SPECIAL FALL BOOKS ISSUE

the weekly Standard

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Noemie Emery on the Kennedys

ONCE A GREAT PARTY

THE DEMOCRATS' GOLDEN AGE

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the weekly Standard

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A Footnote to Mother-in-Law-gate

Before the phony pet dog/Mother-in-Law anecdote enters the pantheon of Al Gore whoppers, it's worth giving proper credit to Walter V. Robinson, who first reported it in the Sept. 18 *Boston Globe*. As Mickey Kaus joked the next day in *Kausfiles.com*, Robinson "must have misplaced his orders from Media Central: He's still busting Gore for stretching the truth."

Robinson's piece was a model of thoroughness: "Vice President Al Gore," he began, "reaching for a personal example to illustrate the breathtaking costs of some prescription drugs, told seniors in Florida last month that his mother-in-law pays nearly three times as much for the same arthritis medicine used for his ailing dog, Shiloh. But Gore, the master of many policy details, mangled the facts, and late last week his aides could not say with certainty that Shiloh or Margaret Ann Aitcheson actually takes the brand-name drug, Lodine, that Gore said they do."

Well, "mangled the facts" was putting it politely. As Robinson went on to explain, Gore, "who has a history of embellishing facts about himself and his family," had lifted the figures and the comparison from a study done by House Democrats. Plus, the generic version of the drug used by 85 percent of patients turns out to be cheaper than the doggie version. Not to mention, had the amount of the drug implied by Gore's figures actually been administered to the dog, the animal might have been poisoned.

In a follow-up story on Sept. 22, Robinson highlighted the Gore campaign's failed efforts to flee the scene of the anecdote. "Even the House Democratic study, from which Gore lifted manufacturer wholesale prices and presented them as his family's own retail cost, notes that just eight of the 200 best-selling drugs in the United States can be used for both humans and animals. Those numbers suggest that comparing human and animal drug costs to underscore the high cost of prescription drugs, as Gore has done, is irrelevant except for a tiny fraction of the drugs that are prescribed." Game, set, match.

Now, the reason the origins of the story are worth insisting on is not just that Robinson deserves full credit for his scoop, but the astonishing twist given to it by the *New York Times*, where the orders from Media Central are still very much enforced. Rather than follow up on a story unflattering to Gore from its sister paper (the *Globe* is owned by the New York Times company), the *Times* transformed Mother-in-Law-gate into yet another sermon about nasty Republicans. The day after the first *Globe* story, the *Times* took dictation from the Gore campaign:

"Dick Cheney and his aides continued efforts today to hammer away at Mr. Gore's credibility. Karen P. Hughes, Mr. Bush's communications director, distributed an article from the *Boston Globe* that challenged Mr. Gore's assertions that his mother-in-law paid nearly three times as much for the same arthritis medicine that was used by his ailing dog Shiloh. . . . Kym Spell, a spokeswoman for Mr. Gore, called the Bush campaign's focus on the article 'the latest sign the Bush-Cheney ticket is very, very desperate.' And she said the campaign had verified that both Mr. Gore's mother-in-law and dog had used the same drug."

If the Gore campaign says it has verified something, that apparently is good enough for the *Times*, which proceeded the following day to do some hammering away of its own, again on the theme of GOP aggression. Its story the next day was headlined: "In Harshest Attack Yet, Cheney Accuses Gore of Fabrications." And the lede read as follows: "The Republicans continued a sharp assault yesterday on Vice President Al Gore over the veracity of a statement he made last month [about the arthritis drug]." So in just 48 hours, the story had changed from Gore's pathological fantasizing to an alleged Bush-Cheney "assault," which has to be a new record, even for the *Times*. ♦

The Nike Chainsaw Massacre

In the middle of its Olympics ratings fiasco last week, NBC at least got some free publicity by pulling a Nike ad they had run for the first few days of the games. The offending ad featured dishy Olympic distance runner Suzy Favor Hamilton as a classic B-movie scream queen, being pursued by a chainsaw-wielding maniac in a hockey mask. It's an obvious spoof. The Jason/Leatherface knockoff chases Hamilton into the woods, but in her fabulous Nikes, she leaves him gasping for breath.

The reaction from the cranky fringe was swift. Letter-to-the-editor types in Washington and St. Louis described the ad as "truly disgusting and misogynistic" and accused Nike of perpetuating "women as victims of violence!" NBC claims to have received "thousands" of complaints. Even ostensibly sane people found fault. The *Washington Post*'s editorial page said that while the ad may seem funny to the slick (presumably male) execs in Beaverton, "it's not a funny subject, surely not to women who have been or are frightened of becoming victims."

Spoofs, even clever ones, being a minority taste, THE SCRAPBOOK is willing to concede that Nike's judgment may have been less than optimal in

choosing to run the ad during primetime coverage of the Olympics, which have in recent decades been transformed into a quasi-religious spectacle, which must not be mocked!

But still, we feel a collegial duty to point out a couple of things to all the editorialists who swallowed too many solemnity vitamins with their Wheaties last week. *Friday the 13th* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* were not documentaries. Neither were any of the sequels. To the best of THE SCRAPBOOK's knowledge, no women have ever been pursued, much less killed, by chainsaw-wielding men in hockey masks.

Another Nike ad run during the Olympics showed a boy on a skateboard fleeing a sword-swinging gladiator who tries, repeatedly, to decapitate him. This commercial is also spoofing a movie, *Gladiator*. Gladiators were once real, and many men were at one time decapitated by them. Thus far, however, there have been no complaints about this ad.

It's hard to feel bad for Nike in all of this. The super-PC company has long put itself at the service of feminist agitators. Ads this winter in the now-defunct "Ms. Jones" series featured sprinter Marion Jones crusading for equal pay for male and female athletes, presumably in part to deflect attention from the low wage scale in Nike's third world factories. Maybe it isn't so bad that Nike is getting a taste of its own gender demagoguery. ♦

The Underwear Case for Trade with China

On Tuesday of last week, the Senate voted 85-15 to approve China's permanent low-tariff access to U.S. markets (PNTR). With the House having already approved the measure, the way is now clear for China to become a member of the World Trade Organization. Among the "highlights" of the week-long debate in the world's greatest deliberative body were the suggestion made by the ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, that opposition to PNTR was part and parcel of America's long-lived "racial antagonism" toward all things Chinese and Senate Banking Committee Chairman Phil Gramm's bold prediction that once the folks of China "know the joy of wearing cotton underwear made out of Texas and American cotton," there will be no holding back their demands for political and religious freedom.

Nevertheless, and despite the lopsided outcome, the debate was not a total loss. In the face of Beijing's continuing insistence that Taiwan be allowed to join the WTO only as a territory of the mainland, Jon Kyl's threat to offer an amendment to the bill to guarantee Taiwan's admission as a separate entity pried from President Clinton a pledge not to cave in to Beijing's demands and a reaffirmation that it is U.S. policy to insist China and Taiwan become members at the same time.

So a tip of the hat to Sen. Kyl, and thank goodness this didn't require a floor vote and debate. There's only so much silliness we can record on these two pages. ♦

Casual

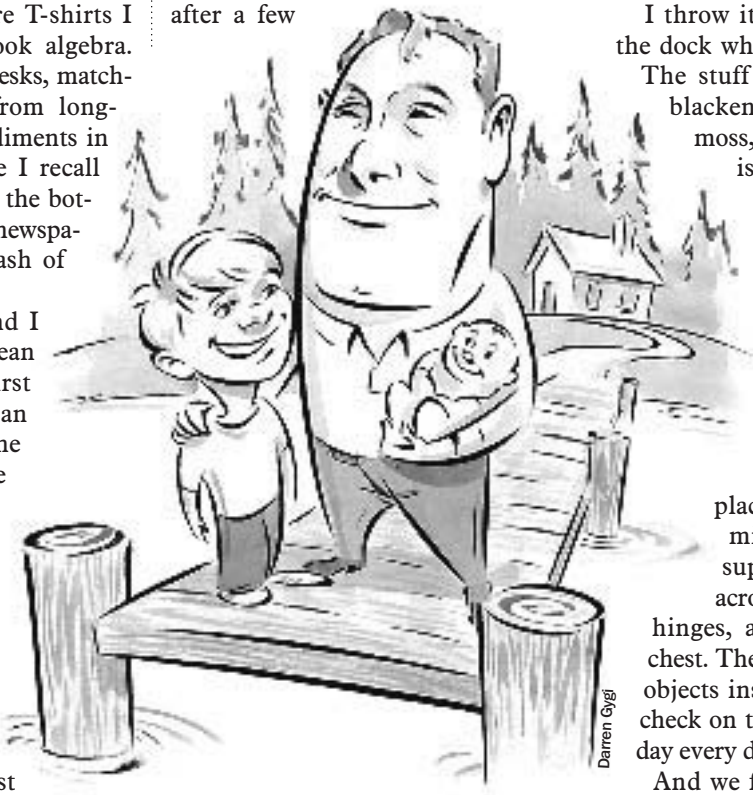
One Man's Treasure

Summer houses are like time capsules. I remember this every June when we go to Maine, to the same place I've gone most of my life. My wife has been going with me every summer since we were in the 10th grade, so it always feels a bit like waking up back in high school when we arrive. In a dresser upstairs there are T-shirts I haven't worn since I took algebra. There are old letters in desks, matchbooks on the mantle from long-defunct restaurants, condiments in the kitchen I'm positive I recall from early childhood. At the bottom of the wood bin are newspapers announcing the crash of the *Challenger*.

This year my wife and I went determined to clean house. One of the first things we found was an answering machine, the outdated kind with the cassette tape and fake wood veneer. Before throwing it away, I played it. There were messages from people I hadn't called back since the Reagan administration. My own voice sounded about 19, which is how old I must have been when I recorded it. It was jarring. I decided to halt the archaeology expedition.

But there turned out to be no escaping unexpected reminders of the passage of time. One afternoon I was wandering around the boathouse looking for something when I found a small pyramid of old Coke bottles arranged on a rafter beam. Must be the kids' bottle collection, I thought to myself. And, I realized a moment later, it was. But not my kids—my parents' kids. These were bottles my brother and I had collected when we were little. Just where we'd left them.

Time seems to move especially fast in Maine, because our routine rarely changes when we're there. In the morning we build sand castles and throw sticks in the water for the dogs. In the afternoon we go swimming. The water is pretty chilly, so the kids usually climb out after a few minutes. They sit on the dock wrapped in towels shivering and watch me go "diving."


Darren Gygi

That's what they call it anyway. The reality is less impressive. I strap on a bright red children's swim mask (once part of a $9.99 "Junior Frogman" set from CVS) and swim around underwater. I must look preposterously dorky. But there's no one around to see it but the kids, and they're too young to be very judgmental about appearances. Plus, they're excited. There's always the chance I'll bring up treasures.

And sometimes I do. Thanks to careless ice fishermen and generations of clumsy people getting in and out of boats, there are quite a few manmade objects on the bottom. One year we found a tackle box that had tumbled unopened out of someone's canoe. This summer I pulled up an ancient-looking bottle with the word "Kaylene-Ol" (whatever that is) embossed on the side. But most of the time what I bring up is just junk: bricks, oarlocks, lost moorings, broken fishing lures, weirdly shaped rocks, unidentifiable hunks of rusted metal, an outboard prop or two, and lots and lots of freshwater oysters.

I throw it all piece by piece onto the dock while the kids yell happily. The stuff is usually gnarled and blackened and covered with moss, but that doesn't diminish its value. They split the loot into even piles and paw through it lovingly, like pieces of eight.

By August this year, the treasure piles had grown too large for the back porch. I cleaned off a shelf in the shed, displacing a decade's worth of mismatched plumbing supplies, hung a board across it with some old strap hinges, and called it a treasure chest. The kids put their cherished objects inside. They came back to check on them six or seven times a day every day until we went home.

And we finally did go home. We spent our last day in Maine as we always do, cleaning and closing up. I came to the shed last. I was about to lock the door when I noticed the shelf with the board across it. Suddenly I felt emotional. Next year, I thought, this place will look exactly the same, because it never changes. But we do. When we come back, the bricks and rocks and hunks of rusted metal will still be here, just where the children left them. I wonder if they'll still consider it treasure.

Tucker Carlson

Correspondence

Evangelical Darling

Andrew Ferguson's article "Christianity, Clinton Style" (Sept. 11) rightly suggests that it was Willow Creek Community Church's type of Christianity that made it easy for Clinton to seduce the 5,000 pastors gathered there in August. What Ferguson overstates, however, is the evangelical loathing of Bill Clinton. He writes, "By the time Clinton left the stage at Willow Creek, his audience of hostile evangelicals was in tears."

While there certainly were critics in the audience, a significant segment of evangelical leadership has already been softened up, or Clintonized, for some time. Many of the rank and file still loathe Clinton, but there is a discernible impulse among certain evangelical leaders to distance themselves from the so-called fundamentalist right on issues like abortion, homosexuality, and other culture-war hot buttons. While they may still oppose abortion, they don't like to get too excited about it and would rather be seen working with liberals and "moderates" than be associated with evangelicals such as Jerry Falwell.

The *Chicago Tribune* reported that at the end of the Hybels-Clinton event, Hybels "put his arm on the president's shoulder and prayed: 'Thank you, God, that you wired him up the way you did.'" In the evangelical culture of celebrity, when one celebrity (Hybels) thanks another celebrity (God) in front of several thousand pastors for the gift of another celebrity (Clinton), it turns him into an evangelical hero and model—his repentance (real or not) making irrelevant his appalling record on social issues and the sickening moral example he set.

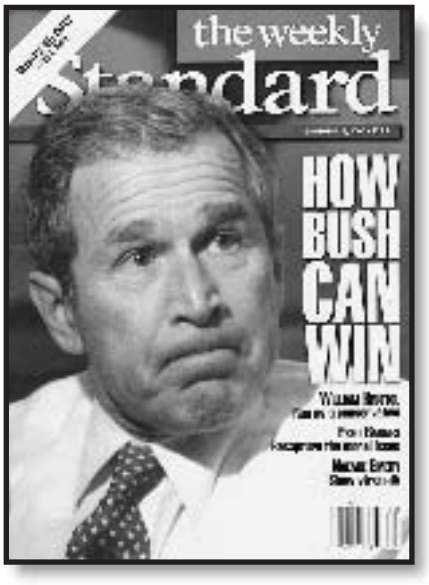
James M. Kushiner
Chicago, IL

Kudos to Andrew Ferguson for his keen insights into how the spinmeister from 1600 Pennsylvania played the kid from Willow Creek like a drum—or maybe it was the other way around.

As an evangelical who lives in the D.C. area and fancies neither Bill Clinton nor Bill Hybels very much, I have long wondered how these two bedfellows really share the covers. Clearly Bill used Bill. And Bill didn't mind being used because he thought he was actually using Bill at the same time. (I'll leave it up to readers to fill in the last names.)

I had never attended a leadership conference at Willow Creek, but I was scheduled to attend the conference in August. Airline troubles kept me away and I should thank them. As I watched part of the C-SPAN tape of the Willow Creek meeting I soon realized that I was watching a Chicago slow pitch softball game.

Nothing I saw that day rang true. As an evangelical who believes that we are



champions of God's revealed truth, I am at times deeply concerned that we are so easily taken in by style and appearance and a desire to be successful rather than faithful. Perhaps some of the tears that day were from evangelicals who were as sad as I was with what I saw.

Bob Wenz
Derwood, MD

Helping Bush Win

While I agree with parts of William Kristol's "How Bush Can Win," there are other parts with which I strongly disagree (Sept. 18). First, when Kristol compares Congress to the presidency, he should remember that congressional elections are very localized events. Although at times local congressional elections are decided on national issues, more often than not they are decided on issues specific to the congressional district being contested.

Second, while I won't argue that party and ideological labels are no longer relevant, they are clearly less relevant in the current political environment than they were during the Cold War. Governor Bush must clearly articulate his position on a host of issues being debated, but he can't assume that simply by labeling Gore a liberal, or even a leftist, the voters will understand where he stands, or what he would do regarding a specific issue. Unfortunately, because of Bush's seeming inarticulateness, which is perceived by many as a lack of understanding about the issues, he is having a real problem drawing distinctions between his positions and Gore's.

Third, Bush must go on the offensive on all fronts, following the advice of a famous Navy admiral: "Damn the torpedoes, go ahead!"

Gary Casteel
Jefferson City, TN

The Ties That Bind

Fred Barnes is right when he urges Gov. Bush to link Al Gore to Bill Clinton once again ("Relinking Gore to Clinton," Sept. 18). As long as the Bush campaign fails to draw a distinction between Sen. Lieberman prior to August and Sen. Lieberman the vice-presidential candidate, the senator serves as a shield or vaccine against Clinton. Once Lieberman must defend his about face on significant issues, he can no longer defend his boss.

What about an ad showing Lieberman on the Senate floor decrying the president's behavior and then cutting away to the post-impeachment celebration with the vice president proclaiming his boss one of our greatest presidents? Nothing subliminal about that, but it would remind the voters that there is (or was) a difference between the two men running on the Democratic ticket.

David Gerstman
Baltimore, MD

Correspondence

Fred Barnes suggests that a key strategy of the Bush campaign should be to relink Gore to Clinton, since many swing voters would like to continue Clinton's policies without Clinton's morality. While I almost always agree with Barnes's arguments, this time I find them misdirected.

Regarding the Clinton-Gore relationship, the campaign has two fundamental choices. First, they can tie Gore closer to Clinton, to remind voters that they don't like Clinton personally and thus should not like Gore. The downside is that this takes time away from dealing with whether Gore's policy proposals are consistent with Clinton's and are likely to bring about continuing prosperity.

Second, they can try to disassociate Gore from the positive Clinton economic results; to say that of the two candidates, only one, Bush, is likely to continue the same economic results. The downside, of course, is that it weakens the tie between Gore's shaky morality and Clinton's abhorrent behavior. The Bush campaign, which always had a small needle to thread, has not taken a consistent path here and thus has achieved neither objective.

It will be difficult to convince the average voter that George Bush, unlike every single other politician they can think of, is sufficiently more moral than Gore that they should choose between the two based on morality. A strategy that focused more consistently on the fact that Gore is a throwback to policies that Clinton, the Republican party, and the American people have long ago discarded, that his instinctive reliance on purely governmental solutions to problems is a mistake, and that his extreme positions in the recent past bring into question what he would really do if elected, would be a far more fruitful approach to the remaining weeks of the campaign.

Daniel G. Mintz
North Bethesda, MD

Long Live Rock

Daniel Wattenberg's lengthy review of Nadine Cohodas's *Spinning Blues Into Gold* (Sept. 11) was terrific because it was about more than just the Chess brothers. It conveyed a real feel for why rock 'n' roll happened—and deserved to. Hopefully, the review will steer Weekly Standard readers to classic powerhouse books on rock's blues, R&B, and country roots, like Peter Guralnick's *Lost Highway*, Arnold Shaw's *Honkers and Shouters*, and Charlie Gillett's *The Sound of the City*.

The last paragraph of Wattenberg's review speaks volumes about why so many conservatives seem comfortable talking only to each other. Unable to grasp why rock (in one form or another) overwhelmingly has resonated with Americans, they blame the liberal order and rock for "coarsening" our culture. The loss is theirs, not ours.

Carl F. Horowitz
Ashburn, VA

A Bastardized Interview?

Having been interviewed by Ira Carnahan at length for his article, "The Rise of 'Bastard Nation,'" I was disappointed to find little of what we discussed appear in the final article (Sept. 11). Instead of recounting my views on the right of adopted adults to access their own public records, Carnahan lifted old, out-of-context quotes from *alt.adoption*, an Internet newsgroup known for its bombast, bluster, and hyperbole, to characterize me as some sort of disturbed mother-hater out to overthrow the American way of life.

For the record, I'm a registered Republican. In fact, my Republican roots go back to my Garrisonian great-great-grandfather, a station master on the Underground Railroad. My grandfather and great-grandfather on the other side of the family were friends of William McKinley, Mark Hanna, James Grant, and Myron T. Herrick, and often played host to them in their homes. My mother worked for Wendell Wilkie. My introduction to politics came in 1947 when my dad pinned a Dewey button on me and forever changed my life. I'm simply carrying on the family tradition of Republican social responsibility.

Ultimately, one must ask who the real radical is here: the big-bucks adoption industry lobby, led by the well-financed National Council for Adoption, who stigmatize adoptees in the United States by promoting shame and subverting the free flow of public records; or those like Bastard Nation and me, who believe in equal treatment under the law and the right to own our public records just like the non-adopted? I think the answer is clear. The government should not be in the business of laundering the identities of the some 6 million adopted people in the U.S. today. Adoptees aren't a state secret, and adoption isn't a ticket into the Witness Protection Program. Open records are a matter of simple justice and dignity.

Marley Elizabeth Greiner
Executive Chair, Bastard Nation
Columbus, OH

Ira Carnahan responds: Greiner says I used "old, out-of-context quotes." Nonsense. Greiner was denouncing mothers as "breeders" and signing her Internet postings "by all means necessary" at the very time I was writing the article. When I asked in our interview why she calls mothers "breeders," she said, "I don't like parents. That's just me personally, and I have to stop that. It gets me in trouble."

Greiner also says I failed to report her views on opening adoption records. In fact, I reported at length the views and statements of Bastard Nation, which Greiner founded and now leads.

Deliciously Funny

The last few years have, politically speaking, been a bit disorienting to fact as well as opinion. The Weekly Standard has helped. Several weeks ago my disorientation was aggravated by the convention in Los Angeles at which it seemed we might move to the bright sunlit uplands of a cure for insomnia.

Then I read Joseph Epstein's article on dining and "*schwantz de boeuf*" ("Eating Out," Aug. 14), and I have been laughing ever since. Many thanks to The Weekly Standard and to Epstein for the funniest single line I have read in many years.

David W. Meltzer
Dallas, TX

the weekly Standard

The Era of Small Government Is Over

Conservatives are gloomy: Congressional Republicans seem to be losing yet another budget battle to Bill Clinton. The president vetoed their tax cut and paid no political price. So the Republicans turned around and adopted his priorities. Instead of insisting on a major tax cut, they are proposing that 90 percent of the Fiscal Year 2001 budget surplus be reserved to pay down the debt. Sounds like the Gore campaign.

And so begins a little ritual that always marks this time of year, as regular as the World Series or the turning of the leaves. As Republicans cave, conservatives moan and shake their heads: If only our leaders weren't so gutless. . . . If only we had leaders who would stand on principle. . . . If only the Democrats weren't such demagogues. . . . Then we could really start transforming government.

Well, maybe it's time to take a step back from the Republicans' annual budget retreat and its rituals. Because when you do, it is hard to avoid some uncomfortable facts. For the first time since the recession of 1991, a plurality of Americans seems to think government should do more to solve the nation's problems. Republican pollster Linda DiVall's American Viewpoint survey this month indicated that 46 percent of Americans want government to do more, whereas 40 percent answered that government was already doing too much. That's striking, because in the past most Americans have had a sense that government was overburdened, even while they may have wanted more government intervention in specific areas.

When you look at the poll results issue by issue, it doesn't get any better for small-government conservatism. A poll commissioned by the Kennedy School, the Kaiser Family Foundation, and NPR found that, not surprisingly, 88 percent of registered Democrats want government to do more to ensure access to affordable health care. But it also found that 53 percent of Republicans want government to be more active in that area. In eight separate issue areas, even Republican voters showed a surprising taste for government activism.

That's why, in survey after survey of this presidential campaign, Democrats have the advantage on the issues. They have about a 15-point lead on Social Security and education, a 25-point lead on health care, and they've even opened up a slight lead on the economy, an issue on which Republicans have often had an advantage.

The fact is, the world is changing in ways that make life much more difficult for Republicans. The public still trusts Republicans to do a better job handling foreign affairs, but since the end of the Cold War those concerns have lost their salience, while Democratic issues like education and health care have gained.

More fundamentally, government no longer seems as much of a menace. In the 1970s, it was easy to see that high taxes and government regulation stifled growth. But now, with the economy, the IRS, and the EPA all booming, it is harder to make that case. Conservatives have also been victimized by their successes. When liberal mayors like New York's David Dinkins were running big cities and crime was out of control, then government did seem hapless. But when the likes of Rudy Giuliani cut crime, suddenly it occurs to people that positive government action can produce real improvements.

The biggest such success has been welfare reform. America's old welfare system—which subsidized people who weren't even looking for work, which encouraged people to jump on the rolls—had a profound effect on the American psyche. It fed the notion that government was a big, ineffective, corrosive force. But now that welfare has been successfully reformed, that notion is losing currency. Moreover, as James Taranto pointed out in a perceptive *Wall Street Journal* essay, welfare reform has "nullified the underclass . . . as a political issue." Al Gore talks a lot about the middle class, but unlike past Democratic candidates he doesn't talk about the non-working poor. He never mentions the homeless.

So the Democrats no longer seem the party of the handout, but almost the party of the work ethic. In short, in the 1980s, with communism still around, with socialism still on top in Europe, and welfare state liberalism still dominating the Democratic party, Americans did have a sense that out-of-control government was a big problem. But today, most people don't seem to see government as a major threat to their well-being. Instead, it's the vast impersonal forces of technological change, economic globalization, and a careening culture that appear most threat-

ening. It seems that many voters are looking for an effective government that will be on their side as they try to shape their lives amidst these forces.

Is all this a disaster for conservatives and Republicans? It could be. If your notion of conservatism is that government should always just get out of the way, then you may have to prepare yourself for some time in the political wilderness. But conservatism has never just been about getting government out of the way. It has been about enhancing American greatness and helping American citizens lead decent and self-governing lives. And it is possible to use government in a limited but energetic way to advance these conservative ends. There can be a governing conservatism, not just a protest conservatism, which would reform government so that it is strong and effective where appropriate, but not stifling or morally corrosive.

One of the people who have understood this is George W. Bush. As he said in a speech last week, "I do not believe government is the enemy—but I do not believe it is always the answer. At its best, it can help people find the tools they need to build for themselves. At its best, it gives options, not orders. At its best, government can help us live our lives—but it can never run them." That is a start at developing the language of the future of the GOP.

Governor Bush is able to run a competitive race in this difficult political climate in part because he has modernized the party's approach to governance, as have so many of the Republican governors. For America is at once a conservative country and a progressive country. It is conservative in that its people adhere to more-or-less conservative moral principles with respect to the family, self-reliance, and the like. But Americans are progressive in the sense that they also believe in banding together for great leaps into the future. They believe in taking action to control their own destiny.

Whether George Bush wins or loses—and we hope he wins—American conservatives are going to have to engage in a period of fundamental rethinking to adapt to the post-Cold War, post-welfare-reform era. Conservatives will have to continue the creative destruction that George Bush and others have started, dropping some old ideas (already term limits have fallen by the wayside) and embracing new ways of achieving old ends. The issue map now favors the Democrats, which means that when they begin their campaigns they have a downhill path. Conservative Republicans have an uphill path. It doesn't always have to be that way.

—David Brooks, for the Editors

A Kinder, Gentler Bush Offensive

If George W. Bush were a warrior, he'd be a happy warrior. **BY FRED BARNES**

Nashville

WHEN AL GORE suddenly urged President Clinton to open up the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, George W. Bush was rapid in responding. He digressed from a speech on Social Security reform at a Cleveland factory on September 21 to announce that Gore was at it again, flip-flopping and pandering. Only last February, Gore had strongly opposed using the reserve to ease gasoline prices. And two weeks ago, Treasury secretary Larry Summers had sent the White House a memo saying it would be "a major policy mistake" to tap the reserve. Now, Gore has reversed himself just as Election Day nears, Bush noted. "Strategic reserves should not be used for short-term political gain at the cost of long-term national security," he said. Then, after listing what he'd do to trim gasoline prices, Bush returned to the subject at hand and talked crisply about Social Security.

The Cleveland episode is a product of the new, improved Bush campaign. Indeed, it showcased Bush's effectiveness as a campaigner. He is quick off the mark, seizing opportunities to zing Gore. When the chance arose to point up Gore's character problem—"This guy will say anything," Bush says—he jumped at it. And he's also better at marketing his issues: taxes, Medicare and Social Security, the military, education. He says tax cuts are "the hardest sell." But when he appeared on Regis Philbin's chat show the morning of the Cleveland speech, he prompted Wisconsin truck driver Susan Hawk, from the *Survivor* TV series, to whoop enthusiastically about the tax cut she'd get in a Bush administration.

There is something missing, however, in the freshly invigorated Bush campaign: the killer instinct. Yes, the Bush TV ads are tougher, but Bush himself isn't. He's sharper, instantly likable, less diffuse, and more energetic. But he doesn't act as if he's gone to war with Gore. Even when he turns negative, he's softly negative, never harsh. And after spending an hour interviewing Bush last week—as he ate lunch on a flight from Cleveland to Nashville—I'm persuaded he'll never be as fierce and relentless as some Republicans would like.

Why not? No doubt polls and focus groups play a role here. They suggest, in 2000 anyway, that voters don't cotton to strident and confrontational candidates. It's clear, too, that Bush's two successful campaigns for governor have shaped his style. He won both while remaining genial. But the main reason he wants to campaign that way again, I'm convinced, is that that's the way he is. He's hardly a gentle soul. But he doesn't like political hardball or angry confrontation. His upbringing and his Christian faith have a lot to do with this. Bush spontaneously began talking to me about his faith. "My life is so intense these days that my faith becomes magnified," he said. "I've never felt more comfortable in my faith. It keeps things in perspective."

All this prevents Bush from getting ferocious in his campaign barbs. On Gore's oil reversal, he scarcely mentioned the egregious coddling of OPEC by the Clinton-Gore administration. Instead, he promised to work with "friends and allies in OPEC to assure greater stability in energy markets." An adviser said this was "shorthand" for saying Clinton and Gore are culpable for letting Mexico, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia gouge American consumers, but I doubt if anyone in Cleveland got the point.

When I asked Bush why he hadn't hit harder, he insisted he'd been "much more outspoken" on other occasions. What he'd said then was that, as president, he'd "remind some folks overseas who was by their side when they needed us." He'd also advocated "good strong diplomacy." Though Bush didn't say so, I suspect he's bitten his tongue for fear of ruining relations with those countries if he becomes president. In any case, he didn't give Gore the whacking the vice president would have given him if their roles had been reversed.

Nor is Bush ready to go after Gore for the sneering remarks of a Hollywood producer at a Los Angeles fundraiser on September 18, attended by Gore and running mate Joe Lieberman. The producer, Larry David, mocked Bush's religious faith. "Like Bush," David said, "I too found Christ in my forties. He came into my room one night, and I said: 'What, no call? You just pop in?'"

Four days later, Bush said he'd just learned the specifics of what David had said. "My comment is, religious tolerance runs both ways. It's one thing to attack a man's politics. It's another to attack his religion. If you ask for tolerance about a man's religion, you ought to extend it. It ought to be reciprocated." That was as far as Bush went, and his campaign didn't go much farther. They didn't do an obvious thing like organizing a press conference of priests, ministers, and rabbis to denounce the Democrats.

What's slightly odd about this mild-in-the-extreme response is that Bush was criticized in the Republican primaries when a supporter of his attacked John McCain (for allegedly abandoning the cause of veterans) at a Bush press conference. Not only did McCain hold Bush responsible, so did

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the media. This time, with the shoe on the other foot, Bush operatives assumed the press wouldn't be interested. "It's always harder for Republicans," says Ari Fleischer, Bush's deputy spokesman. True, but the Bush campaign probably let the press off too easily. It was a case of the campaign reflecting its leader.

When Bush appeared in Nashville at a rally at the Vandyland Ice Cream store, he once more shied away from skewering Gore. He talked about his best issue, a prescription drug benefit under Medicare. Polls show that a Republican National Committee television spot drubbing Gore's version of a drug benefit is working. In Ohio, for instance, tracking by the state party found the ad lured undecided voters to Bush and helped raise his standing on the health care issue. Yet Bush touted his own plan without attacking Gore's on its weak points: a $600 fee, distribution of drugs through a "government-run HMO," an irrevocable decision at age 64 1/2 on whether to enter the program.

Were he a warrior, Bush would surely be called a happy warrior. At any rate, he is cheerful on the stump. He doesn't whine or carp. Despite Gore's surge, he's remained quite optimistic about his chances. He recently asked his chief strategist, Karl Rove, to look at the trajectory of Ronald Reagan's campaign in 1980 and was reassured to hear that Reagan peaked in late October. The same thing happened in his own first race for governor of Texas in 1994.

As he has all year, Bush ends his speeches by citing voters who show him pictures of their kids and plead with him not to let them down. Bush uses this segue into his vow to restore "honor and dignity" to the White House. There's another thing that happens along rope lines that I suspect is an even greater spur to Bush. "They say, 'I'm praying for you,'" Bush says. "It happens a lot. It's so comforting. It's America. It's the strength of America. It's what America is all about." It's also what Bush is all about. And if he is right about the country, he'll win. ♦

Who Pays for the Pill? (I)

The clash between reproductive freedom and religious conscience. BY JOE LOCONTE

AP/Wide World Photos

AFTER an embittered and byzantine debate last July, the Washington, D.C., city council unanimously approved a bill requiring health insurance plans sold in the District to cover contraceptives. Every religious employer in the city—not exempting the National Conference of Catholic Bishops or even churches—would have been required to comply. The bill earned a pocket veto from the mayor, but a version of it is expected to resurface this fall.

It is a sign of things to come. In the last two years, 13 states have begun requiring health policies that cover prescription drugs to add contraception, including abortion-inducing drugs and devices. The laws are forcing employers—such as religious hospitals, schools, and charities—to subsidize practices they find morally offensive. So-called "conscience clause" exemptions are too narrowly written to offer much protection. The dogma of sexual liberation is quietly insinuating itself into the very definition of health insurance.

A noisy and litigious clash of values is inevitable: The right to reproductive freedom, minted during the sexual revolution, is on a collision course with the free exercise of religion, enshrined in the Bill of Rights as the capstone of American liberty. Planned Parenthood president Gloria Feldt calls opposition to contraception mandates "blatant sex discrimination against women." Richard Myers, professor of law at Ave Maria School of Law in Ann Arbor, Mich., demurs: Requiring birth-control coverage "is an assault on religious institutions at their core. It takes away their ability to define themselves and the nature of their operations."

The contest can only intensify. In October 1998, Congress imposed a

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contraception mandate on the health insurance system for federal employees, the first and only time specific benefits have been required in the system's 40-year history. At least a dozen more states are debating similar laws. Last July, Planned Parenthood filed a discrimination lawsuit against the Bartell Drug Company for failing to include birth control in its employees' health plan. If successful, the suit could shake up the entire industry.

The majority of states with mandates include protections for religious groups, but most of these are turning out to be a sham. As the Alan Guttmacher Institute, an affiliate of Planned Parenthood, frankly admits, "the goal is to craft as narrow an exemption as possible." Under California's law—a model for other states—only a "religious employer" can qualify, and only by meeting several criteria: It must (1) make the teaching of religious values its primary purpose, (2) employ primarily persons who share its religious beliefs, and (3) serve persons of the same religious background. That probably limits protection to houses of worship.

Meanwhile, private entities ranging from colleges to health clinics are vulnerable to the regulations. Insurance companies decide who qualifies for an exemption, while state agencies monitor compliance by insurers and HMOs. Critics argue this puts religious freedom at the mercy of bureaucrats. "These are conscience clauses without a conscience," says C. Ben Mitchell, of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. "It's a threat to every religious institution." Catholic Charities of Sacramento already has filed suit against the state of California. Warns executive director Jim Rodgers, "The effect of this new legislation would be to secularize us."

The Catholic Church is at special risk. The 1968 Papal Encyclical "Humanae Vitae" reiterated the church's condemnation of artificial birth control, and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops has told Catholic health care agencies they may not "promote or condone contraceptive practices." Church institutions typically omit contraception coverage for employees. The original D.C. bill, which allowed no exemptions, would have brought every Catholic organization under its purview. Says Sister Carol Keehan, president of D.C.'s Providence Hospital: "We're talking about profound issues that concern life, not what kind of pictures we can hang on the wall."

If mandates like this become universal, they will affect a staggering number of church-based institutions. Nationwide there are over 21,000 religious schools, plus hundreds of seminaries and religious colleges and universities. Catholic Charities supports 165 diocesan agencies, while nearly 1,000 Catholic hospitals and nursing facilities provide about 16 percent of all hospital beds. The National Association of Evangelicals boasts a member list of over 5,000 religious nonprofits. To that must be added countless doctors, pharmacists, and assorted individual employers who personally oppose birth control and abortifacients.

The majority of states with mandates include protections for religious groups, but most of these are turning out to be a sham.

Catholic leaders have fought the laws in state capitols and helped craft more expansive conscience clauses in places like Maryland and Connecticut. But they have received little help. Pro-life groups, focusing on the fight against abortion, avoid the contraception debate. Rank-and-file Catholics largely disregard church teaching on birth control, while evangelical Christians mostly fail to address the issue.

"Our people don't even think about it," admits Richard Cizik, vice president of governmental affairs for the National Association of Evangelicals. "They don't fully realize the long-term agenda." Michael O'Dea, executive director of the Christus Medicus Foundation, which helps Catholic archdioceses set up health insurance plans, agrees. He sees widespread confusion and complacency about health care policies. "It's routine now for insurance companies to cover contraception, sterilization, and abortion," he says. "Many Catholic organizations don't really know what they're subsidizing." Says Myers of Ave Maria Law School, "This stuff is creeping in through the back door."

Political pressures to universalize abortion coverage, however, could easily spark a backlash. Pro-life activists note growing demands on health insurers to cover abortion-inducing drugs such as the "morning after" pill, already available by prescription, and RU-486, still awaiting federal approval. At the same time, frustration deepens with government tax policies that favor work-based insurance, making it burdensome for families to buy alternative plans that uphold their moral beliefs.

Oddly, both sides in this debate see themselves as defending freedom against heavy-handed social engineers. Says Richard Doerflinger, of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, "It's as if we were just arms of the government. It's the idea that there is no such thing as private health care or private conscience." On the contrary, insist pro-choice leaders, employers have no right to impose a religious restriction on their workers' health insurance. "Whose conscience counts?" asked Gloria Feldt on a recent *Crossfire*. "What about the conscience of the individual who feels that it's very important to plan and space having children until you're ready to take care of them?"

Never mind that inexpensive birth control is available at the corner pharmacy. For many pro-choicers, anything that reduces the convenience of contraception or abortion is a transgression against women. Planned Parenthood, for example, has launched

an effort to prevent mergers between Catholic and secular hospitals—even when they are the only means of keeping facilities open. As the organization's "MergerWatch" director Lois Uttley warned in *Redbook*, "This is one of the most serious threats to women's reproductive health care today."

Threats abound, to be sure, but not from organized religion. Pro-choice activists claim a social concern to make health services available to women, particularly the poor. Yet they are alienating the very health care providers who do the most to reach the neediest—religious hospitals, clinics, charities, and shelters. They demand these agencies offer services without discrimination, while they themselves discriminate against groups whose belief in God sustains their caregiving. They welcome religious duty as long as it serves their notion of the public good, even as they advance policies that confine faith to a private ghetto.

"The mask of choice is falling off," says Susan Orr, a policy expert with the Family Research Council. "It's not about choice. It's not about health care. It's about making everyone collaborators with the culture of death." A little hyperbolic? Perhaps, but it's no foible to be troubled when deeply held beliefs are publicly disparaged. It is no whimsy to worry when people are forced to bankroll whatever reproductive practices are in vogue—today chemical abortion, tomorrow cloning.

And tomorrow is fast approaching. In June, the American Medical Association considered a plan that would have required hospitals receiving federal money—virtually all hospitals—to offer "a full range" of reproductive services, including abortion. It took the unprecedented intervention of Cardinal Francis George of Chicago to persuade AMA delegates to defeat the measure. In August, the National Institutes of Health approved federal funding for research on human embryos. For anyone still serious about bedrock American notions of freedom, it would be foolhardy not to ask where all this leads. ♦

Who Pays for the Pill? (II)

The bogus crusade against "sex discrimination" in health insurance.

BY IRA CARNAHAN

FOR THE PAST COUPLE of months, Planned Parenthood has been beating the PR drums on behalf of a class-action suit it has filed against Bartell Drug, a Seattle-based chain that doesn't cover contraceptives in its health plan. The "historic lawsuit," as *People* magazine dubs it, argues that the policy of many companies not to reimburse their employees' birth control expenses is an outrageous double standard that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. "It is sex discrimination when male employees get their basic health care needs covered by insurance, but women are forced to pay for theirs," declares Planned Parenthood president Gloria Feldt.

Planned Parenthood and its backers make two key claims. The first is that women of child-bearing age pay far more in out-of-pocket medical expenses than do men. The second is that covering contraceptives in health plans wouldn't cost employers much—in fact, it would actually save them money by reducing the number of women who become pregnant.

Let's start with the claim that women pay much more than men. The statistic that Planned Parenthood invariably cites—and journalists report—is that women pay 68 percent more out of pocket for their health care than men. This makes it sound as if insurance is a lousy deal for women.

But that's hardly the case. While women do pay more out of pocket, they also spend more on health care—67 percent more, according to a 1994 study by the Women's Research & Education Institute (WREI), on which Planned Parenthood relies for its out-of-pocket figure. Employers, then, actually pay far more to cover the health expenses of women employees. WREI estimates the average annual health expenditure for women ages 15-44 at $2,123, while the average expenditure for men is $1,272. Out-of-pocket spending for women averages $573 a year, while for men it's $342.

Thus, while the average woman spends substantially more each year on health care than the average man, most of that extra spending is paid for by her private insurance or Medicaid. This means that it is women (who are also more likely than men to have health insurance in the first place) who benefit disproportionately from our health insurance system. The idea that insurance plans discriminate against them is the opposite of the truth.

Also dubious, though harder to disprove, is Planned Parenthood's suggestion that employers and health insurers are making a big mistake by not covering contraceptives, because paying for the medical care of a pregnant woman is far more costly. This argument is unconvincing. It assumes that some significant percentage of women who hold jobs and have private insurance get pregnant simply because their health plan doesn't pay for contraception. It further assumes that employers fail to recognize this and so pass up easy savings on health expenses—savings that employers aren't financially savvy enough to discern but that the political activists at Planned Parenthood are.

The biggest problem with Planned Parenthood's campaign, though, isn't the weak evidence that employers are foolishly discriminating against women. It's that requiring contraceptives to be insured subverts the pur-

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pose of insurance, which is to cover unpredictable expenses that would otherwise cause great hardship.

A monthly bill of $25 or $30 for birth control pills simply doesn't fit into that category. And, so long as the woman who's using contraception is married, as is the drug company employee named in Planned Parenthood's suit, the expense is effectively being borne by a man and woman in any case, so it's hardly discriminatory.

But, many people figure, why not require health plans to cover birth control anyway? Surely there's no harm. But if consumers don't pay for contraceptives directly, they'll be less sensitive to price. And if they're less sensitive to price, prices will eventually go up. This isn't mere speculation. Economists agree that one of the big reasons the cost of health care in the United States is so high is that most people don't pay their expenses directly. Instead, insurers pay. As a result, people don't pay much attention to price. This isn't a problem that is limited to health insurance, but one that arises whenever something is insured.

In some cases, of course, insurance is worth it. We don't want people forced to pay for heart transplants out of pocket, even if knowing they might have to would lead them to eat better, exercise more, and do other things that make a heart transplant less likely. But in plenty of other cases—like contraceptives—the fact that insurance lowers people's sensitivity to price is something we ought to worry about.

Or is it? One could argue, after all, that requiring insurance coverage of contraceptives would actually help consumers, because big insurers wield more market power than do consumers. But the market for birth control is already competitive on the producer side. And while a buyer monopoly might lower prices in the short run, over time it would erode incentives for manufacturers to invest and bring new products to market.

There is nothing historic about Planned Parenthood's birth control lawsuit. Much the opposite: It's just another in a long line of efforts by people to get something for nothing. ♦

Inspecting the Throne Room

It's the ultimate inside-the-Beltway perk.

BY WOODY WEST

Darren Gygi

STATUS IS the shiniest currency among those who pull the oars of governance in Washington. Their salaries may be a hoot to the Fast Eddies of Wall Street and risible to freshly IPO'd software wizards. The political appointees and the permanent departmental helots in the nation's capital, however, find compensation in the perks that define eminence.

To have access to a helicopter or jet is close to beatitude; to be assigned a car and driver is almost as good as it gets. The spaciousness of one's office in the Department of DitDat and DooDah signifies one's worth to the commonweal. Where one is seen lunching, and with whom, and to which parties one is invited at which Georgetown home are definitely coin of this realm—glory itself if the event is noted by the newspapers.

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A more recent and envied indicator of status is to be assigned a security detail—stern young men and women so loaded with armament and communications electronics that they are at risk in a thunderstorm. There are now 42 high and higher bosses at 31 federal agencies (not counting the president, vice president, and secretary of state) who surround themselves with gun-toting guardians, according to a study by the General Accounting Office. Their annual pricetag is nearly $30 million, in part because the big guys (and big gals, to be sure) insist that their bodyguards accompany them when traveling—and of course federal officials dig being on the road. At a Senate hearing this summer, a federal official justified the protection by noting that there recently was a cream-pie attack on agriculture secretary Dan Glickman. QED?

But now there is apparently a potential new Washington status symbol, one that could see-and-raise even

a personal security detail. This innovation became public knowledge the way much does along the Potomac—through members of the bureaucracy displeased with their plows and furrows.

A band of employees (a clamor of bureaucrats?) at the Environmental Protection Agency is complaining of what a news report labels "rampant bias." Lest one immediately think that the bias is against sound science and sensible evaluation of ecological threat, the complaint rather is over racial and sexual bias—which is not to be taken lightly, to be sure. This summer a senior manager at EPA was awarded $600,000 in federal court after what she called years of harassment.

During a recent rally of other disgruntled workers, the somewhat delicate new symbol of Washington status was disclosed—it involves what Don Quixote's sidekick, Sancho Panza, described as doing that which no one else can do for you. One of the aggrieved EPAers told of being ordered to clean a toilet during an EPA "event" in North Carolina; she said she was among six agency employees staying at a lodge on a business trip. She was the only black employee and asserts that she was singled out to clean the toilet "in anticipation of the arrival of EPA Administrator Carol M. Browner," according to a news story.

If one attracted a superior's baleful eye, it was possible to clean toilets for a good many sunrises.

"She [Miss Browner] does not use the toilet behind anyone else," the environment specialist quoted her supervisor as saying. Well. Miss Browner, who has spent her career energetically protecting us from ourselves, quickly had a denial issued: Such a protocol was not any part of her modus operandi, vivendi, or predilection, and if the incident occurred it was due to an excessively zealous agency official. Courtiers, of course, are jealous protectors of the perks of their dukes and duchesses, or what they think would please them—and certainly the denial should be regarded with the credence that a Washington denial deserves. The EPA administrator's spokesman was eloquent about how arduously Miss Browner has labored to make her agency an exemplar of non-discrimination and diversity.

Whatever the validity of the other complaints of bias by EPA workers—arbitrary performance evaluations, retaliation for complaining about unfair working conditions, unequal promotions standards—the alleged North Carolina affair is out of the ordinary. It is unclear on the face of it, however, that racial bias is an unarguable deduction. Perhaps the offended employee was the junior member of the traveling delegation, or possibly looked to be the most competent of the six bureaucrats, or simply failed to make herself scarce when the supervisor wanted to tidy up the premises.

Those who have been government functionaries in uniform will be familiar with the EPA employee's predicament. In the naval service it is called "Captain of the Head"—a "head" being the sea-going designation for a toilet. If one attracted a superior's baleful eye or was not inconspicuous when chores were assigned, it was possible to clean toilets for a good many sunrises. It was accepted as the way the G.I. world worked.

But of course such archaic fatalism cannot be translated into the ethos of public service and Washington folkways. There is murmuring among the disaffected at EPA of a class-action lawsuit. Presumably there will be a full airing of the toilet allegations when and if the battalions of lawyers for the aggrieved get to cruising speed.

Until this round of sue-the-feds at EPA is resolved, though, the new perk probably will be in abeyance. But it does have an understated aura of superiority, doesn't it, for a Washington Bigfoot. ♦

The Lech Walesa of China?

Chinese exile Han Dongfang was always an idealist. Can he lead a movement for freedom in China?

By David Aikman

Hong Kong

The office, on the eighth floor of a slightly déclassé building here, is decorated in classic dissident utilitarian: white walls, water coolers, and styrofoam coffee cups democratically dispersed among desktop computers and rent-an-office bookshelves and collapsible tables. But the man who presides here is one of natural distinction, a tall, handsome Chinese who speaks excellent English and emphasizes his points with long-fingered hands. He is Han Dongfang, 37, founder and editor of the *China Labor Bulletin*, a broadcaster on Radio Free Asia, and potentially someday the Lech Walesa of China.

Like Walesa, Han stumbled more or less by accident onto a stage where labor unrest and sudden, exhilarating hopes for change were unfolding, only to end abruptly in political repression. A railroad worker, he was galvanized into activism on behalf of workers' rights by the Tiananmen Square democracy protest in 1989, which landed him on China's most-wanted list. Insisting he'd done nothing wrong, he turned himself in to the authorities and spent nearly two years in prison. Unlike Walesa, whose house arrest after the Communist government of Poland declared martial law in 1981 was relatively benign, Han paid a physical price for his views: tuberculosis and the loss of a lung. Today, Han looks healthy and vigorous, though he remains vulnerable to arrest any time the Chinese authorities decide he is inconvenient.

Up until 1989, Han's life was unexceptional. Born in 1963 in Shanxi province to a couple who divorced when he was young, he moved to Beijing with his mother to complete his secondary school. Neither teachers nor peers let him forget his provincial origins. But he was hugely idealistic. At school, he was enraptured by tales of Lei Feng, a People's Liberation Army soldier whose alleged selfless dedication to the cause of the people transformed him, with help from Mao's propagandists, into a paragon of Communist virtue. At 17, Han joined the People's Armed Police, a law-enforcement wing of the People's Liberation Army. "I was looking for my dream," he says today. "I wanted to be a hero, like Lei Feng." Within months, his leadership qualities had attracted the attention of his superiors, who promoted him to section commander, a one-in-a-thousand slot for a new recruit.

But the idealism wouldn't leave him. He was shocked that officers dined on meat and alcohol while the enlisted ranks subsisted on coarse dumplings. "I was caught between the people in my tent and my boss," he recalls. "I began to choose my heart." This led to a quarrel with his section commander, who tore up Han's Communist party application before his eyes. Han's reputation for integrity spread among the soldiers. During his post-Tiananmen imprisonment, a prison guard would approach him and say he knew Han from his military days and promise to get him anything he needed.

After three years in the army, Han found a six-month job as a librarian at Beijing Teacher's University (an odd parallel to the career of Mao Zedong, who spent six months as a librarian at Peking University in 1918). Han read widely, from the Greek classics to Freud. But he was restless and objected to being told by fellow librarians not to be in such a hurry to do his job. The customers could wait, they said. Han's next job was as a railroad worker accompanying refrigerated trains across China. Then one day in late April 1989, riding through Beijing on a bus, he and his wife noticed that students had gathered in Tiananmen Square. "Come on," his wife told him, "let's go and listen."

They did, and Han was entranced. "Suddenly, I couldn't pull myself away," he recalls. "I began to talk to people" in the square, workers with serious complaints

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David Aikman

Han Donfang, editor of China Labor Bulletin, *in Hong Kong*

about their pay and working conditions. The student demonstrators, somewhat arrogantly seeking to preserve the "pure" democratic nature of their discussions, had banished the workers to a corner of Tiananmen Square. "I didn't even know what the word 'democracy' meant before then," says Han. What he did know was the situation of workers, and, amid the heady discussions of China's future that April and May, he wanted to change things. He and a handful of others founded the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation, a makeshift umbrella group that attracted 20,000 members in a matter of days. When the tanks roared into Tiananmen Square on the night of June 3, Han was asleep and didn't at first grasp what was happening. Complete strangers half-dragged him away from the shooting. He was shocked by what they said: "Han Dongfang, you are not the same as other people. In the future, our country will need such a leader as you. We need a Chinese Walesa. Other people can die, we can all die, but you must not die."

Han set out to bicycle around China, naively thinking he might take a sabbatical away from the turmoil. From that brief period, he remembers a Lei Feng moment. "I went to lie down by a river," he says with a laugh. "The first thing that came into my mind was that the Communist heroes I'd heard about died with dignity." He was arrested within weeks. In prison, he had something of an epiphany. "I was so happy. It was my dream. When we were in school reading the stories of the Communist heroes, I was disappointed that we would never get the chance to be like them. When the bright lights came on [and my interrogation got serious], I was very proud."

Because he refused to admit wrongdoing, Han was pushed into a tiny cell crammed with 20 prisoners racked with tuberculosis and hepatitis. He soon contracted tuberculosis; his weight and physical strength dropped precipitously. He was finally released when the authorities judged him near death. Pressure from international human rights agencies finally enabled him to leave for the United States for medical treatment in 1992. The following year, his diseased right lung was removed at Columbia Medical Center in New York.

Other Chinese dissidents might have applied for political asylum and stayed in the United States to await the eventual demise of the current regime. But Han went back to China in August 1993, through Hong Kong, determined to carry on the struggle for workers' rights. Furious at the reappearance of the troublemaker, the Public Security Bureau arrested him in a Guangzhou hotel, transported him under guard to the Hong Kong border, and pushed him across. "People like you have no right to call yourselves Chinese," the Chinese police told him.

Han has stayed in Hong Kong, despite its transfer from British to Chinese rule in 1997. His *China Labor Bulletin*, founded in 1993, documents China's appalling labor conditions, and since 1997 he has broadcast regularly into China on Radio Free Asia. He announces his phone number on the air, and workers and officials from all over China phone him anonymously to vent their grievances. When callers consent, Han broadcasts their calls back into China. His is one of the most popular voices on the radio.

For Han, workers' rights are a core ingredient of democracy in China. He shows no personal rancor or desire for revenge against his Communist tormentors. Indeed, in seeking to bring change, he is deeply concerned to avoid triggering a revolutionary explosion. "People call me, and I [broadcast] what they say," he explains. "Some people call to say, 'You are the last Communist in China, because you use the term "working class."' But I don't believe in communism anymore. I am a socialist and a trade unionist, and I believe in God."

It's a powerful and potentially combustible mixture, but in Han's view not contradictory. He is not opposed to capitalism for its own sake, only to the extreme

harshness of some of its manifestations in China. Throughout the country, the regime's official labor unions are toothless instruments of the party, and workers are prohibited from organizing on their own initiative. Routinely, moreover, the labor laws go unenforced because officials accept bribes from businessmen, both Chinese and foreign. "People have always said foreign investment is the hope of China," Han has written. "This is our bridge to the world. But what comes across the bridge are 12-hour shifts, seven-day workweeks, and only two trips to the bathroom a day." When China's workers "begin to understand and to use equal negotiations to struggle to protect their own rights and interests," he predicts, "it will be inevitable that Chinese society will have properly begun an orderly process towards democratization."

Han says he gets upset when he hears that workers anywhere in China have been demonstrating or disrupting traffic. "Seven years ago I would have said that this is a chance to overthrow the Communist party," he explains. "But now I see that to make people more angry, to make them hate more, is not a way to solve problems. This is Mao's idea. We should change ideas."

Han's own ideas were powerfully affected during his few months in New Jersey in 1993 before and after his lung operation. He became a Christian and was baptized in a Protestant Chinese Christian church. "I believe that the power of God comes from forgiveness and love," he says. "I feel a real release from hatred. In religion, God works a miracle in each person. I have found the reason for my life from my faith." Though Han is guarded about his beliefs and seldom discusses them publicly, they seem to have permeated his approach to political change in China. He is confident about the long term but deeply worried about national chaos in the short term, foreseeing worker riots and demonstrations that could lead to nationwide bloodshed. "I try to tell the Communists," he says with a certain weary exasperation, "'You are going to lose power any day. Only you, Communist leaders, can stop this from happening.'"

Han acknowledges that there is no Chinese Gorbachev in sight, and he painstakingly deflects the adulatory calls he receives from listeners. "I tell them that I am not a leader, I am a railroad worker. The reason I say this is that in Chinese culture there is a strong, strong feeling in people's minds that we are waiting every day for a human savior. But look back at our history. Every human savior we have created has (in the end) killed us." He becomes distressed when people compare him to Walesa.

But though there are obvious differences—Walesa led an anti-Communist strike in the very heart of Poland, whereas Han is a popular broadcaster living on China's fringe—his reputation stands high among both Chinese fellow-exiles like Wei Jingsheng, Wang Dan, and Harry Wu and Americans who follow China. "He's been the world's conscience on labor rights in China," observes an official who has worked closely with the AFL-CIO on Chinese labor issues. "Most people would say that he accurately reflects workers' thinking." At the National Endowment for Democracy, which awarded Han its Democracy Award in 1993, Louisa Coan Greve, senior program officer for Asia, who knows Han well, says, "He is just extremely admirable. There isn't a steadier, more thoughtful, hard-working person in the entire circle of people working for the oppressed in China. He is at the top of the league of people in Asia thinking strategically."

Watching his homeland closely from his office and the modest apartment on Hong Kong's Lamma Island where he lives with his wife and their two U.S.-born children, Han exudes an unusual combination of concern, indignation, and hope. He may not yet be China's Lech Walesa, but he long ago surpassed Lei Feng. ♦

Muscular Christianity

Meet George South, pro-wrestling's born-again evangelist.

By Matt Labash

Concord, N.C.

Every now and then, one encounters a man who is not afraid to face the darkness, to lock eyes with the devil, to climb inside the squared circle, and to hit somebody in the head with a chair for Jesus. George South is such a man.

At first glance, South seems like nothing special: He has 20-inch biceps for arms, and a mean-muchacho mustache. He wears his banana-hammock shorts high and tight, and when his shoulder-length pony tail becomes un-slicked, it frizzes into an angry mane. But many of his colleagues share these traits, with one notable exception: the John 3:16 scripture on the seat of his trunks. For upon second glance, George South is the oddest of ducks—he's a Christian professional wrestler.

Christianity and athletics have commingled since the mid-nineteenth century. It was then that the "Muscular Christianity" movement (which promoted character-building through sport) took root in British schools, as exemplified in Thomas Hughes's 1857 novel *Tom Brown's School Days*. Making its way across the Atlantic, Muscular Christianity found adherents among the likes of gospeler Billy Sunday, an ex-baseball player who sounded like a pro wrestler when he denounced sinners as "beetle-browed, hog-jowled, peanut-brained, weasel-eyed four flushers." Since then, enough Jocks for Jesus tomes and Christian athletic associations have proliferated to keep faith-professing athletes booked on the church-banquet tour in perpetuity.

Professional wrestling, however, has remained a godless province, watched by 34 million viewers—fakery be damned—who catch national broadcasts six nights a week. Wrestling script-writers used to conjure up ritualized battles between good (the babyfaces) and evil (the heels). But today's wrestlers, says Dave Meltzer, of the *Pro Wrestling Torch* newsletter, all inhabit the same moral wasteland, no longer breaking down into faces and heels, but into "badasses and badder asses." Consequently, groups like the Parents Television Council release studies finding that the World Wrestling Federation's *Smackdown!* show alone accounted for over 11 percent of the combined sex, profanity, and violence on television in 1999. Where wrestling fans used to be treated to milk-drinking babyfaces and mustache-twirling foreign menaces, they now witness subplots incorporating everything from rape to transvestites.

Needless to say, the sport isn't noted for religious iconography, though there has been some. In the '80s, scores of Bible-belt youth were scared witless by wrestler Kevin Sullivan, who pledged solemn devotion to Lucifer. On the Christian side of the ledger, most characters working religious angles were objects of scorn or heels in disguise. There was snake-oil salesman Brother Love, and Earnest Angel, a heel manager out of Memphis who used to clock the opposition with Bibles. A few years back, the WWF tried to launch The Sisters of Mercy, a nun tagteam consisting of Sister Angelica and Mother Smucker—an idea that met its just demise after one outing.

Matt Labash is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard.

In recent years, there's been a slew of ex-wrestlers who have joined the ministry: Everyone from Tully Blanchard to "The Million Dollar Man" Ted DiBiase. But they are just that—ex-wrestlers who have forsaken the profession that corrupted them. This year, in Texas, the Christian Wrestling Federation was founded by Robert "Jesus Freak" Vaughan, a Sunday School teacher and former football player who put together an evangelical wrestling road show. But none of the talent has ever actually wrestled professionally. Of that rather narrow demographic—the preaching, active-duty professional wrestler—there is, by my count, only one man who still prizes his faith and his work, and who has never forsaken either: George South.

I first meet South in a strip-mall parking lot in Concord, N.C., which lies just a few miles east of the Charlotte Motor Speedway. Here, in a converted grocery warehouse that sits behind a hair replacement shop and a Mexican mart, he runs a wrestling school. South bellows a hearty "Hey Buddy!"—his favorite salutation—as he emerges from his GMC van in Converse All Stars, an "I love Jesus" cut-off tank top, and shorts slit to accommodate his quadriceps.

A 20-year veteran of the business, the 37-year-old South used to wrestle as "Gorgeous George"—a moniker he's dropped since "it's false advertising," he says, pointing to the furrowed scars on his forehead. Now, he is "Mr. Number One," which is not a boast, but an homage to Paul Jones, the former National Wrestling Alliance champ and South's boyhood idol, who used to wrestle under the same. Jones now runs a garage in Charlotte and has contracted cancer, affording South the opportunity to witness to him and pray with him weekly—a dream come true that South says could be rivaled only by "him beating me with an Indian deathlock."

South was born in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains in Sugar Grove, N.C. Both of his parents died in a car accident when he was six, scattering George and his 13 siblings and forcing them to rely on the charity of townspeople. Early on, South discovered his two animating influences: Christianity and "rasslin." When he was 13, his brother Bill helped out with the former, informing George that everyone was on their way to heaven or hell. When curious George inquired how you arrived at each destination, Bill replied, "Well, to get to hell, you ain't got to do much. You're headed there anyway." George opted for heaven, and was relieved when Bill told him the plan of salvation wasn't much more complicated: "Just ask Jesus into your heart, and ask the Lord to forgive you your sins."

South was introduced to wrestling a short time later, when "The Nanny," an elderly woman who took George in for nine years until he graduated from high school, turned him onto television matches. From there, he started frequenting the Monday night bouts at the old Charlotte Park Center, rooting for Paul Jones as if his life depended on it. The first time South attended, "I spent 15 minutes just sniffin' the popcorn," he says. "When I saw that ring, I thought I'd start crying; I was in heaven."

South became what the pros call a "mark for the business," believing every last staged "spot" (the wrestlers' preplanned moves). After high school, he got a job driving a truck at a textile mill. But his calling beckoned when he saw an ad to "Fulfill your dreams—be a wrestler." South showed up for the casting call in his work clothes. "It was like a movie," he says, recalling how he opened the creaky door of an old building in Charlotte to see a Samoan, an old man, a woman, and a midget who invited him into the ring. "I was so stupid, I said okay," recalls South, "They took turns. The old guy, Rusty Roberts, tied me in knots. The woman hurt me worse than the rest of them. The midget kicked me in the ribs as hard as he could. They tore my work pants. I was bleeding. They about killed me." George was hooked for life.

South spent the next five years or so wrestling on the Carolina circuit (which he says is to professional wrestling what the "little shriner circus is to Ringling Brothers"). From there, he hooked up with the league that would become—Ted Turner bought them out—World Championship Wrestling. South simultaneously wriggled into Vince McMahon's World Wrestling Federation.

Though he called himself Mr. Number One, his ranking stood much lower. South was an "underneath guy" or "jobber"—a stooge paid to sacrifice his body and lose matches, which he calls "a lost art" now that everybody wants to be a main event guy. Of the 4,000 professional matches South estimates he's fought, he says he's won "about 100." In his dated highlights reel, you can see him getting stomped by the best. From "Nature Boy" Ric Flair to Dirty Dick Slater, every match seems to end with the words that were music to Mr. Number One's ears: "That'll be the end of George South."

While South was never a contract player, he saw plenty of TV time—until he mixed his faith with his wrestling persona. South had always passed out tracts in the locker room. But in the mid '90s, he finally decided to work his faith into his wrestling gimmick during a Georgia Championship Wrestling broadcast on Turner's TBS Superstation. Determined to debut his John 3:16 rasslin' britches during a match with "Heavy Metal" Van Hammer, George was pulled aside by Grizzly Smith, the federation's road manager, and was told Ted Turner wouldn't stand for overt displays of religiosity. If South did not remove his trunks, he would not be paid. "I could go out there with a woman

Panel from a pamphlet distributed by the George South Ministry

half-nekkid or cuss on the microphone, and that's okay," says an incredulous South, who notes that "Stone Cold" Steve Austin now sports the blasphemous "Austin 3:16" on his trunks. "I wasn't goin' out there to preach, I was goin' out there to get my tail kicked like I always do." After holding up the broadcast for 30 minutes, South relented, and wore his drawers inside out. Afterwards, "I apologized to the Lord," says South, "I didn't do TV after that. I could've gone back, but it was with that stipulation."

Instead, South has returned to the hardscrabble independent circuit. After two decades in the business, he has witnessed just about everything. There was Brutus "the Barber" Beefcake, who shaved South's head four weeks in a row at the WWF. ("You'd make 150 bucks for rasslin'," says South, "plus 300 bucks for lettin' 'em cut your hair—plus afterwards, you get trimmed up by the WWF beautician.") There was Rattlesnake Westbrooks, who used to eat dogfood and cockroaches backstage ("his dressing room shows were better than his matches"). Then there was The Convict, who ended up getting busted for boosting the checkbook of the National Guard Armory where they were wrestling. "That guy lived his gimmick, Buddy," South says.

South has taken his encyclopedic wrestling know-how, and put it to good use. His Exodus Wrestling Alliance stages full-service dust-ups, after which George takes to the center of the ring, coated in enough sweat to make him look like a glazed donut, and shares the undiluted gospel. And on the indie circuit, where witnessing can be a tougher proposition as one dodges flying cups of tobacco juice—George still wears his scripture britches and passes out tracts and Bibles at intermission.

Behind the strip-mall in Concord, South's wrestling school is a no-frills cinderblock edifice with a ring, 50 metal folding chairs, an open-faced fan, and nothing else. If trainees complain about the lack of air-conditioning, George tells them to come back in the winter, when they can wrestle with icicles hanging from their nose. This is not the WWF's training center, "The Power Plant," which George derisively dismisses as an antiseptic, climate-controlled fantasy, the equivalent of "singing in the shower." Here, he allows wrestlers to learn how to work a hostile crowd of paying customers, while he trains them in "the old school style—when the wrestlers really worked."

The "school" doesn't even bear a sign. Advertising, he complains, typically attracts every beer-gutted bus driver who ordered wrestling boots out of a catalog and thinks he is owed a WWF contract. George mostly shoos them off, or makes them take so many consecutive "bumps" (or falls) that they expire from exhaustion. "They'll quit before I ever touch them," he says, "Most of them can't get off the couch and walk to the refrigerator without being out of breath." For those who stay, George charges $3,000—though he rarely, if ever, sees all the money. He often settles for wampum—such as a new pair of wrestling boots.

On a sweltering summer night, George is prepping for one of his training shows, where his charges will dazzle a local Baptist youth group. George runs a broom over the floor and sets the radio to a classic rock station while swilling mouthwash—a professional courtesy for the tight clinches, he says. One by one, the wrestlers straggle in. There's John and Andy Adcox—two coal-eyed squirts from George's church whom South has informally adopted since their father died in a car accident a few years ago. Andy wrestles as The Little Package, while John says he is Superstar, which causes him to roll his eyes, as he hates the assigned name, preferring Maddog. There's The Carolina Dreamer (inexplicably introduced as hailing from Tampa,

Fla.), who shows up in shower shoes eating chicken fingers, while hauling the Dr. Perky grape soda that will serve as that night's concession. In the corner, oiling himself up is Shogun, the Sexy Samurai, who is not an Asian warrior but a tree surgeon with blonde-surfer locks.

As his wrestlers take warm-up bumps and South yells instructions, the Baptist youth file in, their senses overwhelmed. The mat-splatting bodies sound like sacks of potatoes getting dropped on trash can lids. When the matches start, one little girl begins to cry. But two chubby adolescent boys—not youth group regulars, but wrestling aficionados—grab ringside seats and start heckling. They give the business to everybody. They place a chair in the ring to help expedite the demise of The Little Package. They ridicule the guest referee, their own youth pastor, who splits his pants in the middle of the bout. "Your moon is shining," says one.

While South keeps his junk-talking to a minimum during the match, even when they mock his receding hairline, he takes a microphone to the middle of the ring afterwards to scare the little heathens into the kingdom. Practiced from years of microphone work in wrestling broadcasts, and from teaching Sunday School at Reedy Creek Baptist Church, George tells the kids that nothing in this life matters—not even wrestling. He says they can ignore the eternal verities as long as time permits—but they can't know when their time will expire. He tells them that they have heard the plan of salvation from this "dumb rassler" in this "ol' ugly building" and if they ignore it, they do so at their own peril. He offers a stripped-down version of Pascal's wager: "When it's all over and the smoke clears," George says, if he's wrong, then "I haven't lost anything but peace of mind. But if we find out I'm right and you're wrong—look what you've lost."

Nobody comes forward for George's altar call. But a few weeks earlier, after his teenage sons, George Jr. and Brock (also aspiring wrestlers), had spit water on the crowd and thrown each other through tables, George preached a similar sermon, and three people came forward to accept Christ—including the referee whom George had love-tapped during an earlier match. South, who also runs side ministries, like delivering food to the homeless, says church crowds can be the toughest. "Some of the meanest people I know are Baptist preachers. They'd make excellent heels."

The next day, I visit South's house, the front porch of which contains turnbuckles and ropes and all manner of wrestling debris. "Welcome to the Addams Family, Buddy," says South. During the week, he plays Mr. Mom to his five children and a black cat named Dog. His wife works "a real job" at a downtown brokerage, and George is grateful for the benefits, as he says it's terribly difficult to take out insurance as a professional wrestler.

South's converted garage is a wrestling museum, a grappler's Cooperstown—with all manner of board games and action figures, fight marquees, and photographs. Many of the photos are of his friends, and many of them are dead. There's "Hotshot" Eddie Gilbert, whom George says he discussed God with just a few days before his "heart exploded" in Puerto Rico—from drugs, George thinks. And there's "The Juicer," Art Barr, whom George fought shortly before he expired. South's roll call of dead friends—there are many others—lends his ministry an added urgency, and he has no patience for genteel types who say the gospel doesn't belong in a wrestling ring. "Jesus didn't go to the people who were well," South says. "Well people don't need a doctor. Sick people do."

That afternoon, we are off to Wentworth, N.C., a small town outside Greensboro where George has been wrestling for the last several weekends under the imprimatur of the Renegade American Wrestling Alliance, one of North Carolina's best indie federations, headed by Chris Nelson, aka Slim Jim Bolen. When we get to "the arena" (a converted Bingo hall)—Slim Jim is in full meltdown, as the ring he just bought from a South Carolina wrestler named High Performance is anything but. The ring's center spring keeps popping out from under the metal girders, and when George gets there, he is forced to jerry-rig the coil so that they don't have to rassle in the parking lot—which George has seen happen elsewhere. "Easy on the ring tonight," Slim Jim tells his troupe, "it's just for show."

Backstage, it is a Star Wars bar of oddities. Slutty-looking valets—perhaps on furlough from their Dairy Queen shifts—preen about in high heels. A member of the Daulton Boys—a black-dustered cowboy outfit—carefully conceals a metal weight in his ranch-hand glove. Vern the referee, who will change costumes and double as V-Jak, a hardcore wrestler, shows me the blade he will use to cut his forehead open during a six-man tag team trash can match. The United Nations of Devastation tagteam—consisting of Hubie the Canadian and Drake the Swede—will draw some of the most serious heat of the night, as the crowd, deprived of Cold War Russians and Oil Embargo Arabs, are still starved for foreign-born heels. When I ask Drake what Sweden could have possibly done to incur such wrath (price-gouging at Ikea?), he refuses to break character, telling me in a perfect West Virginia accent how much he hates Americans.

As he suits up, George ignores the coquettish valets. Slim Jim says that tonight, the wrestlers are generally curtailing their swearing, "out of respect for George." As he checks his Food Lion bag full of Bibles, which he will dis-

tribute at intermission, George talks over the night's spots with Little George—a slight 21-year-old playing George's son. To match Big George, Little George is forced to wear an "I Love Jesus" T-shirt, which South finds amusing, since L.G. is currently trying to chat up some of the looser-looking arena rats.

The Georges are matched against the Southside Players—two black gentlemen who in civilian life are a health-care-facility worker and a Hardee's manager. The Georges and the Players talk over spots before leaving the dressing room, wish each other safety, and the Players even bow their heads in silent prayer. While South is supposed to be a heel, there's no chance two dice-shooting brothers are going to go over with the redneck audience, who delight in taunting them in Ebonics (causing one of the Players to flip a heckler off). Throughout the match, George is tepid, reluctant to "leave my feet" against two dilettantes. Instead he quietly tells them to keep their heads up in the clinches (to avoid accidental head-butts). The Georges make short work of the Players: As Big George distracts the ref, Little George hammers them with a foreign object pulled from his pants.

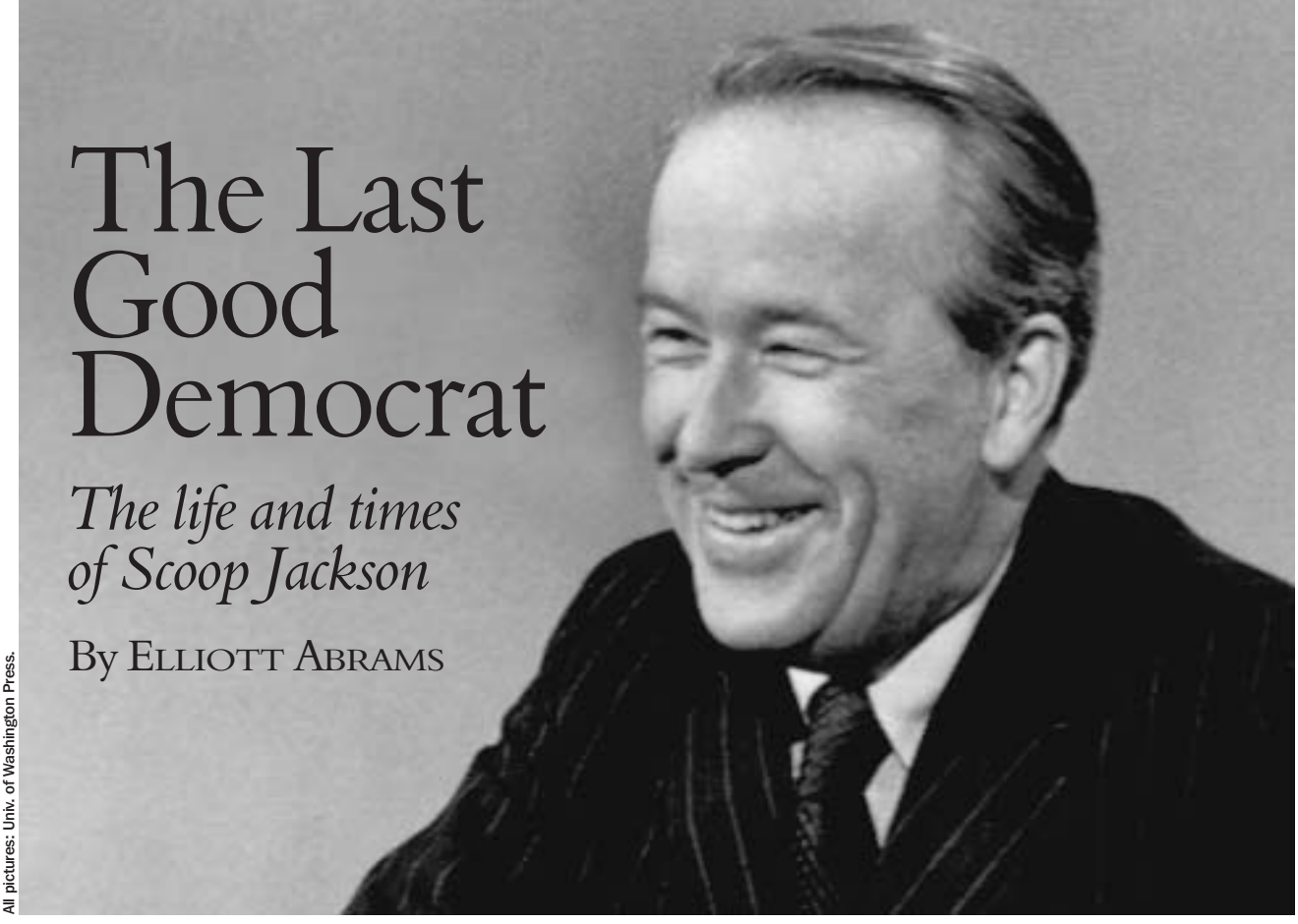
We leave the arena after midnight, and on the way home George is critiquing the show like a fussy mother. He is incensed that one wrestler kicked another "in the goo-loos" right in front of the ref, who jeopardized his credibility by not disqualifying him—"that's in the fake rule book," says George. He is scandalized at the indiscriminate violence—all payoff with no buildup—that younger wrestlers favor. Before the bell even rang, it seems, Slim Jim had hit one opponent with a crutch, a cookie sheet, a trash can, and a wet paint sign. "Where do you go from there?" asks George. But above all, George can't wait to turn heel on his faux son, Little George, who he says, has all the enthusiasm of "a knot on a log."

In wrestling's minor leagues, there will be lots of nights like this. Still, it wasn't a total loss. George passed out his Bibles. And though he wasn't permitted to preach, a fan told George at intermission that he'd memorized John 3:16 after seeing it advertised weekly on George's trunks. "Most people think if we don't get called to [be a missionary in] Africa, God ain't gonna call us," explains George. "But He might. He might call you to do just what you do everyday. Like in Wentworth, Carolina tonight, Buddy." ♦

The Last Good Democrat

The life and times of Scoop Jackson

By Elliott Abrams



All pictures: Univ. of Washington Press.

Even the greatest senators—Clay, Calhoun, Webster, La Follette, Taft—rarely grip the country's imagination the way presidents and generals do. When legislators do change the course of events, the drama is usually lost to our collective memory. Thousands of members of Congress have come and gone over the years, their individual achievements hidden in committee reports, private compromises, amendments pushed through or blocked, and innumerable, unnoticed meetings.

Henry M. Jackson, congressman and senator from 1941 until his death in 1983, achieved far greater renown than most legislators, ran for president in 1972 and 1976, and was for much of the 1970s and 1980s one of the most powerful men in America. Yet his extraordinary record in public life is in danger of being forgotten—particularly his long struggles during the Cold War, which are often misclassified (when they are remembered at all) merely as examples of "hard-line foreign policy."

Elliott Abrams, president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, was special counsel to Senator Henry M. Jackson in 1975 and 1976.

Jackson has long needed a sympathetic biographer to chronicle his amazing life story, and the new biography by Robert G. Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics*, is cause for celebration. "Scoop" Jackson, the son of Norwegian immigrants, was an entirely self-made man, that true American phenomenon: no money, no connections; nothing but talent and determination that raised him from his home in Everett, Washington, to national power. When he arrived at Union Station in 1941, the youngest member of the House at age twenty-eight, he had never been to Washington, D.C., before and had to ask a cab driver to find the Capitol for him. His unfamiliarity with the city—and the city's unfamiliarity with him—did not last long.

Henry M. Jackson
A Life in Politics
by Robert G. Kaufman
University of Washington Press, 576 pp., $30

He had the most successful political career in the history of Washington state, never losing there. In the fall of 1938, at the age of twenty-six, he won his first election, to the public prosecutor's office. By 1940, he was running for the congressional seat in Washington's Second District, which he won six times before his successful Senate run in 1952. His subsequent campaign totals are astonishing: He was reelected to the Senate with 67 percent of the vote in 1958, 72 percent in 1964, 82 percent in 1970, 72 percent in 1976, and 69 percent in 1982, his final campaign.

Jackson was a kind of missionary, who emerged from the American provinces and was never fully acculturated by the national elites among whom he spent his adult life. His duty, as he saw it, was to learn and to teach the lessons of world politics in his lifetime—and the most important lesson, he thought, was the necessity for the great democracies to practice the kind of foreign policy that Kaufman correctly describes as "moral realism." Jackson had entered Congress steeped in the isolationism popular in his district, but World War II changed his views. Seeing Buchenwald eleven days after its liberation, he learned something about barbarism and why it must be resisted by force of arms. He visited his ancestral Norway after its liberation from the Nazis, and ever after

he insisted that there is sometimes no substitute for military power. From then on, Jackson demanded, as Kaufman describes it, "a synthesis of power and principle" that included "vigilant containment" and an insistence on infusing "American foreign policy with greater moral clarity and confidence about U.S. virtues and our adversaries' vices."

By 1949 he was playing a role in national security policy. And Jackson's influence over the decades was matched only by his foresight, beginning with his argument in favor of building the H-bomb rather than relying on Stalin's forbearance. This was the first entry in an extraordinarily prescient record on foreign policy:

• He was a key figure in the creation of a Navy powered by nuclear reactors and a submarine fleet armed with nuclear missiles.

• As early as his trip to the USSR in 1956, he understood that the Soviets would, as he put it, act like a "hotel burglar," trying any doors that were open but passing those that were locked. He explained in a 1957 speech that "the essence of the Soviet dilemma [is that] the Kremlin must grant some freedom in order to maintain technological growth but allowing freedom undermines Communist ideology and discipline"—a view later embraced by George Shultz and Ronald Reagan.

• He argued in 1962, long before Daniel Patrick Moynihan became America's U.N. ambassador, that "the hope for peace with justice does not lie with the United Nations. Indeed the truth is almost exactly the reverse. The best hope for the United Nations lies with the maintenance of peace."

• In 1969 he opposed the anti-ballistic missile treaty, arguing twelve years before Ronald Reagan assumed the presidency that (as Walter Mondale later recalled it) the United States should "bankrupt the Soviet Union by developing weapons systems that forced the Soviets to match us."

In *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics*, Kaufman is especially good at bringing to life the twenty-year debate over détente, which lasted from the election of Richard Nixon in 1968 to the end of the Cold War. An associate professor of political science at the University of Vermont, Kaufman is the author of the 1990 *Arms Control During the Pre-Nuclear Era*, which helps explain his grasp of the complex arms-control issues he takes up in this biography. Kaufman also helped Richard Nixon prepare his book *Beyond Peace*, and that work gave him a deep understanding of Nixon's foreign-policy views. In preparing his present work, Kaufman had the full cooperation of the Jackson family and the support of the Henry M. Jackson Foundation, and if he tells Jackson's story without soaring literary passages, that, too, is true to Scoop's memory.

Much of the Cold War material Kaufman presents is familiar to those who lived through it, but he provides the details that show Jackson at his best—and thereby gives us a historical record of inestimable value. The years of America's attempt at détente were Jackson's finest hours. He had a mastery of Senate procedures, a detailed knowledge of arms programs, and an unshakable faith in the country's willingness to bear the burdens world leadership forced upon it. And he combined all that with an absolute insistence that no aspect of American foreign policy could be unmoored from our basic dedication to human rights.

As early as 1963 he used the forum of the Senate hearing to challenge administration policy (in this case, the test-ban treaty), and he employed Senate committee jurisdictions and staffs as his weapons in the fight against policies he considered morally weak and militarily dangerous. In 1967 he was the key opponent of Nixon's anti-ballistic missile treaty, which limited the ability of the United States to deploy missile defenses. He led the debate over anti-ballistic missiles again in 1969 and 1970, and he spearheaded the opposition to the SALT I treaty in 1972.

Through what became known as the "Jackson Amendment," which tied trade with the Soviets to their willingness to let Soviet Jews emigrate, he insisted that morality and foreign policy be linked long before Jimmy Carter's much-touted human-rights policy. Kaufman's account of the struggle over détente is thorough, lively, fair—and willing to drop the pretense of academic neutrality to make sharp judgments when the evidence supports them. Kaufman, for instance, presents in clear focus Jackson's five objections to the view of Nixon, Ford, and Kissinger:

• Jackson agreed with Solzhenitsyn that "the Soviet Union's internal structure was the key to its international behavior" and that as long as it was totalitarian no real détente was possible.

• He did not believe in the "Nixon Doctrine" (of reliance on regional proxies) and felt there were "no sufficiently robust alternatives to American power to protect vital U.S. interests."

• He believed Nixon and Kissinger misunderstood the American people and were too pessimistic about rallying public support for a strong military and a vigorous American foreign policy, but he also believed this required a distinctly moral—indeed ideological—foreign policy.

• He had a far more pessimistic view about Soviet prospects, and "viewed the Cold War as a struggle with a terminal point, which would end with the breakup of the Soviet Union," so that "the objective of American foreign policy ought to be to hasten that end with every means available within the bounds of prudence."

• Finally, he believed far more attention must be paid to human rights, and Kaufman correctly notes that "Jackson's approach to statecraft rested on a synthesis of power and principles." Thus "the duty of the American government to safeguard and encourage human rights in the Soviet Union arose, he thought, from both moral and practical considerations."

In all of this, history has proved Jackson right and his contribution invaluable. He laid the foundation for the foreign policy of the 1980s and the ultimate American victory in the Cold War, which he did not live to see. Kaufman has examined in detail every aspect of the long debate between Jackson and Kissinger (still now carried on in Kissinger's volumes of memoirs), and the conclusion in *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics* is clear:

> Henry Jackson exhibited the persistence, strength of character, knowledge, and legislative talent to challenge the conventional wisdom that détente was desirable, possible, and the best the United States could do. Through exhaustive hearings and key pieces of legislation, it was he, not Kissinger, who did more than anybody else in American politics during the 1970s to make possible the policy of boldness during the 1980s that the secretary of state now defends. . . . What impelled him was the belief that the Soviet regime must collapse before a genuine détente could occur. Few legislators in American history have ever succeeded so brilliantly in redirecting American foreign policy.

Yet Henry Jackson, this titan of the Senate, was widely spurned in his own party, and his two attempts to win its presidential nomination were disastrous. Here again, Kaufman is a reliable guide, portraying with accuracy what in one chapter title he calls "The Great Liberal Crack-up." The political capital Jackson amassed in his home state depended on his effectiveness in bringing home federal dollars and on keeping promises he made to the voters. It depended as well, as they got to know him better, on a widespread admiration for his integrity and dedication. As Kaufman notes, "Few men in politics worked harder or longer at it than Henry Jackson. . . . He did not smoke. He did not drink. He did not go to the symphony or listen to music of any kind. He did not follow professional sports. He did not really have any hobbies. Nor did he socialize with many of his Senate colleagues." He worked twelve- and fourteen-hour days, utterly devoted to the Senate, and voters in his home state figured it out.

Jackson wins the Massachusetts Democratic primary in 1976

Perhaps decades earlier these traits would have helped Jackson in national politics. But by the 1970s, American politics and the Democratic party had changed. His 1972 campaign was doomed from the start, for his party was bound that year to nominate a liberal. And Jackson, for all his liberal voting record on economic issues and civil rights, was by then hated by his party's left wing because of his foreign-policy views. His achievements with respect to the environment, which won him an unprecedented series of awards from conservation groups like the Sierra Club, were ignored. Moreover, in 1972 he had no real fund-raising apparatus, and relied on his Senate staff to launch a national campaign, at which they were incompetent.

The election in 1976 might have been different. Jackson started out as a serious candidate: He was on a *Time* magazine cover early in the campaign with the headline "Scoop Out Front," a Ralph Nader group called him "most effective senator," a 1975 Gallup poll showed him running neck and neck with President Ford, and the nomination of the liberal hero George McGovern in 1972 had led the Democratic party to ruin.

So what went wrong for Jackson in 1976? Profound changes in the Democratic party and in American politics, unrecognized by him, made his nomination nearly impossible—particularly when combined with his real weaknesses. He was a mediocre public speaker who came through badly on television, lacking the charisma with which to mobilize an audience. Moreover, he did not share the ebullience of Hubert Humphrey and Bill Clinton, who gained energy from the audiences they faced. In this sense Scoop Jackson did not love politics; he loved instead public affairs and the opportunity to affect them. As Kaufman points out, Jackson's races back in Washington state had never been seriously contested, and he did not enjoy the kind of tough fight he faced in the presidential race.

He also had "a tin ear for the new cultural ethos of the younger generation of activists within the Democratic party." As Kaufman suggests, this was perhaps the product of his late marriage and the young age of his children: While his rivals dealt with the new youth culture every night at home, Jackson's children were not yet teenagers during the 1976 campaign, and he drew a complete blank when it came to the

post-Vietnam cultural revolution in America. Kaufman recounts the story of the day Robert Redford came lobbying for an environmental cause. His entry into Jackson's outer office caused the predictable stir among the receptionists and staff members, but Jackson's reaction was pure Scoop: "Robert Redford? Who's *he* with?"

In addition, the energy crisis of the mid-1970s brought out the most serious flaws in Jackson's political philosophy. He was a big-government, public-power, never-trust-the-markets Democrat whose reaction to the oil crisis was, typically, to blame the oil companies and to urge price controls and a large federal bureaucracy to administer them. His cure for unemployment was to spend more money and create jobs on the federal dole; his 1976 campaign speeches are replete with "let's rebuild the railroad beds" rhetoric. And even this New Deal approach to economics was out of step with party activists. The Democratic party Jackson knew—composed of ethnic groups, big-city political machines, and labor unions—was losing ground to the new Democratic party of the baby boomers in the suburbs.

In addition, Jackson failed to see that the so-called "McGovern reforms" had changed the dynamics of the Democratic primaries, and his own campaign was poorly designed and made many mistakes. He and his managers badly underestimated Jimmy Carter, and unlike Carter's team, they "failed to grasp that generating the money and momentum necessary to wage a successful campaign depended on getting off to a fast start in the delegate-poor but media-rich early primaries." Jackson captured Massachusetts and New York but never gained momentum, and Carter's victory in Pennsylvania sewed up the 1976 nomination.

Jackson won another landslide election in his home state that year and returned to the Senate for what proved to be four more years of struggle over foreign and defense policy. Surprisingly, Carter—who had run as a Navy veteran tough on communism—pursued a policy Jackson called "moralism, malaise, and retrenchment." Jackson was at the peak of his senatorial influence and was prepared to use it: "Of the nine presidents from Roosevelt through Reagan with whom he served," Kaufman trenchantly notes, "Jackson would have the worst relationship by far with his fellow Democrat Jimmy Carter."

Scoop Jackson and Ronald Reagan at the White House in 1983

Jackson's fight with Carter was another chapter in the great struggle over détente, this time with Soviet behavior in the third world, the SALT II treaty, and the role of human rights as the tests. As Jackson saw it, Carter and his secretary of state, Cyrus Vance, dangerously misunderstood the interplay of power and ideals and threatened to weaken America while the Soviets grew stronger.

Once again, Jackson became the pole attracting staff (such as the redoubtable Dorothy Fosdick, his chief foreign policy adviser for twenty-eight years), supporters, and allies—some even within the Carter administration—in an enormous effort to blunt a foreign policy he believed would undermine America in the Cold War and set back the cause of liberty. These were the years in which it was a source of pride and honor to call oneself a "Jackson Democrat."

The account Kaufman gives of the Carter presidency is immensely well-informed. He is no more impressed by the later re-writings of the history of those four years by Zbigniew Brzezinski and others than he is for the Nixon and Ford years. Once again, Jackson used the tools he had mastered in the Senate to change the course of American foreign policy. Kaufman quotes Bill Bradley, who served with Jackson (one wonders at times if there is anyone Kaufman did *not* interview), to explain that Scoop

> played the legislative game the way good generals fight wars: everything was planned; nothing was left to chance. Votes were lined up in advance with meticulous personal lobbying. Outside groups were enlisted to lobby. Certain decided senators were asked to contact the other senators who were still uncertain about the issue at hand. For floor debates Jackson prepared a battle book—that's what his staff called it—in which every possible question was anticipated, mastered, and answered. He left as little as possible to improvisation, and then he went out onto the floor and crushed his opponents.

Kaufman's treatment of Jackson is strikingly thorough and honest. He gives Jackson no quarter for his excessive pro-Chinese sympathies, which were incompatible with his principles on human rights. He acknowledges fully that Jackson had little understanding of the American economy and resorted to panaceas involving an expansion of government far more likely to exacerbate the problems they tried to solve. He reports on every time (though there are not too many) Jackson pulled in his horns in the mid-1970s in an effort to blunt left-wing opposition to his candidacy for president.

But Kaufman has discovered so much about Jackson that for every weakness he discloses he finds a new and greater virtue. Jackson opposed forced school busing but sent his children to public school—while George

McGovern was loudly supporting busing in public and sending his own children to private schools. Jackson earned tens of thousands of dollars giving speeches and quietly donated every single cent to a scholarship fund for poor students that he had established in honor of his sister, a schoolteacher. (The fact of the fund's existence only became public when new Senate ethics laws, designed to prevent private vice, forced Jackson to disclose his private charity.)

During his heyday—through the Nixon, Ford, and Kissinger years and the Carter presidency—Henry Jackson was a rare voice of confidence in America. His insistence on a "moral realism," combining American power with principled support of human rights and democratic allies, helped prevent disaster during America's post-Vietnam crisis of détente, malaise, and the Brezhnev Doctrine. Jackson provided, not alone but as a principal and irreplaceable figure, the foundation upon which Ronald Reagan was able to build—using some of Jackson's ideas and some of Jackson's people. With those ideas and people ascendant, and with a Republican Senate in which Jackson lost his chairmanships, his own role became less central. As Kaufman writes, "Jackson's foreign policy ideas triumphed just as the peak of his power passed. . . . By the end of 1980, he had reached the twilight time of his life and his career."

Scoop Jackson died on September 1, 1983, of an aneurysm, at age seventy-one. There was an outpouring of grief, and gratitude, and among the many wonderful things said, Pat Moynihan's tribute stands out: "He lived in the worst of times, the age of the totalitarian state. It fell to him to tell this to his own people and to the world and he did so full well knowing that there is a cost for such truthtelling. But . . . of all things human, the only emotion he never knew was fear; the only weakness he could never comprehend was the love of ease."

He lived for his work, which is to say for his country, and his career reminds us—at a time when we need reminding—that public life can be lived with an integrity that inspires as Jackson inspired those who knew him, followed him, worked for him, even those who fought him. Scoop Jackson was a modest man in many ways, and had no great rhetorical talents; one could even say he had limited political talent, as that commodity is measured these days. He did not wish to feel our pain, nor could he tell a good story or an easy lie, nor did wading into a crowd delight him. He thought better of us, and hoped to be appreciated for the career he constructed through fifteen thousand days of public service.

A statue of Scoop Jackson now stands in a corner of the Russell Senate Office Building, but Robert G. Kaufman's *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics* is a far more useful monument. ♦

Robert Kennedy in 1968. Simon and Schuster.

Decline and Fall

Tracing history through the generations of Kennedys. **BY NOEMIE EMERY**

How long can the will of one man impinge on the life of another? The lives of these three men—Robert F. Kennedy, and his nephews Patrick Kennedy and John Kennedy Jr.—were molded to a large degree by the wish of Joseph P. Kennedy to make one of his sons president.

For nearly thirty years, his hopes centered on his first son and namesake, a strapping, gregarious figure who fell wholeheartedly in with his father's ambitions. When Joe Jr. died during World War II, the father's eye fell on his second son, Jack, a more complex figure, in terrible health, with whom his relations were trickier. Perhaps to his astonishment, that shy, sickly Jack became JFK, a charismatic and canny political leader. But then *he* was killed, and an attractive man and skilled politician became a Lost Prince.

The American people's urge to find him again—and the Kennedy family's urge to regain its lost power—created a dynamic that has roiled, confused, and sometimes distorted the political life of this country for forty years. In the premature loss of clever and capable political leaders like John and Robert Kennedy, the nation has suffered. In the destruction of two men who were "New Democrats" before the term was needed, the Democratic party has suffered. And the Kennedys themselves, tempted by and trapped within this drama, are suffering even today.

Robert Kennedy
His Life
by Evan Thomas
Simon & Schuster, 509 pp., $28

Patrick Kennedy
The Rise to Power
by Darrell M. West
Prentice Hall, 184 pp., $18.75

The Day John Died
by Christopher Andersen
William Morrow, 303 pp., $26

The only substantial volume in this season's run of books on the topic is Evan Thomas's study of Bobby, the third Kennedy son, whose life was consumed in struggles brought on by the family ethos: first to define himself as his brother's helper, and then to define himself as the family leader.

He was, Thomas writes, the "runt" of the family, almost an irrelevancy in his father's schemes. There was the "golden trio" of Joe Jr., Jack, and Kathleen, and there were the others, too young and too many to matter. Ted, the youngest, accepted his role as the baby, the comic relief. But Bobby, seven years younger than his next-oldest brother, had an intense need to prove himself.

Slighter, less graceful, less good looking than the others, he would find this difficult. As Thomas notes, in pictures that showed the other children smiling and radiant, Bobby "perches by his mother's side, his face tense with anxiety. . . . He was not only smaller and slower than his brothers, he looked *afraid*." What he was afraid of was being ignored and discounted.

Oppressed by a controlling father, John Kennedy rebelled by becoming elusive and skeptical. Neglected by an indifferent father, Bobby dove into the family ethos, defining himself as family guardian, the custodian of others. From time to time, he would try to break out to a life on his own, but he would always come back to the family orbit, always in service to somebody else.

His first rise came with the death of Joe Jr. in 1944, which pushed Jack into the role of heir apparent and Bobby into that of back-up son. The second came with Jack's political campaigns, during which Bobby moved from near-stranger to his older brother's closest associate. Thomas presents Jack's relations with Joe Jr. as far more strained and remote than previous writers have suggested and says that Bobby was brought in at first to keep the peace between the overbearing father and the independent and frequently rebellious son. Bobby rose in their esteem to become the central cog in the family enterprise. The next-to-last had become the most important.

Some biographers claim that by 1960 Joseph P. Kennedy had plans to make all three of his sons president. It was certainly he who insisted that Jack make Bobby his attorney general and that Ted prepare to run for Jack's Senate seat, when he was old enough, in 1962. Bobby functioned for most of Jack's term as nearly a co-president, overseeing the war on crime, the civil rights crisis, backchannel approaches to the Soviet Union, guerrilla wars in Southeast Asia, and the Cuban missile crisis.

In some ways, however, Robert was less close to his brother than has been commonly thought. They did not socialize, and, while Bobby was an open book to his brother, the more elusive Jack Kennedy had facets Bobby seldom saw. The president (and his wife) dis-

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liked the rowdy atmosphere of children and celebrities at Bobby's Hickory Hill estate. Nor were Bobby and Ethel often at the White House after working hours. The president "rigidly divided his relationships, separating 'staff' (the Irish Mafia and Ted Sorensen) from his social friends," Thomas writes. "RFK was, in a certain sense, staff."

Yet at work the brothers tended to blend, able to communicate in family shorthand, or even in no words at all. In the unwritten bargain worked out between them, John Kennedy gave his brother access to all arms of government, often overriding the authority of those technically in office. In return, Bobby picked up for his brother, in all his touchy areas of life. Being the keeper to this brother was no small endeavor, and Thomas entitles his final pre-Dallas chapter "Worn." By late 1963, Bobby was visibly aging, losing substance and energy, and thinking of a change of duties inside the administration.

In a book studded with terse, pungent headings, "Mourner" comes right after "Worn." JFK's death in Dallas cost Bobby not only his job and his brother, but his sense of himself in his world. He had been the servant, and now there was no one to look up to and work for. There was a parallel problem, as well, for it is sometimes forgotten how much his brother looked after *him*. John Kennedy had given Bobby unparalleled access and power, without his having to think about manners or consequence, shielded by JFK's office and political skills. Jack could laugh at Bobby, but he also admired him. "He thought Bobby was . . . the sacred one," said Jack's friend Charles Spalding; he was the one who expressed the anger and the moral vision the cooler president was reluctant to let show. Jack had a constituency of two hundred million; Bobby a constituency of one. Now, for his own ambition and his brother's memory, he had to work for the good will of others, to have them *want* to have him as a leader.

John Kennedy was the last iconic figure of the World War II-Cold War consensus, a group that was elite, bipartisan, and assured. Robert Kennedy was the first iconic figure of the disruption that followed, and what made him so "hot" as a political leader was that the era's sense of anger and perceived injustice mirrored what he felt inside himself. In 1964 he won a Senate seat from New York, but, bored with the Senate's rules and procedures, he took more interest in productions like his community development program for Bedford-Stuyvesant and in trips to Poland, South Africa, and South America, where he was treated like a god by the oppressed.

As time went on, it became increasingly easy for even dispassionate people to be troubled by Lyndon Johnson's handling of the war in Asia and the turn the Great Society was taking. But with Robert Kennedy, the policy dissension was also fueled by inner rage. It was unfair that some people were terribly poor, that race was a burden, that young men, most of them poor, died in a war past explaining. And it was unfair too that his brother was dead, unfair that he and his friends had lost power, unfair that, largely through his own hard work, a man he detested now sat in his dead brother's chair. Interviewing him in 1967, Saul Bellow saw the origin of

William Morrow; AP / Wide World Photos.

Left: John Kennedy Jr. at the 1988 Democratic convention. Right: Patrick Kennedy with President Clinton.

his ambitions: "He never for a moment stopped thinking about his brother. He seemed to be continually grieving. . . . He was literally, muscularly, tense about it. His face was convulsed with some great emotional charge. He was nourishing his grief. It gave him energy." Bellow thought he never wanted it to die.

For the Kennedy family, the dynastic goal after Bobby's death on June 6, 1968, became more than ever a burden: It is likely that, without the fierce pressure to run for president that descended upon him, Edward Kennedy would now be more slim and sober, his first wife would have been less self-destructive, and Mary Jo Kopechne would be alive today. Certainly the current political career of his son Patrick is a striking example of the temptations and traps of the dynastic dynamic, which can make a career out of practically nothing and destroy one's private happiness at once.

Patrick never knew his uncle John, who was murdered four years before he was born. He was one year old when his uncle Robert was murdered, and two when the accident at Chappaquiddick doomed his father's presidential hopes. His mother was a severe alcoholic, his father an intermittent one; their marriage broke down when Patrick was seven and ended formally when he was thirteen. Through his childhood, he suffered fierce bouts of asthma, and he entered a program for drug and alcohol abuse in his late teens.

After dropping out of Georgetown because of "the overwhelming presence of my family in Washington," he went to Providence College—and then startled everyone by running for the Rhode Island General Assembly. Politics, said an observer, "had one virtue that Patrick found desirable. It provided structure, and gave him people who organized his life."

Darrell M. West's recent *Patrick Kennedy: The Rise to Power* is useful, but shallow and partisan. It takes at face value Patrick Kennedy's faith (not shared by his two most famous uncles) in the expanding welfare state and his view that, under a Republican Congress, centuries of progress in the human rights area "are under constant threat of being eroded and dismantled every single day." Worse, West seems determined to portray Patrick Kennedy as a more-or-less normal politician, while the truth is that his career has been based wholly on the family money that got him elected and the money that can be wrung by the family name out of gullible donors.

In Patrick's first race, photogenic members of his famous family stood outside the polls to have their pictures taken with voters before they went in to pull the lever. "His campaign was an all-Kennedy affair, complete with appearances by JFK Jr. and Patrick's father," Robert Dreyfuss wrote in the *Nation*. "Patrick spent $87,000 to win the part-time, $300 a year position." When Patrick ran for Congress in 1994, the entire dynasty helped him. "Star-studded fund-raisers . . . included numerous Kennedys and friends like . . . Sargent Shriver, Pierre Salinger, Jack Valenti, and Tip O'Neill, helping Patrick amass $1 million."

In 1998 he reached the House leadership, being named chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, less for any political talents than for wringing huge sums of cash out of liberal donors, by touching the sacred chords of Kennedy memory. He has created a club for $100,000-plus donors, whom he invites to picnics at the family estate. "What Kennedy excels in is raising money," writes Michael Barone in *The Almanac of American Politics*. "He is probably the single biggest draw at fund-raisers around the country."

When they first reached Congress at the start of 1947, both John Kennedy and Richard Nixon were picked out by party leaders as spokesmen and as possible presidents. No such assessments have come Patrick's way. "My strengths are not being a legislative titan," he once admitted. "My strengths are not being taken that seriously on the substance side." Despite his fast rise and current celebrity, this fact may now be weighing on the young man who has always worried that he wasn't "Kennedy enough." He revealed last fall that the pressures of being a Kennedy caused him to suffer anxiety and depression.

Among those electioneering in Patrick's first race was his cousin John F. Kennedy Jr., though, as observers noted, he seemed half-hearted, and had

to be pushed into doing his job. Later, he sought out the assemblyman Patrick had challenged to say, "I don't like being here. I don't think it's fair for me to be here. . . . The only reason I'm here is for my cousin. But I don't believe in it."

From stories like this, and details in *The Day John Died* by Christopher Andersen, it becomes clear that this most courted of heirs to Camelot spent his short life trying to avoid the kind of career his cousin Patrick embraced. Stunningly handsome, appallingly rich, heir to his mother's glamour as well as to the mystique of the father he could not remember, this most striking of all the grandsons of Joseph P. Kennedy seemed terribly wary of being too tempted by even more fame than he had already, of being made use of by other people, and of being steamrollered into doing something he might not want.

John's cousins, the senator's sons, were brought up in largely political households. The president's son was raised in a more private setting, by a mother who attempted to forearm him. She sent him to survival camps and to work on ranches while she minimized his exposure to the raucous Kennedy kin. What once seemed charming—if hectic—in the Kennedys now appeared toxic and threatening. ("One of the big decisions Jackie made in her life was to get the children . . . away from the Kennedys," said her friend Peter Duchin. "One summer, Jackie sent John on a diving expedition to Micronesia. . . . She said to me, 'Do you think that's far enough away?'")

Pursued all his life by political suitors, JFK Jr. learned early on to evade them. He led them on with his appearance at the 1988 Democratic convention, but then withdrew, uncertain of what he wanted but sure enough of what he did not want. "I have a slightly contrarian impulse I can't seem to shake," Andersen quotes him. "It's always sort of fun to try and play with blocks and see what you can come up with that's a little bit different."

What he came up with was *George*, a magazine mixing dazzle and politics, that may have mirrored his experience of life. It surprised many by being relatively non-partisan. Would he ever have gone into electoral politics? He defined himself as having an inquisitive, as opposed to a partisan, temperament. Friends think he would have been reluctant to give up what little remained of his privacy or to take something he did not think he had earned. When he died last year at thirty-eight in a plane crash, he was apparently still toying with the idea of running for an executive post, such as mayor or governor. A friend of his said that he and Senator Al D'Amato "tried to convince John to run for mayor of New York City—as a Republican. It was in jest at first, but John was really thinking it over. In many ways, John was quite conservative . . . more of a Republican than a Democrat. He had such a sense of what was appropriate behavior—John knew right from wrong."

What John Jr. seemed to realize is that a family connection, without some defining vision of one's own, can sustain only a small life in politics. His father had followed *his* father's wishes to take up a life in politics. But JFK became a leader—and legend—only when he defined his own public persona apart from his father and different from what his older brother's would have been. Robert Kennedy became a powerful figure only when he found his own voice. Ted Kennedy could not appeal to a national audience, even with the nostalgia for *two* murdered brothers. Nor could Bobby's sons.

It is notable that the one rising star in the Kennedy family now is Kathleen Kennedy Townsend—who was never brought up to be president, did not use family fanfare, did not run in a "Kennedy state," lost her first race for Congress, and paid her dues while toiling in dull government jobs.

An instant career, based on one's relatives' fame, can seem very appealing. But like most presents, it never comes free. ♦

An English Life

The serio-comedy of Kingsley Amis.

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

On April 15, 1953, in a note attached to the typescript of his first novel, *Lucky Jim*, Kingsley Amis told his editor, "Serio-comedy is the formula really, though if it gets by at all I imagine it'll get by chiefly on the score of the comic angle."

It would have saddened Amis to know just how correct he would prove. Having finished doctoral studies at Oxford, Amis was then at his first teaching post, at the University of Swansea. On the one hand, he was a work-addicted literary scholar with a razor-sharp mind, who had won his way out of South London's lower-middle class to a wide erudition, who spent much of his time composing verse in tricky metrics, and who grew bored when conversation drifted too far from English literature. On the other hand, he was—once he got the money to lead the life—a wild libertine and bottle-a-day man whose sexual recklessness, his novelist son Martin relates in the new memoir *Experience*, "often approached the psychotic."

Lucky Jim became a bestseller in England and America, was translated into dozens of languages, and is still in print. It is widely, if not universally, considered the funniest novel written since the Second World War. While none of his two dozen later novels matched that success, Amis remained loyal to an exacting set of literary principles—honesty, clarity, propriety—and capable of carrying them out in any form, from literary novels to genre fiction (science fic-

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tion, mystery) to short stories to criticism to poems to theater to autobiography. Yet *Lucky Jim* imprisoned Amis in a public caricature. Since his most popular novels are full of seduction and drinking, he was sometimes taken as a mere yuk-yuk artist, a sort of proletarian and boozy Wodehouse, an Angry Young Waugh. With a few exceptions (Paul Fussell's excellent critical study *The Anti-Egotist: Kingsley Amis, Man of Letters* is one of them), Amis has not been taken terribly seriously as a writer.

To read the newly published *Letters of Kingsley Amis* is to see just how unfair that verdict is. True, they display an explosive sense of humor at its broadest, but they also show one of the few genuinely independent-minded writers of our time, hewing tenaciously to his calling despite gargantuan obstacles, most of them self-imposed.

The obsession that defined Amis as both man and writer was a hatred of authority, particularly any authority that rested on pretense and posturing. This obsession may have been innate, or it may have arisen from a smothering upbringing as an only child under constant surveillance. Kingsley's father thwarted his literary ambitions: Reading in company was rude, he held; reading in private was anti-social. Worse than that, according to Martin, Kingsley's father "persecuted my father with boredom." Amis came to hate boredom and bores with a crusading passion. Nothing less would do, he thought, because of what he called the "burning sincerity of all boredom." Bores, meanwhile, were not just uninteresting, but evil, because they were opportunistic, selfish, and judgmental. A bore, Amis said, is "the sort that sits there looking at you and waiting for you to say something he/she will despise you for."

Amis had two great friends in his life: the poet Philip Larkin, whom he met at Oxford during the war; and Robert Conquest, a London literary pal and light-verse poet who went on to become the century's great Sovietologist. Larkin, too, hated pretense, liked to joke, and loved jazz. "I enjoy talking to you more than to anybody else," Amis wrote in 1946, "because I never feel I am giving myself away and so can admit to shady, dishonest, crawling, cowardly, brutal, unjust, arrogant, snobbish, lecherous, perverted and generally shameful feelings that I don't want anyone else to know about; but most of all because I am always on the verge of violent laughter when talking to you, and because you are *savagely uninterested in all the things I am uninterested in.*"

The correspondence with Larkin, which takes up almost all of the first three hundred pages of the *Letters*, is full of anagrams and riddles ("you old bugger" becomes "you old bugar" and then "oyu dol Barug," until what Auden and Isherwood did together is described as "rugby"); private jazz jokes, like turning poets into solo performers or combos (including Geoffrey "Smoking Turd" Chaucer, and "Bill" Langland and his Ploughmen of Rhythm); and scatological humor, like the unspoken agreement—honored until the week Larkin died in 1985—to end every letter with the word bum, in some silly context. ("Many wept for joy to see the Queen standing at last on her bum," Amis writes in 1954.)

The Letters of Kingsley Amis
edited by Zachary Leader
HarperCollins, 1,208 pp., £24.99

Experience
A Memoir
by Martin Amis
Talk Miramax, 240 pp., $23.95

The lion's share of their correspondence, however, was about literature. Larkin, too, was independent minded—but slightly more reverent and considerably more polite. Amis was absolutely ferocious, even rude, in the face of the English literature canon as it was handed down at St. John's College, Oxford, in the 1940s. His proudest boast is, "All wrong-thinking people will agree with me."

Amis could never rid himself of the idea that literary pedagogy was a Potemkin village, an illegitimate and authoritarian power structure that operated much like his family. "I always thought that Eng Lit *ought to be good*," he writes Larkin after a year of graduate school. "I still think it, only it *isn't*." After reading all of John Dryden, "the dryden" became his currency of poetic overratedness: Samuel Johnson traded at .5 drydens, Keats at .4, Ben Jonson tied with Shelley at .85, and Milton was way up there, vying for the dryden laurels with "Smoking Turd" Chaucer at .9.

He disliked modernism (his favorite poets were Shakespeare, Tennyson, Betjeman, Graves, and of course Larkin), and was even harsher on modern writers. "Honestly, can you see anything in [Ezra Pound]?" he writes. "Buggered if I can. *I can't see what people mean* who say he's good. I mean, good *in any way at all*." Gerard Manley Hopkins is simply "a bad poet." Robert Bridges is "a bumblock of the first order, . . . his silly private language annoys me—'what I am in the habit of calling inscape' *well getoutofthehabitthen*."

Of Nathanael West, he tells Larkin: "What a stupid *liar* the man is; I feel when reading him as I do with Virginia Woolf: I want to keep saying 'No he didn't', 'No, it didn't happen as you describe it,' 'No, that isn't what he thought,' 'No, that's just what she didn't say.'" Ted Hughes, meanwhile, "is as ABSOLUTELY DEVOID OF ANY KIND OF MERIT WHATSOEVER as his late wife [Sylvia Plath] was, isn't he?"

Talk Miramax. Opposite: HarperCollins.

Kingsley and Hilly Amis with their children in 1955

Wagner, Lawrence, Lillian Hellman, Seamus Heaney—they're all phonies and poseurs. But the all-surpassing modern pseud is Dylan Thomas—later "Mr. Thos" and thence "Mr. Toss": "I have got to the stage now with mr toss that I have only reached with Chaucer and Dryden, not even with Milton, that of VIOLENTLY WISHING that the man WERE IN FRONT OF ME, so that I could be DEMONIACALLY RUDE to him about his GONORRHEIC RUBBISH, and end up by WALKING ON HIS FACE and PUNCHING HIS PRIVY PARTS." (In a cruel posthumous twist, Amis, perhaps because he was the most famous writer living in Wales, would be named one of Thomas's literary executors.)

Nor did Amis like W.H. Auden. After reading Auden's long poem *The Age of Anxiety*, written in *Beowulf*-meter, Amis writes: "I have read some of The anxiety, by that crazy Awdon type, and find it Impossible piss plashing in a pot, Shameful shagbaggery, and shite surely." Such parody might not have bothered Auden, who once wrote that the best form of criticism—and the only one he would permit in his "ideal university"—was parody. If Auden is correct, then Amis is one of the great critics of the century, for these letters are filled with dashed-off, pitch-perfect sendups (the best of which is of Thomas Hardy's "Afterwards"). Such exercises, along with the writing of pornographic novels, were Larkin and Amis's favorite hobby. They called it "horse-pissing," the goal of which was "denigration-by-obscene-accretion."

Both were pessimistic. Their only difference was in temperament. Where Amis was a *carpe-diem*, lust-for-life sort, Larkin had an ascetic leaning, an "emotional parsimony," as Amis put it, that would harden into a lifestyle in early adulthood. "You have never, I feel, forced yourself on people in the way I have," Amis wrote Larkin in 1948. "You appear to me as far less irresponsible than I am. But at the moment I'm in a better position than you are. It's a pity that nothing can be done to redress the balance, except by my vague offers of hospitality that isn't much use to you." Larkin assumed that their different lives had more to do with the fact that women found Amis strikingly attractive and Larkin frumpy. Whatever the reason, at a certain point, Amis started living life, and Larkin didn't.

In one of the most gripping letters, written in January 1948, Amis gives Larkin a blow-by-blow of the fiasco surrounding the pregnancy of his nineteen-year-old girlfriend, Hilly. After convincing her to get an abortion, Amis paid £100 to "the nasty man," as he describes the abortionist. (The incident is fictionalized in Amis's *You Can't Do Both*.) When told by a friend that Hilly would be rendered sterile by the procedure and could well die, he proposed to her. The first of their three children, Philip, was born seven months later.

Martin Amis, born barely a year after that, assures us in *Experience* that Kingsley was a loving, even doting father, in a gruff way. Less than half of Martin's absorbing book deals with Kingsley, but all of it is wise, and—judging by his father's letters—clear-sighted. Kingsley Amis's marriage was difficult from the beginning. By July 1949, he was well launched on adultery, writing to Larkin about taking the first steps toward seducing a fifteen-year-old girl ("This is true, but I don't expect you to believe it"—a locution he uses with such frequency that he comes to abbreviate it to TITBIDEYTBI). He soon adds: "Two of my girl pupils told me the other evening that I am alpha-plus for women, and that they wish I wasn't married, so you see what a strain it is to stay vertical with them." Months later, he writes: "That old winged boa-constrictor, sex, still has me in his coils." Hilly discovered his adulteries and began committing her own.

In 1963, Amis took a three-week vacation with his new mistress, the novelist Elizabeth Jane Howard, and returned home to find Hilly and the children had cleared out. He would later look on the episode—it's almost as if he mislaid his marriage—as the biggest mistake of his life. He and Howard married, and he sought to get his habits under control. Trying to cut down on drinking, he boasted of a "light" weekend: "Fell from grace on Saturday night—and thus held a public quarrel in a pub on the Sunday evening. But otherwise good: yesterday's score: 1 sherry, 2 beers, 3 gins, 1/2 bottle Beaujolais." Hilly, meanwhile, moved to Ann Arbor and opened a fish-and-chip shop called Lucky Jim's—a detail so sad it would sound implausible in a novel.

Throughout Amis's correspondence, there is a sense that sex and, to a lesser extent, booze are taking him to a place he hadn't intended. "I feel in a sense that 'they can't stop me now,'" he wrote Larkin, "except when I take up my new novel and feel how easy it will be for me to stop myself." Amis grew increasingly self-absorbed, in a way that is noticeable even as early as the first days of *Lucky Jim*'s success. When Amis received from Larkin a draft of "Church Going," one of the half-dozen towering poems of the twentieth century—so obviously so that when the *Times Literary Supplement* first published it, the paper bannered on its cover: "A Wonderful Poem By Philip

Larkin"—Amis replied only: "It seems okay on the whole. . . . Sorry I forgot your bithrayd."

The two passed each other on the way to different genres and lives. Larkin stopped writing novels after publishing two in his early twenties. In 1961 Amis became a fellow in English at Peterhouse, Cambridge, and kept writing poetry, but found it minor. In a letter to Larkin he described "that tight-reined sadness that's your strong suit and which I can't hope to touch." A sullen distance grew up between the two of them. When Amis quit Cambridge to write full-time, and gave a series of sour newspaper interviews before leaving for the Mediterranean with Elizabeth Jane, Larkin complained to Robert Conquest: "I think it wd have been more graceful of K. to glide out of Cambridge without all this public posturing. If he made a mistake in thinking he could write there that's his fault, not anyone else's: no need to try to put them in the wrong. I can't imagine Majorca will be any better. Whose flat will he borrow there? Who'll he screw?"

Robert Conquest shared with Amis a love of racy verse and a sensible anti-communism. Amis had been a Communist when he arrived at Oxford in the 1940s. (The first entry in the *Letters* takes a fellow Red to task for bolting the party.) But since his politics, like his literary values, were formed around the central idea of anti-authoritarianism, communism could never have held him long. With the invasion of Hungary in 1956, Amis came to feel he'd been duped and in his resentment began addressing irate letters to all the papers he read. These would continue to the end of his life. In 1975, he wrote to the *Times* to attack the high-ranking Labourite Tony Benn: "Mr. Raymond Fletcher seriously misrepresents me. I have never written that Mr. Wedgwood Benn has gone off his head. What I said was that he looks and sounds as if he is off his head. I feel sure he is not; but as one without training as an alienist, I offer this view with due humility."

Amis's right-wing dyspepsia was provoked not just by Communists and Labour politicians, but progressives of

Talk Miramax.

Martin and Kingsley Amis in the early 1970s

every stripe. In the *Daily Telegraph* he expressed his "warm approval of the Post Office plan to abandon alphabetical order in its directory listings. . . . Among the advantages of such a change would be the following: 1. It would be a change. 2. The existing system works perfectly well. 3. A great deal of expense and trouble would be called for. 4. There would be chaos during the period of change-over. 5. Nobody wants it. 6. Nobody would benefit."

In the 1980s, he summed up the progressive philosophy as "Sod the Public," and dismissed its exponents as "F—ing Fools." His son Martin was one of these. Being a F—ing Fool didn't mean you were stupid; it just meant you ought to know better. When Martin informed him he was at work on a book about nuclear weapons, Kingsley replied, "Ah, I suppose you're . . . 'against them,' are you?" Kingsley angered Martin with his frequent and strident disparagement of Nelson Mandela. It wasn't until Martin read the Amis letters and saw Mandela wasn't mentioned at all that he realized his father had merely been baiting him, and hadn't cared much about Mandela one way or the other.

The same goes for Amis's liberal use of ethnic slurs and stereotypes. Describing a photographer who will be coming to visit Larkin, Amis remarks, "He's a decent sort of shag. John Goldblatt by name—though he ate a couple of pork chops unhesitatingly enough." This kind of language has led some to condemn Amis as racist and anti-Semitic, but it's fairer to consider it a reluctance to leave any humorous stone unturned. Anti-Semitic jokes, he wrote to Anthony Thwaite, were "not my style, I hope."

Two trips to America drove him even further right. The American academics he met were "all very un-American," he wrote Larkin from Princeton in 1959. He wrote Conquest from Vanderbilt in 1967, "I met *one* chap who was solid on V Nam. His wife has enormous tits so he's clearly the sort of ally one wants." Amis was a passionate pro-American on Vietnam, wrote letters to expose the North Vietnamese use of flame-throwers, and sincerely believed that marijuana was a Soviet plot to weaken American morale. The 1980s were thus a happy time. "US intellectuals and lefties must be in a state," he wrote Conquest, "just over Reagan generally. Good show."

For his part, Conquest—the pseudonymous author of some of the bawdier lyrics in Amis's *New Oxford Book of Light Verse*—pressed Amis not to be indiscreet. By this time, Conquest was advising Margaret Thatcher on foreign policy. The last thing he needed was for some Soviet sympathizer to remark:

"and we understand that Mrs T is taking foreign policy advice from a gentleman whose man claim to fame is as the author of A Young Engine Driver Called Hunt."

Along the way, Amis had picked up an entire menu of phobias. He had been terrified of flying since childhood, refused to spend a night alone in a house, wouldn't travel alone, and was prey to panic attacks. Hilly would often walk Kingsley into Martin's bedroom in the middle of the night after he'd had nightmares about "leaving his body." Her rationale was that, in front of the children, he wouldn't allow himself to appear as scared as he really was.

These phobias were something he almost never spoke about, except to Larkin. By the early 1970s, life had worn Amis out physically. Just turned fifty, he sounds like an old man: "No real news here: all the exciting things seem to be happening to Bob. *I* just prod at the sodding keyboard, more and more every month, running like buggery to stay somewhere near the same place. Off to Wopland like a fool at the end of the week—not for long. Just the feeling you want to do what you won't be able to do again, ever, in a year or two." By 1979, he was writing to Larkin: "On my self-pity themes, don't tempt me, son." At fifty-five, this great sybaritic machine had ground down.

In 1980, Jane Howard gave Amis a Johnnie-Walker-or-me ultimatum, and Amis replied: Johnnie Walker. Left without companionship, he began to eat for consolation ("It seems to calm me down"), and over the remaining fifteen years of his life grew "absolutely, tremendously fat." His children quickly came up with a solution to his solitude. He would pay the mortgage on a house that Hilly and her third husband, then short on funds, could move into. So Amis spent the last fifteen years of his life in a chaste *ménage à trois* with the woman he increasingly felt he should never have left.

And he began writing Larkin again, with the same puns, imprecations ("you burag you"), sign-offs ending in "bum," and salacious humor mixed with literary wisdom—as when he explained to Larkin why he had decided to give up work on a novel with a gay narrator:

> Of course since only about 17 people in the country know what a novel is, the rest will think I must be one of the boys myself. And I don't need that, do I? . . . See, most people forget that the novelist is continuously trying to fool them into believing he's really felt what his characters feel. So when they come to an extra convincing bit of queer's feelings they're going to say, "He couldn't have invented that, he must be writing out of personal experience, the dirty . . . sodomising bugger."

In 1985, Larkin wrote his last letter to Amis before disappearing into the hospital for treatment of an inoperable cancer. It ends: "You will excuse the absence of the usual valediction, Yours ever, Philip."

In *Experience*, Martin Amis is particularly sensitive to the way the correspondence in the last decade of Larkin's life picks up where it left off before *Lucky Jim*. It is the same adolescent friendship, but without the disparity in animal magnetism that took the friends on such different paths. "They are finally equal," Martin writes, "equal before God and a godless death, and also physically and—for the first time—sexually equal." After Larkin's death in 1985, "the remaining decade of my father's life, as seen here, could almost be considered detachable, like an addendum."

Amis was far from worn out mentally. The last decade of his life was his most productive. He cranked out novels at the rate of one a year, including a half-dozen of his very best. A big problem was that Amis fell down a lot when he was drunk. After one such incident, his mind remained cloudy and he began to fail. "He keeps typing the word 'seagulls,'" Hilly worried in 1995. "He gets up at 5 in the morning and types *i*s and *o*s." Martin arrived one day to find him with a notepad filled with misremembered phone numbers, next to one of which he had written, "COMPLETELY RELAHIBLE." His mind—surely a hellish place to inhabit for a lot of the time—had given out. He died a few days later.

For an anti-authoritarian like Amis, the difficulty lies always in discriminating between the times one is making an important stand for one's freedom and dignity (whether as an artist or a person) and the times one is just engaging in adolescent ego-indulgence. Amis wasn't much good at such discrimination—but then, not many people are. If he sought a portion of sensual excitement greater than the normal lot, he was unusually clear-headed about the price: a portion of trial and unhappiness greater than the normal lot. "Well, it's all experience," as Amis wrote to Conquest in 1989, "though it's a pity there had to be so much of it." ♦

Asleep at the Switch

England then, America now.

BY LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

"The chief practical use of history," James Bryce wrote, "is to deliver us from plausible historical analogies." That fairly summarizes the dim view the profession has of analogies that reduce complex issues to, say, another Vietnam or Munich. If two events seem similar in one way, the determined polemicist is sure to insist they agree in others. As historian David Hackett Fischer noted, when they fall into the wrong hands, analogies become dangerous weapons, employed as substitutes, rather than auxiliaries, to proof.

And yet, when applied wisely, analogies can clarify. In fact, as supplements

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to reasoned argument or tools of amplification and illustration, they are useful to historical writing, and, when handled with care, often illuminate.

Donald and Frederick Kagan, historians at Yale and West Point respectively (and father and son), use an analogy to illuminate our present situation in *While America Sleeps: Self-Delusion, Military Weakness and the Threat to Peace Today*. Their comparison of Britain during the interwar period with America now, is meant to be a wake-up call. "America is in danger," they warn in the opening sentence. But theirs is a polemic that manages, through meticulous detail, careful qualification, and absence of exaggeration, to avoid twisting the historical record.

Still, the parallels between the two eras are meant to alarm, and they do. If recent history has confounded the expectation that the post-Cold War era would be a period of international harmony, this vision, a staple of British thinking in the period after the First World War, was not so easily shaken then. Just as U.S. policymakers in recent years have been assuring Americans that their future will reduce to a simple narrative of material progress and moral improvement, so too did British officials insist a new era would abolish the complexities of international politics.

In place of strategic thinking, they embraced instead the serene conviction that commercial relations and treaties were properly a cause rather than an effect of peace—a belief that should have been repudiated decisively at the Marne. As the Kagans summarize the thinking of those years, "The conventional wisdom of the past must be rejected; strategy, alliances, armaments, military forces had been the causes of wars in the past. The rejection of these things and the way of thinking that went with them is what would bring peace."

This line of thinking, neatly exemplified by the Locarno agreements of 1925, which essentially forbade war between Europe's major powers, also responded to multiple needs unrelated to Britain's faith in the power of treaties. To begin with, England's leaders, and even more so its public, were understandably determined to recover from the carnage of the war that had just ended. The Kagans allude to our "Vietnam syndrome," but, as they concede, that scarcely captures the price that the Somme and Passchendael had exacted from Britain's soul. As Lloyd George put it, the task for England now was "to make Britain a fit country for heroes to live in." And the policy implications were clear: England should curtail its strategic commitments abroad and, as George McGovern would advise America to do a half century later, come home.

Bettmann / CORBIS

Neville Chamberlain

While America Sleeps
Self-Delusion, Military Weakness and the Threat to Peace Today
by Donald Kagan and Frederick W. Kagan
St. Martin's, 480 pp., $32.50

Though understandable, the impulse to turn inward was misguided. At the time, Britain was, like the United States today, a hinge of world order. Were it to wash its hands of the world's problems, those problems would soon enough multiply and imperil England directly. But absent in London was even the inclination to attend to Britain's imperial obligations. In what has since become the favorite cliché of American politicians, British conservative leader Bonar Law declared in 1922 that "we cannot act alone as the policeman of the world." Rather, peace would be guaranteed as a result of three things: international law, military technology, and appeasement.

As to the first of these, from the Versailles treaty to Munich twenty years later, the worthless and unenforceable accord was a leitmotif of the interwar period—just as it has become a staple of Clintonite diplomacy in North Korea, China, and the Balkans. The terms of Versailles, for example, harsh on Germany and difficult to enforce, were progressively watered down and eventually abandoned altogether. Then, too, the League of Nations, which, like the United Nations, was to preserve international order through collective security, fared no better than its successor.

True, many British officials, particularly those in the defense establishment, harbored suspicions about the power of the parchment. Fortunately, England fielded a powerful insurance policy in its armed forces. But just like their American counterparts in the early 1990s, British leaders during the 1920s seemed to view the country's military establishment less as an instrument of strategy than a burdensome drain on the national treasury.

Intent on reaping a "peace dividend," officials pared the military to the bone and tailored strategic forecasts to reflect their parsimony. Notoriously, they devised successive "ten-year rules," which justified paltry defense expenditures on the basis of predictions of a lasting peace. These rules were abandoned only in 1932—seven years prior to the outbreak of another world war.

What is less well known, and what the Kagans recount in devastating detail, are the Panglossian assumptions about military technology that governed British military planning—assumptions that are being revived today as if nothing had been learned and nothing remembered. The most notable parallel is the conviction that airpower offers a tool to unshackle decisionmakers from war's iron logic. The Clinton administration has, for example, shown a clear preference for what are known as "stand-off attacks"—missile strikes launched from a suitably safe remove or, if necessary, from manned aircraft. At the same time, it underfunds the army,

rarely permitting it to venture far from home and even then, keeping it on a tight leash to preclude it from causing embarrassment.

The British, too, embraced airpower (and a doctrine of "distant attack") without condition and regardless of consequence. RAF chief Frederick Sykes argued, "In air power we possess a rapid and economical instrument by which to ensure peace and good government in our outer empire." Reeling from the casualties of the First World War and unwilling to expend ample funds to maintain large ground forces, the British government proved an easy sell for the RAF. It even devised a doctrine of "air policing," which was employed to put down insurrections in, among other places, Iraq.

"Air power," the Kagans write, "became a panacea that cured the host of ills caused by military weakness—right up to the time the nation faced a serious test of strength." Important as airpower, and particularly strategic bombing, would prove to be, the resources devoted to its development exacted a steep price from Britain's air defense forces. Languishing from years of neglect, these forces would perform unevenly in the next war.

The most commonly noted, but nonetheless most important, similarity between the two eras pertains to the practice of appeasement. Today, appeasement is a dirty word. But between the wars it was a policy whose worth had yet to be disproved—not unlike the current mantra of "engagement." In fact, the Kagans find engagement, especially in the case of North Korea, to be nothing more than appeasement clothed in new-age rhetoric. They also locate in America's stance toward Iraq echoes of allied fecklessness toward Germany between the wars and reveal some intriguing similarities between 1998's Operation Desert Fox and France's ill-fated occupation of the Ruhr.

What distinguishes the book's treatment of appeasement from hundreds of others before it—and what is sure to be its most controversial aspect—is the chronology it offers. In the conventional telling, British appeasement commences with the decision to turn the other cheek when Hitler remilitarizes the Rhineland and Mussolini invades Ethiopia. True, the inclination was evident even before Hitler takes power. Germany had by that point been rearming for at least six years with little complaint from Britain. But the Kagans go further, contending that the practice dates back to the Locarno accords of 1925, of which the liberal Weimar Republic was the German signatory. "Every day that went by hardened in

AP / Wide World Photos

William Clinton

the minds of successive German governments the desire to overthrow the [Versailles] treaty and strengthened their vast and complex arrangement to subvert it in time."

Clearly, America today lacks a rival on the scale of Germany. China, to be sure, may soon pose such a threat, and the United States has certainly been appeasing it. But the Kagans focus instead on the practice as applied to Saddam Hussein (the chapter on Iraq is entitled "Another Versailles"), Serbia, and North Korea, which, however unseemly, has not been nearly in the same league as Britain's appeasement of Germany. As the Kagans demonstrate, Britain was by the late 1930s appeasing from a position of weakness. Folly though the practice may be, America appeases rogue regimes from a position of strength. This makes the American version all the more inscrutable.

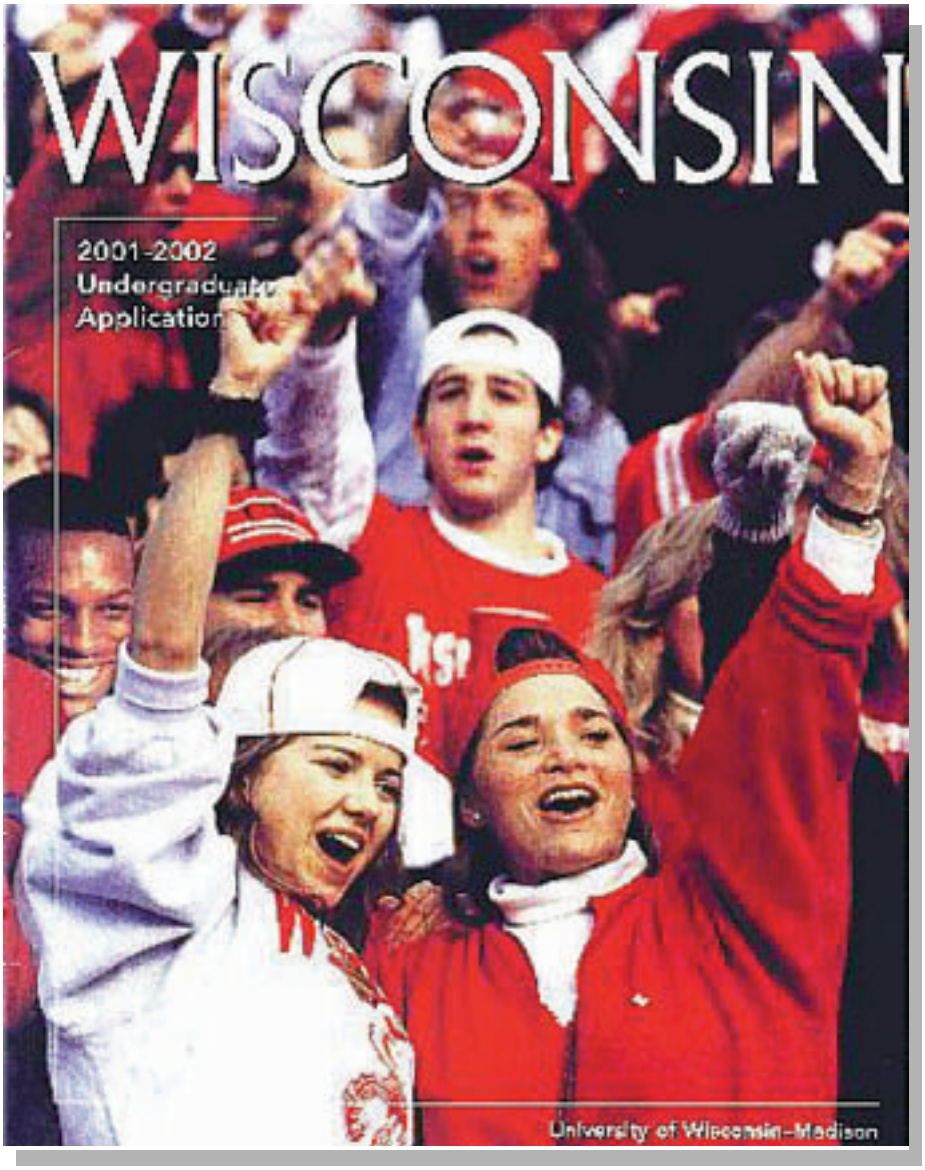
After all, Britain's unwillingness to shoulder its responsibilities was born of economic hardship and unimaginable bloodshed. What's America's excuse? The Kagans correctly reply that there is none. The United States is in the midst of its longest ever period of economic growth. Its political creed has enjoyed near-universal vindication. Far from resenting American power, other nations implore the United States to maintain an active global role. "America has suffered no such recent calamity as World War I," the Kagans add. "The continued wounds received from the 'Vietnam syndrome' are self-inflicted and unnecessary. There is no reason whatsoever why America should not accept the burden fate laid upon her in 1991."

And, yet, it has not. The Kagans do not offer an explanation and seem genuinely puzzled by America's loss of will. But in noting America's unprecedented fortunes, and how sharply this state of affairs contrasts with Britain's misery, they suggest a possible answer: that America's vulnerability derives from its very prosperity. For wealth seems to have dulled Americans' awareness of the threats beyond their shores. It has also had a giddy and sometimes narcotic effect on otherwise sober-minded policymakers who seem convinced that a thriving international economy will suffice to sweep up the detritus of the last century.

But it is a fanciful conceit to imagine that prosperity can be relied on to achieve the foreign policy aims of the United States. Contentment can just as easily undermine America's vigilance. And, measured by the Kagans' indictment of the Clinton years, this is exactly what it has done. America may be repeating Britain's mistakes for very different reasons. But, as the Kagans convincingly demonstrate, it is repeating them nonetheless. ♦

Not a Parody

From the online edition of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, September 20, 2000



UW-Madison Doctors Photo to Stress Diversity

Picture of minority student digitally inserted into shot on application booklet

By Sharif Durhams
of the *Journal Sentinel* staff

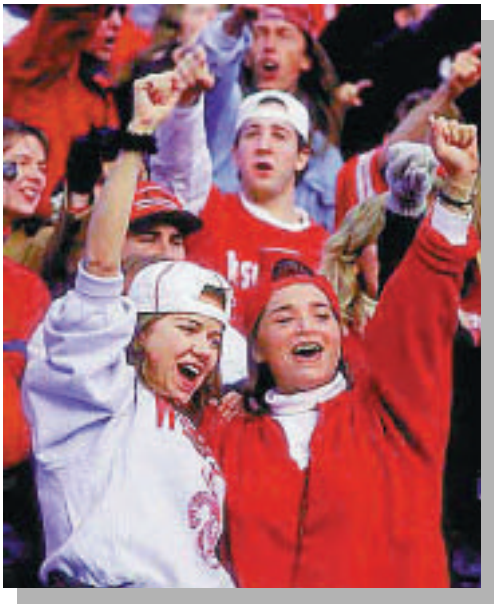
In an effort to promote the University of Wisconsin-Madison as a racially diverse campus, university officials digitally inserted a black student's face into a photograph of white Badger football fans that was used on the cover of their new undergraduate application . . .

The doctored photo (left) appears on the cover of the Wisconsin 2001-'02 admissions application, which is now being reprinted.

The photo of Diallo Shabazz (lower left) was cropped, flipped, and inserted into the original crowd scene.

The original photo (below) shows Badger football fans cheering during a football game at Camp Randall Stadium.

photo: UW-Madison news & public affairs



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