn. The withdrawal may well be tougher for a bachelor than for a married man. Certainly it was hellacious for Sparrow, who took it very hard.

Sparrow described his own retirement as "exile." In retirement, his drinking increased as did his irritability. He became insulting to the point that he was barred from the college. Edward Shils's plan to get him a permanent appointment at the University of Chicago became impossible to arrange when he appeared there for a second set of public lectures and performed poorly. His drinking aided the destruction of his memory. Although Lowe does not emphasize it, Sparrow was said to be in especial terror about the prospect of death; as it turned out, his death, at the age of eighty-five in 1992, was a relatively easeful one, occurring at home and among friends.

John Lowe deals with Sparrow's life in a sympathetic yet critical spirit that one would like to think Sparrow himself would have approved. He conveys how pleasant it was to be in his company when Sparrow was at his not infrequent best. He remarks on Sparrow's disappointment at not having been knighted. Admiring his lucid and forceful prose style, Lowe treats Sparrow's sporadic writings with serious respect and is less hard on his low productivity than Sparrow himself was.

The Codrington Library of All Souls College.

Lowe judges Sparrow to have been a not very good warden, arguing that "he was determined to keep the college as he liked it without really considering its role for the future, or its contribution to the life of the university, or, indeed, the wishes of his colleagues." Earlier he writes, "One might plead that he sincerely believed that he was preserving the college from dangerous intrusions, but it would be truer to say that he was striving to ensure that it remained the way he personally wanted it." Hard though it is, this is probably just.

And yet one has to admit that Sparrow was impressive even in failure. If he was unable to write the great poem or produce the significant work of scholarship, or to turn back the clock (the great dream of all romantic conservatives), he nonetheless fashioned himself into an extraordinary figure. And a figure of Sparrow's kind is unimaginable outside Oxbridge: someone who is witty and learned, and who had, as he once put it in another context, "the courage of his conventions."

Which brings me back to the yearning for something one has never known. Because of the characters therein assembled, the Oxbridge of John Sparrow's generation, for all its shortcomings, was an intellectual carnival of the highest power and a place of inexhaustible interest. I still regret not having been there. ♦

Our Canadian Cousins

Anti-Americanism Up North

By Preston Jones

There was a moment in the nineteenth century when it seemed possible that the Yankees might, after defeating the Confederate South, try to annex British North America. So the separate colonies of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and "Canada" (roughly present day Quebec and Ontario) deemed it prudent to form a united front, and in 1867 the Dominion of Canada—consciously rejecting the American Republic's embrace of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—declared itself to stand for "peace, order, and good government."

But it was clear from long before that Canadians preferred to rely upon government rather than individuals or private institutions to provide them with a sense of collective purpose. "We leave," one United Empire Loyalist wrote en route from upstate New York to the Ottawa Valley in 1773, "not because we do not see . . . that the king of England seems pernicious, ill-minded or insane, but because we do not believe . . . that we can yet cut ourselves off from Europe, from tradition, or from the past."

J. L. Granatstein
Yankee Go Home?
Canadians and Anti-Americanism
HarperCollins, 336 pp., $20

And in 1839, well after Canadians had joined in fighting Americans in the War of 1812 to preserve their distinct society, the governor-in-chief of Britain's remaining North American colonies maintained that the only way for British America to avoid annexation by the United States was for the government to raise up "for the North American colonist some nationality of his own; by elevating these small and unimportant communities into a society having some objects of national importance; and thus by giving their inhabitants a country which they will be unwilling to see absorbed even into one more powerful."

Given the British Americans' early reliance on government, it comes as no surprise that Canadians still look to politicians for reasons to live. It is a truism that Canadians—from the Maritime Provinces on the Atlantic to British Columbia on the Pacific—have never shared a common national identity. In 1997 one poll showed that some 12 percent of British Columbians supported independence, and it is well known that a majority of French Quebeckers voted in favor of sovereignty in October 1995.

But the one thing that has bound the perpetually fractious Canadians together for well over a century has been their unwillingness to see their nation or their province absorbed into the United States.

Canadians are famous for their inability to define themselves, but—as J. L. Granatstein observes in his interesting new study, *Yankee Go Home?: Canadians and Anti-Americanism*—polls consistently show that less than 5 percent of them favor joining the United States. "It's not that we don't like America," a Canadian friend fibs. "We just don't want to be Americans."

In the preface to his *Yankee Go Home?*, Granatstein, an eminent Canadian historian and public commentator, calls himself a lifelong "devout anti-American," and sometimes that shows; but his tone comes nowhere near the anti-American screeds of, say, Margaret Atwood or the late philosopher George Grant's gloomy nationalist tracts. Of the more than thirty books Granatstein has written or edited, American readers would benefit most from this one,

Preston Jones is writing a doctoral dissertation in Canadian history at the University of Ottawa.

which inevitably puts the United States in an interesting light.

Surely some would be interested to know, for instance, that an event as obscure to most Americans as the Alaska boundary dispute of 1903, in which Britain sided with the increasingly powerful United States against the loyal (if somewhat peripheral) Canadian dominion, figures prominently in the Canadian nationalist's anti-American catechism. So too does the bragging of Americans who, having spent less than a year fighting the Kaiser in the First World War, hooted that they had won that conflict, while the bloodied Canadians had been in France's trenches from the beginning. Granatstein writes that this sort of American bravado contributed mightily to the animus of John Diefenbaker, whose 1963 campaign for reelection as Canada's prime minister was fantastically anti-American—so much so that the U.S. government quietly assisted the opposition Liberal leader, Lester Pearson, which of course gave Diefenbaker's supporters and their anti-American progeny yet another reason to hate the United States.

Not that Pearson's own relationship with official America was unendingly smooth. Recounted in this book is the familiar Canadian tale of how Pearson obliquely criticized Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam policy at Temple University in 1965 and how, the next day, LBJ grabbed the prime minister by his lapels and rebuked him for having come to the United States and "pissed on my rug." Then there was the 1985 "Shamrock Summit" at Quebec City where the pro-American Brian Mulroney and his wife Mila led Ronald and Nancy Reagan on stage to sing "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling." "This public display of sucking up to Reagan," Granatstein writes, "may have been the single most demeaning moment in the entire political history of Canada's relations with the United States."

Prominent in this book is the moral superiority Canadians have nurtured in their breasts from the days of the loyalists to the present. "We have the freest institutions and most direct self-government in the world," the *Canadian Methodist Magazine* declared in 1880, noting further that Canada was free from many of the "social cancers" which were "empoisoning the national life of our neighbors": "polygamous Mormondom," "Ku-Klux terrorism," "Oneida Communism," the "Illinois divorce system," and "cruel Indian massacres."

In much of this, let it be said, the Canadians had a point. In the second half of the nineteenth century, for example, U.S. troops fought nearly a thousand engagements with Indians; in the same period Canadians fought just ten—and most of these were with a single tribe.

But the Canadians' tendency to pat their own backs does get tedious—as when they piously observed in October 1995 that the O. J. Simpson spectacle could never have happened in Canada, even as their own nation came within some fifty thousand votes of splitting up. And then there is Granatstein's lofty opinion that "Canadians are fortunate enough to live in God's country, the best of all places on the earth, a land graced with North America's bounty and few of the United States' worst problems."

Of course, much of what Canadians take pride in these days are gov-

ernment programs and social philosophies most Americans reject, so there's little prospect of the United States looking to Canada for moral instruction any time soon.

In America, in theory at any rate, blindness to racial differences is considered a virtue. But multiculturalism is entrenched in Canada's Charter of Rights. Granatstein notes with approval that this was done "in an effort to stop the melting pot bragged about in the United States from doing its work." Granatstein is hopeful, moreover, for Canadian "social democracy," which, "however attenuated today, has thrived in the past and continues to struggle onward." He is similarly pleased that "unions remain stronger in Canada than in the United States," while "the influence of religion is less."

One irony in this list of selling points is that to a considerable measure Canada owes these differences to Americans, particularly to Vietnam-era draft dodgers, most of whom were college educated and partisans of the Left, and some of whom ended up getting tenure at Canadian universities. These anti-American Americans, Granatstein says, "vigorously rejected the policies of the United States and some of its works" and they "increased the acceptability of American radicalism in Canada." One study cited by Granatstein shows that in the late 1980s many of these draft dodgers turned professors were still among Canada's most fervent anti-Americans.

It comes as no surprise that Canada's least anti-American faction is made up of Quebec nationalists, who voted overwhelmingly in favor of free trade candidates in the 1988 federal election. One reason for this is that, by virtue of their French language, the nationalists do not fear American culture as much as English-speaking Canadians. French Quebeckers also recognize that the weaker Canada's central government becomes, the greater their odds of gaining political independence. So Quebec's nationalists favored free trade for the same reason many English-speaking Canadians did not—namely, that it was a further blow to "Canadian identity."

In his conclusion Granatstein maintains that since the North American free trade agreements of the late 1980s and early 1990s, anti-Americanism in Canada has become nearly a spent force. "In a continental market dominated by television and media dollars, there seems little way to resist the trend of Americanization," he writes. "The decline of anti-Americanism surely is a recognition of the truth that Canadians are, every day, more like Americans."

There is certainly much truth in this. But, being Canadian, Granatstein may not be able to divine the extent to which his English-speaking compatriots, and especially his fellow Ontarians, differ from their American kin. As most perceptive Americans who have spent time in Canada would agree, the psychological and temperamental gulf between the United States and its greatest trading partner is much wider than the international border. ♦

B&A

The Jong and the Restless

Erica Flies Again

By Norah Vincent

Don't let the pretentious, Freudian title fool you. Erica Jong's *What Do Women Want?* isn't a manifesto. It's not even much of a polemic. The latest foray into non-fiction by the author of the bestselling 1973 novel *Fear of Flying* is petty egotism and self-congratulation masquerading as cultural criticism.

Erica Jong
What Do Women Want?
Bread, Roses, Sex, Power
HarperCollins, 202 pp., $25

Jong should have stuck to the high-brow bodice-rippers with which she first brought herself to public notice. Non-fiction only brings out her worst insecurities. Without the redeeming layer of artifice that even shallow novels afford, Jong's pedestrian opinions on pornography, sex, men, motherhood, and Mrs. Clinton just stand around in her writing like awkward guests at a cocktail party. It's painful to watch.

On the first page of *What Do Women Want?*, Jong announces, "Since my first novel did foment a sort of revolution in consciousness, I was able to nurse, for a time, the delusion that the word did change the world. Then I lost it. Now I have come to trust the word again—though in a more modest way." She's right that she was deluded about her own importance way back when, but she's deluded as well about her modesty now. This narcissistic dwelling on her place in history is the sure mark of the has-been—a perfect preface to a vaunting, useless book.

On the very next page, for example, Jong declares: "If the 'f' word, feminism, is out of fashion today, that's because it's associated with the seventies—the mythic decade of our daughters' births. How can anything espoused by their mothers be either radical or real?" Wrapped up in the conceit that her own decline and fall is history's decline and fall, Jong misses that the "f" word is out of

Norah Vincent is a freelance writer living in New York City.

fashion primarily because it was a fad—fabricated by fatuous frumps, flakes, and floozies whom the next generation of women fled like poison.

Then again, maybe the "f" word is out of fashion because feminism in the hands of people like Jong has become so predictable. You don't need to read this book; you already know what it's going to say. Speak the words "Hillary Rodham Clinton," and any feminist worth the title will immediately intone that the first lady is unpopular because Americans are threatened by a strong woman. As Jong piously writes:

> For it is true that when we wish women to fail, we decree for them endless and impossible ordeals like those devised for witches by their inquisitors. If they drown, they are innocent; if they float, they are guilty. This has pretty much been the way America has tried to get rid of its cleverest political women, from Victoria Woodhull and Emma Goldman to Eleanor Roosevelt and Geraldine Ferraro.

One wishes she hadn't left out Ethel Rosenberg, if only for completeness.

Jong does concede that what she labels an attitude of "f— you" characterized Mrs. Clinton from the start. She finds it admirable, in fact. Of course, Jong doesn't go on to concede that such an attitude doesn't win many friends except, perhaps, in the cattle-futures market. Hillary Clinton has alienated much of the American public because she has an abrasive personality and because she manifests unfounded intellectual and moral contempt for most people she meets, especially those with whom she disagrees. Jong's puerile invocation of a witch hunt is typical of the way her prose matches her mind, invariably reaching for the most hackneyed explanation possible.

Consider these opinings:

On Lady Diana: "She probably was a dear girl (why should I doubt it?), and she was more empathetic than the usual Sloane Ranger."

On the avant-garde: "Something new in literature is often gloriously oblivious to old rules of decorum, old limits of literary expression."

On Adrian Lyne's recently broadcast refilming of *Lolita*, in which symbolic bananas and ejaculating soda fountains blight almost every scene: "It is a restrained, understated piece of work."

On art: "All of us, if we are honest, know that art is a fart in the face of God."

Erica Jong

UP / Corbis-Bettman

On Viagra: "The Viagra craze shows, if nothing else, that American men want their erections back. And so do American women."

On Bill Clinton: "When we are confused by the current political scene, we ought to look to the animal kingdom for guidance. . . . 'Power is the ultimate aphrodisiac,' said Henry Kissinger. And he wasn't even as cute as Bill Clinton."

Even more than in these exhausted, old confusions, *What Do Women Want?* reveals its worn-out and past-it author in the endless name-dropping and back-patting that fill Jong's pages. "In my time," she modestly reminds us, "I have hung out with plenty of contemporary icons: Nobel laureates, rock stars more famous than Jesus, movie idols who can't walk unmolested in the streets, politicians in and out of high office."

It gets, if possible, more embarrassing when Jong likens herself to a genuine novelist like Vladimir Nabokov: The "literary blessing" that Graham Greene conferred upon Nabokov's *Lolita*, she humbly tells us, is just like the one "John Updike and Henry Miller were later to confer upon *Fear of Flying*." Henry Miller makes several appearances in *What Do Women Want?*, always as an occasion for flattering Jong: "He was coaxed by a friend into reading *Fear of Flying*, and he responded with a torrent of applause, enthusiasm, and unpaid agentry. . . . He always made a great point of how literary I was."

The self-delivered accolades continue throughout the book: "As a professional writer whose process of composition often resembles Twain's, . . . I think I understand Twain's creative strategy." There may be a smidgen of unintended truth in this last claim. Twain couldn't have written a better parody of Erica Jong than Erica Jong has unwittingly written of herself.

The truly awe-inspiring thing about *What Do Women Want?* is its author's utter conviction of her own wisdom, self-possession, and exemplary good taste—her cogency, intellect, and depth. That feminism's patron saint of the pot-boiler was so deluded about her own importance when she published *Fear of Flying* in 1973 is sad but perhaps intelligible. That she is still so deluded is merely sad: The aging Erica Jong is living proof of why feminism is out of fashion. ♦

Not a Parody

A number of leading writers were asked to comment on the Clinton-Lewinsky affair by the *New Yorker* magazine. The following are excerpts from their groupthink essays. All references to the McCarthy hearings, Torquemada, Javert, and the Salem witch trials have been rigorously excised.

DEPT. OF CLEAR THINKING

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African-American men seemed to understand it right away. Years ago, in the middle of the Whitewater investigation, one heard the first murmurs: white skin notwithstanding, this is our first black President. Blacker than any actual black person who could ever be elected in our children's lifetime. After all, Clinton displays almost every trope of blackness: single-parent household, born poor, working-class, saxophone-playing, McDonald's-and-junk-food-loving boy from Arkansas.

—TONI MORRISON

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That our ungentlemanly President's gentlemanly failure to kiss and tell should be subjected to the legalisms of judiciary procedure is, of course, total madness, a torture and a regicide, which could only have been brought about by Starr, the crazed zealot the right wing didn't even know it had.

—LORRIE MOORE

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What the French don't possess is the equivalent of the American South, where a strain of Protestant fundamentalism is so maniacal that one of its archetypal zealots, Kenneth Starr, has been able to nearly dismantle the Presidency because of a gawky and fumbling sexual dalliance.

—WILLIAM STYRON

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All you need is a sinner and a suit. If you happen to be a prosecutor with a righteous bent, you can transform what morally offends you into a criminal offense. . . .

The sexual act can be barbaric, brutally selfish, and self-aggrandizing, or loving and revelatory. It can be infantile and ludicrous, or spiritually exalted and profound. It can be narcissistic, heedless, exploitative, or devotional. In the course of one person's life, it can, at one time or another, be all these things. But the particular character of a consensual act is manifest only in the intimate connection of two minds. When it is exposed to an audience, it deconstructs as something inevitably prurient, automatically scandalous.

—E.L. DOCTOROW

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One thought that public executions and floggings, putting sinners in stocks, shaving the heads of adulteresses and similar pastimes that have beguiled the multitude ever since our ancestors evolved into the human species had all gone out of style in the industrialized democracies. . . . In the dim, bloodstained past of certain cultures, sacrifices of kings were holy acts, performed by priests to obtain for the king's subjects a great benefit—averting a famine or a plague. Something akin to those rites, but obscenely profane, has been acted out in Washington.

—LOUIS BEGLEY

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What I remember about Bush is that the only time in his whole presidency that he got a little animated was when he went to war against Iraq. His façade of Eastern-establishment savoir-faire slipped, and there he was, a guy for whom launching a missile seemed to be better than sex.

—JANE SMILEY

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[Clinton] is comfortable with the extremes of human possibility, with the grandness and loathsomeness of mankind, with the Icarian dream and petty stumble that is human character. It is this comfort, in fact, which might lead a man of his constitution to stray from what in some circles is thought of as morality.

—ETHAN CANIN