the weekly Standard

JUNE 7, 1999

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PATRICK KENNEDY: THE MAN AND THE MYTH
MATT LABASH

How Not to Spend Your Summer Vacation

ANDREW FERGUSON
visits the National Gallery's new Sculpture Garden

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DAVID BROOKS
tours the National Museum of American History

the weekly Standard

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Cover by Peter Steiner

Books & Arts

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

First Freeloaders

Okay, it's not an impeachable offense, but there's something cheap and tacky about Bill and Hillary Clinton's freeloading on their vacations. This is not what other presidents and first ladies have done—all those folks the Clintons claimed they'd be more ethical than. The Fords and Carters paid rent for vacation homes, and the Reagans and Bushes went to their own spreads for rest and relaxation. True, the Clintons don't own a vacation home, or any residence for that matter. But that doesn't excuse their willingness to pay nothing for their five-day stay last week at plush White Oak Plantation in Yulee, Florida, near Jacksonville.

This continued a Clinton family practice that started with their stay on Martha's Vineyard in 1993 at the home of former secretary of defense Robert McNamara. The Clintons came back for three more freebies in 1994, 1997, and 1998, staying at the Vineyard house of real estate developer Richard Friedman. Twice, they've vacationed for free in Jackson Hole, Wyoming—at Sen. Jay Rockefeller's spread in 1995 and financier Max Chapman's in 1996. In 1994, they spent all-expenses-paid days in Coronado, California, thanks to Democratic fundraiser Larry Lawrence, whose body was later disinterred from Arlington National Cemetery because he'd lied about his military record.

Then there was the stay at film mogul Steven Spielberg's spread in the Hamptons in 1998. It was gratis, as were the vacations in the Virgin Islands in 1998 at the home of local residents Jay and Dolly Greblick and last year and this year in Park City, Utah, at Hollywood bigwig Jeffrey Katzenberg's ski chalet.

So what's wrong with being the First Freeloaders? The Beltway press corps, with the exception of Tom DeFrank of the *New York Daily News*, has ignored the question entirely. Still, there was enough wrong with taking freebies that Gerald Ford felt obligated to pay rent for his twice yearly stays in Vail, Colorado, and Jimmy Carter paid the going rate to vacation at a government guest lodge in Grand Tetons National Park in Wyoming. This spared them accusations of sponging or creating potential conflicts of interest. The Clintons don't bother with such ethical niceties. But here's a question the press might ask: Is a president whose vacations are paid for by movie execs likelier to go easy on Hollywood after something like the Littleton massacre?

The Torch Burns

For those who missed it, something remarkable happened on *Face the Nation* last week. During a discussion of the Chinese spying scandal, Sen. Robert Torricelli became the first Democrat in the Senate to suggest that Janet Reno should resign. Torricelli accused Reno of exercising terrible judgment in her response—which, as he pointed out, was late, halting, and ultimately impotent—to espionage at the Los Alamos labs. Specifically, Torricelli said, the Justice Department's refusal to allow the FBI to tap the phone of suspected spy Wen Ho Lee was "almost inexplicable."

As Matthew Rees's story in this issue shows, the department's refusal was indeed inexplicable. At least. But then so were Torricelli's remarks.

For years, you'll remember, Torricelli has been one of Bill Clinton's worst hack defenders, a red-faced conspiracy buff who once sent a letter to the very same Janet Reno complaining about—and implying the federal government should take action against—the *American Spectator* magazine

Scrapbook

for running an uncomplimentary article about the Clintons.

What happened? Torricelli isn't returning calls about his comments, a sure sign that someone has told him to cool it. And in fact, someone has. At a meeting of Senate Democrats last week, the *New York Times* reports, several female senators scolded Torricelli, claiming his remarks about Reno were "unfair."

Our plea to the senator: Don't stop now. More outbursts, please. It's nice to see at least one Democrat tell something like it is. And it's a good lesson for the White House: The thing about loose cannons is that they sometimes swivel 180 degrees.

Americans United for Blame Shifting

We thought we had heard every meretricious explanation for the April 20 Columbine High shootings by Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, but Barry W. Lynn—the Methodist pastor who heads Americans United for the Separation of Church and State—has come up with a new one. "Evidence indicates that the two students who killed their peers, and ultimately themselves at Columbine High felt alienated and ostracized," he explained in a May 19 press release. "We know from experience that school-sponsored religious displays and worship invariably make some students feel like second-class citizens."

There's a name for the Rev. Lynn's notion. It's called "blaming the victim." When the 17-year-old Cassie Bernall answered yes to the question "Do you believe in God?" She was shot through the temple. But apparently she must have deserved it, for she was a pretty, young evangelical who wanted to cut off her long blonde hair to make wigs for cancer victims and who spent her weekends handing out doughnuts and religious tracts to the drug addicts and gang members down in the worst neighborhood of Denver. The 18-year-old Valeen Schnurr was wounded nine times and survives with permanent nerve damage. But perhaps she just got what was coming to her for carrying a Bible around. After weeks of silence, the parents of the murdered Rachel Scott have recently allowed their daughter's story to be told. The 17-year-old was shot in the leg by her giggling classmates, who then asked her if she believed in God. And when she answered yes, they taunted, "Then go be with Him now," and shot her again. But it seems she only got her just deserts. Think how "alienated and ostracized" she must have made those poor boys feel. Why, there ought to be a law against people like Rachel, and Cassie, and Valeen.

Help Wanted

Charles Krauthammer seeks a research assistant. Contact Borden Flanagan at 1225 19th St., NW, Suite 620, Washington, DC 20036.

Casual

Down on the Farm

It's ten years exactly since Jim first took me to his farm in Casey County. I'd read about it often. A lot of Jim's columns in the paper we worked for, the *Cincinnati Post*, were set on the farm where he'd grown up in Kentucky, in the foothills of the Cumberlands. Yet somehow what I'd read had given me the wrong idea.

I'd pictured hardscrabble country, kids without shoes and an unforgiving environment. The horses Jim told me he kept at the old place and left outside all winter I'd envisaged as bony nags; the house, a shack out of Dogpatch.

The columns probably invited that view because Jim called himself a hillbilly and had grown up during the Depression. His father, who scorned handouts, had plowed steep fields with mules. Eventually, Jim had gone off to Germany in World War II and later to Ohio State on the GI Bill. But that early June when he first took me and a few of our colleagues there, Casey County was lush as Eden.

It was a balmy day, dappled with sun. I've never forgotten the sweetness of the air or the general leafiness and the pervasive green.

The little settlement—just a string of modest houses sparsely stretched along a crest, with a church high on a hill at one end—was called Bethelridge. Opposite Jim's place rose Rocky Knob, whose profile he loved. The frame house was small and, like the others, gleaming white. With the dormitory he'd added upstairs, it could sleep his family of six. Out back was a weathered barn, and next to it, the horses.

You don't have to know anything about horses to tell an aristocrat of the animal kingdom. Ebony was sleek and superb. Jim said he was a registered Tennessee Walker. The little gray pony had a bad foot, but Ebony and Major, the lovely palomino, graciously tolerated our token rides.

Jim gave us a tour of the place, down by the stream and through the woods, then we piled back into the van and drove off toward South Fork Ridge to pick up a saddle he was having repaired by an Old Order Mennonite craftsman. On the way, he took us through the county seat, known for the world's largest apple pie, baked there every last-week-of-September and movable only by forklift. The name of the town—Liberty—made an impression on me because of the pictures all over the papers in recent days of the Chinese students holding aloft their Lady Liberty in Tiananmen Square.

On our way, we passed cemeteries bright with flags and plastic wreaths left on Memorial Day, still known in those border parts as Decoration Day. Jim showed us the grave of a forebear, Silas Adams, who at 24 was elected to lead the First Kentucky Union Cavalry, succeeding an old Liberty attorney who had criticized President Lincoln for allowing blacks to fight.

The saddler lived deep in the country, in a bare, spacious wooden house on a hill under a giant tree. His airy workshop occupied the ground floor, and out front in the grass sat a baby, playing on a blanket in the shade.

Coming back, we detoured to follow a hand-written sign that pointed down a dirt road and said "Rhubarb 2 miles." It took us to a farmhouse in a field. A Mennonite man in a torn straw hat came out to cut us our rhubarb. His family, he said, had lived there for generations. He told me the brilliant blue bird I'd seen from the car was an indigo bunting. That may have been the quietest spot I've ever been.

Back at Jim's, we drank ice water from the well, and chatted with longtime neighbors, and helped with a few chores around the place. It was dusk when we left. The square wooden church with its corner steeple faced west, and it was flushed with light as we drove off. Jim told me once that his core beliefs had remained essentially unchanged since he was nine.

It was dark by the time we stopped for that Kentucky rarity, commercially available home cooking—to wit, cornbread, country ham, and pinto beans. On the night ride back to Cincinnati, we listened to the radio, and I stashed away for keeps an endearing refrain: "Since my phone still ain't ringin' / I assume it still ain't you."

It was an idyllic day, and a quintessentially American one—nailed in my memory by the next morning's brutal headlines of the Chinese massacre.

Our little group came from miscellaneous backgrounds and races, six people thrown together in the transient fraternity of journalism. In Casey County, we glimpsed a simpler American world, predicated on freedom, where lean lives unfolded around essentials. It's a world to which fewer and fewer of us have any exposure and that holds little sway over the habits and imaginations of city, suburb, and mall-reared generations. Reading the paper the morning after our trip, I felt a sharp hope that it would endure.

Claudia Winkler

Correspondence

A Perilous Partnership

William Kristol and Robert Kagan are right: The demonstrations at the American embassy in Beijing show the world more than just China's continuing ability to organize demonstrations ("Call Off the Engagement," May 24). In Tiananmen Square hundreds of people were killed because they were in favor of democracy, and yet there was not a whimper of protest; now a few people are killed by a democracy and they receive a government-organized demonstration. Just as China was not ready for democracy ten years ago, these demonstrations show that it is still not ready today.

Chuck Morales
Santa Margarita, CA

Cuomo and the Vendettas

After reading Matthew Rees's exhaustive article about Andrew Cuomo, one believes it might be time to rename your publication "The Whining Standard" ("Andrew Cuomo's Vendetta," May 17). This article displays the ultimate in unbalanced journalism.

Andrew Cuomo has undertaken one of the most difficult assignments in the federal government as secretary of HUD and has been extraordinarily effective. The National Italian American Foundation resents the fact that The Weekly Standard targets the only Italian-American member of the Clinton cabinet for a highly personalized attack which is in no way relevant to the effective job he has done and continues to do.

No effort was made in the development of this story to get both sides. As a result the article suffers from a fatal combination of shoddy research, parochial writing, and irrelevant conclusions. If there is a vendetta here, it appears to be against Andrew Cuomo.

Joseph R. Cerrell
President
The National Italian American Foundation
Washington, DC

Matthew Rees responds: ***Joseph R. Cerrell says I made no attempt to "get both sides" of the story. He seems to have missed the paragraph in my article in which I recount my negotiations with HUD officials over being granted an interview. (When I refused their offer of an off the record interview—I would not have been able to use any of the information they shared with me—they refused to speak with me, and did not return repeated phone calls.) As for my "shoddy research, parochial writing, and irrelevant conclusions," if Cerrell can point to any specific examples, I invite him to do so. And as for the article being motivated by animus toward Italian Americans, the charge is so silly it doesn't merit a response.***

Red Wheel Turnin'

I have some objections to Margaret Boerner's review of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *November 1916* ("Time's Arrow," May 17). First, the character Georgi Vorotyntsev is not a new addition, but is the same Col. Vorotyntsev from *August 1914*. Nor does he "stand in for Solzhenitsyn," at least not exclusively. Solzhenitsyn has also given part of himself into the role of the young artillery ensign, Sanya Lazhenitsyn.

Part of Boerner's dissatisfaction with *The Red Wheel* cycle may stem from her definition of a novel as a "literary work with a beginning, middle, and end." However, in his memoir *The Oak and the Calf*, Solzhenitsyn divides his fiction into "tales" and "novels." He describes the novels as tracing the destinies of groups of diverse people, which *The Red Wheel* surely does, and tales as being just stories with beginnings, middles, and ends.

Boerner needn't give up on Solzhenitsyn's cycle—*November 1916* is the middle, transitional installment, and so must be somewhat open-ended.

Bruce Thompson
Smyrna, GA

The Unspoken War

I should have expected to find Sen. McCain's speech glowingly reviewed by The Scrapbook in a magazine which calls people like me "McGovern Republicans" ("McCain's Moment," May 17). Senator McCain at least uses the word "war" to describe what we are doing in the Balkans. But neither he nor The Scrapbook will face up to the fact that this "war" has not been declared and that it is illegal under any reasonable constitutional definition. Our rule of law continues to erode even if people who help the process call themselves "conservatives." The only result of this war will be the destruction of the Republican party. I suspect this was the president's agenda all along.

John Willson
Hillsdale, MI

Correction

In Robert M. Goldberg's "Hijacking Medicine" (May 31), it was reported that two Democrats broke ranks with the White House over Medicare reform. They were John Breaux and Bob Kerrey, not John Kerry.

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

The Good News About the Cox Report

One often learns the most when politicians are forced to speak from least immediate knowledge about a subject with greatest long-term implications. The release last Tuesday of Rep. Christopher Cox's House select committee report on recent Chinese military espionage against the United States is a classic example.

At ten o'clock in the morning, the committee made public an unclassified version of its work, in three volumes totaling more than 900 pages. By day's end, it is fair to say, hardly anyone in America had finished looking at the color pictures, let alone fully digested the thing. And yet the report was highly newsworthy. So within hours, nearly every major elected official in the country, operating from previously published accounts of what Cox's committee was *likely* to conclude, had rushed out a formal reaction. They said the most revealing and—by the admittedly low standards of current American thinking about China—even encouraging things.

Not all of them, of course.

The Clinton White House—intent as always to deflect bad news and eager to protect the reputation of its "strategic partner," the People's Republic—rather sheepishly denied having done anything wrong, quickly endorsed the report's modest recommendations for improved counterintelligence and technology control, and then went silent.

Away from the direct line of fire, the administration's most dogged congressional and corporate partners in China-engagement fetishism felt freer to dismiss Cox's revelations as so much workaday boredom. It's just the old spy versus spy story, Republican congressman David Dreier told the *Wall Street Journal*. By pilfering classified information about the world's most sophisticated nuclear warheads, missile guidance systems, and jet-fighter engines, the Chinese were just "doing their jobs" in an appropriate and necessary bilateral "business relationship" like any other we enjoy in the world. What's a little espionage between strategic partners? Anyone who says different is making a "gross mistake."

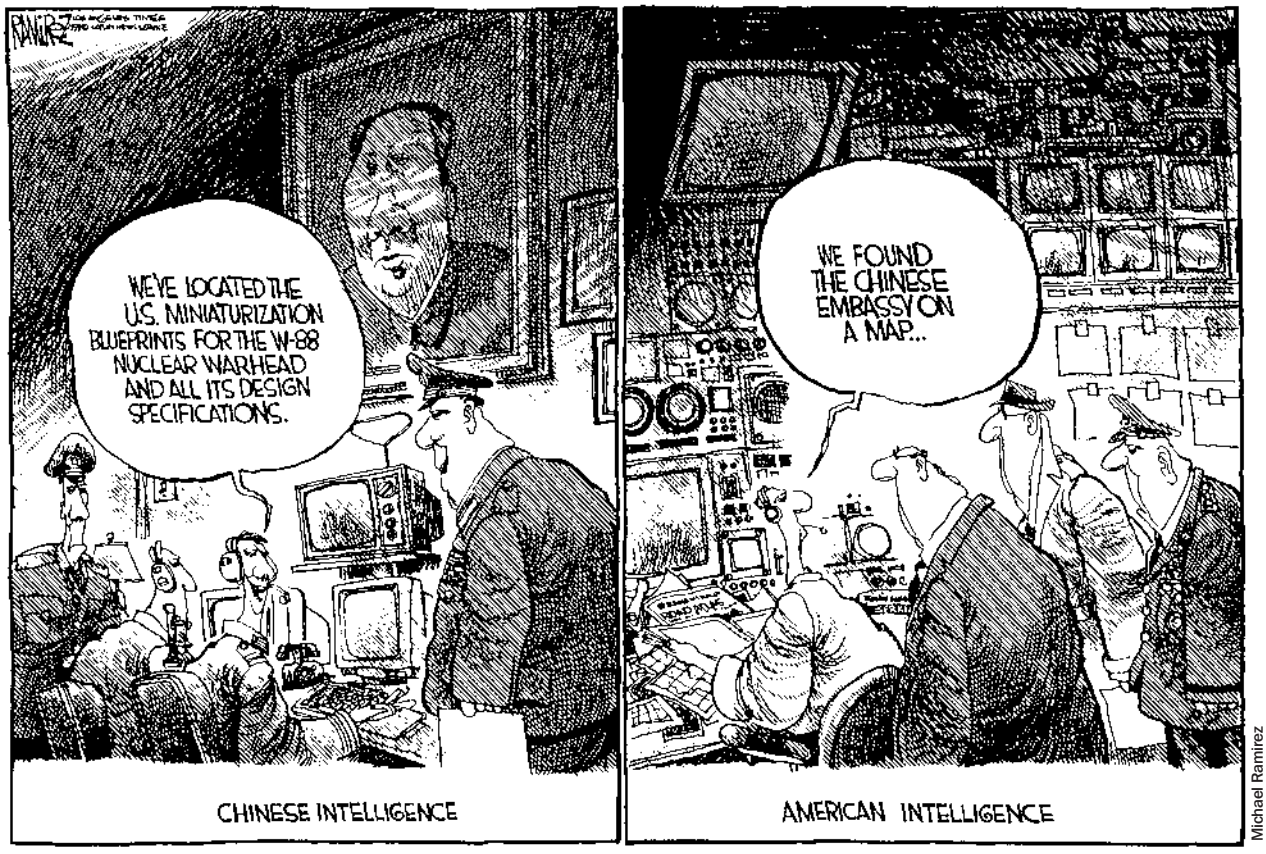
At the opposite extreme, implacable Clinton critics like House majority whip Tom DeLay used the Cox report to mutter darkly about "whether the president and vice president deliberately ignored the reality of Chinese spying and theft because they had ulterior economic and political motives." DeLay was alluding here, without much evidence, to the Democratic party's illegal foreign campaign contributions in the 1996 election cycle—which seem to us a real but probably unrelated scandal and, in the geostrategic context of the Cox report, a significantly less important one.

All of which was rather predictable. What was not so predictable was reaction to the Cox report from the vast middle of American political opinion. The bipartisan select committee's final recommendations were unanimous, of course, so it was almost inevitable that the report would be widely praised as "solid" and "fair." But how to explain the fact that the report was just as widely dubbed "alarming"—by a full spectrum of Democrats and Republicans alike?

Rep. Dreier was quite correct, after all, that even friendly countries spy on one another all the time and that many nations now boast thermonuclear capabilities. We may not like it in theory. But we don't tear our hair out over it on the front page of the *New York Times*, either. Israel and France do not "alarm" American politicians. Why, suddenly, should China?

Unless, that is, there is something fundamentally different about the People's Republic. Could it be that in their "alarm" over the Cox report, our elected officials—perhaps without even realizing it—are at last expressing long-buried doubts about the very basis of their bipartisan "engagement" orthodoxy? Could it be that China isn't, and *cannot be*, any kind of meaningful "friend" to the United States?

Here, the actual text of the Cox report is most suggestive. Its first chapter opens with a beautifully condensed description of the structure and nature of the Chinese state, with its absolute dominance by overlapping cadres of Communist party and People's Liberation Army officials. The report moves then to a review of the Communist party's 1997 "16-character policy" announcement, clearly establishing that China's economic initiatives are of a piece with—and totally sub-



ordinate to—its plan for military modernization and expansion. Finally, in its "all volume overview," and in notably deadpan fashion, the Cox report explains what Beijing's true goal is. Why it is, in other words, that the Chinese have been spying on us:

> The PRC has vigorously pursued over the last two decades the acquisition of foreign military technologies. These efforts represent the official policy of the PRC and its Chinese Communist Party leadership. The PRC seeks foreign military technology as part of its efforts to place the PRC at the forefront of nations and to enable the PRC to fulfill its international agenda. The PRC's long-run geopolitical goals include incorporating Taiwan into the PRC and becoming the primary power in Asia.
>
> The PRC has not ruled out using force against Taiwan, and its thefts of U.S. technology have enhanced its military capabilities for any such use of force.
>
> The PRC has also asserted territorial claims against other Southeast Asian nations and Japan, and has used its military forces as leverage in asserting these claims.
>
> These PRC goals conflict with current U.S. interests in Asia and the Pacific, and the possibility of a U.S.-PRC confrontation cannot be dismissed.

This is, indeed, alarming. But until the very recent past, only a relative handful of American politicians, in either party, have been sufficiently clear-eyed and conscience-bound to voice alarm. House members like Democrat Nancy Pelosi and Republican Frank Wolf have long understood that "engagement" is a fool's illusion; that the Chinese government's oppression of its people and saber-rattling throughout Asia are not "irritants" in the Sino-U.S. relationship, but represent the very essence of the Communist regime. Yes, when they spy on the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, the Chinese are just "doing their jobs." The job in question is the wholesale displacement of American ideas and influence from an entire, pivotal part of the globe. The People's Republic of China is an ideologically committed, hostile, dangerous power.

The day the Cox report was publicized, no less thoroughly mainstream an American figure than Governor George W. Bush of Texas saw fit to issue a press release. Bush is surrounded by some of the most experienced foreign policy hands in the Republican party, many or most of whom are themselves quite implicated in modern "engagement" doctrine. Bush, at least, can be assumed to have chosen his language carefully. U.S.-China trade remains of "mutual benefit," he allowed. But the only kind of trade he mentioned was "food." And, citing "the balance of power in Asia" and "the rest of the world," Bush went on to announce his conclusion that "China is not America's 'strategic partner.'" Instead, "China is a competitor, a competitor which does not share our values, but now, unfortunately, shares many of our nuclear secrets."

These are altogether remarkable words. Perhaps the ice is finally beginning to break on America's sappy, self-destructive "friendship" with Beijing. If the Cox report inspires a long overdue, fullscale rethinking of China policy, it will deserve even more praise than it's already received.

—David Tell, for the Editors

See No Reno

by Matthew Rees

Janet Reno faced a dilemma in August 1997. A senior FBI official named John Lewis informed her that her Office of Intelligence Policy and Review had rejected three FBI requests to tap the phone and computer of a government scientist accused of nuclear espionage. Reno knew little about the case, but given the FBI's persistence and her respect for Lewis, she agreed the request merited further review.

This time, she referred it to a Justice Department national security office, which, if it deemed the matter worthy, would forward it to a panel of judges for a final decision. In 1996, this panel had approved every one of the 839 warrant requests it had received from Justice.

The matter landed in the lap of Daniel Seikaly, a former assistant U.S. attorney. Seikaly read the request, as well as the statute governing such matters, and ruled against the FBI. This wouldn't be attracting any attention, except for two facts that came out later. First, the request for a warrant was aimed at Wen Ho Lee, who now stands accused of masterminding the greatest theft of U.S. nuclear secrets in history. And second, under private questioning from senators on May 20, Seikaly acknowledged that the Lee case was the first and last warrant request he ever ruled on.

Janet Reno

Michael Ramirez

Reno is now under pressure to explain her department's obstinacy. The chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee has said she should resign, a Democratic senator has said almost as much, and there's been criticism from both parties of Justice's decision not to put the warrant request before the judges. Through it all, Reno maintains that while the matter "should have been brought to my attention . . . the decision [to deny the warrant] was correct."

Will this latest controversy be the straw that breaks Reno? Washington was buzzing last week that the White House wanted to offer up her scalp so as to protect that of Sandy Berger, the national security adviser whose actions in the espionage case are even more suspicious. But at the end of the week, Reno announced she'd spoken to Charles Ruff, the White House counsel, who told her she had the White House's confidence. It was beginning to look like she'd survive.

She may wish she hadn't. As Congress investigates the espionage, there's sure to be a laser beam on Reno, with people asking whether aides kept her in the dark about the spying probe or she remained willfully ignorant. Either way, much will be made of the fact that Justice was denying the warrant at the very time Congress was investigating Bill Clinton's use of Chinese money in the 1996 presidential campaign and Republicans were agitating for the appointment of an independent counsel.

Reno's May 27 briefing with reporters may have been a sign of things to come. Sixty-four questions were asked, and 63 of them related to Justice's handling of the espionage.

With good reason. Justice's actions under Reno won't be easy to defend. The Cox report, for example, describes how the department stymied congressional investigators' efforts to obtain information about the transfer of sensitive technology to China by companies like Loral and Hughes. At a May 26 Senate hearing, Christopher Cox, chairman of the select committee looking into the issue, said Justice officials "took the view they could interpose themselves between us and all the other parts of the executive branch." Even Norm Dicks, the committee's senior Democrat, admitted at the hearing, "We got very good cooperation overall, and the Justice Department was the one area where we had some difficulty."

One explanation for this resistance is that Justice didn't want its bungling of the espionage investigation to be revealed. Consider:

In 1996, officials of the Los Alamos labs, where Lee worked, wanted to search his computer for classified files. Lee had already signed a waiver allowing the government to "audit or access" his computer at

any time without his knowledge. But according to John Browne, the director at Los Alamos, Justice officials told lab officials they should back off, as any information gathered wouldn't be admissible in court. The lab complied.

Justice's denial of repeated FBI warrant requests in 1997 rested on equally dubious reasoning. Even though Lee had been identified to the department as a prime suspect in a criminal espionage investigation one year earlier and his classified-computer privileges had been revoked, Justice's Office of Intelligence Policy and Review still decided not to ask the judicial panel to consider the FBI's warrant request.

Fast forward to February 1999. The FBI, though still without a warrant, was able to administer a polygraph on Lee. He didn't perform well, and according to the *New York Times*, he deleted as many as 2,000 files from his computer two days later. In March, FBI officials resorted to simply asking Lee if they could search his computer. Aware by now he was a target of the espionage investigation, Lee agreed to the search. It didn't take the FBI long to find material transferred from classified files and to recreate the deleted files. On March 8, Lee was fired.

What followed raised even more questions about Justice's judgment. FBI agents wanted to search Lee's home, but Justice still refused to provide a warrant. So while the file transfers were confirmed in March, the FBI didn't win permission to search Lee's home until April 10.

"This is her Waco in the counterintelligence area," says a former Clinton Justice official, adding that espionage has never been a Reno priority. "She distanced herself from the issue and delegated to the wrong people." Indeed, the current head of Justice's Office of Intelligence Policy and Review, Frances Fragos Townsend, is viewed within the department as a Reno crony who's light on substance.

What is painfully obvious is that in the investigation of Lee, Justice operated from a flawed position. As Victoria Toensing, a former chief counsel to the Senate Intelligence Committee, points out, the investigation "was treated as a criminal matter in which the goal was convicting someone, when it should have been treated as a national security matter in which the goal was protecting America's nuclear secrets."

"THIS IS HER WACO IN THE INTELLIGENCE AREA," SAYS A FORMER CLINTON JUSTICE OFFICIAL. ESPIONAGE HAS NEVER BEEN A RENO PRIORITY.

This is but one of many issues Reno will be asked about in coming weeks. In the meantime, her suggestion last week that Louis Freeh, the FBI director, should have personally brought the warrant requests to her attention signals she's not prepared to shoulder all the blame. She's also formed a task force to provide an "administrative" review of the decision-making process that led to the denial of the warrants. The question, she says, is whether "everything was done right." Some, however, would regard it as more urgent to know why the wrong decision was made.

Matthew Rees is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Marriage in Massachusetts

by David Orgon Coolidge

BOSTON

THEY DIDN'T THINK it could happen in Massachusetts, home to virtually every gay-friendly public policy found in America. Not here, where public school students are bused to Gay/Straight Youth Pride Day rallies at the state capitol, and the "religious Right" is just the figment of an overheated imagination.

But there it was: a Defense of Marriage Act, modeled on the federal statute signed by President Clinton that defines marriage as the union of a man and a woman, now a bill before the Massachusetts legislature—with a top Democrat as its primary sponsor and a broad array of religious leaders among those lined up to testify in its behalf.

This development was no happenstance, but the fruit of long efforts by the Massachusetts Family Institute to build a coalition as ecumenical as marriage itself. Over three years, director Matt Daniels had forged the relationships that made this day possible.

The witnesses slated in favor of the bill surpassed

the gay community's worst nightmare: a Catholic bishop, the pastor of the largest Asian evangelical church in New England, an Orthodox rabbi, two Eastern Orthodox church leaders, a Mormon official, and the imam of the Islamic Center of New England. Adding insult to injury, the bill had the support of the mainstream Black Ministerial Alliance, the pastors of two of the largest African-American churches in Boston, and Alveda King, niece of Martin Luther King Jr. You might say a rainbow coalition had turned out to stand up for marriage.

These witnesses' message was simple: To redefine marriage would be to tamper with a fundamental institution of society. Instead, Massachusetts should reaffirm in law its well-established understanding of marriage so as to be able to defend its institutions—at a time when the Vermont supreme court threatens to legalize same-sex "marriage," inviting same-sex couples from Massachusetts to "marry" in Vermont, come home, and file suit. Without a law on its books addressing this issue, Massachusetts might be forced to recognize these "marriages."

Some years back, when it looked as though Hawaii might give same-sex unions the status of marriage, 29 states passed defense-of-marriage statutes. But in New England, only Maine did so. To date, bills in Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut have gone nowhere. Until this year, no bill had even been *introduced* in Massachusetts.

It isn't hard to see why. At a press conference on May 18, no sooner had the religious leaders stated their support for the Defense of Marriage Act than the hostile questioning began: "Some people say this is homophobic. What do you say to that?" "Do you think people should have to prove they can procreate to get a marriage license?" "Isn't gay marriage the same as interracial marriage?" "Isn't this bill unnecessary—and if so, isn't it just an attack on the gay community?"

At the hearing that day before the Joint Committee on the Judiciary, representatives of the American Civil Liberties Union, the Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), various gay political groups, the National Organization for Women, and their legislator friends all condemned the bill. They denounced it first as unnecessary, then as unconstitutional—although states clearly have the power to exclude, for example, polygamous and incestuous unions. The full faith and credit clause of the U.S. Constitution has never required uniformity in marriage laws.

Then the bill's critics demonized the other side. Why would anyone introduce legislation that is both unnecessary and unconstitutional? The answer had to be "homophobia" pure and simple. Congressman Barney Frank made a cameo appearance to condemn the "divisive" bill as aimed at "injuring vulnerable gay and lesbian youth." (As Frank told the New Bedford *Standard-Times*, "'You're trash. You're dirt.' That's all that [this bill] says.")

A number of legislators agreed. Rep. Ruth Balser

called the bill "a threat to gay people." Rep. Jarrett Barrios said it would "invade people's bedrooms." Cambridge city councilor Katherine Triantafillou sternly reminded the committee that they were legislators, not clergy, and called the bill "a threat to democracy." After several African-American ministers testified, one member of the committee, Gail Canderas, professed herself "astonished that people of color would support this bill." Alveda King responded that the issue was not skin color, but the importance of marriage, especially as a link between the generations. This elicited a sarcastic retort from the representative: "I have no children with my current husband. What am I to do about my profound failure to procreate?" Canderas continued, "You're asking us to marginalize 10 to 20 percent of the population by denying them the civil right to marry."

Rep. Michael Cahill said that the Defense of Marriage Act "ostracizes, targets, and persecutes." The result is "to devalue and dehumanize." Rep. Elizabeth Malia, who said she'd been "brought up Catholic," claimed that "with enough of this, you get Columbine High School." "Why can't we work out our differences in the legislature," she asked, "like in housing and health care?" It seemed lost on her that she was at that very moment participating in a legislative exercise intended to enact the people's will—instead of leaving a divisive issue to another state's courts.

Finally came the charge of "extremism." This bill is nothing but the creation of "the far Right," intoned Rep. Paul Demakis, "the people who send hate mail to our offices, and who killed Matthew Shepard." Sen. Cheryl Jacques dragged in slavery and the Holocaust. Sue Hyde, New England director for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, spelled out the political implications. Her group has 1,000 members in Massachusetts, she said, and they "will regard any vote for [this bill] as an anti-gay vote." Then the president of the Massachusetts ACLU, Jan Platner, said her piece.

The Defense of Marriage Act, Platner asserted, is an "inappropriate, ill-advised, and gratuitous" invasion of that "most sacred space where we exercise our choice of partner and family." This seemed a slightly odd claim, since marriage is a public status, not a private act. And I was struck by the term "sacred space." It was then that I began to catch on.

What we do with our bodies—this is the "sacred space" to which she referred. In this sacred space, not only must we be allowed to act privately, but our private choices must be publicly affirmed. Otherwise, what we do in private is *merely* private—and thereby "marginalized" or "stigmatized." Our sacred choices *must* receive public endorsement. Liberty becomes the right to do whatever one wants with one's body. Equality becomes the imperative to treat all sacred choices as equally valuable.

Liberty and equality are "our noble traditions" in Massachusetts, said Rep. Cahill. "We must stick to our traditions" and oppose the bill that would reaffirm marriage, he declared with no trace of irony.

With this weird inversion now unapologetically advanced by Massachusetts liberals, it's no surprise that the Defense of Marriage Act touched a nerve, or that the press and many legislators were palpably hostile to the witnesses favoring marriage. The legal arguments offered in support of the bill by professors Hadley Arkes and Dwight Duncan and attorney Colbe Mazzarella (a mother of six) responded to every point advanced by the opposition, yet they seemed to fall on deaf ears. The Massachusetts Family Institute and the Massachusetts Catholic Conference framed their case in scrupulously positive terms, and the panel representing civic groups who favor the bill included the Knights of Columbus, with exactly 50 times as many members in the state as the Gay and Lesbian Task Force. But the strength of the bill's supporters only redoubled the opponents' determination to "unmask" the pro-marriage forces' "real agenda."

THE ENLIGHTENED OF MASSACHUSETTS ARE NOT HAPPY ABOUT THE "EXTREMISTS" IN THEIR MIDST WHO STILL BELIEVE IN MARRIAGE.

The new enlightened of Massachusetts who worship at the altar of "sexuality" are not happy about the benighted ones in their midst, the "extremists" who believe in marriage. They are especially outraged and incredulous that many of the stubborn holdouts are "people of color." Gary Daffin, co-chairman of the Massachusetts Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, told the *Boston Globe* that the African-American and Asian leaders "are being used by the right wing to split the two communities."

Given the public savaging of the Defense of Marriage Act at the hearing, the committee is lying low and may not act unless confronted with a Vermont supreme court decision. Nevertheless, sooner or later the legislators will have to screw up their courage and choose.

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Gore Curriculum

by Christopher Caldwell

Pascal Forgione witnessed a hijacking and it cost him his job. Last February 10, Forgione, who heads the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), was due at an Education Department press conference to announce the results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a periodic measure of school performance that he administers. These are generally low-key events, since policy forbids partisan comment on the data until the center's bureaucrats can present them dispassionately to the public. This time, however, there was a last-minute change of plan. Reporters who usually cover the education beat found themselves roped off at the back of the auditorium. The best seats were taken by hundreds of administration-friendly lobbyists and Education Department activists. Standing at the front of the room to announce the results and take credit was Al Gore himself.

Turning a non-partisan announcement into a campaign rally would have been an abuse even if the vice president had not misrepresented the data. But he did that, too, claiming big gains in reading scores since 1994, linking the improvement to Clinton administration policies, and drawing wild cheers from the assembled claque. He did not mention that the 1994 scores had shown a precipitous drop-off since the last measures of the Bush administration in 1992, and that the new NAEP ratings remained below their 1992 highs. Once Gore had blown out of the room—without taking a single question—the task of unsaying much of what he had just said fell to Forgione and Mark D. Musick, chairman of the National Assessment Governing Board, which draws up the NAEP tests.

The incident might have ended there, but Musick was infuriated. He wrote a letter to Forgione commiserating over Gore's hijacking of the NAEP announcement. "We believe," Musick wrote, "that the format, tone and substance of that event was not consistent with the principle of an independent, non-partisan release of National Assessment data." Unless such non-partisanship could be assured, Musick wrote, "it eventually won't matter how much attention is paid to the results; people won't believe them."

The letter leaked. In March, *Los Angeles Times* reporter Ricardo Alonso-Zaldívar described Gore's stunt as symptomatic of two devious tendencies. First, to steal credit for policy initiatives he didn't develop. Second, to politicize parts of the bureaucracy that have been set up to be beyond partisan politics. Forgione, who had devoted his career to educational testing—as Connecticut's head of assessment, Delaware's state schools superintendent, and executive director of the National Education Goals Program—popped off. He told the L.A. writer that interventions such as Gore's "can cloud the confidence people might have in the independence of the data." He added, "This should not happen again." Then he told *Education Week* that repeating such a charade would damage NAEP's credibility.

Sayonara, Pascal Forgione. In mid-April, For-

gione was told that his four-year appointment, which expires on June 21, would not be renewed. It's not surprising that he burst into tears when he told his employees he'd be leaving—everyone around him was stunned. Forgione was popular and had upped the NCES's budget. He had won praise for an extension of the Third International Math and Science Study. The Advisory Council on Education Statistics, an elite group of statisticians that advises the Education Department, recommended that Forgione stay on; Andy Porter, the council's chairman, called his departure a "tremendous loss." Education Secretary Richard Riley, too, urged his reappointment. That he was not kept on in the face of such endorsements means the decision to oust him came from the White House. A number of education newsletters, particularly *Education Daily*, discerned a link between Forgione's appeal for nonpartisan statistics and his unsuitability for further employment in the Clinton-Gore administration.


Al Gore
AP/Wide World Photos

But then Forgione's enemies came forth with what they said was the *real* explanation for his ouster. For eight consecutive years, it seems, Forgione filed for extensions on his federal income taxes. In seven of those years, he missed the August 15 fallback deadline. He would file his taxes towards the end of the year and collect a refund from the IRS, which he would use to pay his children's college tuition. Forgione referred to this as forced savings; the White House looked at it as an "appearance of impropriety" that could sidetrack its "commitment to education."

There are problems with this White House line. First, the Department of Education had been fully aware of the practice when Forgione was nominated and confirmed. Second, none of the Republicans on the House Education and the Workforce committee showed the slightest discomfort with Forgione's means of paying his taxes. That's because, while Forgione's practice may have been eccentric, there was absolutely nothing unethical or illegal about it. It is illegal to pay taxes late; but as long as the government owes the taxpayer money, there's no crime in *filing for your refund* late. Nobody interviewed for this article—Republican or Democrat; in Congress or the Ed Department or the private sector—believes Forgione was fired for his tax problem.

Forgione did not return calls for this article, but he told Jonathan Fox of *Education Daily*, "I've been doing this my whole life. It's bad behavior, but it's my money I'm getting back." He is said to have received a six-month consulting contract with the Education Department. (Strange treatment if he were really departing under an ethical cloud.) He appeared last week at oversight hearings of the House Education and Workforce committee. Republicans—like Mike Castle of Delaware and Peter Hoekstra of Michigan—used the occasion to argue that stricter statutory independence be given to the NCES. Congressional Democrats—Harold Ford of Tennessee, Bobby Scott of Virginia, Tim Roemer of Indiana—again proved themselves formidable presidential historians, alluding to an incident in 1992 when President Bush prematurely revealed some statistics. They stressed that the vice president's statistical interest reflects nothing more than his high degree of commitment to education. Republicans are less bothered by this line of thinking than one would imagine. "Bringing attention to education issues is not a bad thing," says Republican committee staffer Vic Klatt. "What bothers us more is that the vice president manipulated the data and then tried to claim credit for it."

But two disturbing aspects of this seemingly minor incident show Gore to be truly Clinton's heir. The first is the elevation of public relations over public service. Gore is flinging around rhetoric about how much he cares about education, but he is unwilling to countenance a bureaucrat who wants to match that rhetoric to reality. The NCES is a key federal education body, and no one has been nominated to head it once Forgione goes. So the "education vice president" has shown himself perfectly willing to leave the program rudderless for months.

Second is the need he feels to cloak brass-knuckles politics with trumped-up, post-facto "moral" jus-

tifications. Of course, low-ranking administration officials, if they don't toe the line, will always be prey to high-ranking administration officials—and may pay with their jobs. Of course the White House will try to disguise its Machiavellian motives from the public. But corruption is one thing and delusions of moral grandeur are another. The Forgione case makes us worry about Gore in much the way Travelgate made us worry about the Clintons. It's the sign of a bizarre need on Gore's part to disguise his Machiavellian motives from himself.

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UKRAINE: BACK TO THE FUTURE

by Arnold Beichman

LAST YEAR I WAS PART OF A DELEGATION sponsored by the International Republican Institute to monitor parliamentary elections in Ukraine. I chose to be an observer in the city of Zhitomir because my parents, who came from Ukraine in the early 1900s, used to talk a great deal about this city as the place they always looked forward to visiting. Kolki, the *shtetl* my father migrated from, was a three-hour drive from Zhitomir over bad roads. I had always longed to visit and see this place and talk to Jewish inhabitants about what Kolki was like before the two world wars.

Before making the travel arrangements I inquired whether there might be a local rabbi to shepherd me around Kolki. I got my answer: No. Kolki was "*Judenrein*," the Nazi word for a town or city free of Jews. Between Ukrainian pogroms at the end of World War I and Nazi special extermination squads during World War II, Ukrainian Jews in Kolki had disappeared.

The story is much the same throughout the former Soviet Union. Despite occasional words of condemnation by President Yeltsin, anti-Semitism in Russia is at peak levels—so much so that it won't take a lot for all of Russia, with a Jewish population of barely 450,000 (.3 percent of the population) to become *Judenrein*. Even on the streets of Moscow, swastikas are being flaunted. And what is anti-Semitism like outside of the metropolitan centers such as Moscow and St. Petersburg? Here's what it's like in a small town.

Borovichi is a provincial Russian town of 70,000 people some 250 miles northwest of Moscow. An openly fascist group calling itself Russian National Unity has announced that if the city's tiny Jewish community of about 400 doesn't leave of its own free will, it should be expelled. (There is ample Russian precedent for such a recommendation, starting with Ivan the Terrible.) Until the expulsion occurs, the group's spokesman, appearing on a local television station earlier this year, urged Borovichians to kill one Jew a day. Eduard Alekseev of Borovichi, 30-year-old head of the small Jewish community and an economist by profession, has enlisted the help of International Solidarity with Workers in Russia to sound the alarm. This is an organization set up to support the democratic, anti-racist sections of the Russian labor movement. Already one Jewish family was lucky to escape with their lives when their home was firebombed, according to Alekseev. And Borovichi Jews receive messages regularly threatening death if they do not leave.

Meanwhile local police reportedly have told the Jews that it will do them no good to make an issue of this massive increase in anti-Semitic activity. Neither the governor of the province nor the police consider the Russian National Unity activities illegal. The RNU party is now actively recruiting youth for military training. The local prosecutor has denied that the swastikas worn by RNU members on their uniforms incite ethnic hatred. And RNU members claim that the swastika is really an old emblem of the Russian Orthodox Church and has nothing to do with Nazism. All this in a city where 10,000 men joined the Red Army in World War II to fight the Nazis, and 4,000 never returned.

The handful of Jews in Borovichi and their leader Alekseev, the father of two young boys, have requested that people write to the mayor and provincial governor expressing their concern at this dangerous situation.

With emigration relatively free, though, and the Jewish population aging; with a politically stagnant Kremlin unable or unwilling to deal with the fascist camarillas who roam city streets peddling racism; with a Duma that recently voted to restore the statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky, the founder of the Soviet secret police, to its base near the old KGB headquarters—self-exile seems to be the only course left to Russian and Ukrainian Jews. Their bags, I'm sure, are already packed.

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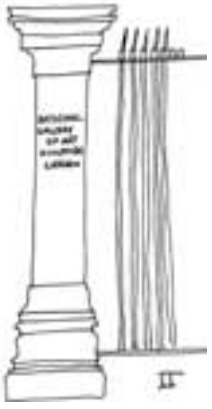
The National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden

An Illustrated Guide

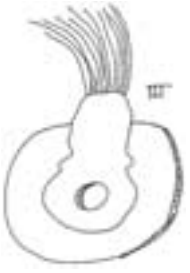
By Andrew Ferguson

After several decades of planning, fund-raising, and other forms of bureaucratic back-and-forthing, the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden opened the other day on the Mall, across the street from the National Archives in our nation's capital. As art lovers know, Washington already had a sculpture garden. It lies on the other side of the Mall, in a sunken terrace next to the Hirshhorn Museum, which is shaped like a doughnut. The new sculpture garden is superior in almost every respect. It is not shaped like a doughnut, for example; it is shaped like a big garden—a six-acre rectangle of deciduous trees and winding walks and flowering shrubs. The only thing that bears even the remotest resemblance to a doughnut is a shimmering circular fountain in the middle of the garden. There is also a sculpture by Joan Miro with the word "Eclair" in the title, but this has nothing to do with baked goods of any kind. I'm pretty sure (Fig. I).

A pleasanter place than the new garden is not to be found in all of Washington. Already, however, you can hear the carping of critics. The garden, complains one, represents a "jumble of styles," with works cast in "diverse media" like stainless steel, cinder block, and fiberglass. I take the point. Entering the garden, one is instantly confronted with discordant examples of neoclassicism, homey landscaping in the British picturesque style, and the something-or-otherism of our modern sculptors. It's confusing, but all are easily transmutable into my own favored medium—Pilot Varsity Disposable Fountain Pen on Reporter's Notebook (Reorder # 25-280, from American Pad and Paper Co. in Dallas, Texas)—as can be seen in Fig. II, which offers an intensely personal interpretation of the neoclassical post and wrought-iron fencing at the Northwest entrance to the garden.



This post, in my opinion, gives a promising greeting to the visitor, a genuflection to the solemn, neoclassical lines of John Russell Pope's great West Building across Sixth Street. But the first piece of sculpture that the visitor encounters alters the mood decisively. It is by Claes Oldenburg. The guidebook, available at the garden entrance, explains: "One of Oldenburg's favorite office supplies was a typewriter eraser." Hence *Typewriter Eraser Scale X*, in which the artist used stainless steel and fiberglass to make a very large typewriter eraser. "The sculpture presents a giant eraser," the guidebook further explains, as if further explanation were necessary. As I stood before it, struggling with my own interpretation of this particular office supply (Fig. III), an elderly man in an Orioles cap and his wife stopped dead in their tracks.



"What is it?" the man barked at her.

The woman shrugged.

"It's a typewriter eraser," I said, butting in.

He stared at me. "I know it's a typewriter eraser," he said, as though addressing an imbecile. "But what the hell is it?"

This man lacked the spirit of whimsy with which it is best to approach many of the sculptures. He also lacked the guidebook. It especially helps if you keep consulting the guidebook. As when viewing any work of modern art, you must have with you at all times a piece of paper that explains what you are viewing. Otherwise you will be totally at sea, assuming

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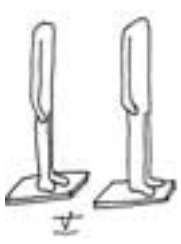
you are not a college professor or Hilton Kramer. A case in point: Barry Flanagan's *Thinker on a Rock* (Fig. IV), which is a piece of bronze representing a big bunny rabbit sitting on a rock, thinking. Flanagan, says the guidebook, was "reacting against the formal, constructed metal sculpture to which he was exposed in art school." It's hard to believe, looking at *Thinker*, that Barry Flanagan went to art school, but that's why we have guidebooks. Perhaps I should explain something about Fig. IV. The figure to the right is not part of *Thinker*. It is a little boy clowning around for his parents, who were taking his picture. The boy was thus making his own statement on the nature of postmodern whimsy—an act of post-postmodern meta-whimsy, if I'm keeping this straight.

Not all the pieces in the sculpture garden are whimsical. Some of them are so unwhimsical it's not funny. I took a break from my work and sat on one of the benches circling the fountain and suddenly felt uneasy, as though I were being looked at—although "looked at" isn't the right phrase. Behind me, in a stand of linden trees, was Magdalena Abakanowicz's *Puellae* (Girls), a group of thirty bronze figures that are three-feet high and look exactly like Fig. V., except replicated fifteen times. Their "repetitious presentation has been regarded as the artist's personal response to totalitarianism." This is probably why the artist has, as you'll notice, cut their heads off. "These figures can be arranged in any configuration," says the guidebook, but here they are placed facing the fountain—although "facing" isn't the right word either, since, again, they don't have heads.



Beyond *Puellae* is the work

that many critics are already hailing as the garden's masterpiece. This is *Aurora* by Mark di Suvero (Fig. VI), and if it is not the finest of the garden's works it is undeniably the heaviest: "eight tons of steel over three diagonal supports combine massive scale with elegance of proportion," as the guidebook puts it. "Several of the linear elements converge within a central circular hub and then explode outward, imparting tension." Also, by the way, the linear elements converge to create the logo of the Circle K chain of convenience stores. The guidebook doesn't mention this.

And what is the garden's total effect on the average visitor? "The appeal is chiefly cerebral and retinal," complained the *Washington Post*. "The dominant emotion is the virtual absence of any strong emotion." But this is not true, to judge by my own experience. Before I left the garden I stopped to assay Joel Shapiro's aptly titled *Untitled* (Fig. VII), which allows us to "encounter a multiplicity of animated compositions." I found myself once again next to the man in the Orioles cap, who stood staring, displeased. "What's it called?" he snapped at his wife, after several long moments of silence. He disdained even to lean over to read the plaque himself. She bent down towards the little card and then straightened up.

"*Untitled*," she said.

"You see?" he barked. "You see? He didn't know any better than we do what the f— it is."

His face, as he turned it toward me, was dark: the face of a taxpayer, its linear elements converging to create a sense of strong emotion, ready to explode outward (Fig. VIII). ♦

The National Museum of Multiculturalism

By David Brooks

Let's say you've brought your kids to Washington, D.C., on their summer vacation. You've taken them to the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial, shown them the U.S. Capitol, and you find they're charged up about American history, maybe more than at any other time in their lives. Along the Mall, you notice a large building called the National Museum of American History, part of the famous Smithsonian Institution. So you figure you'll spend an afternoon there with the kids showing them more about the nation's past.

As you approach, you scan the long quotations from John Adams and James Smithson carved into the wall above the doors, high-minded sentiments about the diffusion of knowledge. Inside there's a music shop that advertises jazz, folk, be-bop, and blues CDs, and you shepherd the kids past in search of history.

Straight ahead through the atrium the first thing you hit is an exhibit called "American Encounters: New Mexico History," which describes day to day life in an Indian Pueblo. There's a display case showing what a typical dining room table in the pueblo looks like on a feast day, with bowls of food and one can each of Pepsi, Coke, and Tetley iced tea. Then you walk into something called the "Pueblo Resistance and Self-Determination Theater" where you can watch a short movie about Native American efforts to resist European invasion. The next room is called "Faith and Defiance," on the Christianization of the natives. "The Indians survived the incursion of Catholicism by Indianizing it," one of the signs informs.

You and the kids then pass into a room called "Hispanic Resistance and Self-Determination," where you can see a short movie about Hispanic efforts to resist American cultural hegemony. Then there is a longer section called "Tourism: Buying and Selling Culture." A typical display declares, "They discovered and exploited human resources, the cultural practices and products of Indians and Hispanics . . ." The final showcase in the exhibit shows a bunch of Native American crafts. On one side are the words "Destruction" and "Domination" in big letters, and on the other side are "Self-Determination" and "Survival." Then there's a final short movie about old cultures being threatened by commercialism.

You know you should hang around all this stuff and read all the information, but your kids seem bored, so you move along pretty quickly. The New Mexico exhibit lets out right into the display of the first ladies' inaugural gowns. You remember this exhibit from a trip you took to the museum years ago; it's the only thing you remember from that visit.

A DISPLAY ABOUT TWO MORE OBSCURE FIRST LADIES, GRACE GOODHUE COOLIDGE AND LOU HENRY HOOVER, IS CALLED "A SUBTLE FEMINISM."

The exhibit has changed a bit. It is now called "First Ladies: Political Role, Public Image." That means before you get to any gowns there are walls and walls of pictures and signs describing various first ladies. "Some joined their husbands in the political struggles of the day," one of the signs reads, "others championed social and political causes." The kids recognize the display on Hillary Clinton's health care campaign, and you look over the one on Eleanor Roosevelt's efforts on behalf of human rights. There are also displays about more obscure first ladies. The one on Grace Goodhue Coolidge and Lou Henry Hoover is called "A Subtle Feminism."

Finally you come to the gowns. From there, a passageway leads you to "From Parlor to Politics: Women and Reform in America 1890-1925." This exhibit is about early feminist causes such as the suffragist movement and the National Women's Trade Union League. It opens with a movie in which an

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Peter Steiner

actress reads a rousing speech. "What began individually as a tingling sense of revolt against injustice has become a wide, deep sympathy of women for one another. . . . This women's movement is as natural, as beneficial, as irresistible as the coming of spring!" The source of the speech isn't mentioned, so you don't know whether it's an authentic historical document or something one of the curators wrote.

There are some rooms showing what everyday life was like for women in the period, and a display on Jane Addams's Hull House, but you zip through this exhibit because you're anxious to get to the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, the westward expansion, and some of the other central events in American history that your kids have been asking about.

The women's movement exhibit leads to another called "After the Revolution: Everyday Life in America 1780-1800," which looks promising, since it at least mentions the American Revolution. The first sign introduces the display: "They were a diverse people, white, black and red, male and female. . . . For some victory meant immediate political and economic freedom. For others it did not. . . ." The first room shows the sort of crockery and farm implements used by a typical Delaware farm family after the Revolution. The next room shows the tools that would have been used by slaves in the Chesapeake area. Then there's a section showing the implements, such as lacrosse sticks and farm tools, that would have been used by a family in the Seneca Nation of the Iroquois Confederacy. It's in this room that you hit your first oblique reference to the U.S. Constitution: "When the American colonies sought to unite during their war with Britain, some leaders thought the [Iroquois] confederacy might serve as a model in some respects for the new American government."

Next comes a room devoted to the everyday life of a New England merchant family (they had nicer plates) and then another on the day to day life of working people in Philadelphia. By this time your kids are not anxious to see any more farm tools and crockery. So you speed out looking for displays on the major figures whose monuments the kids have been touring—Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln.

As you move down the hall, you pass a display called "Sitting for Justice," which features the actual counter from the Woolworth's in Greensboro, North Carolina, where African-American students protested segregation. This is the coolest artifact you've seen so far, but you move on, drawn by a large statue of Washington at the end of the hall. When you get to the statue, which, a plaque informs you, used to sit on the grounds of the Capitol building before it was moved to the Smithsonian in 1908, you turn to your left and move straight into an exhibit called "Field to Factory: African-American Migration 1915-1940." This exhibit shows you what everyday life was like for the African Americans who migrated from the South up North in search of opportunity. You can see the implements many of these poor migrants used to do their washing. You can see what the train compartments they rode in looked like. And there are some vivid exhibits relating to segregation, including one in which you are forced to choose between two doorways, one marked white and the other marked colored. You notice everybody goes through the colored one.

You head back to the statue of Washington, still looking for the exhibit on the Father of his Country. On the other side of the statue is an exhibit called "Communities in a Changing Nation: The Promise of 19th-Century America." The sign reads, "This exhibit explores what the promise of America meant to dif-

ferent communities pursuing freedom, equality and abundance . . .” There’s a room on class struggle between owners and workers, which features the everyday implements, such as sewing machines, that were used by early industrial workers. There’s a room on Jewish immigrants. There’s a room showing the farm implements and domestic furniture that were used by African-American slaves.

Peter Steiner

By now, you’ve been wandering around for an hour or so. You’ve seen almost everything on the main floor, and your kids are getting tired. At this point, they are just wandering through, not even pretending to read all the signs, or look at yet another display case of plates and carpentry tools. You figure you had better get a map to find out where the exhibits are on the subjects that most interest you. On your way over to the information desk you formulate a mental list of a few of the topics you had hoped to see addressed in a museum of American history: The exploration of the American continent by people like Columbus, Henry Hudson, and Lewis and Clark, the British colonial system, the Puritans, the role of rebels like John Adams and Patrick Henry, the American Revolution and why it was fought, the drafting of the U.S. Constitution, the lives of Washington, Jefferson, and Hamilton, the presidency of Andrew Jackson, the Civil War, the pioneers, Teddy Roosevelt, big city political machines and the Progressive reform movement, World War I, the rise of Broadway, Hollywood, and American popular culture, the Great Depression, the New Deal, World War II, Vietnam, Watergate, the Cold War.

But when you get to the map and scan it, you realize the truth about the National Museum of American History. It ignores or virtually ignores most of the major events in American history. This is a museum of multicultural grievance, which simply passes over any subject, individual, or idea, no matter how vital to American history, that does not have to do with the oppression of some ethnic outgroup or disfavored gender. If you start adding up the space devoted to different subjects, you discover the museum has allocated its space in all sorts of absurd ways. For example, up on the top floor there is a section on the armed forces. Six times more space is devoted to the internment of and prejudice against Japanese Americans than to the entire rest of World War II. There is no mention of Eisenhower, Patton, Marshall, or MacArthur, leaders who weren’t exactly incidental to American conduct of the war. Similarly, there is but one showcase devoted to World War I. And that showcase is devoted to the role of women in the war. If you judged by the National Museum of American History, men had no role in World War I. Nor would you have any idea why World War I was fought, who was on which side, or how America came to be involved.

Likewise, if you measure by display space, the culture of Puerto Rico, about which there is a separate exhibit, is vastly more important to American history than the Civil War. There are 7 showcases devoted to the war between the states. The first has a picture of John Brown. Another contains General Sheridan’s horse, Rienzi, now stuffed, but next to no information on who General Sheridan was, what he did in the war, why the war was fought, how it was fought, or who won it.

But the museum doesn’t distort history only in the way it allocates attention. There is also the kind of attention it pays. The curators of the American history museum are fixated on everyday life, on the conditions of the common people. Wherever you go in this

museum, whatever subject is being addressed, you will see a lot of dishes and farm implements. The small World War II section shows what a barracks looked like, with authentic foot lockers, shovels, and plates. This obsessive focus on the quotidian means that the museum virtually ignores any larger issues, like what role fascism and democracy played in the war.

Similarly, the American Founders held certain ideas about government, about inalienable rights, about America's destiny. But since those ideas didn't revolve around hoes and butter churns, they are neglected here. Hamilton and Jefferson had contrasting visions of what sort of country America should be, a debate that was not trivial, but because Hamilton and Jefferson were members of the elite, their dispute is beyond the pale. If the curators of the Smithsonian's American history museum were asked to do an exhibit on the Book of Exodus, they would devote room after room to Israelite walking sticks and totally ignore the Ten Commandments.

> IF THIS MUSEUM PORTRAYED THE BOOK OF EXODUS, IT WOULD FEATURE ISRAELITE WALKING STICKS AND IGNORE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

The museum systematically shortchanges political history. There is a room on the top floor devoted to politics. It has an Al Smith banner, some Clinton-Gore and Bush-Quayle posters, and the two lecterns used in the 1976 presidential debates. These are the implements of campaigning. But you will not learn that some elections in America were fought over ideas. You will not learn what the major parties have stood for over the course of their histories. There is nothing in the museum to explain the evolution of national power. How did it grow? What institutions are important to it? How has power shifted from one branch of government to another? Is there such a thing as foreign affairs? These issues, part political and part intellectual history, are apparently irrelevant to the parochial concerns of the Smithsonian curators.

Their approach leaves individuals with almost no role in shaping history. The museum devotes lavish attention to ethnic communities, and sometimes an individual is mentioned as a spokesperson for a group or gender. But personal greatness is simply excluded. So while the museum devotes huge space to African-American history, it makes little or no mention of Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, or any other history-shaping individual. And if it ignores these figures, needless to say, the museum makes no effort to explain figures like Washington, Lincoln, TR, Woodrow Wilson, FDR, Truman, or Reagan.

In short, anybody who came to this museum to learn about American history would find a dour and distorted view of the nation's past. But it's doubtful that many visitors leave with anything at all. They seem to just wander through, noticing a rake here, a printing press there. Most people's imaginations, especially kids', are fired by the deeds of great heroes. But there is little inspiring in that way here. Have you ever heard visitors just back from Washington say that what they really liked about their trip was the National Museum of American History?

The curators are not incompetent. Though their displays are somewhat dry—filled with lifeless showcases and endless signs that require a lot of standing around reading—there are nonetheless some effective presentations. The exhibit on the African-American migration is well put together. The bottom floor is devoted to technology, and some of the displays there, notably on the evolution of information technology, are quite interesting. The problem with the museum is narrow-mindedness. The curators are absorbed with one type of history, one multicultural dogma. Everything that doesn't fit into that approach is simply repressed and excluded. There is no spirit of curiosity. Just a handful of consciousness-raising clichés, repeated in room after room.

This pure brand of multiculturalism has been under assault of late from both right and left. But it is here as if preserved in amber. Perhaps we should just retitle this the National Museum of Multiculturalism and keep all its exhibits intact, so that future generations can learn about an ideological fad that swept through certain circles in the late 1980s.

Or, alternatively, we could fix this museum. The National Air and Space Museum gives a straightforward account of its subject. The National Gallery of Art presents its treasures in a balanced and open-minded fashion. There is no reason this museum couldn't cover American history honestly and offer a few exciting displays illuminating the major themes of our experience.

But until visitors show they actually care how American history is presented, the museum will undoubtedly go on as it has, quietly distorting the country's past and stifling the enthusiasm of the unsuspecting parents and kids who wander in. ♦

Patrick Kennedy—the Man and the Myth

By Matt Labash

Watch Rep. Patrick Kennedy, the 31-year-old son of Senator Ted, mount the stump at any event, and you can't help but be overcome by pathos. Take February's National Treasury Employees Union conference, when Joe and Rose's grandson appeared at the Capitol Hill Holiday Inn. Our civil servants, in their short-sleeved dress shirts and referee-style wingtips, graze their ties across heavily-oiled iceberg lettuce, rising to pay deference to the nephew of JFK and RFK. Newly appointed head of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and cousin of Maria Shriver and John Jr., now in his third term from Rhode Island's 1st congressional district, Patrick has come to preach the gospel of Richard Gephardt. He awkwardly assures union members, "I'm on your sheet of music," and, "I'm on a working, uhhh, person's agenda." But they seem to love him, as he decries "malicious, negative politics" while blaming Republicans for a racist truck-dragging death in Jasper, Texas, and the gay-bashing murder of Matthew Shepard. So pleased is his audience that one union leader rewards young Patrick with a chocolate lollipop.

Still, watching them watch him, it's difficult not to sense the slight disappointment. Cosmetic snap judgments may be unfair, but this is a Kennedy after all, American royalty. And what was the Camelot franchise built on if not wisely invested cosmetic capital? There were the *Life* magazine spreads of toothy wide receivers playing touch football on Hickory Hill, of Chanel suits and pillbox hats, of Jack and Bobby's perfectly coiffed thatches, so un-mussed by world crises. Then there's Patrick, whose voice pitches too high, and whose freckled hands flail like wounded finches. Still trim and only a moderate drinker, he has yet to inherit his father's Chivas-swollen mien. But neither does he possess cousin Joe's charm, or cousin John's chin, or his uncles' laconic wit.

It may be unfair—brutal even—to make such comparisons with Patrick's more famous, more talented, more comely kin. But nobody has invited those comparisons as much as the man himself. Rare is the speech or interview where he does not utter the words "my father," "my family," or (his favorite) "my uncles." And the name still works its spell. Gephardt has made him the DCCC chairman, entrusted with winning the House back for Democrats. Indeed, his swift rise to fifth-ranking Democrat in the House can only be explained by his mastery of the time-honored, three-pronged family strategy: (1) Invoke the Kennedy name as often as possible, (2) Learn how to buy friends and influence people, (3) Invoke the Kennedy name to raise money to help you buy more friends.

KENNEDY RAILS AT REPUBLICANS IN A MANNER SO ARTLESS YOU CAN ALMOST HEAR UNCLE JACK TURNING OVER UNDER HIS ETERNAL FLAME.

Though *Boston Herald* columnist and Kennedy tormentor Howie Carr has labeled Cousin Joe the "Wizard of Uh's," Patrick is probably the Kennedy one would be least likely to cheat off of when taking the SAT. But that is not to deny his skill at milking his bloodline for political contributions. Even before being handpicked to head the DCCC, Kennedy had his own leadership PAC as well as a joint fund-raising committee with Gephardt, and had raised over $1.5 million for Democrats as a tireless celebrity campaigner. Since his appointment last November, the DCCC has set a new quarterly record for the most funds raised in a non-election year. And Kennedy hopes to narrow the traditional Republican money lead even further with his recently announced fund-raising stroke of genius—rewarding $100,000 donors with a clambake at Hyannisport, where starstruck contributors can presumably play touch football with Patrick and Dick and maybe even Teddy, assuming he can still run.

Matt Labash is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard.

But it's not just for fund-raising that Kennedy uses his family connections. His relatives are also rhetorical crutches, and he never misses an opportunity to employ them when shrilly denouncing Republicans in a manner so artless one can almost hear Uncle Jack rolling over under his eternal flame. In 1996, for instance, during a debate on the repeal of the assault weapons ban, Kennedy took to the well, trembling with emotion, as he leveled a shot at former representative Gerald Solomon: "Shame on you. . . . Play with the devil, die with the devil. . . . There are families out there . . . [you'll] never know what it's like, because [you don't] have someone in your family who was killed." Solomon, a Marine veteran of Korea and recovering from prostate surgery, became so agitated that he offered to take Kennedy outside.

Similarly, during the 1998 impeachment debate, Kennedy became incensed when Rep. Bob Barr quoted Uncle Jack on the floor. In the hallway afterwards, he accosted Barr in front of a gaggle of reporters: "You quoted my uncle," he screamed, "and went to a White Citizens Council meeting," referring to a Council of Conservative Citizens meeting that Barr claimed he had addressed without being fully apprised of their agenda. Not exactly Aeschines and Demosthenes, Barr called Kennedy "son." Kennedy informed Barr that he was a "duly elected member of Congress." Barr said he was "duly impressed." Kennedy called Barr a "white supremacist" and a "liar," later saying, "It appalled me that a racist would invoke my uncle's name." Barr called Kennedy a "punk" and said he wasn't quite certain if Kennedy hadn't "gone off the deep end." Kennedy didn't seem bothered that his patron Richard Gephardt had spoken to the same group as Barr some years earlier. Indeed, he accompanied Gephardt to a Harvard speech at the Kennedy School of Government where Gephardt invoked Uncle Jack's name without incident.


Kent Lemon

Being pals with the House minority leader is heady stuff for the boy once described by his mother Joan, Ted's ex-wife, as "a slow starter." Growing up with a brother and sister six and seven years his senior, respectively, Patrick Kennedy once said, "I'd always be the one everybody got a laugh out of, because they ended up making me cry or run from the room." Then there were his parents, divorced when he was 15. Joan was an acknowledged alcoholic who collected DWIs like rummy hands, and his father was an unacknowledged souser and philanderer. Between the intervention sessions for his mother and the taunts from classmates over his father's dropping off his Chappaquiddick date in a watery grave when Patrick was two, it's a wonder the boy was as likable as old acquaintances recall.

Which is not to say he didn't have a sense of his place in the world; or rather, his family's place. One day, after Aunt Ethel had hired a tennis pro to coach the cousins, the pro encouraged the boys to pick up the balls, promising that whoever collected the most could hit with him for an extra half an hour. As the pro told Laurence Leamer, author of *The Kennedy Women*, Patrick sullenly declared, "We Kennedys pay people like you to pick up balls for us."

Like his father and uncles, Patrick wasn't much of a student and elected not to go to Harvard like his

uncles and father (Ted, that *poco diablo*, had been expelled after cheating on his Spanish exam). Instead, he headed for Providence College, where he earned solid Bs and Cs as a social science major and developed a taste for the family business (politics, not bootlegging). It would be inaccurate to peg Patrick as caring only about the three Kennedy vices, "getting laid, getting elected, and getting a drink," as one *Providence Journal-Bulletin* writer says, "but he doesn't know very much, other than family history." Phil Terzian, also a *Bulletin* writer, drew a similar conclusion after writing a piece in 1987 about Patrick's father that was light on sympathy and heavy on Mary Jo Kopechne references. Patrick, Terzian says, came to the lobby of the newspaper building, and called him on the security guard's phone. "He was completely out of control, physically, rhetorically, and mentally as far as I could tell—threatening to assault me," says Terzian.

Still in his sophomore year at Providence, two years out of rehab for a high school drug habit, Patrick set his sights on the job of state representative John Skeffington, a funeral director and nine-year Democratic incumbent who was beloved by party bosses. They tried to dissuade him from running, but the 21-year-old Kennedy didn't take it well. "I come from a well-recognized family," he said later. "I faced a situation where I wanted to run for public office, and I was told to wait my turn. This was totally repugnant to me."

Rhode Island has long had the reputation of being "a state for sale, cheap," as Lincoln Steffens once put it. Considering that Patrick spent $87,000 (or $78 per vote, a Rhode Island record for a state representative's race) to win a part-time legislator's gig that paid $300 a year, it didn't come that cheap. More remarkable were the resources at Patrick's disposal: from the family's deep-pockets donor lists to the Brown University speech coach hired to improve Patrick's dadaist delivery, to Dad himself helicoptering in to the district to accompany his son door to door. Nearly a dozen Kennedys weren't so much recruited as conscripted to win Patrick's 1988 race. Skeffington, still in the funeral business, says that Kennedys flooded the polls in two-hour shifts with Polaroid cameras, offering prospective voters a chance to get their picture taken with a real-life Camelot heir. The only hint of embarrassment came from John Jr. "He was a perfect gentleman," says Skeffington. "He said, 'I hope you realize that I don't want to be here, I don't like this, but you understand it's my cousin and I was asked to do it. I don't think it's fair.'"

Patrick was so green he solicited voters outside his district and was stumped when radio-show callers asked if he knew where his campaign headquarters was located. Still, Skeffington was plowed under, losing the loyalty of voters, campaign workers, even family members. When Patrick moved a few doors down from Skeffington's ex-wife, she invited Patrick and his mother over. ("They had tea!" says a still wounded Skeffington.) When John Jr., then *People's* "sexiest man alive," showed up at the polls, Skeffington's female campaign staffers lined up to get their pictures taken with him. ("I said, 'Well jeez, at least take my [campaign] buttons off,'" he recalls.) And so it has gone for Patrick in Rhode Island, where Uncle Jack married and summered, where old Irish widows keep Jesus and JFK in companion frames on the walls of their triple-deckers, and where locals tell you that anyone who is "warm and breathing"—a "duck-billed platypus" or a "child molester with five arms"—can win with Patrick's last name.

AT THE POLLS, KENNEDYS WITH POLAROID CAMERAS OFFERED VOTERS A CHANCE TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED WITH A REAL-LIFE CAMELOT HEIR.

If Providence voters were infatuated with their new state representative, party chieftains were less so. Not only did Kennedy rub out their candidate, but he also developed a reputation as a headline-hunter by decrying the insular practices of then-speaker of the House Joe DeAngelis. Journalists began receiving documentation of Kennedy's stumblebum performances on the house floor. "Legislators used to send me tapes in a brown paper bag," says a wistful Howie Carr, the nation's premier collector of Kennedy malapropisms. Favorite entries ranged from Patrick's admitting that because of his family wealth, he doesn't have to "make mends meet," to his saying that he was trying to "test my feet." One prominent New England Democrat recalls Patrick's appearance at a 1990 campaign event for Claiborne Pell. The former senator was delayed and a surrogate speaker was needed. "Ted pushed Patrick, just to get his name out there. But Patrick didn't have a suit, so he showed up in one of Ted's. It was right out of the movie *Big*. It was the funniest thing you ever saw,

this guy in a suit five sizes too large, trying to be Dad. That's when we started calling him 'Ted Lite.'"

There was schadenfreude among his political enemies when Patrick was ensnared in cousin William Kennedy Smith's 1991 Palm Beach rape trial. Having flown down to the family's beachfront compound, Teddy decided to celebrate Good Friday by rousting Patrick and Cousin Willie from their beds to imbibe at Au Bar (Patrick testified that he only downed ginger ales). Both cousins made the pleasure of women's company and returned to the estate in the middle of the night. While take-charge Cousin Willie had sex with his date on the compound lawn, Patrick returned to his room with his date Michelle Cassone. In rather un-Kennedyesque fashion, they sat on separate beds until, Patrick said, they finally "kissed a little." According to Cassone, that was when Teddy entered the room in a long dress shirt "with no pants," walking "kinda wobbly," with love's pure light in his eye.

Confounding Patrick's political foes, Kennedy-Smith was acquitted, and Patrick suffered almost no collateral damage. Indeed, he gained essential experience in defending indefensible behavior by shilling for his father and cousin, a skill that would come in useful during President Clinton's impeachment trial some seven years later. Of Cousin Willie, Patrick said he "could not have done anything like that," despite the fact that three additional women said Kennedy-Smith had similarly accosted them (the judge did not allow their testimony to be introduced at trial). As for wobbly, pants-less Dad, Patrick was "proud" of his father, who, he added, was a "fun terrific person." Palm Beach itself, he complained, was a "place of the idle rich who are more worried about how to get into clubs and golf courses than they are about social justice." Never mind that the help testified that Patrick woke up at the crack of noon for his usual half-pound of bacon breakfast, crab thermidor lunch, and family-mandated daiquiris. More laughably, Patrick began "testing his feet" as a partisan bomb-thrower, blaming the media frenzy at his cousin's trial on a Republican establishment "threatened by the kind of mission my father is on Capitol Hill."

By 1993 the undistinguished state legislator who had already declared that he had presidential aspirations, was ready to become the distinguished gentleman from Rhode Island. His candidacy was announced with suitable pomp, a $25-a-head chicken dinner at the Rhode Island convention center, where swooning matriarchs could gawk at more imported Kennedys. Dick Gephardt hosted a $50,000 coming out party for Kennedy on Capitol Hill and told

Rhode Island voters that young Patrick was headed for the Armed Services Committee, where he could wangle pork on behalf of the state's considerable naval interests.

But even after he had forged an alliance with the man who would shepherd his career in Washington, Kennedy proved less than polished. At one campaign event at a Shriver cousin's house, a Democratic fund-raiser attempted to interest moderate Republican donors in the newest Kennedy's candidacy. "We brought these guys in and we're all out on the porch," says the fund-raiser. "Patrick came running around the corner and got down on his knees to peer in the window. He was playing hide and seek with some kid. I almost threw up on the spot, I was so embarrassed. So I grabbed him and I said, 'Patrick, you wanna play games, go in the backyard—there's a swingset. But don't embarrass me.' He just went, 'Huh?' and ran around the corner." Other skeptics mocked young Kennedy. One local radio host repeatedly tweaked him by playing "If I Only Had A Brain." The *Providence Journal-Bulletin* endorsed his opponent, Dr. Kevin Vigilante, who clearly outdebated him. In one contest, after flubbing an answer, Kennedy waited for Vigilante to respond, then added, "Dr. Vigilante said it as I would like to say it. He said it very well. That's what I was trying to get across." With record-setting contributions pouring in (80 percent of which came from the family's out of state network), and with a barrage of negative ads, Kennedy handily beat Vigilante, one of the few such Democratic victories in 1994. His subsequent races in a heavily Democratic district have not been close.

After his election, Gephardt did secure the freshman Kennedy the spot on the coveted Armed Services Committee, even though the committee had lost Democratic seats to the new Republican majority. As a junior minority member, Kennedy didn't manage to wangle much more than a half-pound of bacon for his state, but he did provide entertainment. Here is a verbatim question that Kennedy asked when quizzing the secretary of the Navy on how to eradicate racial intolerance from the military: "So what happens is, things don't get reported because, you know, let's not make much to do about nothing, so to speak. One of the worries I have about, you know, a really zero-defect mentality with respect to defect—I'm not talking now—I mean everyone can acknowledge that if there's a little bit of extremism, I'm not saying that that isn't just grounds for you know, expulsion from the military. But how do we address the broader issues. . . . Can you answer that in terms of communication?"

Though Kennedy has spent most of his time in Congress solidifying his hold on the senior vote with Mediscare politics and shunning the national media spotlight (wouldn't you while "testing your feet"?), the Clinton impeachment raised his profile. When it came to shilling for the president, Kennedy was rivaled only by the Congressional Black Caucus and Judiciary Committee Democrats. He defended Clinton with the

awe you'd expect from someone who once gushed after sailing with the president off Martha's Vineyard: "I'm sitting next to him, and he's talking to you, and he's asking for something for lunch, and my family is there, and I realized, oh my God, it's just an incredible feeling to be that close to the president of the United States. The president of the United States!"

Over the course of the Lewinsky affair, Kennedy found fault with quite a few politicians, but never with Clinton. He attacked Sen. John Chafee for "masquerading" as a moderate—high slander for the collegial, middle-of-the-Rhode Island delegation. And after a trip to Puerto Rico with Hillary Clinton (who had proclaimed in an earlier Rhode Island stop, "I love Patrick Kennedy; I love being around him; I love listening to him"), Kennedy went after his fellow Rhode Island Democrat, Rep. Robert Weygand, for voting to move forward with an impeachment inquiry. Kennedy accused Weygand of "covering his backside," while Rhode Island polls showed it was in fact Kennedy who was playing it safe with voters. But mostly he screamed about Uncle Jack from the floor of the House: "These Republicans are not profiles in courage. . . . They are the farthest thing from it that I can imagine." And mangled his clichés: "Impeachment proceedings are just like pulling a fire alarm in a crowded room." And discoursed on the Constitution: "I myself have educated myself about the severity of the Articles of Impeachment, and I want to share with my colleagues and the American people some of the thoughts that I have learned."

SOME DEMOCRATIC INSIDERS HAVE TROUBLE DISCERNING WHERE GEPHARDT'S FINGERS END AND KENNEDY'S PULLSTRING BEGINS.

Since Dick Gephardt has withdrawn from the presidential race and cast his lot with Kennedy, whose fund-raising efforts he hopes will secure him the Speaker's title, their relationship has grown more symbiotic. In fact, even some Democratic insiders have trouble discerning where Gephardt's fingers end and Kennedy's pullstring begins. At the DCCC, Kennedy is surrounded by a knot of formidable Gephardt deputies, from executive director David Plouffe (Gephardt's former deputy chief of staff) to communications director Erik Smith (Gephardt's former deputy press secretary).

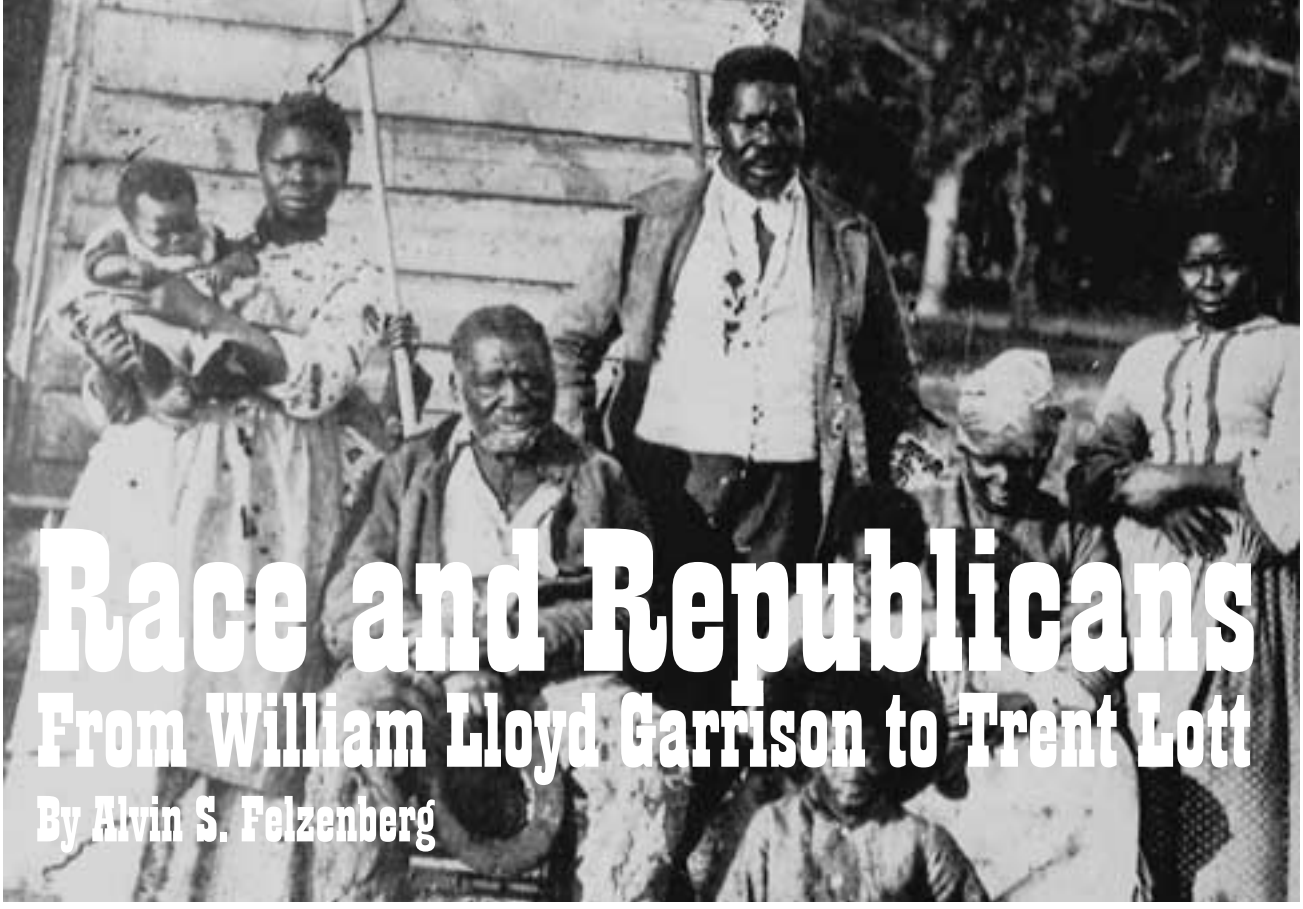
"Kennedy was picked for his ability to attract liberal money, especially from the northeast, like it's never poured in before," says one prominent Democratic consultant. "He was also picked because he won't be as independent as [his predecessor] Martin Frost. He'll be the nominal leader, and he'll let Dick make most of the decisions. They've got good staff over there, and I think they are trying to put Kennedy in a position where he can't cause himself or the committee any damage."

Actually Kennedy doesn't need *that* much protection. He seems to have taken to the job. At a recent National Press Club press conference, he recited electoral minutiae with the fixed stare of an autistic savant reciting 1930s box scores. With his hands in check, his voice pitched lower, he gave a near flawless performance, except for his ad lib about gun control, in which he claimed that "the number of Littletons every week that go on in this country . . . are astounding." Sensing trouble, he floated a statistic on how many children are killed by guns. Confused, I buttonhole him afterwards, trying to get clarification. He tells me that 14 kids are killed every day, and 40 kids are killed every week. No math whiz myself, I scribble quick calculations. If 14 kids are killed a day, that would be 98 kids killed per week, 70 excluding weekends. "Whether it's every day or weekdays," Patrick says, "it's too many."

In the brief time before I get back to my office, a DCCC spokesman (and former Gephardt aide) manages to track me down and leave a message, straightening out Patrick's numbers. With staff work like that, it is no wonder that Kennedy has forgone a run at retiring Senator Chafee's seat, which he was an odds-on favorite to win. As he once astutely noted, "I don't need a Senate seat to get national stature. With my family name, I'm still able to get that anyway." Besides, he says, he's better suited to the "hurly-burly" of the House.

He might, however, want to re-read *Profiles in Courage*. In it, Uncle Jack excerpts the diary of a cabinet member, describing the Senate as being primarily populated by "small lights, mentally weak, and wholly unfit to be Senators. Some are vulgar demagogues . . . some are men of wealth who have purchased their position . . . [some are] men of narrow intellect, limited comprehension, and low partisan prejudice."

If that's still the case, Dad may want to save Patrick a seat. ♦



Race and Republicans

From William Lloyd Garrison to Trent Lott

By Alvin S. Felzenberg

In 1984, in Biloxi, Mississippi, deep in the heart of the old Confederacy, the future Senate majority leader Trent Lott declared that "the spirit of Jefferson Davis" now lives in the Republican party.

It's a mystery quite how the party of Abraham Lincoln, born in the moral outrage of the great northern abolitionists, could become in the minds of some of its most visible modern leaders the party of Davis. To some, Davis's legacy may seem one of support for states' rights. To others, however, he remains a Southern slaveholder, Democrat, and president of a Confederacy born in rebellion and secession.

William Lloyd Garrison

Or perhaps it's not such a mystery. From their 1854 beginning, the Republicans were the party that fought slavery, imposed Reconstruction, and opposed segregation, while the Democrats were the party of Jim Crow, race baiting, and Dixiecrats. But for many years, "progressive" historians have been telling a story of America's "steady march to liberalism," in which all good comes from Democrats and all evil from Republicans. And not only have Democrats learned this false lesson and claimed an undeserved reputation on race, but even Republicans have absorbed their enemies' lesson—until at last they find themselves claiming Jefferson Davis as one of their own.

In order to construct their progressive story, these left-leaning historians—Henry Steele Commanger, Allen Nevins, Claude G. Bowers, and the Arthur Schlesingers—were forced to pass over innumerable Democratic sins: Andrew Jackson's treatment of native Americans, southern populists' racial demonizing, Woodrow Wilson's segregationism, William Jennings Bryan's support of the Ku Klux Klan, and Franklin Roosevelt's indifference to anti-lynching legislation.

Simultaneously, they were compelled to ignore the efforts the conservative "stand patters" made to improve race relations. New York boss Roscoe Conkling escorted Mississippi's Hiram Revels, the first black senator, down the aisle to his swearing in when no one else would—but his courage has found few admirers among reform-minded historians. In the 1880s, as a young congressman, Henry Cabot Lodge introduced a voting rights bill—but he's known to history primarily as Woodrow Wilson's antagonist in international relations. "Uncle Joe" Cannon, the tyrannical speaker of the House in the early 1900s, backed every civil rights measure introduced during his long tenure—but he's more famous for liking tariffs and trusts.

Presidents Grant, Harrison, Harding, and Coolidge tried to outlaw lynching, protect voting rights, and increase tolerance—but all receive "failing" or "below average" grades from historians who disapprove of their economic policies. Textbooks record that Eisenhower sent troops to Little Rock to enforce the Supreme Court's 1954 anti-segregation decision in *Brown*—but always with the caveat that he did so "reluctantly and

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Alvin S. Felzenberg writes and lectures about the American presidency.

late." They make less mention of his peaceful desegregation of the nation's capital or his success in passing the first civil rights bill in almost a century despite Democratic efforts to weaken it.

So complete has been the victory of this view of American history that even Republicans turn away from their past: No serious candidate invokes the names of Grant, Harding, Cannon, or Coolidge. Yet African-American activist Frederick Douglass stood up for Grant in his day. His political descendants did the same for other Republicans. If progressive historians had been less willing to relegate race to secondary importance in explaining the past, or if Republicans had proved less apt pupils, the GOP could cite with telling effect a long train of heroes in the fight against racism—beginning with William Lloyd Garrison.

In his marvelous new study *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery*, Henry Mayer has rescued this nineteenth-century abolitionist from common distortions. Historians have typically depicted Garrison as marginal at best and a firebrand fanatic at worst, typical of the abolitionist troublemakers who made more difficult the work of practical politicians like Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, and Stephen Douglas.

But Garrison, in fact, is one of the rare examples of a presumed extremist who proves more practical than the temporizers. All he needed to make his vision a reality was a complete shift in prevailing public opinion—and Garrison did more to bring that shift about than any other figure of his time. Mayer believes Garrison's greatness was his ability to understand that by eschewing both compromise and conventional politics, he could—through logical analysis, agitation, confrontation, and grassroots organizing—move public opinion his way.

Born in 1805, the descendant of indentured servants, Garrison derived his profound religious faith from his mother and his passion for abolition from an early Quaker mentor, Benjamin Lundy. After trying his hand at shoemaking and carpentry, he was apprenticed to a printer at age thirteen—quickly rising to become a professional printer, writer, and newspaper publisher.

But it was in 1829, at age twenty-four, that he first came to broad public notice, delivering a stirring address at Boston's Park Street Church in which he dedicated his life to the fight against slavery. His peroration was reprinted on the masthead of all his future papers: "I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—AND I WILL BE HEARD." In 1831, he launched his newspaper, the *Liberator*, and showed an early capacity to enrage. In 1835, an angry mob would certainly have lynched him had not two burly Irishmen come to his rescue.

HENRY MAYER
All on Fire
William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery
St. Martin's, 707 pp., $32.50

But the key to grasping his importance is recognizing how quickly Garrison moved from the fringes of public opinion to the center—or rather, how quickly he moved public opinion, for Garrison never wavered. When, at the July 4, 1854, picnic in Framingham, Massachusetts, Garrison burned a copy of the Constitution, calling it "a covenant with death," few northerners still thought him extreme. Eleven years later, he journeyed to Charleston, South Carolina, as President Lincoln's official representative to observe Union troops retake Fort Sumter.

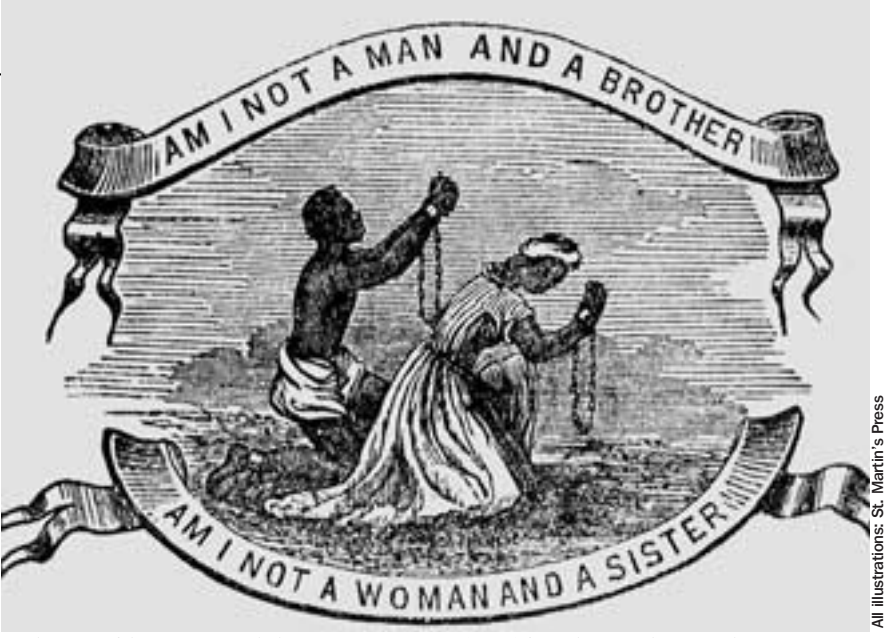
Garrison knew how to turn events to his advantage. He mockingly asked why—if they thought slavery a moral good—southerners passed laws fining free Negroes who subscribed to the *Liberator*. And as he tormented his opponents, Garrison pressed to make "immediacy" the dominant faction within the abolition movement. He saw parallels between members of the American Colonization Society (who sought to deport freed slaves to Africa) and Jacksonians (who were forcing Cherokees from the Georgia frontier). Both, he said, were trying to deny the universal and biblical promise of the Declaration of Independence to non-whites.

Having succeeded in making "immediacy" the primary objective of most abolitionists, Garrison worked to make it the primary northern response to the secessionist threats issuing from the South. If southerners would leave a Union that resisted the spread of slavery, he and his followers would withdraw from one that compromised with slavery's defenders. Lacking the legal power to abolish slavery outright, northerners could stop sustaining it by themselves breaking away from a flawed covenant.

In *All on Fire*, Mayer attributes Garrison's stand to the antinomian, "perfectionist" theology of Charles Grandison Finney (founder of Oberlin College) and the Unitarian "breakawayer," Theodore Parker. Garrison beseeched churchgoers to leave congregations that did not denounce slavery. He also urged his followers not to participate in a political system that delayed immediate change.

But Garrison railed loudest against politicians who proposed compromise. He reserved his greatest scorn for Henry Clay, precisely because he considered the Great Compromiser the "tallest and most majestic figure in the nation": "If men of high standing and extensive influence . . . shrink from the battle, by whom shall the victory be won?" He denounced Clay's efforts to hold the Union together through mutual concessions as "moral cowardice."

When Garrison began his work, "cotton Whigs" ran much of Massachusetts.



All illustrations: St. Martin's Press

The icon of the American abolitionist movement, adapted from the British Anti-Slavery Society.

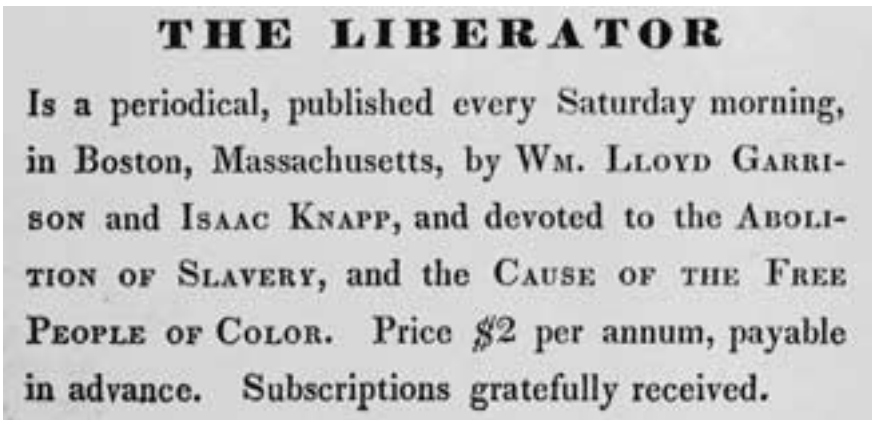
Politicians were beholden to mill owners who turned southern cotton into textiles. Their leader, Daniel Webster, saw preservation of the Union as the means of maintaining ties between northern industrialists and southern planters. But over time, this faction lost influence to the "conscience Whigs," who favored abolition. Together with disaffected Democrats, they laid the foundation for a new northern consensus.

The "anti-political" Garrison was quick to sense this transformation. And so was a shrewd politician from the Illinois prairie. When Lincoln's law partner and political advance man, William H. Herndon, paid a call on Garrison, he expected to find a cantankerous, whining scourge but found himself taken with the fanatic's warmth and wit. (Garrison's friends were already calling him the "happy warrior," from Wordsworth's poem. When vigilantes offered $1,500 for the apprehension of anyone distributing the *Liberator*, he protested that his followers were "worth more.")

Herndon was also surprised at the political acumen of this professed political dropout. They agreed to collaborate, but only along separate tracks. While keeping his distance from all politicians, Garrison took note that Lincoln, although no pure abolitionist, spoke of slavery as a "moral" issue: Douglas had feigned indifference to slavery's spread, and Lincoln had denounced it as an "evil."

While he criticized Lincoln as president for his slowness on slavery, Garrison sensed that the war provided the legal means to destroy the practice. When Lincoln finally issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, the uncompromising Garrison did not dismiss it as a "fraud" because it exempted territory the Union controlled. He noted instead that it freed the slaves of rebels, offered blacks military protection, and admitted them into the army. Garrison always accepted what he got and pressed on for what he wanted. Through the remainder of the war, he made the case for immediate emancipation of the million slaves still in the border states.

Whatever Lincoln's hesitations, his willingness to engage black troops, nullify fugitive slave laws, and add the Thirteenth Amendment won him Garrison's open support. Lincoln acknowledged the Union's debt to Garrison when he wrote, "The logic and moral power of Garrison and the antislavery people of the country and the army, have done it all." Of Lincoln, Garrison said, "No man ever did so large a business on so small a capital in the service of freedom and humanity." In 1864, for the first time since he burst on the public stage, Garrison issued a political endorsement, editorializing for Lincoln. He remained an active Republican until his death in 1879.



THE LIBERATOR

Is a periodical, published every Saturday morning, in Boston, Massachusetts, by Wm. Lloyd Garrison and Isaac Knapp, and devoted to the Abolition of Slavery, and the Cause of the Free People of Color. Price $2 per annum, payable in advance. Subscriptions gratefully received.

But Garrison found "immediacy" harder to argue in debates over Reconstruction after the war. As Mayer notes in *All on Fire*, these issues did not carry the same "theological burden" as abolition, and they required yet another change in opinion from an exhausted public. Even after slavery had ended, three northern states still denied the vote to freed blacks, and 93 percent of blacks in the North were still disenfranchised.

The Republicans Garrison had joined would spend much of their future debating how to appeal to those they had set free. Mayer describes the problem the party faced at the end of the Civil War:

> This question became one of whether to broaden the party's base with black voters in the South, and risk losing its most conservative and racist voters in the North, or to take a partial victory as a promissory note and expand the party's strength on the basis of other issues.

Until the end of Ulysses S. Grant's presidency, the Republicans tried the first approach. Reaching out to southern blacks was a key component of the Reconstruction plans of Senator Charles Sumner, Representative Thaddeus Stevens, and other "Radical Republicans." It was central in their battle with President Andrew Johnson. With one eye fixed on continued GOP majorities and another on improving the condition

of blacks, the Radicals gave southern states a choice: Either grant the franchise to their former slaves or have their congressional delegations reduced.

The "reconstructed states" responded by restricting the rights of emancipated slaves. Terrorist bands intimidated those who attempted to vote. Former Confederate politicians and officers were elected to Congress. (The Radicals refused to seat them.) After Johnson vetoed civil rights laws and refused to enforce the rights of blacks, Congress imposed its own reconstruction plan by legislation, constitutional amendment, and, ultimately, impeachment.

Radicals and their black supporters in the South expected the stalemate between Congress and the president to end with Ulysses S. Grant's election in 1868. Grant had allowed two hundred thousand liberated slaves into Union combat forces (part of his strategy to win the war by "attrition") and had sided with the Radicals in their rift with Johnson.

Once in office, Grant repeatedly sent troops to southern polling places to assure African Americans the right to vote. He relentlessly pursued the fledgling Ku Klux Klan and denounced color prejudice as "senseless." He invoked market-based justifications for his attempt to acquire the Dominican Republic, arguing that blacks might use their ability to sell their labor at higher wages there as leverage to persuade southern employers to pay them higher wages.

But Grant nonetheless failed, primarily because it was impossible for him to achieve both sectional reconciliation and equal justice for blacks. Grant described how his efforts on behalf of former slaves in the South eroded his base of support elsewhere:

> The whole public are tired out with these annual, autumnal outbreaks in the South, and there is so much unwholesome lying done by the press and people in regard to the cause and extent of these breaches of the peace that the great majority were ready now to condemn any interference on the part of the Government.

The 1876 election of "His Fraudulency," Rutherford B. Hayes, brought to an end Republican efforts to protect blacks. Though he lost the popular vote, Hayes became president when electors in three southern states shifted their votes in exchange for his promise to withdraw all remaining federal troops from the South.

For the next eighty years, Republicans turned to Mayer's "other issues": sound money, tariffs, economic development, civil service, trust busting, and taxes. Some of these may have slowed the economic advance of former slaves. Civil service reform, for instance—a favorite cause among progressive historians—ended the patronage Republicans had used to help blacks. Through his political alliance with Booker T. Washington, Theodore Roosevelt appointed blacks to federal posts over local objections.

But having acquiesced in the disenfranchisement of their southern black supporters, Republicans sought to make their party competitive in the region by attracting whites. It didn't work—and Frederick Douglass explained why:

> If anything, the South became, with every concession made by the Republicans, . . . more Democratic. There never was yet, and there never will be, an instance of permanent success where a party abandons its righteous principles to win favor of the opposing party.

For their part, the Democrats, from Andrew Johnson's presidency to Lyndon Johnson's, sought to reassemble the Jacksonian coalition of northern machines and southern segregationists. In 1924, Franklin Roosevelt advised Democrats to raise only issues of importance to the entire nation—which meant that they should stay away from the question of integration. Truman did desegregate the armed forces, and Kennedy enforced court orders to integrate southern state universities. Yet all three looked upon civil rights advocates primarily as interests to be managed rather than integral parts of their electoral coalitions.

Buoyed by a changed public opinion, produced by Garrison's spiritual heirs who marched with Martin Luther King Jr., Lyndon Johnson brought an end to Jim Crow and made voting rights a reality for millions of African Americans. His deeds, plus his Republican opponent Barry Goldwater's opposition to the 1964 civil rights bill, hastened a realignment of the two parties with African Americans voting for the Democrats and southern whites for the Republicans. Where Nixon had still carried 32 percent of the African-American vote in 1960, Goldwater's share dropped to 6 percent, and no GOP presidential standard bearer has fared much better since: Nixon, 1968: 12 percent; Nixon, 1972: 13 percent; Ford, 1976: 15 percent; Reagan, 1980: 10 percent; Reagan, 1984: 13 percent; Bush, 1988: 18 percent; Bush, 1992: 11 percent; Dole, 1996: 12 percent.

Several myths arose after the 1964 election that cloud impressions minorities have of the Republicans' past—and form the image many Republicans hold of themselves.

One myth is that Goldwater's anti-civil rights vote was rooted in racism. More a libertarian than anything else,

Goldwater opposed sections of the bill that denied private businesses the right to deny service to any person for any reason. In his home state of Arizona, Goldwater was known as an advocate of integration. His commitment to "voluntary association" blinded him to the reality that where Rosa Parks could sit on a bus was prescribed by state law.

Another myth is that Goldwater represented his entire party's position on civil rights. Twenty-seven of the thirty-one other Republican senators supported the bill. Twenty-one Democrats voted against it, among them Sam Ervin (star of the Watergate hearings), J. William Fulbright (an early Vietnam war skeptic), Robert Byrd (the "constitutional authority" of the Clinton impeachment), and Albert Gore (father of the vice president). Such "right wing Neanderthals" as Karl Mundt, Carl Curtis, and Roman Hruska voted for it. The most eloquent speech came from Republican minority leader Everett Dirksen, quoting Victor Hugo: "Nothing is so powerful as an idea whose time has come."

The story was similar in the House. Understandably, liberal historians and activists have downplayed the role of Republicans in breaking Democratic filibusters and securing final passage. Less understandable is what sustains collective amnesia among Republicans. When he ascended in 1994, the first Republican speaker of the House in over forty years, Newt Gingrich said:

> No Republican here should kid themselves about it. The greatest leaders in fighting for an integrated America in the twentieth century were in the Democratic party. The fact is, it was the liberal wing of the Democratic party that ended segregation.

None of Gingrich's consistent efforts on behalf of the nation's capital, its public schools, scholarships for poor children, and Habitat for Humanity could change those impressions. Other Republican officials, apologizing for their party's having been on the "wrong side" of the issue when it wasn't, have fared no better. And some Republican conservatives have even tried to claim the mantle of George Wallace, a man who was neither a Republican nor a conservative. In a 1968 straw poll, even the "country-club" Republican Nelson Rockefeller out-polled Wallace among conservatives, 43 percent to 23 percent. (Given a choice only between two big-spending liberals, they chose the one who did not apply racial tests—proving conservatives of the time were neither racist nor stupid.)

By failing to come to terms with its true history on race, the modern Republican party remains saddled with the worst of all worlds and bereft of a policy. On some occasions, Republicans have acted as though they accepted Democratic caricatures of themselves as "uncaring bigots." And as if to prove they are not, they let stand programs they believe both wrong and unsuccessful, like bilingual education, affirmative action, and racial set asides.

The rest of the time, with the exception of welfare reform and flirtations with "negative income taxes," "enterprise zones," and "school choice," Republicans offer few alternatives to Democratic programs. Republicans show signs of disappointment and even hurt at their opponents' failure to credit them at least for their altruism. But when will such truly Republican notions as community renewal legislation, school choice, and authorization for faith-based entities to compete for public funds—all the profoundly conservative plans that offer real hope to the African-American community—ever receive from GOP leadership the same priority as tax cuts, Social Security, and missile defense?

Much as they insist on their commitment to "inclusion," the Republicans will never recruit minority voters back to what was their natural home until the party stops believing the "progressive" view that has denied the long history of Democratic vices and Republican virtues on black-white relations. Only then can the party return to its original ideas of equality of opportunity and equality before the law. Only then can the party cease to oscillate between behaving as a shamed clone of the Democrats on issues of race, and simply ignoring blacks as a Democratic interest group.

An accurate rendering of our history can teach modern Republicans a lesson in practical politics, and it can teach them a lesson as well in moral leadership. Sometimes the two do come together—and William Lloyd Garrison remains the best person to remind us of that. ♦

BCA

The God of Science

The Case for Intelligent Design

By Michael J. Behe

In the 1940s, the British astronomer Fred Hoyle was puzzling over the origins of the element carbon. According to the science of his day, virtually no carbon should be made by stars, the nuclear furnaces that forge almost all the other elements. Yet carbon, essential for life, indisputably exists.

So Hoyle guessed that there is a lucky arrangement of things—"resonance levels" for several kinds of atomic nuclei—that allows stars to make carbon. And when other physicists searched for such resonance levels, they found them, exactly where Hoyle predicted.

In consternation Hoyle, an atheist, later wrote,

> A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question.

Michael J. Behe is professor of biological sciences at Lehigh University and the author of Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution.

And that, in a nutshell, is what philosophers call "the argument for design." When a number of separate, very unlikely events combine to produce something as complex as life, we suspect that the conditions were intentionally arranged for the purpose.

Design arguments remain controversial for a number of reasons—the most obvious being their theological overtones: Theists generally find them persuasive; atheists don't. But sometimes, as the example of Hoyle demonstrates, an atheist will find himself forced to accept such arguments. And sometimes, it works the other way around. Robert Pennock, a professor of the philosophy of science at the University of Texas, is a theist, a Quaker, who doesn't like the design argument, and he's written his new *Tower of Babel: The Evidence Against the New Creationism* to parry it.

Unfortunately, whatever merits exist in Pennock's analysis, they are obscured by biased rhetoric. His term "creationism," for instance, is one that readers will typically take to mean biblical literalism: a "young earth" created as recently as 4004 B.C., Adam and Eve, Noah's Ark, and all the rest. But Pennock applies "creationist" to writers who believe in none of this. His actual opponents turn out to have doctorates in things like embryology, biochemistry, the philosophy of science, and mathematics from places like the University of Chicago, Cambridge, and Berkeley. And they write books and articles that engage, rather than avoid, serious issues in science and philosophy.

To be fair, Pennock does note the difference between modern intelligent-design theorists and biblical literalists. But he never asks whether the term "creationist" can be used for both, and he exploits the confusion by using lines of argument against the modern intelligent-design theorists that tell only against the old-fashioned literalists.

His title, *Tower of Babel*, for example, alludes to a device that he uses to try to get young-earth creationists to admit the error of their ways: The Bible says that all the plants and animals were created within a few days of one another; the Bible also records that human languages were created simultaneously by God, to foil plans for the tower of Babel; so Pennock concludes that if he can convince creationists there is good evidence that modern languages arose from a common ancestral language, he may be able to get them to give up their insistence on the simultaneous creation of all living things.

He announces proudly, "To my knowledge no one has drawn this important parallel before" between linguistic and biological evolution. Well, no wonder. People who believe that the Bible trumps fossils and Stephen Jay Gould will also use it to trump Noam Chomsky and Indo-European roots.

But Pennock is being disingenuous. His target is not biblical literalists; it's intelligent-design theorists, who have no quarrel with linguistic changes. His whole etymological argument stands as an exercise in misdirection: The point is simply to leave an association in the reader's mind between the design argument and the inability to see that French is similar to Spanish.

ROBERT PENNOCK
Tower of Babel
The Evidence Against the New Creationism
MIT Press, 440 pp., $35

Throughout the book Pennock milks "creationism" for all the negative connotations he can. He calls it a "meme" (the term coined by the Darwinist popularizer Richard Dawkins to mean an idea that spreads by natural selection), even though many other Darwinists disavow the concept of memes. So, Pennock says, a new variety of creationism (by which he means intelligent-design theory) "evolved" from young-earth creationism as a "cluster of ideas that reproduces itself" and that these new intelligent-design "creationists" today "forget their own history," as though there were a straight intellectual line to be drawn between the two types of opponents of absolute Darwinism.

But Phillip Johnson, a professor of law at Berkeley and the chief target of Pennock's criticisms, was an agnostic until his mid-thirties and came by his skepticism of evolution after reading the atheist Richard Dawkins's *The Blind Watchmaker* and the agnostic Michael Denton's *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*. I am a lifelong Roman Catholic who was taught Darwinian evolution in parochial school and believed it until, as a professor of biochemistry, I started noticing some biochemical difficulties for natural selection. Pennock's supposed intellectual lineage is baseless.

It's true that the argument for design has a venerable history, going back at least to Aristotle. It's had its low points over the last few hundred years, but it has made a strong comeback at the end of the twentieth century. And its rising fortunes have been boosted by discoveries principally in physics and astronomy: The Big Bang theory and "anthropic coincidences" (life-friendly features of the universe, such as the resonance levels Hoyle pointed out) are summarized in a number of scholarly texts and popular books. More recent design arguments have also been based on chemical problems confronting the origin of life and on aspects of biology.

Pennock, however, is preternaturally uninterested in scientific objections to evolution. "Of course," he yawns, modern design theorists "are right to suggest that the origin of life remains a mystery." But, he adds lethargically, "Research into this topic has started only relatively recently"—which turns out to be seventy-five years ago. Of the problems I pointed out in my 1996 *Darwin's Black Box*, for example, he remarks, "Behe will no doubt complain that I have not addressed the biochemical details of his real examples, but as we have noted, the evidence is not yet in on those questions." But several of the biochemical systems I discussed have been well understood for forty years. For Pennock, the evidence will never be in if it points to intelligent design.

Tower of Babel puts two philosophical objections to intelligent-design theory. First, Pennock faults it for using negative argumentation and false dichotomies: To argue that Darwinism is wrong is not to prove that Genesis literalism is right. Perhaps some evolution-

ary mechanism other than natural selection is at work, or perhaps some other creation story, like that of an American Indian tribe, is true instead of Genesis.

Pennock admits that Phillip Johnson, for example, does not defend biblical literalism, but he says that Johnson commits the fallacy anyway, because as a Christian he speaks of an active God who can intervene in nature. This, Pennock sniffs, neglects such possibilities as deism, an impersonal God, and a "universal life force."

Philosophers call this logic chopping. Johnson was writing not for philosophers but for the general public. Suppose he had spelled out the argument this way:

> Darwinism is the most plausible unintelligent mechanism, yet it has tremendous difficulties and the evidence garnered so far points to its inability to do what its advocates claim for it. If unintelligent mechanisms can't do the job, then that shifts the focus to intelligent agency. That's as far as the argument against Darwinism takes us, but most people already have other reasons for believing in a personal God who just might act in history, and they will find the argument for intelligent design fits with what they already hold.

With the argument arranged this way, evidence against Darwinism does count as evidence for an active God, just as valid negative advertising against the Democratic candidate will help the Republican, even though Vegetarian and One World candidates are on the ballot, too. Life is either the result of exclusively unintelligent causes or it is not, and the evidence against the unintelligent production of life is clearly evidence for intelligent design.

The second philosophical objection in *Tower of Babel* is that design violates "methodological naturalism," which means roughly that science must act as though the universe were a closed system of cause and effect, whether it really is or not. "Without the constraint of lawful regularity," Pennock lectures, "inductive evidential inference cannot get off the ground."

But wasn't it an "inductive evidential inference" that led the atheist Fred Hoyle to conclude that nature doesn't follow merely blind forces? Isn't it "the constraint of lawful regularity" that turns chemicals in origin-of-life experiments into goo at the bottom of the test tube, rather than into primitive cells? Pennock implies that our only choices are a cartoon world, where genies and fairies swirl about endlessly dispensing magic, or a world of relentless materialism where, say, the charitable work of a Mother Teresa is explained only in terms of evolutionary selection coefficients.

Why should we think our explanatory possibilities are limited to these choices? Observation and experiment demonstrate that law-like regularities explain much of nature. The same methods indicate that intelligence accounts for other aspects. It is ludicrous to forbid Fred Hoyle to notice what for all the world looks like design, or to say that if he does notice, he's no longer a scientist.

Methodological naturalism proves at last nothing more than an artificial restriction on thought, and it will eventually pass. Despite would-be gatekeepers like Pennock, the argument for design is gaining strength with the advance of science—and for a simple reason once described by the physicist Percy Bridgman: "The scientific method, as far as it is a method, is nothing more than doing one's damnedest with one's mind, no holds barred."

No holds barred—even though that may force us to conclude that the universe reveals, in its intelligent design, traces of its intelligent designer. ♦

B&A

Cleaning Up After Clinton

Davis and Hitchens on Truth and Lies

By David Tell

For years, Lanny Davis wagged his friendly tail from the pet-shop window of local politics in suburban Washington and dreamed of life downtown, where the lucky dogs do their business not on last week's *Potomac Valu-Shopper*—but right there, live, on CNN. But no one would buy him. Then, one day, scratching at the *New York Times*, Davis chanced upon a William Safire column about Hillary Clinton and Whitewater, and he got to thinking. What if he were to become a more aggressive pooch? What if he were to phone up his better-connected Democratic acquaintances and beg that they recommend him to the cable-TV squawk shows as a down-the-line defender of the scandal-plagued First Couple?

Puppy heaven! Within days of this brainstorm, Davis was all over the nation's airwaves, playing tireless, yappy fetch with the imaginary tennis ball of Bill and Hillary's perfect virtue. And before the year was out, the Clinton West Wing, where it takes a village of useful idiots, had marked him for greatness.

Our hero was hired up as "special counsel to the president" for work on the administration's principal domestic policy initiative. Which is to say: Lanny Davis started doing "damage control," urging White House reporters to accept as plausible—and circulate throughout the country—an account of Clintonism sufficiently "full" and "contextualized" as to smother all the hideous details. Put another way: For thirteen months until January 1998, Lanny Davis got paid federal money to lie a lot.

Davis's new chronicle of these labors, *Truth to Tell*, is not nearly so infuriating as its title would imply. It is pathetic instead. The book is an inside-

David Tell is opinion editor of The Weekly Standard.

baseball memoir as might be written by some wide-eyed, farm-boy rookie after just a single spring-training session in the big leagues. *Gosh! I've met . . . Mark McGwire.*

Or, as Kid Lanny all but burbles with equivalent awe-struck enthusiasm: Gosh! I've met . . . Michael Weisskopf of *Time* magazine, "one of the best in the business—a middle-of-the-road journalist, without an ideological or personal ax to grind, with a level of integrity and a concern for accuracy and fairness that were as high as those of any journalist I had encountered over the years."

So it goes, page after cringe-making page, Davis incontinent with pride just to have breathed the same air as such titans. Once, he recalls, unable to wait till morning, he stayed by his office computer past midnight for the opportunity to read a minor, late-breaking wire by his favorite reporter, John Solomon of the Associated Press. And, oh joy, the trade lingo he learned! Which he now waves around the way a prep-school boy handles his pipe: This or that news story did or didn't "have legs," he lets drop with a knowing wink.

Imagine you are one of the many White House reporters effusively praised in *Truth to Tell* for having been willing to engage Lanny Davis in "an ongoing back-and-forth dialogue to sort out the facts and legal issues accurately." Innumerable times, with the deadline clock ticking, he has made you run a frantic find-the-buried-body race through some multi-thousand-page release of subpoenaed documents—nattering in your ear the whole while. And now he pats you on the head for having filed your dispatches "comprehensively, accurately, and with our viewpoint expressed." How must this feel? What must it be like to read that you embraced a "culture of trust" with this next-to-useless Jimmy Olsen chipmunk?

Embarrassing, one suspects. But that is a private matter. The rest of us should point no accusing finger at the reporters who listened to Davis's endless spiels and dutifully recorded his "viewpoint." He was speaking for the president of the United States, after all; what he said was therefore news, and they were professionally obliged to write it down. With this in mind, the only *real* dupe to emerge from the dreary scandal catalogue of *Truth to Tell* is the author himself.

On Kathleen Willey: "I just couldn't take this story seriously." On the no-show jobs that Clinton staffers

LANNY J. DAVIS

Truth to Tell

Tell It Early, Tell It All, Tell It Yourself—Notes from My White House Education

Free Press, 284 pp., $25

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

No One Left to Lie To

The Triangulations of William Jefferson Clinton

Verso, 122 pp., $19

arranged for Webb Hubbell after he was forced to resign from the Justice Department: "I gave so little credence to the seriousness of the story." John Huang's visits to the Oval Office struck Davis as "a nonstory from the beginning." His "first reaction" to Monica Lewinsky "was that there couldn't be a basis for this rumor." And when questions arose about the curious wordplay of the president's Lewinsky denials, "I couldn't believe the press had reached this level of cynicism." Say what else we might about him, Lanny Davis is transparently sincere. In a White House packed with soul-dead shysters, Davis appears actually to have *believed* the lies he told.

So the question becomes: How to explain such invincible credulity? And the answer is found in the conception of political truth-telling embodied by Davis's rulebook of "spin." Bad spin, he advises, is "hiding or obscuring bad facts, by releasing information selectively and misleadingly, and sometimes by being less than completely forthright in answering media questions."

Good spin, by contrast, is "surrounding bad facts with context, with good facts (if there are any), and, if possible, with a credible, favorable (or less damaging) interpretation of these facts." That way, Davis says, the worst that's likely to happen is that people will shrug off the facts and figure: "How bad could it be?"

Notice: There are good and bad "facts," but they are always something less than Truth. You have not really told the Truth—that is, issued good spin—until you have manipulated these facts into a story that will not seriously harm you. And so, by necessary inversion, a story that *does* threaten serious harm simply cannot be "true." It is theoretically impossible, for example, that your president has perjured himself, obstructed justice, and deputized his aides to conceal the crimes.

Provided, of course, that you are Lanny Davis. And that you remember what your "mother and father" taught you "about the importance of having a Democrat in the White House." Yes, there will be people who carp at you over mere facts. But the larger, good-spin truth will always protect you, and if there is but a single Republican among the carpers, it will be fair for you to "label any criticism as pure politics."

Thus the Clinton White House fashions its cult metaphysics: That which

does not flatter our leader is a threat to the cosmos and so must be false.

All this would seem an unusually creepy philosophy, if it were in fact unusual. But it isn't, as the events of the past year make clear. Drained of its party-hack aspect, and in only slightly less extreme a form, the Lanny Davis standard of political integrity—the ethos of a high-school pep rally—is the one America now accepts. The habit of measuring a politician's public character by his humility before the law and other such niceties appears largely lost. If a politician is "on our side," if he claims to endorse most of what most of us consider righteous policy—even though he is a lying bastard, and a felon in the bargain—well, we now think that is fine enough. And we are prepared to root for him.

Yet there do remain a few vocal dissenters on the continent. One of them is Christopher Hitchens, the transplanted Englishman who contributes brilliant, snarly prose to many of our better magazines and also to the *Nation*. His new book is a withering treatment of the contemporary culture of Clintonism, the considerable subtlety of which analysis defies fair summary.

Just the same, if summary there must be, suffice it to say that Hitchens understands our scandalous president with rare and unsparing precision. And that he even better understands our president's various left and liberal defenders—with whom Hitchens otherwise, more times than not, sees eye to eye. *No One Left to Lie To* is a veritable bible of anti-anti-anti-Clintonism.

But even that lovely doctrine can be pushed too hard—one would not have thought it possible—and at various points, Hitchens reaches beyond the limit of his own best argument. For his general endorsement of the Starr investigation and the House impeachment articles it inspired, he has lately been accused, by the *Nation*'s Katha Pollitt, of treason against progressivism: of having given aid and comfort to the likes of Hyde and Barr and Lott. In *No One Left to Lie To*, Hitchens cannot resist the temptation to retort in kind.

AP / Wide World Photos. Previous page: Free Press and Verso

President Clinton laughs at a high-school rally in Michigan, 1996.

Whom is Katha Pollitt aiding and comforting, Hitchens wonders? So here, at great length, he reminds his erstwhile lefty friends that in political combat Clinton has routinely shot their wounded. That he has relied for advice on Dick Morris, a "conservative Republican." That he has bilked Indian tribes and said kind things about Richard Nixon. That he has authorized the execution of a hopelessly brain-damaged black man. That he has signed the anti-homosexual Defense of Marriage Act. That he has sold out health-care policy to the big insurance companies. *This* is a progressive politics, Hitchens asks?

No, it is not. It is the anti-politics of "triangulation," and a good bit of it is repulsive no matter where you sit. But under the circumstances, it is also rather beside the point, or should be. For to engage in a sectarian dispute over whether the president is either a "lesser evil" or a "crypto-right-winger"—and thus does or doesn't deserve support against Ken Starr—is itself to concede the Lanny Davis premise: that Clinton's honor can ultimately be tested only in the realm of supra-factual, agenda-contingent "truth," quite apart from what he's actually done.

Christopher Hitchens does not believe this, of course. The rest of his book is an eloquent claim that the president is bad not because he is an imperfect socialist, but just *because he is bad.* Which should be plenty bad enough. Hitchens has no doubt been provoked beyond endurance by his critics on the left. But the sarcastic "team spirit" taunt he hurls in reply ill suits his cause.

Bill Clinton has breached the barrier. In the future, there will likely be another such president: lawless, appalling, and popular all at once. He will be surrounded by another collection of Lanny Davis toadies. And it will once again be a lonely, thankless task to call attention to his crimes. There in the opposition bunker, one expects to find a man of Christopher Hitchens's notable nerve and talent—willing to reject the president for the simple and sufficient reason that he is corrupt, irrespective of his position on the death penalty, welfare reform, or anything else. ♦

The Boston Globe

Parody

A Clinton in the Senate?

By Ron Fournier
ASSOCIATED PRESS

KEY BISCAYNE, FLA—President Clinton's decision to spend his vacation in Florida has sparked rumors that he may have the state's next open Senate seat in his sights.

"There's a dynamism here in Central Florida that you can't find anywhere else in the world," the president told a group at Seizure World, a retirement community outside Orlando. "I've always said that anything that happens in America happens in Florida first."

A number of Florida Republicans accused President Clinton of being a carpetbagger. "The president roots for the Arkansas Swamp Possums, and that's going to give him a lot of explaining to do," said Miami Herald reporter Brad Swank. "This is Florida Marlins country, and has been ever since—oh, the last ten or twelve days when we got the franchise."

CBS anchor Dan Rather attempted to draw the president out on the matter. When Rather asked whether a Senate run was in the cards, Mr. Clinton replied, "Up yours, cracker! That's my personal life." Mr. Rather later apologized.

For now the president is playing coy. "I definitely plan to move to Florida when I leave the White House," he said. "Maybe. Sometimes." If the president decides to run for Senate, he could face a formidable opponent, Anita Bry-

(see THONG, p. C8)