the weekly Standard

FEBRUARY 25, 2002

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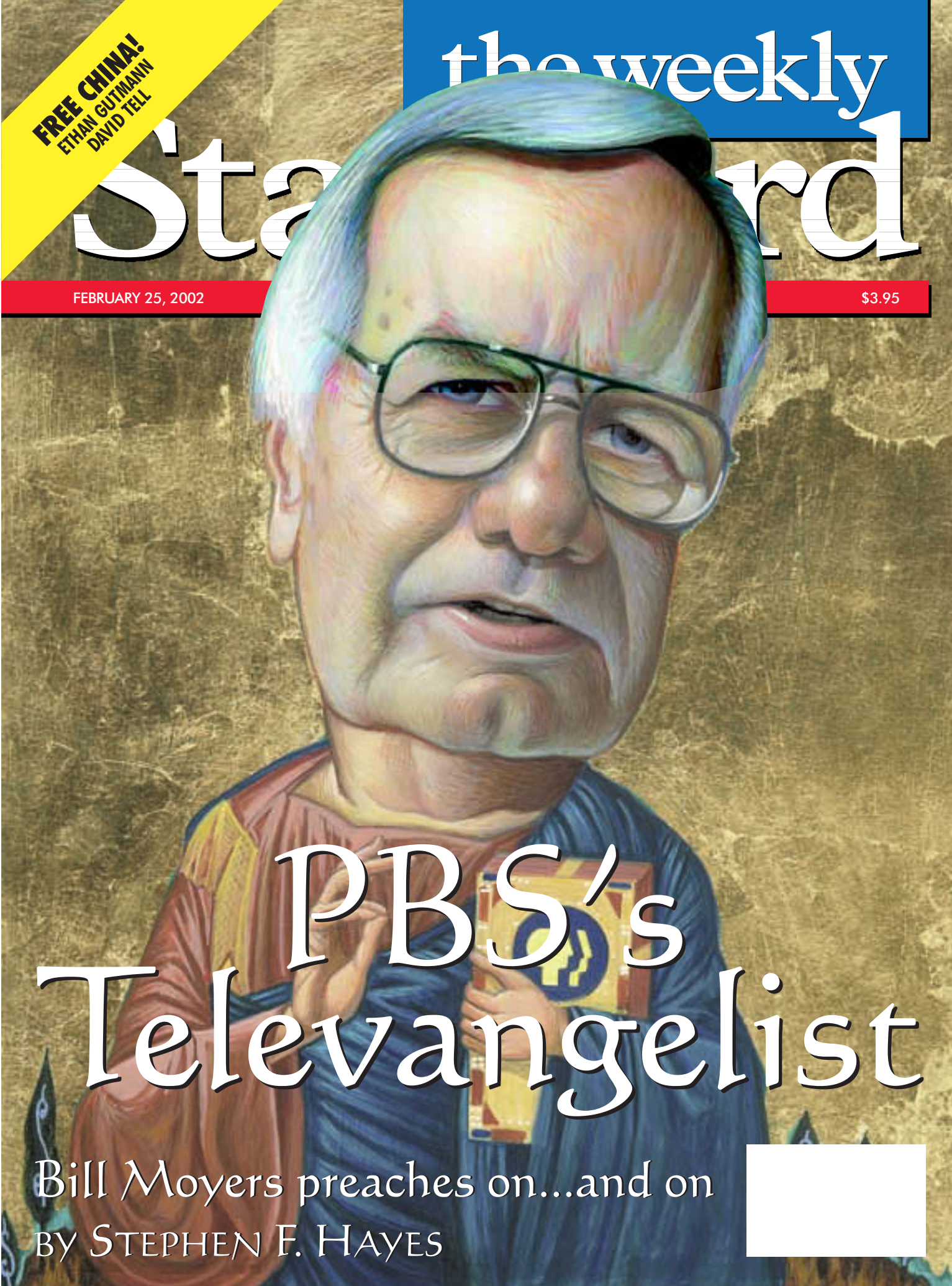

PBS's Televangelist

Bill Moyers preaches on...and on

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Knowledge is pow

It's also securit

responsibility a

independence.

Everyone knows the benefits of homeownership. But not everyone knows the steps. Not everyone knows that good credit is essential for getting a mortgage. That down payments need not overwhelm. Or that the mortgage process isn't quite so scary. For all the first-timers, fear not. Our website, freddiemac.com/homebuyers, now offers a complete step-by-step guide to buying a home. Plus an entire curriculum on the subject of good credit: how to get it, how to keep it and how to use it to finance a home. It's a virtual Homeownership 101 for those just starting out. The diploma is three bedrooms, two baths and a fireplace.

Freddie Mac

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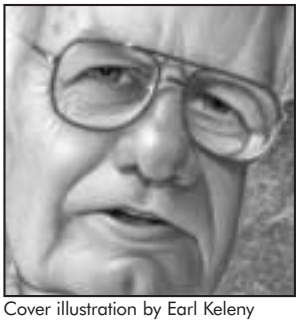

Cover illustration by Earl Keleny

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Books & Arts

the weekly Standard

THE WEEKLY STANDARD (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly (except the second week in January, the fourth week in April, the second week in July, and the fourth week in August) by News America Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153; changes of address to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Yearly subscriptions, $78.00. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-850-682-7653 for subscription inquiries. Visa/MasterCard payment accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send manuscripts and letters to the editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. For a copy of THE WEEKLY STANDARD Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. THE WEEKLY STANDARD Advertising Sales Office in Washington, DC, is 1-202-293-4900. Advertising Production: Call John L. Mackall 1-202-496-3354.

BPA INTERNATIONAL

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The Borking of Pickering (cont.)

As reported in these pages last week, Judiciary Committee Democrats are going hard and heavy after U.S. District Judge Charles Pickering, selected by President Bush for the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. We've seen the law firm of Biden, Kennedy, and Leahy engaged before in various forms of borking. But the Pickering hearings have introduced the nation to a new borker: John Edwards of North Carolina.

It fell—or perhaps it was assigned—to Edwards, who made millions as a plaintiff's lawyer, to cross-examine Judge Pickering about his handling of a case from 1994. Working from Clinton-era Justice Department documents he had in his possession but which Pickering had not seen (how about that for due process, Your Honor?), Edwards accused Pickering of conduct violating the Code of Judicial Ethics.

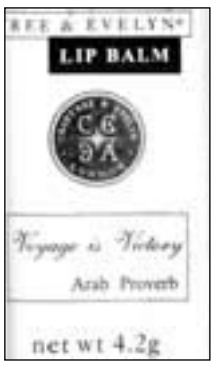
Now that the documents have been made available to everyone, including the judge, it appears at the least that there is another side to the story. Reviewing the issues at the request of Senate Republicans, Michael Krauss, professor of legal ethics at George Mason School of Law, writes, "One is hard pressed to see any violation of Judge Pickering's ethical duties here." And: "[The] documents reveal nothing more than a determined effort by Judge Pickering to discharge, faithfully and competently, his judicial duties under the Constitution."

Drawing on the same documents, Edwards also said Pickering had told "the government lawyers [in the case] that you would on your own motion order a new trial." Pickering denied saying that. And the documents back him up. The pertinent one—a Nov. 29, 1994, memo by prosecutor Brad Berry—said that Pickering had asked whether the Justice Department would agree not to oppose a motion for a new trial on a certain charge. But Berry's memo doesn't say that Pickering said he would call for this trial "on your own motion."

Edwards, who has presidential aspirations, may not have established himself as the equal of the established borkers in his party, but he shows promise. And he certainly has the character. We still remember those ads when he ran for the Senate in 1998, which suggested he was born in North Carolina though in fact he came into the world in Seneca, South Carolina. In case you wonder, there's documentation for that. ♦

Annals of P.R. Ineptitude

The airlines may no longer be able to treat their upscale passengers to real silverware, but that doesn't mean they don't still try to pamper their best customers.



For instance, a frequent-flying friend of THE SCRAPBOOK's recently received some complimentary personal care products for flying business class on U.S. Airways. One item in particular stood out—a stick of lip balm whose label we have reproduced here.

We're guessing (hoping?) it was produced before Sept. 11. In any event, they'll probably want to consider a quick redesign. ♦

New Frontiers in Feminism

Courtesy of the translations done by the Middle East Media Research Institute (*www.memri.org*), we can report that the government-controlled papers in Egypt (as elsewhere in the Arab world) are having second thoughts about feminism. Why? Delight in the January 27 suicide bombing in Jerusalem by a Palestinian woman, Wafa Idris.

Here's columnist Samiya Sa'ad Al-Din in the government daily *Al-Akhbar*: "Palestinian women have torn the gender classification out of their birth certificates, declaring that sacrifice for the Palestinian homeland would not be for men alone; on the contrary, all Palestinian women will write the history of the liberation with their blood, and will become time bombs in the face of the Israeli enemy."

And here's Adel Sadeq, the head of the psychiatry department at Ein Shams University in Cairo: "If it was the Holy Spirit that placed a child in Mary's womb, perhaps that same holy spirit placed the bomb in the heart of Wafa, and enveloped her pure body with dynamite."

So much for the idea that jihad is a man's task. Killing Israelis is just too important to be left to men only. ♦

Victims über alles

The Germans are known for good sausages, dangerous philosophy, goofy hiking outfits, and a few other things besides, but not, last time we checked, for the comedic gift. Were it not for this fact, one could be excused for thinking that the momentous mat-

ing of the German left and right this past week was a parody of the cult of victimization.

For those who missed the story, the *Washington Post* reported last Monday that there is now a movement afoot to help the German people come to terms with the unconscionable suffering inflicted during World War II. The redoubtables leading this charge are the "leftist, Nobel Prize-winning German novelist Günter Grass" and the "Austrian hard-right politician Jörg Haider." (Haider built on his regained prominence by going on a pilgrimage to Iraq last week to meet with fellow humanitarian Saddam Hussein.) These opposed extremists seek to heal the wounds of the past, to acknowledge those voiceless victims forgotten by a harsh and unfeeling world: the German people.

More specifically, they want to raise consciousness on behalf of the "13 million Germans who were expelled from Eastern Europe in 1945 and 1946." THE SCRAPBOOK cannot but be moved by this masterful display of self-forgetting moralism—one unmitigated by anything resembling a sense of proportion. Yes, let us stipulate, many innocent Germans suffered, some horribly, in the aftermath of World War II. But there is something unsettling, to say the least, about Germans' wallowing in their own suffering, in seeking to inspire feelings of guilt in their "tormentors" and evoke sympathy from the rest of the world under the mantra, "We're Victims Too."

Rather than seek acknowledgment of their suffering, it would be healthier for the German people—who let us not forget did not begin to confront in any serious way the crimes of Hitler until the late 1960s—to ask what it was that induced their eastern European neighbors to treat them so harshly in the first place. ♦

Nominations Requested

Applications are invited for the fourth annual Eric Breindel Award for Excellence in Journalism. The award is named for longtime *New York Post* editor and columnist (and WEEKLY STANDARD contributor) Eric Breindel, who died in 1998 at the age of 42. It is presented each year to the columnist, editorialist, or reporter whose work best reflects the spirit of Breindel's too-short career: love of country, concern for the preservation and integrity of democratic institutions, and resistance to the evils of totalitarianism.

Last year's winner was *National Review* managing editor (and WEEKLY STANDARD alum) Jay Nordlinger; previous winners were columnist Tom Flannery of the Scranton, Pa., *Carbondale News,* and columnist Jeff Jacoby of the *Boston Globe*.

For an application and further information about this year's contest, which once again features a $10,000 award, please contact Sheila Malecki of the Eric Breindel Memorial Foundation at (212) 930-8692. Deadline for submissions is April 26. The recipient will be announced in June. ♦

Casual

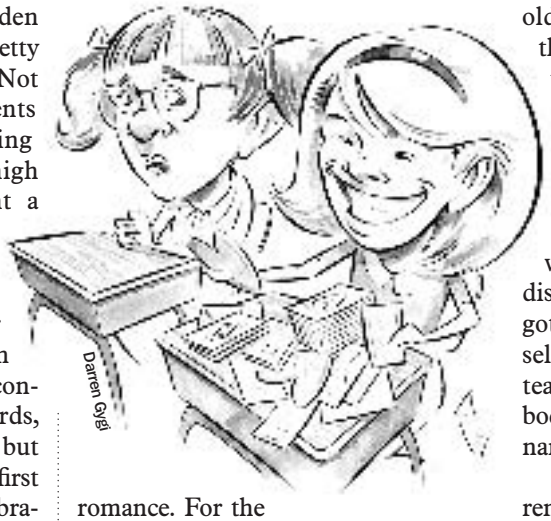
First Degraders

Last week, the powers that be at our local elementary school laid down the law for its annual Valentine's Day bash. Any kid who wanted to give out *any* valentines had to give them to everyone in his class. What's more, any kid who gave out valentines had to give the *same* valentine to all his friends. This would seem to put the frosting (of radical egalitarianism) on the cake (of teacherly bossiness).

But I can see their point. I was a schoolchild in the country's golden age of libertarianism, when kids pretty much got to set their own rules. Not just in high school (where students demanded, and got, a smoking lounge); and not just in junior high (where the whine of "We want a movie!" would reliably forestall a history lecture—which was bound to be about the teacher's reminiscences of Vietnam war protests, anyway); and not just in grade school (where music class consisted of listening to Beatles records, and French of eating crêpes) . . . but right down into kindergarten and first grade, where Valentine's Day celebrations meant to showcase youthful sweetness turned into episodes out of *Lord of the Flies*.

I won't say Valentine's Day is the lousiest holiday of the year (it is, of course, but I won't say it), but it certainly has the lousiest signature food. If Halloween is candy corn and Thanksgiving is pumpkin pie and Christmas is petit-fours, Valentine's Day is those chalky, rock-hard little pastel hearts that taste like they were pared off the end of some slum-barber's styptic pencil. To make matters worse, they are imprinted with nothing-phrases like YU + ME = LOTSA LUV, which would be taken as raunchy come-ons if adults said them and seem to hold as a general principle that there's something dreamily romantic about atrocious spelling. (You *have* to eat these things, of course. It's like airplane food. You're six. You're sitting at a desk in class. There's nothing else to do.)

If eating a box of crummy candy had been all a kid had to endure, Valentine's Day celebrations around 1970 wouldn't have been so bad. What was brutal about them—and this was perhaps their underlying purpose—was the Darwinian lessons they taught children about romance. For the Valentine's Day celebration was the only chance the anonymous kids in the class had to communicate with the popular ones. And on the day the valentines were exchanged, we were all given, in a matter of seconds, an illustration of just how un-reciprocal that "exchange" could be—and a harbinger of how un-reciprocal everything romantic could be.



At a signal from the teacher, kids wandered about the classroom, drawing valentines out of paper bags and manila envelopes, and dropping them on the desks of their classroom favorites. In general, kids gave valentines only to a few close friends of their own sex, and a few noteworthy classmates of the opposite one. When the dust had cleared, a skewed hierarchy had asserted itself, based on two factors that nobody would have thought of individually, but which were glaring once the class was taken as a collective: first, the tendency of girls to take love letters more seriously than boys; second, the tendency of boys to discriminate ruthlessly on grounds of looks. So the popular boys—particularly my friend Georgie Winchester, who lived on my street and sat at the desk in front of me—had mounds of testimonials before them. The popular girls and the moderately popular boys had an intermediate number. And the unpopular girls had maybe one or two.

I can see Anne Wiggins sitting at her desk in (as luck would have it) the front of Mrs. Fuller's first-grade class, under the pitiless gaze of 25 six-year-olds. Poor Anne had probably spent the whole previous week picking out the valentine most likely to please Georgie Winchester, who was just then picking his way slowly and disdainfully through a heap of two dozen similar cards. And at that moment, the unprepossessing and weaselly Bart Yarmouth, perhaps to disguise his own hurt pride at having got only four or five valentines himself—and perhaps even to fend off tears—hollered, "Hey, look, everybody! Piggins" (for such was her nickname) "din't get any Valentines at *all*!"

I'm as certain that Anne will remember that day on her deathbed as I am that Georgie has no recollection of it whatsoever. Had no one thought of this? I guess the answer is no—no one had thought of this. Three decades ago, parents were famously less interested in children than in wife-swapping, barbiturates, and self-fulfillment. But even had ours been a nation of dream parents, something similar would probably have occurred. Because, for a parent who did care about his children, the idea that the young thing would wind up on the losing end of a plebiscite on prettiness was unthinkable. About as unthinkable, in fact, as the idea that such a barbarous plebiscite would ever get held in the first place.

Christopher Caldwell

A world of ideas on public policy.

In Defense of Global Capitalism

by Johan Norberg

The current debate about globalization presupposes that the world is rapidly going to the dogs. In particular, the world is said to have become increasingly unfair. The chorus of the debate on the market economy runs: "The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer." If anything, this is regarded as a dictate of natural law, not a thesis to be argued. Yes, the first half is true: the rich – not all of them everywhere, but generally speaking – have indeed become richer. But the second half is, quite simply, wrong. The poor have not, generally speaking, come to be worse off in recent decades. On the contrary, extreme poverty has diminished, and where it was quantitatively greatest – in Asia – many hundreds of millions of people have begun to achieve a secure existence and even a modest degree of affluence.

Between 1965 and 1998, the average world citizen's income almost doubled, from $2,497 to $4,839. For the poorest one-fifth of the world's population, the increase has been faster still, with average income more than doubling during the same period from $551 to $1,137. In China, the World Bank has spoken of "the biggest and fastest poverty reduction in history."

By the 1990s, when the Swedish author Lasse Berg and the film-maker Stig Karlsson returned to Asian countries in which they had travelled thirty years earlier, they could not believe how wrong they had been to view socialist revolution as the only way out of the misery they had seen on their earlier visit. In India and China, more and more people were extricating themselves from poverty, hunger, and insanitary conditions.

> ***The most important thing of all is liberty itself, the independence and dignity which autonomy confers on people who have been living under oppression***

The biggest change of all is in people's thoughts and dreams. Television and newspapers bring ideas and impressions from the other side of the globe, widening people's notions of what is possible. This development has resulted not from socialist revolution but, on the contrary, from a move in the past few decades towards greater individual liberty. International exchange and the freedom to choose have grown; investments and development assistance have transmitted ideas and resources. Benefit has been derived from the knowledge, wealth, and inventions of other countries.

Imports of medicines and new health care systems have improved living conditions. Modern technology and new methods of production have boosted productivity and improved the food supply. Individuals have become freer to choose their own occupations and to sell their products. Discrimination has been reduced, since global capitalism doesn't care whether the best producer is a man or a woman. Discrimination is expensive, implying as it does the rejection of certain people's goods and labor. We can tell from the statistics how these developments have enhanced national prosperity and reduced poverty. But the most important thing of all is liberty itself, the independence and dignity which autonomy confers on people who have been living under oppression.

Lasse Berg sums up the phenomenon thus: "It is not only inside China that a Chinese wall is now being torn down. Something similar is happening all over the world, in Bihar, in East Timor, Ovamboland. Human beings are discovering that the individual is entitled to be his own. This has by no means been self-evident before. The discovery engenders a longing, not only for freedom but also for the good things in life, for prosperity."

It is this mentality which must inspire optimism. We have not travelled the full distance; coercion and poverty still cover large areas of our globe. Great setbacks can and will occur. But people who know that living in a state of ignorance and oppression is not a natural necessity will no longer accept this as the only conceivable state of affairs. They will demand freedom and democracy. The aim of our political and economic systems should be to give them that freedom.

Johan Norberg holds an MA in the history of ideas and is a leading protagonist in the Swedish debate on free trade and globalization. This article is extracted from his recent book, In Defence of Global Capitalism, published by Timbro (www.timbro.se).

Blue Muse

Since when did Marlene Dietrich end up on the Weekly Standard hit list ("The Ice-Blue Angel," Jan. 28)? In Lisa Singh's inexplicable zeal to dismiss Dietrich as a Big Zero, she shows a degree of contempt that seems more than a little extreme. Is it really necessary to go so far as to cast doubt on the credibility of the lady's cheekbones? And what about the bizarre claim (a joke?) that Dietrich renounced Germany because she was "patrician to the core" and Hitler was of "bourgeois stock"?

More disappointing, though, is Singh's apparent inability to appreciate, even minimally, any aspect of Dietrich's career (however antique it may seem in the age of Madonna and Jennifer Lopez), which made a notable contribution to the culture of her day. The excellent Frederick Hollander (another German emigré) composed songs for her. She served as a muse to novelist Erich Maria Remarque (yet another German emigré). Beyond all that, any Dietrich commentary that fails to mention the flawless Ernst Lubitsch comedy *Desire* and the postwar Billy Wilder gem *A Foreign Affair*—movies made, come to think of it, by still more German emigrés—misses hefty chunks of the big picture.

Diana West
Katonah, NY

Queen Loudmouth

Sam Dealey is right on the money about Sheila Jackson Lee ("Sheila Jackson Lee, Limousine Liberal," Feb. 11). As a consultant working in D.C. and living in Houston, I flew home on Continental almost every Friday during 1997. On one particular flight home, Rep. Lee was aboard.

She first sat in coach, but then began to protest loudly that she wanted to sit in first class. Apparently no seats were available, but she protested again, saying, "Don't you know who I am? I am Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee." I don't think she was upgraded, but I was embarrassed that a representative from my hometown would be so arrogant.

On another flight I had the privilege to sit next to Rep. Ken Bentsen, another Houston area representative. We sat in coach, and he was happy as he could be. I was impressed with the class with which he carried himself and with his willingness to converse with me.

Michael Dale
Houston, TX

Spy Daze

As one who reads The Weekly Standard often, I was disappointed in Justin Torres's "The Spy Who Went to Mass" (Jan. 28). Torres reviewed three books on Robert Hanssen, including my own, *The Spy Who Stayed Out in the Cold*.

Torres mentioned me several times, misspelling my name each time, and what is worse, he got most of the thrust of my book wrong. For instance, he summarizes the reasons for Hanssen's betrayal in the second to last paragraph by writing, "For Havil [sic], it comes down to ego." Wrong. Turn to page 66 and you'll see that I wrote, "Ego . . . was likely the second-greatest factor in Bob Hanssen's mind." A few pages earlier, I discuss the most important reason: money, and the need to put his children through Opus Dei-affiliated schools.

Torres, who appears to be an Opus Dei sympathizer—if not a member—clearly has an agenda. His motivation for writing the piece seems to be to absolve Opus Dei of any part in Hanssen's crimes.

Adrian Havill
Reston, VA

Editor's Note: We apologize for the misspelling of Adrian Havill's name.

Jeffords Defended

Matt Labash's review of *My Declaration of Independence* was not so much a book review as it was a petty slight against a man who took away the Republican majority in the Senate ("From Jefferson to Jeffords," Jan. 21).

I'm confused—is Labash's problem that Jeffords is too unimportant a figure to be permitted to follow his conscience? That he shouldn't have switched parties last May if he hadn't done so already under Reagan? Does conscience have a statute of limitations?

Jeffords considered a time in which the United States had its first massive government surplus in decades a good opportunity to consider a remedy for a massively under-funded mandate which harms America's neediest children, and his decision put him as chair of a committee about which he cared deeply.

Or maybe Labash is just angry that anyone who considered themselves a Republican could find the party's rightward drift unpalatable.

Joe Limehouse
Washington, DC

• • •

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the weekly Standard

Speaking of Evil . . .

There's been a great lot of hand-wringing these past few weeks over the "axis of evil," President Bush's State of the Union coinage for hostile foreign dictatorships that cultivate weapons of mass destruction and make sponsorship of terrorism a conscious policy. The president's critics wonder: Do the three despotisms he has located in this orbit—Iran, Iraq, and North Korea—genuinely constitute a discrete and coherent "axis" on the world stage? And insofar as they might not, what does the president's commitment to pursue "regime change" in these three countries imply about U.S. relations with a host of other terror-infected, arms-proliferating dictatorships around the globe?

This latter question becomes all the more interesting upon consideration of what's *not* been controversial about the president's remark. No one of any stature complains that Saddam Hussein, the Iranian mullahs, and Kim Jong Il lead governments that *aren't* evil. Nor does any respectable voice suggest that states like these might be made virtuous purely through exposure to the enlightened world's diplomatic customs and commercial treasures. Whether, to what extent, by what means, and on what schedule America should assume actual responsibility for the dissolution of aggressive foreign tyrannies seems open to debate. That America should, at very least, seek to contain and isolate such regimes—and announce our hope they be replaced—seems a matter of general consensus, however.

Bush seems a president unlikely to make fresh accommodation with foreign horror simply because Brent Scowcroft says it's smart.

And then there is the People's Republic of China, which President Bush visits Thursday and Friday of this week.

For three decades and seven presidencies, almost without interruption, it has been the official policy of the United States to make a full place for China in the community of civilized nations, as if the invitation alone conferred the necessary qualifications. China's market reforms, proponents of this policy have promised, will inevitably liberalize its domestic politics and international posture. But it has never happened. China remains implacably, essentially hostile to the United States, as a brief peek at any given issue of a state-run Chinese newspaper makes clear. China maintains a large and growing arsenal of ballistic weaponry, targeted on the United States and its democratic allies, and persists in exporting aggressive military technology to rogue and tinderbox states across the globe.

Moreover—worst, of course—China continues to be a dictatorship, its market reforms apparently designed only to smooth the transition from communism to something like national socialism. It is the world's largest and most powerful terrorist regime. That the terror is directed only against China's own citizens (if you're prepared to overlook Tibet) and that American corporations would dearly love to sell each victim some much needed life insurance and a cheeseburger . . . well, these are not facts sufficient to distinguish the People's Republic, in principle, from any other country in which a "regime change" might be hoped for. Are they? Is the Chinese Communist party somehow less deserving of pariah status, because somehow less "evil," than the strongmen who govern Iran, Iraq, and North Korea?

It would be impossible to defend such a proposition. And we rather doubt George W. Bush believes it. "Engagement" is a bipartisan delusion, of course, and many of his aides have suffered from it throughout their careers. But Bush himself has always seemed a man slightly but significantly apart from the herd: a president unlikely to make fresh accommodation with foreign horror simply because Brent Scowcroft says it's the smart thing to do—and visibly uncomfortable with such moral compromises of U.S. policy as he has inherited from his predecessors. Our current president is not Bill Clinton, for example, who as it happens will be in Sydney, Australia, this week to pocket $300,000 for a speech to a Beijing front-group promoting China's "peaceful" reabsorption of Taiwan. Bush has already announced, after all, that his government will do whatever might be necessary to defend Taiwan's democracy. Bush has also—and personally—made plain his disgust with Beijing's persecution of those "unauthorized" social and religious groups millions of Chinese people bravely continue to join.

As if directly to challenge the president on this score, and in open mockery of the engagement crowd's optimistic predictions, Jiang Zemin's government has been conducting a brutal campaign against freedom of conscience almost from the moment Congress enacted Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China in 2000. The crackdown on members of the Falun Gong meditation movement is best known and farthest along: hysterical propaganda, mass arrests and disappearances, public beatings, not-so-secret torture, scores of people dead "of natural causes" in police custody. But Falun Gong having by such means been driven underground, Beijing appears lately to have redirected its appetite for sadism to a different group altogether. As confirmed in documents smuggled out of China and publicized last week by Freedom House and the New York-based Committee for Investigation on Persecution of Religion in China, the Communist party's various security agencies now seem principally intent on eradicating any and every independent practice of Christian faith.

The Chinese government sponsors "Christian" churches of its own, of course, in which sermons are subject to censorship, baptism is forbidden, contact with overseas denominations is illegal, and the Creation and Second Coming are written out of the Bible. Chafing against such restrictions and blasphemies, however, millions of Chinese reject the official congregations and worship instead in Catholic and Protestant "house churches." Each of which Beijing bans as a "cult" the moment it's identified. Security officials believe the recent, explosive growth of Chinese Christianity—according to one of the documents released last week—has been instigated by "hostile Western powers headed by the USA" so as to "perpetuate infiltration" and "tie us up." In order to defeat these "antagonistic powers," national and local police must "enhance the consciousness of law and evidence," "intensify the investigation and interrogation," "detect the illegal and criminal activities," and "terrify" those citizens who might yet fall prey to Jesus, the American spy.

It would be comical in its sheer stupidity—but for its consequences. Consider the testimony of Zhang Hongjuan, a 20-year-old communicant in the South China Church, a banned evangelical Protestant organization whose leader was recently sentenced to death. She writes:

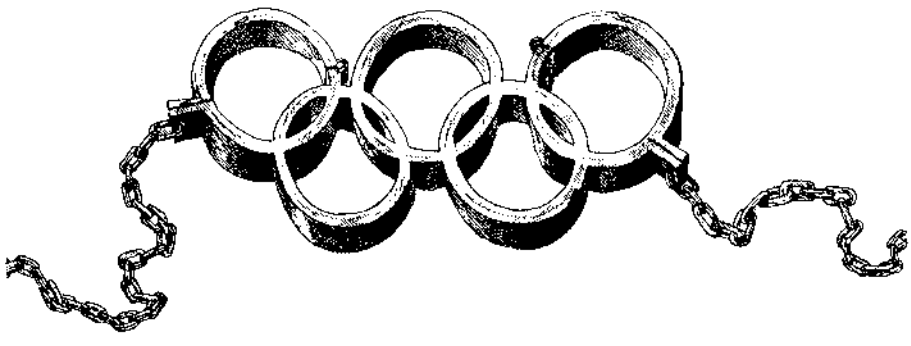
> On August 14, 2001, I was arrested by officers of the Shi Pai Police Station. The police officers interrogated me with severe torture before sending me to the Detention Center of Zhong Xiang Police Department. . . . They put shackles on my hands and feet, and used electric clubs to touch my whole body, especially my chest. . . . They forcefully unbuttoned my shirt, tearing off one button, and touched every spot of my chest with the electric club. I yelled at the top of my voice, but they moved the club into my mouth to stop me from crying.

Others fared still worse:

> When it was Li Li's turn to be interrogated . . . they came up to her and tore at her blouse. . . . They continued to torment her by inserting the electric club underneath her shirt to burn her chest and her lower parts, pulling off her hair by handfuls from her head, and splashing water in her face. For a whole day, a whole night, and yet another whole morning she was continuously tortured.

A "regime change" would seem in order here, long overdue and properly an explicit goal of any honorable American foreign policy. We would expect George W. Bush, consistent with the admirable moral purpose he has attached to U.S. international diplomacy since September 11, to handle this week's Beijing visit accordingly. A refusal to embarrass Chinese evil would itself be an embarrassment to the United States. This time, this president should find some public way, on Chinese soil, to demonstrate that his host government's atrocities against universal human rights do not escape American notice and will not escape American condemnation.

—David Tell, for the Editors



Beijing 2008

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The Axis of Rudeness

Europe's diplomats wax undiplomatic about Bush's speech. BY PETER D. FEAVER

Cambridge, England

PRESIDENT BUSH'S "axis of evil" speech has provoked an extraordinary degree of vitriol from our European allies. The yowling from the press and intellectuals is predictable and returns those cosseted elites to their familiar habit, interrupted ever so briefly after September 11, of viewing every American initiative in the worst possible light.

What is noteworthy this time, however, is the extent to which senior government officials are willing to be shrill on the record, with apparently little thought and less care to the diplomatic repercussions.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake for U.S. leaders to brush off the European reaction as merely a temper tantrum. It is still unclear what the Bush administration intends to do about the axis of evil, but whatever it attempts will be easier if the allies are alongside—and given our shared interests and values, they should be, if the administration plays its hand well.

European complaints about America are rarely newsworthy, but there is a desperate intensity to recent outbursts that deserves a closer look. Shortly after the speech, Britain's foreign secretary Jack Straw dismissed it with the contemptuous speculation that Bush was engaging in election-year pandering.

France's foreign minister indulged in an even more impolitic hissy fit, claiming that Bush now posed a grave threat to France: "Today we are threatened by a new simplistic approach that reduces all the problems in the world to the struggle against terrorism . . ."

Or consider Chris Patten, the bureaucrat in charge of "international affairs" for the European Union. Europe's seniormost diplomat dismissed the speech with the derisive comment, "I find it hard to believe that's a thought-through policy."

The irony is that these European leaders have used extraordinarily undiplomatic means to protest a speech that they disliked on the grounds that it was undiplomatic.

It scarcely needs saying that their shrill outbursts would be considered intolerable were they coming the other way across the Atlantic. In point of fact, no American diplomat would ever treat a policy dispute with the rudeness and petulance that is standard fare over here. Witness the masterful response from Secretary Powell: "There are strong points of view in Europe, and we always appreciate hearing strong points of view. . . . I hear them whether I appreciate them or not."

If European leaders really want to be heard in the United States, then they will have to master their emotions. Prime Minister Blair of Britain understands this instinctively. Blair may have had reservations about the speech, but he registered his concerns privately and constructively. As a consequence, he has influence in Washington.

Of course, diplomacy sometimes involves "a full and frank exchange of views." But among close allies, there is a time and a place, and by choosing a knee-jerk reaction in on-the-record interviews, these European officials violated basic time and place tenets. One wonders whether they were doing some domestic pandering of their own.

Instead of a substantive (and private) exchange, Europeans have chanted the tired "unilateralist" mantra, the charge that the United States does not care about the views of other countries. This canard substitutes for serious thought, and is usually mobilized when the critic cannot think of a substantive reason for opposing a policy. For the record: No dominant state in history enjoying the power advantage the United States currently enjoys has ever been more multilateralist or has accepted more institutional constraints on its freedom of action. Europeans who accuse the United States of stubborn unilateralism have no historical perspective, and must have in mind some Shangri-La in which America never articulates a national interest.

The Europeans, in short, deserve to be scolded for the scolding they unleashed on the president. But that is not the end of the matter, for the administration also needs to do some remedial work of its own. It cannot expect Europeans to accept the axis of evil approach blindly and uncritically, and should address carefully their questions.

For example, Europeans ask whether the president has exaggerated the urgency of the threat. Hasn't Iraq been largely deterred? Isn't North Korea a basket case? Isn't Iran's problem the divisions within its government—rogue operators rather than a rogue state? Bush has a tough row to hoe here, precisely because he appears to be talking about *preemptive* action, moving *before* any of these rogue states can trump al Qaeda's attack on the United States. Under the circumstances, it is not obviously wrong to wonder whether it makes sense to win round one against al Qaeda before starting round two. It is not simply carping to ask the administration to

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explain and justify the sequencing envisioned in the new strategy.

The second question they ask is, Why are we sure appeasement won't work? Carrot-and-stick appeasement, despite its sorry association with World War II, is not always wrong. Britain's appeasement of the United States at the close of the 19th century was brilliant and forestalled the collapse of their empire for several generations until, well, they tried appeasement once too often, this time in Munich. The Europeans are very keen to keep trying appeasement in Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, although, of course, they call it by its politically correct name, "engagement." The Bush administration needs to explain why appeasement is bound to fail in each of these instances—an easy case to make with Iraq, but one that requires more explication with regard to North Korea and Iran.

Finally, they say: We have heard the speech. Now where is the policy? Ramping up the rhetoric without accompanying, visible changes of policy is problematic. Until President Bush's rhetoric is backed up with deeds—deeds the Europeans ironically claim to dread—the Europeans will likely remain quite critical of the speech.

At the same time, the European outburst reminds us that the Bush administration needs to work harder to shore up transatlantic relations. The Bush team risks making the same mistake that bedeviled the administration during its first few months: treating Europe as an adult, whereas Europe in its collective political identity is best thought of (privately) as an adolescent. Europe is incapable of participating as a peer of the United States in diplomatic initiatives or political-military affairs; it is a cacophony of voices and conflicting emotions, and when these contradictions are exposed, the cacophony will surge in typically adolescent fury.

The trick in dealing with adolescents is to accord them the public respect owed adults but privately to hedge, and never to put them in a position where their basic irresponsibility will hurt them or you. Above all, you learn to live without the respect you deserve and with temporizing accommodations.

The next few months will reveal whether the Bush team can master this delicate diplomatic balancing act. If the past few weeks are any guide, they will have to accomplish it without much help from their undiplomatic partners across the pond. ♦

Flying the Bankrupt Skies

The era of big airlines is over.

BY IRWIN M. STELZER

AIRLINE MECHANICS apparently include among their many skills an ability to drive nails into coffins. Last week the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers rejected the 37 percent pay raise offered by United Airlines—its members want 43 percent—and threatened to strike. Never mind that the carrier lost $2.1 billion last year, is drowning in red ink, and—here's the irony—is employee owned.

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A strike, which at this writing is a distinct possibility, would almost certainly throw United into bankruptcy. But that may be where it is headed in any event, given the prospect of soaring labor costs and lost business, as travelers switch to other carriers during this period of uncertainty. United is not the only airline in trouble. Although the government pumped almost $2 billion into the industry after September 11, and has guaranteed a $380 million loan to keep America West flying, most analysts are expecting one or two of the top ten carriers to go belly up in the near future.

With good reason, since forces are at work with which not even the most skilled managers and devoted workers can cope. The transatlantic carriers are powerless to offset the grounding of the investment bankers who filled the first-class and business-class seats with their exalted persons back when the merger and acquisitions business was booming. Nor can even the most brilliantly conceived promotions bring busted dot-commers back onto United's important West Coast-to-Wall Street flights.

Then there is September 11. Many Americans since then have been reluctant to fly—not just because of a fear of being blown up by some suicide bomber, but because they don't want to be stranded away from their homes and families if a new attack forces the government to close the skyways again.

The good news is that recessions end, merger waves have a way of returning, and the post-September 11 fears will subside as time passes and airport security systems are upgraded. The bad news is that none of these favorable developments can change the ugly facts of life of the airline industry: It is inherently a cyclical, boom-and-bust business.

When times are merely bad, and there are empty seats, it pays for the carriers to introduce promotions that earn them something above the zero revenue they get from leaving those seats empty. When times are worse, the carriers can ground some of their planes, and store them in Arizona's massive aircraft holding pen. But those parked aircraft carry leases that require payments of anywhere between $300,000 and $500,000 per month, even when the planes just sit in the desert sun. So let business revive, even a bit, and that capacity is quickly reactivated, shortening the period in which planes are flying full and fares and profits are rising.

That is the fate of all cyclical industries. But there may be more than the business cycle at work today. In most industries, there is—or has been—room for both full-service and no-frills enterprises. Discounters that "pile 'em

high and sell 'em cheap" exist side-by-side with posh retailers. And full-service airlines that provide the convenience of multiple-destination connections at their massive hubs coexist with low-service, low-fare carriers specializing in point-to-point routes.

That may all be changing. In retailing, the discounters, with the exception of Kmart, are prospering, and attracting customers who until recently were willing to pay premium prices to shop in posh surroundings and be asked repeatedly, "Are you being served?" If the booming sales of the discounters and the shriveling sales of the high-end retailers are any indication, this shift may prove to be a durable trend.

So, too, in the airline business. The success of Southwest Airlines and JetBlue (which filed for a $125 million initial public offering two weeks ago), and of EasyJet and Ryanair in the U.K., when set alongside the plight of the full-service "hubbers" such as American and United, suggests that the business model of the latter may be fatally flawed. Alfred Kahn, the father of airline deregulation and still the keenest of the industry's observers, is not so sure. He says that the point-to-point carriers and the hub operators are "two kinds of operation," each serving a different need. But he also notes the possibility that the increasing success of the discounters might leave the majors with so many empty seats that they will not be able to charge business travelers, who pay hefty premiums for the privilege of booking late, enough to turn losses into profits.

Indeed, there is already some evidence that businessmen who use the low-fare carriers to take their families on vacation have begun to migrate to those same airlines for their business travel, with one such bargain line announcing that business travelers account for a high proportion of its 74 percent increase in passengers. Not that titans of industry, or lower echelon business travelers, prefer a bag of salted peanuts and cramped legroom to a glass of champagne and a good stretch. But the fare difference is so great as to make discomfort tolerable—and leave plenty in change to pay for a good bottle of the bubbly on arrival.

Kahn is undoubtedly right in saying that there will likely always be a market for hub operators—but it may be a shrinking market. We won't know until the recession, and its impact on business travel budgets, is forgotten by major corporate customers, and the good times once again roll for the dealmakers on Wall Street. But it seems that many of the big, full-service airlines are in the grip of something lethal, or at least far more damaging than a mere cyclical downturn.

A shift in consumer preferences would not be the only long-term threat to the eventual return to prosperity of full-service carriers. Equally important is the unwillingness of many governments, especially those in Europe, to allow the market to work its way with their national champions. Many of these would be mere memories by now were it not for their governments' determination to keep them and their highly unionized and vocal work forces flying. This means that airlines such as United and American here, and British Airways in the U.K., must compete across the Atlantic with subsidized competitors that will never be allowed to fail, no matter how large their losses.

With a market further distorted by governments' refusal to create a market for landing slots; by airport operators' refusal to allow landing fees to reflect their economic value at different times of the day; and by the willingness of Washington to bail out the likes of America West and its readiness to do the same for other carriers if asked—the possibility that we will someday be blessed with an efficient, market-oriented air transport system, geared to meet the needs of all travelers, becomes ever more remote. ♦

Green with Rage

Why environmentalists throw pies at Bjørn Lomborg. BY JAMES K. GLASSMAN

SHEER PANIC. That's the only way to describe the reaction of green activists to a fact-filled 515-page book by a young Danish statistician, published in English late last year by Cambridge University Press. The statistician, a slim, laid-back former Greenpeace member named Bjørn Lomborg, dared to question the conventional wisdom of the alarmists who dominate the fund-raising arm of the environmental movement: that the world is going to hell in a handbasket.

In *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, Lomborg argues against all the doomsaying, which he dubs The Litany. The planet and the people who live on it are getting healthier, he argues, calamities like global warming are exaggerated, and, in any event, environmental mitigation requires a thorough analysis of costs and benefits. (See Charles T. Rubin's review in this magazine, "Green No More: The Education of an Environmentalist," Dec. 24, 2001.)

Lomborg's message is one that the public deserves to hear—and wants to hear. The book is the number-one bestseller in *Amazon.com*'s "Nature and Ecology" category. Of all the books sold on the website, *The Skeptical Environmentalist* last week ranked number 67—a remarkable achievement. *The State of the World 2002*, by Lester Brown of the Worldwatch Institute, a group that Lomborg cites for particularly egregious distortions, ranks 5,915.

Lomborg is no dogmatist. As an associate professor of statistics at the University of Aarhus, he makes his case calmly and transparently, providing 2,930 footnotes and a 70-page bibliography.

But calm is *not* the word for his critics. They have gone berserk. Nasty, bitchy, hysterical, paranoid—those are apt adjectives to describe the response to the book. The *Economist*, which, despite its own green leanings, lavishly praised Lomborg's book when it came out, last week reported that "Mr. Lomborg is being called a liar, a fraud and worse. People are refusing to share a platform with him. He turns up in Oxford to talk about this book, and the author (it is claimed) of a forthcoming study on climate change throws a pie in his face."

Scientific discourse? Bjørn Lomborg in Oxford.

The World Resources Institute has posted a special media alert on its website: "WRI is urging journalists to exercise caution in reporting on or reviewing the new book, 'The Skeptical Environmentalist.'" It's as though Lomborg were armed and dangerous. And, in a way, of course, he is: armed with facts and dangerous to a movement whose claims are rarely checked. *Grist* magazine, *Tompaine.com*, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and on and on—they're all trying to debunk Lomborg. There's even a site called *www.anti-Lomborg.com*.

But worst of all is *Scientific American*, which devoted 11 pages of its January issue to a special section portentously headlined, "Science Defends Itself Against 'The Skeptical Environmentalist'"—as though all of the mighty scientific establishment were lined up against pitiful little Lomborg. The editor, John Rennie, asked "four leading experts to critique Lomborg's treatments of their areas." Hope you weren't expecting balance.

One of the four authors is Stephen Schneider, whose fatuous article on global warming epitomizes the worst kind of priggish academic posturing ("So how does the reality of the text hold up to its premise? I'm sure you can already guess. . . ."). Well, yes, we can. In fact, experienced readers could guess what Schneider would write even before opening the magazine.

How? Well, this is the same Stephen Schneider, professor of biological sciences at Stanford, who has publicly declared himself in favor of environmental scientists' striking a "balance" between getting their radical agenda accomplished and actually telling the truth. The *Economist* quotes his famous statement to *Discover* magazine in 1989. It reflects a widespread attitude in the movement and goes a long way toward explaining the wild reaction to Lomborg:

> [We] are not just scientists but human beings as well. And like most people we'd like to see the world a better place. . . . To do that we need to get some broad-based support, to capture the public's imagination. That, of course, entails getting loads of media coverage. So we have to offer up scary scenarios, make simplified, dramatic statements, and make little mention of any doubts we might have. . . . Each of us has to decide

James K. Glassman is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, host of the website TechCentralStation.com, and author of the new book The Secret Code of the Superior Investor *(Crown).*

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what the right balance is between being effective and being honest.

As the *Economist* deadpanned: "Science needs no defending from Mr. Lomborg. It may very well need defending from champions like Mr. Schneider."

Even more distressing is the response to the book of E.O. Wilson, the Harvard biologist and prolific and celebrated author. He deplores what he calls "the Lomborg scam" because of "the extraordinary amount of scientific talent that has to be expended to combat [him] in the media. . . . [Mr. Lomborg and his kind] are a parasite load on scholars who earn success through the slow process of peer review and approval."

Back in the 1960s, campus radicals used to say that their demonstrations would provoke college administrators, the police, and government authorities into showing their "true nature." That is what Lomborg's book—unwittingly—has done with the environmental movement. What has he revealed? A petulant, angry, selfish child that whines that it must have its own way.

Wilson complains about wasting time, but what of Lomborg himself? He devotes 33 pages, with tiny type, on his website (*www.lomborg.org*) to refuting the criticisms of Schneider, Wilson, and the other *Scientific American* authors.

Lomborg's unruffled earnestness is admirable, and he is a wonderful witness for the prosecution. When he presented his views at a panel discussion I moderated at the American Enterprise Institute last October, he wore a T-shirt and jeans and drank water from a McDonald's cup. In an article this month in the *American Enterprise* magazine, Eli Lehrer aptly describes him as "a mild-mannered Danish statistics professor who believes in environmental protection laws, votes on the political left, avoids eating meat, and thinks that governments should redistribute wealth. . . . The left-wing environmental movement hates him with a passion."

And this is the point. The environmental movement does not defend "science," as editor Rennie would have it. Rather, it uses science as a weapon to advance the cause, as Charles T. Rubin put it in his WEEKLY STANDARD review. In a letter to *Scientific American*, Matt Ridley, author of *Genome*, writes, "By the end of the four articles I was astonished to find that none of the critics had laid a glove on Lomborg. They . . . found only a few trivial misquotations and ellipses—mostly by distorting the point Lomborg was making." What Lomborg had revealed, said Ridley, was "a narrow but lucrative industry of environmental fund-raising that has a vested interest in claims of alarmism." Ridley continues, "Lomborg is as green as anybody else. But he recognizes that claims of universal environmental deterioration have not only been proved wrong often, but are a counsel of despair that distracts us from the many ways in which economic progress can produce environmental improvement as well."

Yes, but radical—or, more accurately, reactionary—environmentalism has become a religion, or a religion-substitute. Arguing from reason, with 2,930 footnotes, against The Litany may be as futile as arguing from reason against communism or fanatical Islam. Still, it's great to see someone try. What Lomborg is doing is precisely what Rennie claims that his four horsemen of the apocalypse are doing: defending science against lies and distortions. ♦

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PBS's Televangelist

Bill Moyers preaches on . . . and on

By Stephen F. Hayes

When PBS executives asked themselves the question so many Americans asked after the September 11 attacks—what can we do?—their answer was obvious: Bill Moyers. We can give America Bill Moyers. Lots of Bill Moyers.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting promptly set aside some $440,000 in public funds for "emergency programming" featuring Moyers and friends. First there was *Moyers in Conversation*, six half-hour episodes beginning September 12. Also on September 12 came *New York Voices: The Day After*, an hour-long special co-hosted by Moyers. Then, on September 20, *America Responds: A National Conversation with Bill Moyers*, two hours of live dialogue between Moyers and, among others, author and rapper extraordinaire Cornel West, O.J. attorney Alan Dershowitz, and *Vagina Monologues* playwright Eve Ensler.

They weren't done. PBS executives also wanted a more ambitious contribution from public broadcasting—a continuing, "serious show with people who know terrorism and international relations," says one. They thought of Moyers, the furrowed brow of American democracy. This time, already knee-deep in public-broadcasting work, Moyers turned them down.

PBS president Pat Mitchell personally interceded. Moyers told the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* he could sense her "disappointment in the opportunity of the moment, because of 9/11, to create something new. And [PBS] didn't have a person, an on-air journalist, around whom to create it. And I really anguished over that. I've been at this for 31 years. I didn't want, in my twilight years, to let Pat Mitchell, PBS, and public television down." So Moyers agreed to create what became *Now with Bill Moyers*, an open-ended series of weekly, hour-long, primetime shows that debuted on January 18.

In one sense the choice was natural. Through the work of Public Affairs Television, Inc., the private company he and his wife run, Moyers has been communing with American audiences for decades. He has hosted scores of documentaries and "think" shows, on everything from death and dying to the nature of myth; from NAFTA, modern dance, and chemical companies that kill to the power of ideas; from Genesis to fundamentalism to "Amazing Grace," all the while cultivating a reputation as an avuncular examiner of life's Big Questions. A sweater-wearing sage with a southern-sweet style, Moyers admits to being passionately biased in favor of the public interest.

In another sense, though, the choice of Moyers to lead a national reflection in the wake of September 11 was strange. Moyers hardly qualifies as politically nonaligned, a neutral moderator respectful of all sides. In recent years, this veteran of the Great Society—he began his public life as an aide to President Lyndon Johnson—has drifted further to the left, his arguments increasingly strident. By 1991, he was telling interviewer Eric Alterman, "I find it very hard to have intelligent conversations with people on the right wing because they want to hit first and ask questions later."

Moyers's difficulty conversing with people on the right seems to have impaired his ability to report their opinions fairly, particularly on issues of race. "The right gets away with blaming liberals for their efforts to help the poor, but what the right is really objecting to is the fact that the poor are primarily black," he told Alterman. "The man who sits in the White House today [George H.W. Bush] opposed the Civil Rights Act. So did Ronald Reagan. This crowd is really fighting a retroactive civil rights war to prevent the people they dislike because of their color from achieving success in American life."

For Moyers, the statement was hardly exceptional. No wonder some on Capitol Hill and in public television are incensed at Mitchell's choice of host for the new PBS series. "Why Moyers?" asks one longtime Republican adviser. "The only qualification for Moyers in this area is that he keeps comparing conservative Republicans to the Taliban."

If Moyers hasn't made that comparison explicitly for almost a year, he apparently still believes it. An address he delivered to a gathering at the LBJ library in Austin, Texas, on January 4 offers an instructive sample

Stephen F. Hayes is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard.

of his thinking. It elaborates what has become a favorite theme: Democracy is threatened not only by terrorism but also by the sinister forces of money and the market.

The speech lasted an hour and was at times quite eloquent. American democracy, Moyers said, "is at a crossroads. Just as we've been visited with tragedy, we've also been presented an extraordinary opportunity to redefine in deep and enduring ways our faith in democracy and then to live that faith every day personally, practically, and politically as if everything depends on it because it does. It does."

Moyers went on to talk about "true believers" of bin Laden's ilk. Social philosopher Eric Hoffer, he explained, gave this name to "people whose inner rage seeks refuge in a validating rebirth, a religious conversion if you will within a charismatic movement. Once they marched for Hitler, now they march for God."

Then Moyers shifted targets, begging patience as he grappled publicly with his own profundity. "Bear with me just one moment as I try to compose the main thing I want to say," he urged the audience.

America's in trouble. Explained Moyers,

> Not just religious true believers threaten our democracy. It's true believers in the God of the market who would leave us to the ruthless forces of unfettered monopolistic capital where even the laws of the jungle break down. And they're counting on your patriotism to distract you from their plunder. While you're standing at attention with your hand over your heart pledging allegiance to the flag, they're picking your pocket. I know we're not supposed to be raising criticisms right now. This is a national emergency. But what if this emergency lasts a decade? What happens to democracy?

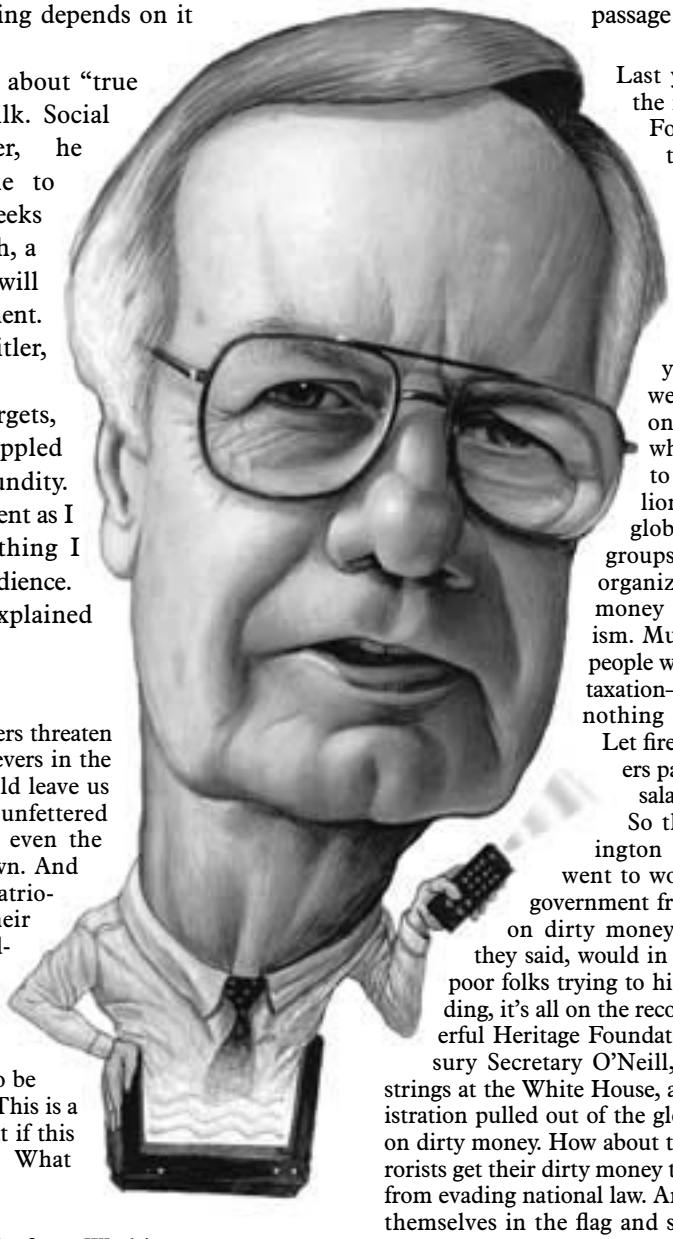


Illustration by Earl Keleny

Big companies—with help from Washington conservatives, including President Bush—are using public vehicles to enhance their private interests, Moyers argued. Worse, he said, they're doing it in the name of those who died on September 11. A "mercenary crowd in Washington" is exploiting the terrorist attacks to enrich themselves. Moyers singled out Rep. Dick Armey, who opposed government-paid health insurance for laid off airline workers, as serving the interests of corporate types who contribute mainly to Republicans. Said Moyers, "Mr. Armey and his band of true believers went along."

Moyers eventually connected "right-wingers" with bin Laden by suggesting that the Bush administration is more interested in protecting its wealthy contributors than in fighting "terrorists' dirty money." The passage deserves to be quoted in full.

> Last year, a year ago this month, the right-wingers at the Heritage Foundation in Washington teamed up with deep pocket bankers, some of whom support the Heritage Foundation, to stop the United States from cracking down on terrorist money havens. I'm not making this up, it's all on the record. Early last year thirty industrial nations were ready to tighten the rules on offshore financial centers whose banks have the potential to hide and help launder billions of dollars for drug cartels, global crime syndicates, and groups like bin Laden's al Qaeda organization. Now not all offshore money is linked to crime or terrorism. Much of it comes from wealthy people who are hiding money to avoid taxation—and right-wingers believe in nothing if not in avoiding taxation. Let firefighters and police and teachers pay out of their middle-income salaries for the war on terrorism. So these right-wingers in Washington and the banking lobbyists went to work to prevent the American government from joining in the crackdown on dirty money. Closing down the havens, they said, would in effect lead to higher taxes on poor folks trying to hide their income. I'm not kidding, it's all on the record. The president of the powerful Heritage Foundation spent an hour with Treasury Secretary O'Neill, Texas bankers pulled their strings at the White House, and, Presto!, the Bush administration pulled out of the global campaign to crack down on dirty money. How about that for patriotism? Better terrorists get their dirty money than tax cheaters be prevented from evading national law. And this from people who wrap themselves in the flag and sing "America the Beautiful" with tears in their eyes. Bitter? Yes.

Moyers was still bitter when I asked him whether his frequent attacks on the Bush administration—in "documentaries" on taxpayer-funded television, in his new show, in his speeches—are more

strident even than the attacks Bush's political opponents make on commercial networks.

"What attacks on the president?" he responded, with no apparent irony. After pointing out to me that he criticized the Clinton administration for its campaign finance abuses, he turned the question around. "Are you going to attack me by reporting on this? I mean, I'm asking you seriously, where in this broadcast have I attacked President Bush? Where in the LBJ library speech have I attacked President Bush? You have to be specific."

I started reading his words back to him. "How about that for patriotism? Better terrorists get their dirty money than tax cheaters be prevented from evading national law . . . " Cutting me off, Moyers scoffed. They're facts, he says, not attacks.

But upon closer examination, some of Moyers's "facts" aren't what they seem. According to a report by the Treasury Department, none of the money that financed the terrorists has been traced to the so-called tax havens; much of al Qaeda's banking was done in countries like Germany, Great Britain, and even the United States. And, as Dan Mitchell of the Heritage Foundation (where, in the interests of full disclosure, I worked for six months in 1993) points out, "every nation in the world has bank secrecy. The real issue is the conditions that must apply for that secrecy to be waived. Needless to say, all the low-tax jurisdictions waive secrecy for universally recognized crimes such as terrorism, drug-running, murder, etc. What they don't do, however, is help other nations tax income earned inside their borders."

Such "facts," as Moyers calls them, mar not only his speeches, but also his new television program. The first several episodes of *Now with Bill Moyers* develop the theme of the dual threat to American democracy, from terrorism and money.

The show's premiere started strong, with National Public Radio's Juan Williams offering viewers a sophisticated look at a Cleveland, Ohio, imam embroiled in a community-wide controversy because of hateful comments he had made about Jews ten years before. Moyers followed that segment by interviewing an imam from Connecticut. Thirty minutes in, however, the focus shifted to Bush. "From the beginning it's been a happy marriage of money and politics," Moyers intoned, over footage of President Bush's inauguration. The remainder of the show pushed campaign finance reform as the panacea for our democratic woes.

The second show took up where the first one left off, with a lengthy Enron segment recycled from another PBS show, *Frontline*. In a tip of the hat to ideological balance, Moyers interviewed *Wall Street Journal* editor Robert Bartley, badgering him about why the paper doesn't consider Enron another Whitewater. And Moyers returned to the subject of tax havens that he says benefited "the terrorists."

"Those tax havens were encouraging . . . Europeans and others to avoid their laws. How can we have a society when people are encouraged to hide their money and evade their laws? It seems to me that this is exactly the kind of oversight that citizens cannot maintain themselves and that governments have to do it and that we shouldn't be encouraging people to hide their money."

Moyers then offered something labeled "Commentary," presumably to distinguish it from the objective reporting just completed. Halfway through the show, Moyers wandered back to September 11, profiling a Pentagon widow who opposes any U.S. military response to the attacks.

The third installment developed the same themes, split roughly in the same manner. Moyers spent most of his fourth show looking at civilian casualties in Afghanistan, but saved time for a *Frontline* excerpt on pornography, "the new source of profits" for "big business."

If Moyers has no special expertise in terrorism, he has abundant credentials on money in politics. Perhaps that's why his focus has drifted away from the original purpose of the series. He's been working on political money for nearly 30 years—pointing out whenever he has the chance that he was the first newsman to take an in-depth look at PACs, some 25 years ago. Plus, we've been in something of a democratic "crisis" now for more than a decade.

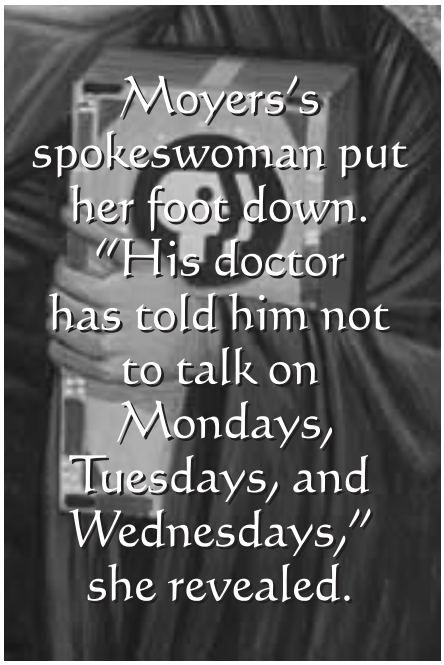
One need not be a campaign finance reform zealot to find unpalatable some of the subsidy-seeking by industries and money-grubbing by individuals after September 11. Indeed, there are truths buried in Moyers's heaps of hyperbole. Absent his rhetorical excesses, many of the "right-wingers" he vilifies would agree that capitalizing on the attacks for financial gain is repugnant.

Still, it seemed odd that these accusations should come from Moyers, who has himself made so many programs since September 11. When I approached Moyers to discuss the series and elucidate their funding, I was told he couldn't talk. "He's just too busy, you know, with the new show, the documentaries, and lots of other interviews," explained Adina Barnett, a spokesman from the public relations firm Moyers retains to promote him. Disappointed, I begged. "But there is more than a week before my deadline," I explained. "He can't find even 15 minutes anytime in the next eight days to chat?" No, she regretted to tell me. "He's just too busy."

Later I called again, and she put her foot down. "His doctor has told him not to talk on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays," she revealed. "He's doing too much talking late in the week, with the documentaries and the show. It's not that he won't talk to you. He can't talk to you."

So I sent him a fax. I didn't come up with this idea on my own. Last February, the American Chemical Council had resorted to faxing back and forth with Moyers when he was working on an exposé of the industry. And Moyers had always responded quickly.

I had spent some time at *www.abouttradesecrets.com*, a website the chemical industry set up to counter Moyers's claims in the PBS documentary *Trade Secrets* that aired on March 26, 2001. Some industry representatives had heard that Moyers was set to trash them in the broadcast, suggesting that for years the industry had put profits before human life. Naturally, they wanted a chance to discuss the charges or at least provide what context they could. Terry Yosie, a vice president of the American Chemistry Council, had urged Moyers to follow the Society of Professional Journalists code of ethics—"test the accuracy of information from all sources and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error" and "diligently seek out subjects of news stories to give them the opportunity to respond to allegations of possible wrongdoing." In a series of letters to Moyers, Yosie had begged for balance.



Moyers wouldn't hear of it. "This is an investigative documentary, not a debate," he said at the time. "We wanted to make sure of our reporting and make sure we had our facts laid down and then we wanted the industry to have the chance to respond to our reporting." He shut them out of the first hour and a half of the program, offering them the chance to participate only in a 30-minute panel discussion after the case against them was made. This brought criticism from *Washington Post* media critic Howard Kurtz, who wrote, "Unlike the most routine news story, the 90-minute documentary includes not a single comment from the industry under fire."

Wanting Moyers's assistance in getting my "facts laid down," I tried one more time to reach him. "One piece of information I am hoping you can provide me," I wrote in my faxed letter, "is how much money your company Public Affairs Television has made in post-September 11 public television." Surely he wouldn't be lobbing those rocks at the "mercenary crowd in Washington" from the front porch of a glass house.

Moyers called two hours later. He apologized for not calling sooner, and we had a brief chat. I asked him about the money.

"I've never discussed my earnings in public," he said, clearly agitated that anyone would ask about them. "I'm not a publicly held company, I'm a small independent producer who makes a reasonable income."

If he's criticizing others for exploiting September 11 for a buck, I ask, isn't it fair to inquire how much he'll earn for his work on these public television broadcasts?

"I didn't say the questions were unfair," he said. Still, he wouldn't answer them. Finally, he said he simply doesn't know how much he's made. "I actually don't know." Much of the work, he suspects, may have even been done *pro bono*.

That's a point he confirmed in the five-page, single-spaced letter he e-mailed to me the next day. "Nothing. Nada. Zip," he wrote. When the station insisted he take a "talent fee," he gave it to his "church and other non-profits in New York. Like just about everyone else in this city, I had no appetite to benefit financially, even modestly, from 9/11."

He further pointed out that he "privatized" more than ten years ago, eschewing "public television funding" altogether. "For over a decade now I have raised every penny for every production from foundations and corporations," Moyers insisted. "They're 'subsidizing' public television, not the other way around. As I say, you have it wrong."

If I have it wrong, so does the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Their records show that over the past decade, Moyers took a total of $969,377, though nothing since 1994.

Some might call this nitpicking. After all, PBS was created with federal funds, and the indistinguishable streams of taxpayer, corporate, and foundation money that flow through public broadcasting make the Enron partnerships look simple in comparison. What's more, many of the shows Moyers produces for public television come with companion books, and Moyers sells most of his productions in video after they air on PBS. *Amazon.com*, for

instance, lists 33 different Moyers videos and dozens of books. *The 11th of September—Bill Moyers in Conversation* can be had for $16.99.

"Almost all of our producers have the rights to their shows," says PBS president Mitchell, who adds that almost all of the money made from video and book sales goes to the producer, in this case Moyers. "My guess, as a producer who used to be in the business, is that it's not much money. The only programs that really make revenue are the children's projects," like *Barney*. We'll have to rely on those guesses, because Moyers, as we know, won't discuss his money.

What he will tell us, though, is that with the production of *Now with Bill Moyers*, he has decided to suspend his privatization. "Yes, I have now made an exception in the funding for this new series (which funding comes from PBS, not CPB)," he explains in his letter.

The reasons? "First, the initiative came from PBS. . . . Second, having indicated my intention to step back from active production at the end of this year, I was drawn to the challenge of creating for our stations the model for a new broadcast that might be sustained after I am gone. Third, the one condition sought by PBS—that this be a collaboration with NPR—was in itself an exciting opportunity. Fourth, I figured I might be able to raise additional funds for the kind of reportage not tolerated by the original budget."

When I asked Moyers if he sees any irony in the fact that he's a wealthy man owing in no small part to his long association with public television, the MVP of PBS told me that he's no different from any other public servant—fireman, policeman, or teacher. But when I reminded him that their salaries are matters of public record, he once again reverted to the status of private contractor.

"I make the same disclosures any privately held company makes," he insisted. "I am an independent producer who has made a decent living, by choice in public television as opposed to commercial television. I'm not Enron."

And of course he's right. Still, when it comes to complex, incestuous funding schemes that enrich a few at the expense of so many, Moyers is—to paraphrase Judge Smails—no slouch.

Though he'd be loath to admit it, given his frequent complaints about media consolidation, Moyers has become something of a clandestine media magnate. He quietly earns $200,000 a year as president of the Florence and John Schumann Foundation, which has assets of $90 million-plus. From that nice perch, which he has held since 1990, he has sought to influence public debate in three main areas: the environment, "effective government" (i.e. campaign finance reform), and "independent media." Moyers has directed funding to numerous media outlets on the left: the *Washington Monthly*, the *Nation*, *Mother Jones*, *In These Times*, *TomPaine.com* (run by Moyers's son John), and, most generously, the *American Prospect*. In some cases, this support runs well into the millions.

What his work with the foundation makes clear is this: Moyers isn't opposed *in principle* to buying influence. He just insists it be done in what he sees as the public interest. And he's very specific about that.

For example, a 1994 grant for $52,000 supported "a detailed report in *The Washington Monthly* on the influence of selected lobbyists in Washington." A 1997 grant for $100,000 went to *Mother Jones* for "promoting important money-in-politics investigations" by the magazine. The foundation's tax reports are loaded with such gifts—usually several million dollars a year for media projects alone, and millions more for effective government and the environment.

These gifts to private magazines or foundations associated with them aren't a big deal. True, they make Moyers look a little silly in his oft-repeated public proclamations that he has "no agenda." But, as he reminded me several times in our short chat, he can do whatever he wants as a citizen—he has First Amendment rights. And conservative foundations have supported specific projects for years through nonprofits attached to magazines such as the *American Spectator*.

Things get a little sticky, though, when we consider Moyers's grants to public television and radio. His $42,000 to WETA "to support a series of special features on money in politics to run four consecutive weeks in the Fall of 1997 on the PBS program *Washington Week in Review*." Or, that same year, $296,500 "to fund production of three 15-minute segments for the *PBS NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* on campaign finance reform." Still in 1997, $127,000 to NPR "to support the special 'Money, Power and Influence' reporting position" and another $100,000 to "support an additional reporter to cover the 'Money, Power and Influence' beat outside the Beltway." A few years earlier, the foundation sent NPR $184,000 to pay for "a full-time reporter for increased environmental coverage."

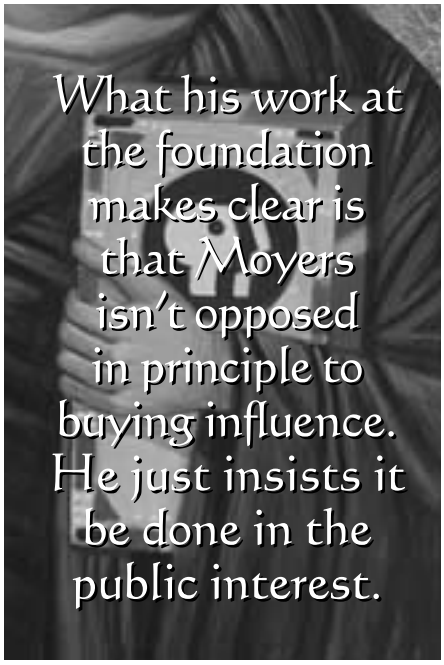
The list, as they say, goes on. A *Frontline* documentary on campaign financing for the small fee of $200,000 in 1995. Not enough impact from the first one? Fine. How about another $240,000 in 1997?

And when nasty conservatives suggest that all of this reinforces a left-leaning public affairs bias at PBS? Or that public broadcasting in America is for sale? Just give $15,000 to help Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting run

an op-ed ad "in support of the independence of public television." As Moyers might say, I'm not making this up.

On his own shows, Moyers frequently draws on the "expertise" of the interest groups he funds through his foundation. In 1999, all of this back-scratching caught up with him when an enterprising reporter from Knight Ridder named Frank Greve pointed out Moyers's duplicity.

"No TV journalist has reported more aggressively on the influence of money in American politics than Bill Moyers," wrote Greve. "His triple roles as journalist, advocate and financier have made Moyers one of the nation's most influential champions of tighter restrictions on campaign contributions. In fact, with the Senate set to begin debate on campaign finance this week, Moyers is using his control over money and media to influence public policy in ways that would be the envy of the special interests he deplores."



Greve pointed out that a one-hour Moyers special called *Free Speech for Sale* featured three campaign finance crusaders who had received Schumann money. When I asked Moyers about such criticism, he shrugged it off.

"I have [interviewed grantees] over the years, coincidentally, because I have strong feelings about a number of things and I have a lot of friends and contacts in a lot of fields. There was one person this week in the documentary we did about *Trading Democracy*, NAFTA, Chapter 11. There was one young man—I've never met him—who works for Earthjustice, which is an environmental watchdog, and as we said in a disclosure at the end of the program, the foundation had made a grant to Earthjustice not related to this issue some time ago."

Indeed, he has disclosed some of this double-scooping on recent shows. But not all of them. Moyers lists the Center for Responsive Politics as a source for one of his campaign finance stories on the *Now* series, and gives the group "special thanks" for their help on *Trade Secrets*. But Moyers neglects to mention the millions the center has gotten from his foundation over the past decade, or that the center is, according to its website, currently receiving a two-year grant for $1 million from Schumann.

The *Trade Secrets* website links to numerous Schumann-funded groups including the Sierra Club, US PIRG, *Grist* magazine, the Center for Public Integrity, the Environmental Working Group, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and, once again, the Center for Responsive Politics. The same is true for the site for *Earth on Edge*, an advocacy documentary Moyers produced last summer in collaboration with the World Resources Institute.

And while he wasn't eager to talk for this piece about the potential conflicts of these dual roles, he hasn't been so reticent in other settings.

"My own personal response to Osama bin Laden is not grand, or rousing, or dramatic," Moyers explained to a gathering of the Environmental Grantmakers Association in October. "All I know to do is to keep doing the best I can the craft that has been my calling now for most of my adult life. My colleagues and I have rededicated ourselves to the production of several environmental reports that were in progress before September 11. As a result of our two specials this year, *Trade Secrets* and *Earth on Edge*, PBS is asking all of public television's production teams to focus on the environment for two weeks around Earth Day next April."

These apparent conflicts have nicked Moyers's reputation, perhaps, but they haven't kept him from winning effusive praise from the nation's television writers and earning dozens of broadcast journalism awards over the course of his career. He won the prestigious Alfred I. DuPont/Columbia University Gold Baton award for 1998-99, honoring a documentary on South Africa. And the *Columbia Journalism Review*, in a Moyers tribute for its fortieth anniversary issue this winter, gushed, "Moyers's conversational ease, his earnest delivery, his fierce intelligence—all of it has transformed him into our leading television intellectual, and a worthy successor to Edward R. Murrow." Moyers has been "an invaluable presence on television" and remains "one of our most astute press critics." In sum, "serious journalism is Moyers's legacy to us."

Moyers left another legacy to the *Columbia Journalism Review*, this one undisclosed. It's the serious funding his foundation has provided for years, including a recent $2 million grant to help "save"—his word—the publication that praises him so effusively. ♦

Who Lost China's Internet?

Without U.S. assistance, it will remain a tool of the Beijing government, not a force for democracy.

By Ethan Gutmann

Beijing

It's not easy being the father of the Chinese Internet. Children are running by, boats are paddling, the smell of roast lamb fills the air, and Michael Robinson, a young American computer engineer, sits rigidly, facing an empty café on the shore of Qinghai Lake, speaking in a low voice of the crackdown. "What is better? Big brother Internet? Or no Internet at all?" Michael asks.

Michael was hired in 1996 by the Chinese government and Global One (a Sprint-France Telecom-Deutsche Telekom joint venture) to build the first network in China providing public access to the Internet. One day sticks in his mind. The Chinese engineers working with him suddenly convened a special meeting, demanding to know if it would be possible to do keyword searching inside e-mails and web addresses on the Chinese Internet. Not really, Michael replied; all information that travels the Net is broken up into little packets. It's hard to "sniff" packets of information, particularly coded packets. You would need to intercept packets as they travel, and then there's the problem of collating the information they contain, actually making sense of it. Yes, yes, they said, but can you do it? On the third go-round, it dawned on Michael that his fellow computer geeks wanted to end the meeting, too. But at a higher level, someone required assurance. Before Internet construction proceeded further, they would need to monitor what Chinese users did with it. For the engineers, this was just cover-your-ass stuff. As long as the foreigner assured them that down the road the Chinese would be able to build an Internet firewall against the world and conduct surveillance on its own citizens, the engineers could continue working with him. Yes, yes, it can be done, Michael told them, and they went back to work.

Ethan Gutmann, a visiting fellow at the Project for the New American Century, is completing a book, Beijing Boot Camp.

Americans make dreams, and every generation carries new ones to China. Since 1979 that dream has been the fall of the Chinese Communist party and the rise of the world's largest market, an event that U.S. businessmen and China hands keep predicting is on the horizon or even imminent. Yet Michael was not naive. He understood the self-serving nature of much of the democracy-is-just-around-the-corner rhetoric. Working inside, he sensed the Chinese leadership's true motives in building an Internet. One of his friends, Peter Lovelock, author of the *Made For China Internet Update*, puts it this way: "These are Marxists. Control the means of communication; embrace the means of communication. Fill it with Chinese voices. If they can block the outside, and block relationships between Chinese forces, no one will listen."

But for Michael, any reservations over complicity with Chinese government objectives were outweighed by a bedrock faith in the Internet's ingenious architecture. A system created to relay U.S. command messages over a damaged network after sustaining a Soviet nuclear strike could surely find a way to get messages through, securely, amid the white noise of millions of Chinese users. Resistance would be futile—even the Chinese Borg could not stop it. With the genie of free speech out of the bottle, it would just be a matter of time before those predictions of democracy in China come true.

That vision has now been called into question, not by a failure of the Internet's architecture, but in several cases, by a failure of American corporate values. Let's start where Michael left off, with the expansion of the Chinese Internet. I treated a top Chinese engineer (who wishes to remain anonymous) to a 30-course imperial meal in Beijing. As hoped, the shark's fin soup loosened his tongue—on the subject of Cisco Systems. In the United States, Cisco is known (among other things) for building corporate firewalls to block viruses and hackers. In China, the government had a unique problem: how to keep a billion people from accessing politically sensitive websites, now and forever.

AP / Wide World Photos

The good old days: a Beijing Internet café, November 15, 1996.

The way to do it would be this: If a Chinese user tried to view a website outside China with political content, such as *CNN.com*, the address would be recognized by a filter program that screens out forbidden sites. The request would then be thrown away, with the user receiving a banal message: "Operation timed out." Great, but China's leaders had a problem: The financial excitement of a wired China quickly led to a proliferation of eight major Internet service providers (ISPs) and four pipelines to the outside world. To force compliance with government objectives—to ensure that all pipes lead back to Rome—they needed the networking superpower, Cisco, to standardize the Chinese Internet and equip it with firewalls on a national scale. According to the Chinese engineer, Cisco came through, developing a router device, integrator, and firewall box specially designed for the government's telecom monopoly. At approximately $20,000 a box, China Telecom "bought many thousands" and IBM arranged for the "high-end" financing. Michael confirms: "Cisco made a killing. They are everywhere."

Cisco does not deny its success in China. Nor does it deny that it may have altered its products to suit the special needs of the Chinese "market"—a localization scheme the company avoided elsewhere in the world—but it categorically rejects any responsibility for how the government uses its firewall boxes. David Zhou, a systems engineer manager at Cisco, Beijing, told me flat out, "We don't care about the [Chinese government's] rules. It's none of Cisco's business." I replied that he has a point: It's not the gun but the way it's used, and how can a company that builds firewalls be expected to, well, not build firewalls? Zhou relaxed, then confidently added that the capabilities of Cisco's routers can be used to intercept information and to conduct keyword searches: "We have the capability to look deeply into the packet." He admitted that Cisco is under the direct scrutiny of State Security, the Public Security Bureau, and the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Does Cisco allow the PLA to look into packets? Zhou didn't know or wouldn't say. But consider, for example, the arrest of veteran activist Chi Shouzhu last April. He was picked up in a crowded train station minutes after printing out online materials promoting Chinese democracy. Incidents such as this have mushroomed in China, suggesting that Cisco may not be the only one capable of looking deeply into the packets. In fact, Cisco's ability to thrive in China may well depend on cooperation with the Public Security Bureau and the PLA.

Cisco's firewall has proven to be far from foolproof. New sites on forbidden topics crop up daily, and with the proliferation of ISPs who just want more subscribers surfing, the lag time between updating the government's list of banned sites and implementation can be erratic. So Chinese security organs also needed to control the search engines through which new sites can be found.

Enter Yahoo! The business press has painted a picture of a thriving, home-grown Chinese market for portals and search engines—mirroring such companies as AOL, Google, and Excite—with names like Sohu, Netease, and Sina fighting for the top spots. Chinese Yahoo!, the American outrider, trails in fifth place. A top Yahoo! representative spoke to me on the condition that I would not use his name or give identifying details other than that he had recently left the company. He admitted that Yahoo! is actually the most popular portal in China by a mile. Management had fudged the hit rate, because "we were viewed as extremely aggressive. We were seen as too foreign."

Chinese xenophobia has led many other U.S. companies to play similar games, but Yahoo! was particularly eager to please. All Chinese chat rooms or discussion groups have a "big mama," a supervisor for a team of censors who wipe out politically incorrect comments in real time. Yahoo! handles things differently. If in the midst of a discussion you type, "We should have nationwide multiparty elections in China!!" no one else will react to your comment. How could they? It appears on your screen, but only you and Yahoo!'s big mama actually see your thought crime. After intercepting it and preventing its transmission, Mother Yahoo! then solicitously generates a friendly e-mail suggesting that you cool your rhetoric—censorship, but with a New Age nod to self-esteem.

The former Yahoo! rep also admitted that the search phrase "Taiwan independence" on Chinese Yahoo! would yield no results, because Yahoo! has disabled searches for select keywords, such as "Falun Gong" and "China democracy." Search for VIP Reference, a major overseas Chinese dissident site, and you will get a single hit, a government site ripping it to shreds. How did Yahoo! come up with these policies? He replied, "It was a precautionary measure. The State Information Bureau was in charge of watching and making sure that we complied. The game is to make sure that they don't complain." By this logic, when Yahoo! rejected an attempt by Voice of America to buy ad space, they were just helping the Internet function smoothly. The former rep defended such censorship: "We are not a content creator, just a medium, a selective medium." But it is a critical medium. The Chinese government uses it to wage political campaigns against Taiwan, Tibet, and America. And of course the great promise of the Internet in China was supposed to be that it was unfettered, not selective. The Yahoo! rep again: "You adjust. The crackdowns come in waves; it's just the issue du jour. It's normal."

But what is "normal" in China can be altered under duress. When Chinese authorities ordered Microsoft to surrender its software's underlying source codes—the keys to encryption—as the price of doing business there, Microsoft chose to fight, spearheading an unprecedented Beijing-based coalition of American, Japanese, and European Chambers of Commerce. Faced with being left behind technologically, the Chinese authorities dropped their demands. Theoretically, China's desire to be part of the Internet should have given the capitalists who wired it similar leverage. Instead, the leverage all seems to have remained with the government, as Western companies fell all over themselves bidding for its favor. AOL, Netscape Communications, and Sun Microsystems all helped disseminate government propaganda by backing the China Internet Corporation, an arm of the state-run Xinhua news agency.

Not to be outdone, Sparkice, a Canadian Internet colossus, splashily announced that it would serve up only state-sanctioned news on its website. Nortel provides software for voice and closed-circuit camera recognition—technology that the Public Security Bureau has already put to good use, according to the Chinese press. AOL is quietly weighing the pros and cons of informing on dissidents if the Public Security Bureau so requests; the right decision would clearly speed Chinese approval for AOL to offer Internet services and perhaps get a foothold in the Chinese television market. In fact, AOL signed a landmark deal with a Chinese station at the end of October. Smaller American companies and smaller nations smell the blood. Along with Chinese officials, they dominate Chinese Internet-security trade shows. China Telecom is considering purchasing software from iCognito, an Israeli company that invented a program called "artificial content recognition," which surfs along just ahead of you, learning as it censors in real time. It was built to filter "gambling, shopping, job search, pornography, stock quotes, or other non-business material," but the first question from the Chinese buyers is invariably: Can it stop Falun Gong?

China's desire to be part of the Internet should have given the capitalists leverage. Instead, Western companies vied for government favor.

In the wake of terrorist attacks on America, some of the byplay between Beijing and its entrepreneurial suitors has taken on new significance. According to James Mulvenon of Rand Corporation, Network-1 Security Solutions, a U.S. web security firm, gained entry to the Chinese market by helpfully donating 300 live computer viruses to the Public Security Bureau. The U.S. embassy has already monitored the picture.exe virus, which worms into a user's computer and then quietly sabotages the widely available encryption software Pretty Good Privacy by sending the personal encryption keys to China. Last August's notorious Code Red worm, which some thought originated in China, appears to have been little more than an amateur nuisance. But Chinese military reports on unconventional warfare explicitly advocate coordinated virus attacks to debilitate U.S. communication and financial systems during a crisis. America may expect a more sophisticated visit from the offspring of a Network-1 sample virus in the future.

Why has there been so little oversight of such corporate activity? As Michael Robinson puts it, for the first four years of the Net era, those with paranoid visions of China's government were never quite able to square their suspicions with the rapid expansion of the Chinese Internet. Although it was widely rumored in Beijing that up to 30,000 state security employees were monitoring the Internet in that city alone, the monitoring was also laughed at. Apparently the bureaucrats liked monitoring pornography so much that they had a massive backlog. State security was said to be lax, corrupt, full of holes. Chinese whiz kids could still surf through the firewall and beyond. Associations could flourish among the patrons of the cybercafés, using anonymous monikers. Many saw the Internet as a populist river leading to the ocean of the global community. Then, the Chinese government abruptly built a cyber-version of the Three Gorges Dam.

In October 2000, the State Council ordered Internet Service Providers to hold all Chinese user data—phone numbers, time, and surfing history—for at least 60 days. In November, commercial news sites were banned. In December, the National People's Congress decreed all unauthorized online political activity illegal. January 2001 saw the criminalization of Internet transfer of "state secret information," such as reports of human rights violations. February brought "Internet Police 110," software blocking "cults, sex, and violence" while monitoring users' attempts to access such sites. By March, the surveillance started to work; hundreds of e-mails on the controversy surrounding a schoolhouse bombing in Jiangxi disappeared. Around the same time, Chinese authorities announced near completion of a "black box" to collect all information flowing across the Internet. In April, arrests of democracy activists using the web and a nationwide crackdown on cybercafés reached critical mass. Surviving cafés had to install internal monitoring software. E-mail to Tibet now took three days to get through, if at all, and Falun Gong e-mail was completely eradicated. By October 2001, when President George W. Bush flew to Shanghai for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit, he was entering an Internet police state. To deflect criticism, but perhaps also as a demonstration of power, blocks on U.S. news websites were magically lifted by Chinese authorities. The minute Bush went airborne, the blocks were back in place. During Bush's current visit to China, any attempt to discuss loosening Chinese Internet controls is likely to be brushed aside using the rhetoric of our own struggle against terror-

ism (what, you're against surveillance?). But if the Chinese take this tack, they are of course being dishonest about their own motives.

There were urgent reasons for the Chinese Internet crackdown; fighting terrorism wasn't one of them. Instead, look to the slow-motion crisis of a leadership transition, the release of the Tiananmen papers, the emergence of a cyber-Falun Gong, and a stirring—you could feel it on the street—for greater freedom of expression, if not genuine democracy. Then again, there may be a more elaborate game afoot. Chairman Mao knew the utility of briefly loosening controls to create a dragnet. In effect, the current Chinese leadership promoted a "hundred flowers" period of relative Internet freedom—again, not to capture terrorists, but to expose anyone who disagreed with the legitimacy of their rule and to attract massive Western investment. American technologies of surveillance, encryption, firewalls, and viruses have now been transferred to Chinese partners—and might even one day be turned against our own ludicrously open Internet. We funded, built, and pushed into China what we thought was a Trojan Horse, but we forgot to build the hatch.

Consider a Chinese user in search of an unblocked news site (*weeklystandard.com*, for example). He won't expect to get through, and if he does, it will be cause for alarm, for the site may be a tripwire—not for spam, but for state security. Everything he does on the web might conceivably be used against him. Pornography? Potentially, a two-year sentence. Political? Possible permanent loss of career, family, and freedom. E-mail may be the most risky: Two years ago, working from my office in a Chinese TV studio, I received an e-mail from a U.S. friend (in a browser-based Hotmail account, no less, which in theory should be difficult to monitor) with the words "China," "unrest," "labor," and "Xinjiang" in queer half-tone brackets, as if the words had been picked out by a filter. I now realize that it was a warning; any savvy Chinese user would have sensed it instantly.

Before the crackdown one could escape and surf anonymously in a cybercafé or use a proxy server—another computer that acts as an intermediary between surfers and websites, helping to hide their web footprints and evade the filters. Not surprisingly, the most common search words in China were not "Britney" and "hooters," but "free" and "proxy." Fully 10 percent of Chinese users—about two million people—used proxies regularly in an attempt to circumvent government controls. In what Michael calls "the first sign of cleverness" by the government, a proxy pollution campaign began last spring when the Chinese authorities either developed or imported a system that sniffs the networks for signs of proxies. A user, frantically typing in proxy addresses until he finds one that isn't blocked, effectively provides the government with a tidy blacklist. After a few of these tedious sessions, many of my Chinese friends simply gave up climbing over the firewall. For a small fee, expat users could turn to a web-based proxy browser, such as Anonymizer. But credit cards are effectively blocked for Chinese citizens. Just for good measure, Anonymizer was finally blocked as well.

The American business presence in China is deeply, perhaps fatally, compromised as an agent for liberalizing change.

Is China's Internet beyond redemption? Is it destined to be a tool of surveillance and repression, managed by the Chinese government and serviced by cynical Western partners? Maybe not. The Great Firewall might be vulnerable to a few physicists at the University of Oregon. I spent a day watching Stephen Hsu diagram the Chinese web and its weaknesses. Hsu and his company, SafeWeb, have developed a proxy server system called Triangle Boy. The triangle refers to the Chinese user, to a fleet of servers outside of the firewall, and to a mothership which the servers report to, but the Chinese government cannot find. Already tens of thousands of Chinese users have connected with it; five of the top twenty Triangle Boy search sites are in the Chinese language. Every day, the Chinese user receives an e-mail listing new addresses of Triangle Boy servers, which allow the user to visit websites that they would otherwise be unable to reach. Because the addresses of the servers change constantly, the system is practically unbeatable. Any attack, especially on the mothership, requires enormous resources.

But as surely as Triangle Boy works to liberate the surfing Chinese masses, you can bet State Security is looking for a way to pounce on this latest proxy rebellion. The simplest one will be to enlist American companies, still eager to curry favor in Beijing, and get them to develop software allowing the Public Security Bureau to sniff out and block proxies as quickly as they are created.

The only practical solution to this puzzle is for the Bush administration to make Internet freedom in China a high priority. At the moment it is a laughably small priority. The Voice of America, whose website has been a high-profile target of Chinese blocking, last summer began funding Triangle Boy to the tune of $10,000 per month. VOA officials undertook that small effort in frustration;

they attempt to send daily news via e-mail to some 800,000 addresses in China, with no guarantee that they are getting through. Hsu estimates that supplying one million Chinese users with Triangle Boy (approximately 600 million page views a month) would require just $1 million annually. Budgeted at $300 million a year, VOA has the means and is wisely looking at several other solutions as well. But for VOA to justify an anti-blocking effort on a scale that will make a difference, it will need to be seen as carrying out an important plank of American foreign policy, not just acting on the margins as it is now.

And why not make this a higher profile U.S. policy? Cracking the Chinese firewall is at least as technically interesting as strategic defense. Triangle Boy is still theoretically vulnerable to spoof sites, authorization problems, or a Code Red-style worm attacking the servers. That implies a need for a highly technical layering operation, involving an endless and ever-changing supply of low-key web-based proxies, mirror sites, and encrypted e-mail and instant messenger services in Mandarin, Cantonese, and English, in sufficient volume to overwhelm the Chinese firewall.

AP / Wide World Photos

Irate peasants with Internet-enabled cell phones are the target market.

Creative engineers, unleashed to solve the problem of bringing Internet freedom to China, might take any number of approaches. They might go through Hong Kong, where illicit cables are said to run to Guangzhou. They might cut some deals with a "loose" Chinese ISP, such as Jitong. They might use messages formatted as images to defeat software that sniffs out characters. They might exploit the fact that Chinese Internet addresses were originally configured in peculiar blocks. Or the fact that the government's proxy-hunters come from only a few locations. A shrewd native engineer could probably root out and defeat 99 percent of these government agents.

None of these measures will be cheap. Nor can we expect the U.S. government to fully manage such a multi-pronged private-and-public defense of Internet freedom. Even if they back the overall concept, administration officials will inevitably want deniability about certain parts of such an operation. This means the project will need to attract the support of foundations, human rights groups, religious organizations—any group that cares about a free China.

But it will be worth it. Given the willingness of capitalists to work hand in hand with the Chinese regime, the Internet may be the only force left that is potentially anti-hierarchical. Think of it as a way to levy a web-based democracy tax on the Chinese government. Think of it also as a way around the university students and the intelligentsia, who are overrated as agents for democratic change in China.

As the father of the Chinese Internet Michael Robinson notes, "In the Chinese Internet's infancy, the first three sites that the government blocked were two anti-government sites—and one Maoist site. What threatens them? . . . The heartland." Ultimately, it won't be the intellectuals who are key to bringing democracy to China. Irate overtaxed peasants with Internet-enabled cell phones ten years from now are the real target market. And those whose dream is democracy in China are operating with diminishing points of entry. The American business presence in China is deeply, perhaps fatally, compromised as an agent for liberalizing change. The Internet remains the strongest force for democracy available to the Chinese people. But it remains a mere potentiality, yet another American dream, unless we first grapple with the question: Who lost China's Internet? Well, we did. But we can still repair the damage. We can, in Michael's words, "lay down the communication network for revolution." If we don't, his progeny may not forgive us. ♦

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The Historian Who Couldn't Shoot Straight

By David Skinner

Bettmann / CORBIS

Michael Bellesiles is a professor of history at Emory University. When his *Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture* appeared in 2000, it came wrapped in a yellow strip of paper printed with four blurbs—one from the Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Michael Kammen, who called the book "a classic work of significant scholarship with inescapable policy implications."

Kammen was right about the implications. Although a work of colonial and pre-Civil War history, *Arming America* spoke directly to recent debates about gun control. Arguing that no American "gun culture" existed before 1850 or so, Bellesiles marshaled a variety of sources to show that guns were much rarer, significantly less useful, and far more regulated than previously believed. He recently told a reporter he is actually a longtime gun enthusiast, but in his book's introduction he took dead aim at Charlton Heston and the NRA. And why not? If no absolute, presumptive right to own a gun existed back when the Second Amendment was written, then no such right exists today.

That's why, when the book first appeared, its reviews were practically love letters. In a cover story for the *New York Times* Sunday book-review section, Garry Wills said *Arming America* had "dispersed the darkness" by showing that privately owned firearms in America were "barely in existence" before the Civil War. In the *Los Angeles Times*, University of Colorado professor Fred Anderson hailed Bellesiles's "intellectual rigor" and "thorough scholarship," calling the book a "brief against the myths that align freedom with the gun."

Even the more critical reviews proclaimed *Arming America* an important, scholarly achievement. In the *New York Review of Books*, Edmund S. Morgan declared that Bellesiles "may have overstated his case, but only a little. He has the facts." Rutgers professor Jackson Lears wrote a 6,700-word review for the *New Republic* in which he took issue with the author's cultural history but assured readers Bellesiles had written a "debunking counter-narrative the old-fashioned way, by means of exhaustive research." Wesleyan University professor Richard Slotkin in the *Atlantic Monthly* called the book a "groundbreaking study," praising its

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"stringent quantitative analysis." In April 2001, Columbia University gave *Arming America* the Bancroft prize, the preeminent award for history writing.

Even as the celebrations continued, however, a handful of scholars began to challenge Bellesiles's research. Questions of fact usually lost in the small-print of appendices and endnotes have been dragged into the light of day. And as a result, a much-praised book has been exposed as sloppy, inaccurate, and possibly fraudulent. Meanwhile Bellesiles's career hangs in the balance.

Much of the controversy has been generated by small skirmishes. Take, for example, the misquotation of the Militia Act of 1792 on page 230 of *Arming America*, where Bellesiles makes it seem that Congress was responsible for supplying militias with guns, instead of the members bringing their own weapons. That's not a small matter: The exact provenance of the militias' guns is a central concern in *Arming America*. Caught out, Bellesiles wrote in an article in the Organization of American Historians newsletter that he'd accidentally quoted the 1803 amendment to the Militia Act.

Unfortunately, the passage doesn't match up with the 1803 text either. And there's another problem: Bellesiles thanked a listserv editor named Ian Binnington for notifying him of the mistake, while Binnington says it was a man named Clayton Cramer who discovered the error. Indeed, Binnington says Bellesiles had to have known that, for he responded to Cramer's message reporting the error.

It's hard to imagine that Bellesiles mistook Cramer for anyone else, since Cramer was the first critic on the scene after Bellesiles published the 1996 journal article that became the basis for *Arming America*. Cramer has posted on his website a three-hundred-page refutation of Bellesiles, along with copies of historical documents. "I'm one of those weird little people who look up footnotes," says Cramer, a software engineer and a frequent contributor to *Shotgun News*.

Cramer is a surprisingly good writer, with a master's degree in history, but, he says, "Most journals are not interested in hearing from me." Still, he has his backers. Don Hickey, a historian who peer-reviewed Bellesiles's 1996 article, remarked recently on a historians' Internet discussion group: "When I checked some of the sources that he claimed Bellesiles had misused, I concluded that Cramer was right." Another scholar adds that "if Cramer says something is in the record, it's in there. If Michael Bellesiles says something's in there, it may or may not be."

So, for example, in chapter three of *Arming America*, Bellesiles wrote that colonial legislatures "strictly regulated the storage of firearms, with weapons kept in some central place, to be produced only in emergencies or on muster day, or loaned to individuals living in outlying areas. They were to remain the property of the government." Jump to page 472, where you'll find a formidable endnote listing nineteen sources and forty-two citations in support. "I have only checked seventeen of the nineteen sources," says Cramer in an e-mail. Those two "might, by some miracle, match his claims. But the other seventeen aren't even close to being right." To prove his point, Cramer has posted copies of documents from eleven of the seventeen sources on his website. Connecticut, for example, appears to have supplied the militia only with gun powder and ammunition, while the members were expected to have their own guns.

Bellesiles refers to records from 1760 to 1790 in Rutland, Vermont—where none exist before 1778 or from 1782 to 1790.

Much of the argument about *Arming America* concerns probate evidence. Bellesiles has expressed shock that records he discussed for only a few paragraphs would garner so much attention. But those paragraphs aren't exactly filler. The probate evidence should have taken months, if not years, and much travel for Bellesiles to gather, and none of his reviewers considered it insignificant. Garry Wills discussed Bellesiles's probate numbers before any other finding. Edmund S. Morgan wrote, "The evidence is overwhelming. First of all are probate records." And this material supplied Bellesiles's most startling empirical findings: From 1763 to 1790, only 14.7 percent of American men owned guns, and only slowly over several decades did that number rise to 32.5 percent in the late 1850s.

Enter James Lindgren, a professor of probate law at Northwestern University. Lindgren decided to look into Bellesiles's probate evidence after reading an online dispute about the book's plausibility. "I had no idea there would be errors," Lindgren says. He asked Bellesiles what data he had, so he "could formulate a reasonable request" for a sample. The *Arming America* author wrote to Lindgren that he counted guns in probate records by keeping a tally on legal pads, and that these legal pads had been compromised by a flood in his office. The revelation of Bellesiles's counting method was almost as damaging as the fact that he couldn't make his work available for replication. Making hash-marks on a legal pad, as Ohio State historian Randolph Roth softly puts it, "isn't the state of the art."

Lindgren and his co-author Justin Heather proceeded to test Bellesiles's probate findings against databases compiled by other scholars and original inventories around the country. If Bellesiles's thesis of rising ownership were correct, they should have found a percentage around or even lower than 14.7. "Guns are found," Lindgren and Heather concluded after their examination, "in about 50-73 percent of the male estates in each of the seven databases." Of course, different databases use different criteria for counting, and probate records are far from compre-

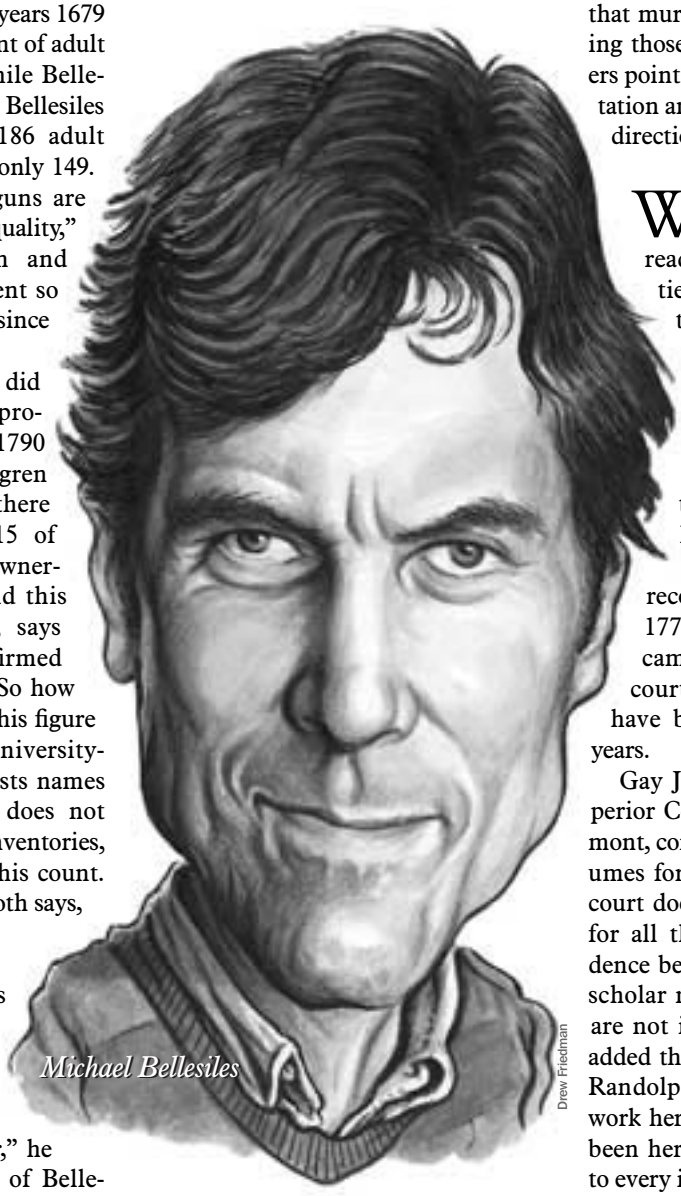
hensive in listing property. Add to this variations in spelling, bookkeeping, and legal custom, and you can explain a generous margin of difference. But Bellesiles's national average for the years 1765 to 1790 is nowhere near the range Lindgren and Heather found.

When Lindgren and Heather narrowed their focus and attempted to replicate Bellesiles's findings for Providence, Rhode Island, for the years 1679 to 1726, they found 63 percent of adult male estates listed guns, while Bellesiles found only 48 percent. Bellesiles claimed to have counted 186 adult male wills when there were only 149. "More than half of these guns are evaluated as old or of poor quality," wrote Bellesiles. Lindgren and Heather found only 9 percent so listed—and their count has since been verified by others.

As went Rhode Island, so did Vermont. Reading the 312 probate records from 1770 to 1790 that Bellesiles cites, Lindgren and Heather found that there were 289 male estates, 115 of which listed guns—for an ownership rate of 40 percent. And this was a conservative count, says Randolph Roth, who confirmed the numbers on microfilm. So how did Bellesiles come up with his figure of 14.4 percent? On his university-hosted website, Bellesiles lists names and gun descriptions but does not reproduce the 312 probate inventories, so one can't actually verify his count. "He won't share his data," Roth says, not for the first time.

Although his complaints are as devastating as anyone's, Roth has some nice things to say about the author of *Arming America*. Calling him "a gifted writer," he says he still thinks highly of Bellesiles's earlier book on Ethan Allen. Indeed, Roth first became involved in the controversy when Bellesiles wrote him to ask for help in answering his critics. He wrote back, offering to go to Vermont to check probate records there and asking for a list of the records that had been consulted. Bellesiles didn't take Roth up on the offer and provided no lists.

Since then, Roth has investigated and found previously unreported errors in *Arming America* concerning homicide rates. In an article for the *William and Mary Quarterly*—the latest issue of which is a much-touted showdown between Bellesiles and his critics—Roth notes Bellesiles's claim that



Michael Bellesiles

Drew Friedman

"In forty-six years, Plymouth colony's courts heard five cases of assault and not a single homicide." The cited source, *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England*, actually covers fifty-eight years, and the endnote in *Arming America* doesn't say which forty-six years Bellesiles has in mind. Nonetheless, Roth found mention in those records of eleven murders and four suspicious deaths from 1633 to 1691. (My own examination confirmed Roth's count of eleven *cases*, though not all were clearly murders.) Answering Roth in the *William and Mary Quarterly*, Bellesiles partly acknowledges the error, but then quickly retreats to his more general argument that murder was nonetheless rare during those years. But, as Roth and others point out, "Every error in representation and reporting tends in the same direction."

Worse was yet to come. On page 353, *Arming America* reads, "During Vermont's frontier period, from 1760 to 1790, there were five reported murders (excluding those deaths in the American Revolution), and three of those were politically motivated." The endnote refers the reader to records at the county courthouse in Rutland, Vermont. But, Roth says, there are no records at the courthouse before 1778, which is when Vermont came into existence—and the court records from 1782 to 1790 have been missing for a hundred years.

Gay Johnson, the clerk of the Superior Court in Rutland County, Vermont, confirmed that they lack the volumes for 1782 to 1790. Although the court does not have a complete index for all their old records, correspondence between her office and another scholar mentions that those volumes are not in the court's holdings. (She added that if anyone should know, it's Randolph Roth: "He's done more work here in the twenty-five years I've been here than anyone. . . . He's been to every inch of this building.")

This is not the only time Bellesiles has named records that don't exist. One of the counties cited as a part of Bellesiles's national sample is San Francisco. In correspondence with Lindgren and on his website, Bellesiles reported that he looked at records for 1849 to 1850 and 1858 to 1859 at the

San Francisco Superior Court. But the court said it has no such records; the entire archive before 1860 was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake. Bellesiles later changed his story, several times actually, before claiming that he had seen those San Francisco records at the Contra Costa County Historical Society instead. But the society itself has denied this, posting on its website the fact that it has only Contra Costa probate records.

More than anything else, the missing California records, discovered by Lindgren in July and reported in September simultaneously by Melissa Seckora in *National Review Online* and David Mehegan in the *Boston Globe*, threw the academic dispute about *Arming America* into high gear. Other publications picked up the story as some scholars and book reviewers began expressing doubt—including *Books & Culture* editor John Wilson, who recently retracted the positive review he'd written. In November, Emory University demanded a full accounting of Bellesiles.

Still, others are standing by him. In December the *New York Times* reported that Columbia University dean Jonathan Cole had distributed "documents detailing Mr. Bellesiles's mistakes" to the Bancroft prize jurors, but spokesman James Devitt insists the university still believes it was correct to award the prize to Bellesiles. Controversy, Devitt explains, is common in scholarly debate and there is "nothing new" in this controversy. Asked who the jurors are, Devitt insists that information is "private," but that they are people who "definitely have an expertise in these areas."

Wesleyan University historian Richard Slotkin says he hasn't followed the controversy, but he would still describe *Arming America* as "groundbreaking"—although he adds, "A groundbreaking study is one that opens up a subject in a way or from an angle that hasn't been done before." Jackson Lears says, "I would not have characterized his research as exhaustive," if he had the review to do over again. But then again, Lears goes on, "I was basically reviewing it as a cultural historian." Not that he doesn't think all of this is serious: "If all of these charges can be shown to be true, there may be reason to expect the Bancroft prize to reevaluate its decision."

A 17th-century manual showing how to load a musket. CORBIS.

Carl Bogus, associate professor at Roger Williams University School of Law, strikes a different note. A prominent gun-control activist and one of Bellesiles's earliest defenders, Bogus faced off with Joyce Lee Malcolm in the *Texas Law Review*. (Malcolm was one of the first scholarly critics of *Arming America*, and in her January 2001 review of the book for *Reason* magazine, she raised the first general warning that the book was myth-making, not myth-busting.) Bogus now sounds less combative. "The nub of the most serious charges is that he has concocted data or deliberately distorted data," Bogus says in a phone interview.

"The critics," he adds, "have made a powerful prima facie case"—but "I am a lawyer, and I've seen many cases evaporate when you hear the other si,de." He believes however that the burden of proof is now on Bellesiles. "I consider Michael Bellesiles a friend, and maybe that's one of the reasons I'm willing to grant him a little extra time here. And I hope he prevails. But the truth will out." Bogus agrees he has a responsibility to reach a judgment on the matter. "I guess it is because I feel some responsibility as a participant in this debate and someone on Bellesiles's team."

Bellesiles's essay in the *William and Mary Quarterly* is not the first time he's responded to his critics. Last month, in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, he referred to them as a "jihad of technical nitpickers." Around the same time, he told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* the 14 percent ownership he found for the period of 1765-90 should be "more in the neighborhood of 22-24 percent," which would be a surprising and major correction to his earlier numbers, but is still well below what the existing literature suggests is likely.

Many scholars seem to be reserving judgment until they've read the *William and Mary Quarterly* forum. Officials at Emory University have now read the forum and recently announced an investigation into Bellesiles's research. Out of the four essays on Bellesiles's book, only one is positively disposed—and then only on theoretical grounds concerning interpretation of the Second Amendment, something Bellesiles gave little attention to in *Arming America*.

The article by University of Colorado historian Gloria Main slams Bellesiles for his "failure to lay out his critical methods for perusal" and for ignoring her own count of guns in six

counties of Maryland in 1650 to 1720. Main had concluded about 76 percent of male estates contained guns. Inexplicably, Bellesiles found 7 percent. Ira Gruber, a history professor at Rice University, picks up the argument on the militia end: "Bellesiles's treatment of the militia is much like that of guns; he regularly uses evidence in a partial or imprecise way." In his own essay, Roth concludes that *Arming America*'s claims about gun ownership are "not supported by the sources Bellesiles cites, the sources he does not cite, or by the data he presents."

But without the Lindgren and Heather paper or the arguments of Clayton Cramer, the *William and Mary Quarterly* issue can hardly be called a point-by-point debate between Bellesiles and his critics. Several major issues go unaddressed, particularly the missing California records. Roth mentions the mythical Vermont court records, but he does not come straight out and accuse Bellesiles of fabricating a source.

Even Bellesiles's response is hardly definitive. Much of it is self-dramatizing and tangential. He spends nine pages pondering the relative importance of probate records, before condescending to address a selection of criticisms. He does not volunteer explanations for apparently nonexistent sources; except for the male-female mix-up, he stands by his Rhode Island counts; he seizes on small ambiguities to explain mountain-sized differences. Basically, he is unrepentant.

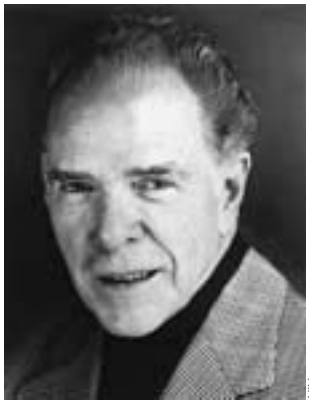
What may be most revealing, however, is the mood of Bellesiles's essay. He opens by quoting an old joke about the last words of a man going before the firing line: "I am honored by all this attention." And he closes with a quotation from Jacob Burckhardt: "Such indeed is the importance of the subject, that it still calls for fresh investigation, and may be studied with advantage from the most varied points of view. Meanwhile, we are content if a patient hearing be granted us."

The first quotation shows evidence of self-conscious candor. The second, unfortunately, more than hints at prevarication. ♦

All Albany's Men

William Kennedy returns to his novels about New York pols. **BY LAUREN WEINER**

The critic William Pritchard probably did not mean to lay down a law of literary excellence when, in his recent study of John Updike, he spoke of "a reader who knows what fairness is and wants fiction to observe something like ideal balance." The ideal balance to which Pritchard refers is the balance between mercy and justice—between engendering our sympathy for fictional characters and holding them accountable for the words they are assigned to say and the deeds they are assigned to perform.



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Viking, 288 pp., $24.95

William Kennedy's novels set in early- and mid-twentieth-century Albany, New York, try to perch on this difficult seesaw. Kennedy, to his credit, is not a writer who considers moral questions passé. He searches for a balance that will come across as true and credible.

Unfortunately, what he attempts in his fiction is undone by his *way* of doing that fiction, and the result is tilted far over to one side. Several ingratiating yarns in his Albany cycle—*Legs* (1975), *Billy Phelan's Greatest Game* (1978), and *Ironweed*, which won a Pulitzer Prize in 1984—bring the city's pool sharks, political bosses, bootleggers, and bums colorfully to life. Colorfully, but not entirely believably, because the novelist's probings of conscience—of what makes someone break the law, or ditch his family, or fail to become what he should have become—spray a fine sheen of exoneration over his characters.

It isn't necessarily intentional. Kennedy once said he borrows the Catholic definition of sin to avoid the "vapidity of guilt" he finds in much of modern literature. His Irish Catholic rogues and roustabouts spend a lot of time admonishing themselves. Francis Phelan of *Ironweed*, a hot-tempered baseball player who squandered his chances in life, is the least self-deluding of Kennedy's creations. He is the most convincingly complex and the saddest, as well. But even with Francis, highly contrived use is made of a sinner's redeeming qualities.

So it is with *Roscoe*, Kennedy's latest novel. Kennedy makes his Roscoe Owen Conway a smart lawyer and rueful observer of the human comedy. As the novel opens, we feel in good hands with this tough-but-tender "fixer," one of three lifelong friends running Albany's Democratic machine during and after World War II.

As we go along, though, false notes begin to sound. Roscoe, an aging tub of lard with a heart condition, has not ridden a horse for years, but when he suddenly decides to do so he rides like the wind and dismounts "gracefully." He's not just a stunning equestrian but a marksman of dead-on accuracy. And the biggest personal flaw of this power broker mired in the colorful illegalities

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of city politics is that he's just too darned honest. As for an old flame of Roscoe's, the extremely well-preserved wife of a recently deceased friend, "She felt blackly excited by his presence."

This unreal impressiveness of Roscoe Conway shouldn't be written off as Irish blarney on Kennedy's part—not entirely, anyway. Not when you consider how many "big authors" writing outside Irish-American terrain indulge in the same crass character-burnishing that Kennedy does. Think of Gabriel García Márquez's hagiographic novel about Simon Bolivar, *The General in His Labyrinth*, and *Cloudsplitter*, Russell Banks's silly Robert Bly-ification of the abolitionist John Brown. Such books give off a distinct air of public-relations spin.

William Kennedy is the writer with the most interesting spin problem since, in his case, advocacy so often takes place on multiple levels: There is the advocacy engaged in by the author. And there is the placement, within several of these books, of a key character who is himself an advocate. *Legs*, about the real-life gangster Jack "Legs" Diamond, is narrated by the gangster's attorney and pal, Marcus Gorman, who skillfully argues Diamond's case both in and out of the courtroom. The title character of *Billy Phelan's Greatest Game* has a columnist coming to his defense in the pages of the *Albany Times Union*.

"Legs" Diamond, Marcus Gorman, and Billy Phelan also figure in *Roscoe*, a work that magnifies this phenomena yet further. The lawyer here pleads for clients both respectable and unsavory, but primarily offers an apologia for his own life: the pleader pleading for himself. As usual in a Kennedy novel, it is complicated because Roscoe feels remorse about participating in skulduggery to keep those no-good Republicans at bay and his clique on top, but he sees mitigating circumstances behind his failings and misdeeds.

In the old-fashioned world of this novel, traits like loyalty, discretion, and honor in war are presented as praiseworthy, and cowardice as blameworthy. Or are they? We are pressed to withhold judgment until we consider the context. In flashbacks, Roscoe revisits his youthful service in World War I. What he did looks like cowardice but is really something else. He was running toward the rear in flight, not from the Germans, but from rats that infested his camp and were swarming all over him. He strayed near the battle line and got hit by friendly fire. Back at headquarters he forged a battle citation for himself and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross based on the sham citation. Roscoe says:

> Fraudulent? Perhaps. But he *was* under direct fire at the German line, he *was* in the heavy action, and *his own buddies* shot and damn near killed him. Must we quibble about motives? When is a hero not a hero? If a hero falls alone in a trench does he make a heroic sound? Take a guess.

The episode has a Quixote-like charm, though the italics tug at the reader's sleeve in a manner characteristic of the entire Albany cycle. Consigliere Marcus Gorman sounded in *Legs*, allowing as how the murderous sadist Diamond "was a liar, of course, a perjurer, all of that, but he was also a venal man of integrity, for he never ceased to renew his vulnerability to punishment, death and damnation."

In *Roscoe*, the medal incident is offered as the skeleton in the closet that explains why Roscoe Conway chose to be a behind-the-scenes politico, legal beagle for Democrats in trouble, and dirty trickster instead of following in his father's footsteps by seeking elective office. Still other reasons Roscoe gave up his higher aspirations are thrown in later, muddying the impression originally given that the fake medal was decisive. The rehashing of decisions made, paths taken or not, feels not only ragged but like an overdraft on our sympathy account.

Weary of all the pay-offs, the rigged elections, the collusion with underworld types, Roscoe is left "awash in guilt, which he doesn't accept." It was "Life [that] made me do it. . . . I'm innocent. I would never do such things on my own. It's a trick. It's a trap to make me powerful, rich, and happy." This classic protesting-too-much is supposed to sound evasive of responsibility—but in an endearingly rascally way. And that's the weasely game that William Kennedy always ends up playing: His client is trying to beat the rap but, in a way, not really—which means he really deserves to beat the rap, right? ♦

BCA

Roughing It

A Montana ranching life.

BY BILL CROKE

One of the most interesting literary genres of the contemporary American West is the ranch memoir. Unlike the pretty volumes that issue from the novelists who move to Montana for the fly fishing, or the delicate work of the poets who come seeking the metaphysical balm of the wilderness, ranch books tend to be realistic accounts written by actual westerners whose roots go back generations.

Men have excelled at these memoirs—William Kittredge, Ivan Doig, and Ralph Beer come to mind—but the genre is increasingly dominated by women: Mary Clearman Blew, Linda Hasselstrom, Page Lambert, and, now, Judy Blunt, with her autobiography, *Breaking Clean*.

Blunt was born in 1954 in the town of Malta, Montana (pop. 2,340), and it wasn't long before she "could rope and ride and jockey a John Deere as well as

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my brothers." Malta is on Montana's "Hi Line," where the two lanes of Route 2 and the tracks of the Northern Pacific Railroad run side by side across five hundred miles of prairie a few miles south of the Canadian border. Even for Montanans, the Hi Line seems an almost mythical place, a world of savage blizzards and withering droughts in a geography too vast to comprehend. It is sparsely inhabited by descendents of northern European homesteaders who stoically accept the boom-bust of agricultural economics as the given condition of life.

Some of the towns scattershot along the Hi Line (Glasgow, Malta, Zurich, Havre, Harlem, Devon, Inverness, Dunkirk) started as railroad stops, arbitrarily named by a nineteenth-century Northern Pacific executive who closed his eyes and pointed a number of times to a map of Europe. Others were named reflecting local weather conditions (Chinook), topographic features (Cut Bank), or as a bow to earlier inhabitants (Blackfoot).

Judy Blunt grew up on a ranch fifty miles down a dirt road south of Malta. The Hi Line was one of the last parts of America to receive rural electrification, and until she was seven years old, the author's family got their water from a hand pump—heating it on the kitchen stove for the weekly bath. Laundry was washed the same way, put through a handwringer before being hung out on the frigid, wind-blasted clothesline.

Blunt's parents assumed that children were not boys and girls but "men and women in training." Her mother and father worked long, hard days, and from the time she could walk, she was taught not only to work but to know the morality of work: It was "a small person," she was told, "who bellied up to the table while his livestock stood hungry." Even in winter the work didn't stop, the snowswept landscape "a network of white veins against the wind-stripped hills." That wind was an endless "urgent moaning under the eaves that rose in sustained shrieks, like a cat fight."

Her first school "squatted on the prairie within driving distance of three rural communities," a "mouse-infested bungalow" that served a handful of students, all eight grades taught by one teacher in one room. She moved on to Malta for high school, boarding at the house of an elderly widow during the week and returning to the ranch on weekends and holidays.

That Blunt is a feminist, of one stripe or another, is apparent throughout *Breaking Clean*, but it doesn't affect too much her vividly rendered story.

Horace Bristol / CORBIS

Breaking Clean
by Judy Blunt
Knopf, 320 pp., $24

Unlike radicalized academic feminists, Blunt grew up actually doing physical work—everything from canning to calving—and "like my mother, like the ranch women who peopled my childhood, I would not spout ideology or argue theory."

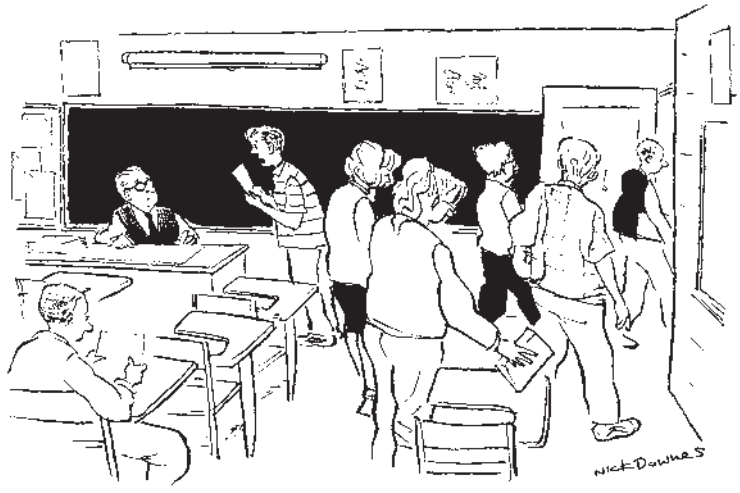
Raymond Carver once said the primary influence on his life as a writer was his children: Being forced to accommodate a family, with the constraints of time and income that imposed, made him realize what the important things to write about were. Blunt is the same kind of writer. At eighteen, just after her high-school graduation, she married a man twelve years her senior, a Vietnam veteran and hardworking son of a neighboring ranch family. The large western ranches were quasi-feudal fiefdoms, and to make a good marriage contributed to the general prosperity. In Blunt's case, it was a case of half wanting it for herself and half wanting it as an escape from her former life.

As they say in Montana, John was "a good hand"—and Blunt insists he was also "a good man." He was silent and strong, suited to the hard life required to make his living, and he was a stoic not capable of gushing about anything. Judy's nearest neighbors were her new in-laws, Frank and Rose. Frank—a crusty old rancher who had turned over the sprawling 36,000 acre cow-calf operation to John while still working on the place—would lecture his daughter-in-law on how to keep house, rear children, and do the grocery shopping. He demanded that she quit smoking, not to promote good health, but because cigarettes were a frivolous expense. Rose was an unbearably constant presence in Blunt's house, rearranging the closets and the pantry, and dispensing gratuitous advice about everything in John and Judy's home.

The last straw came when Frank took a sledgehammer to Blunt's typewriter when she was late preparing lunch for the hired summer-haying crew. Blunt divorced her in-laws as much as she divorced her husband. In 1986 the thirty-one-year-old Blunt, after thirteen years of marriage, packed her three children, a few household belongings, and boxes of dog-eared paperbacks into an old car and headed for the big city, bright lights of Missoula.

The following years would be filled with struggle as she juggled family and work, and pursued a college education. Her first semester, she noted that her fellow students in freshman composition class—tender, inexperienced eighteen-year-olds—were often at a loss to come up with subjects for their personal essays. Judy Blunt didn't have that problem. After a life on the Hi Line, she would always have things to write about. ♦

The Standard Reader



"Sir, I believe I deserve a lot higher grade than a 'C' for what I paid for this term paper."

For Art's Sake

The worst effect of the contemporary art scene may be the way it turns even those who love art into howling philistines. There's something irresistible about reporting, as THE WEEKLY STANDARD did back in November, that a cleaning man had swept up and bagged as trash an expensive installation by Damien Hirst in a London art gallery. Meanwhile, in Colorado, the Aspen Art Museum hung a piece of conceptual art called "I Dare You to Steal This $100"—and someone took the dare, smashing the acrylic and replacing the $100 bill with five $20 bills. "It ruined the whole aesthetics for me," artist Rick Magnuson complained. "I don't think it's a valuable piece now."

Trouble is, Rick, it wasn't that valuable before; we'd guess it was worth around $100. And the fact it was passed off as a great concept for a work of art makes even art lovers—who aren't, after all, the usual applauders of vandalism—laugh when someone applies to it a wittier concept.

Still, we have hopes that things might get better. But the death, at age 69, of Michael Hammond on Jan. 29—one week after taking office as the new chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts—was a blow. Dean of the School of Music at Rice University, a conductor and composer who also taught neuro-anatomy and physiology in medical schools, he was a serious man of serious purpose, and he might have helped move American art toward something more closely resembling genuine art.

The sheer existence of the NEA remains a problem for some Republicans, and its effect on art—its permanent establishment through federal subsidies of an art world at something near its nadir—troubles thoughtful commentators and theorists. But the moment for dismantling the arts endowment has passed, at least for now. Certainly, the Republican-controlled Congress lacks any will to undertake the project. And so the only question now is what can be made of it.

David Gelernter—painter, Yale computer-science professor, and WEEKLY STANDARD contributing editor—is someone with ideas for improving contemporary art, and his nomination last week to the National Council on the Arts, the advisory board for the NEA, is a step in the right direction. He is one of the few thinkers in the conservative world who has managed to reject the idiocies of much of what passes for art these days, without falling into the philistine despair that threatens the rest of us. If the Bush administration can pick someone like Gelernter—or what about Gelernter himself?—to replace Michael Hammond as head of the NEA, there's a chance we won't have to report the comedy of contemporary art vandalism on the pages we ought to be using to talk about art. ♦

Books in Brief

***On the Unseriousness of Human Affairs: Teaching, Writing, Playing, Believing, Lecturing, Philosophizing, Singing, Dancing*, by James V. Schall (ISI, 250 pp., $24.95)** Georgetown University's James Schall happily cuts across the contemporary cultural grain. Among other claims, he holds that modern civilization owes its existence to both Greek philosophy and Judeo-Christian religion—and a world that has forgotten these foundations is blind to the essential, inherent worth of each human being. Through a dozen or so finely crafted essays, Schall explains that the deep human need for song, dance, and philosophy is not a form of escapism from the serious things of life. Rather, it is evidence of the true freedom for which human beings are created.

—Elizabeth Royal

***A Government of Laws: Political Theory, Religion, and the American Founding*, by Ellis Sandoz (University of Missouri Press, 240 pp., $45)** The ambition of Ellis Sandoz's project is impressive. In his *A Government of Laws* he argues that the American founding grew out of a providential harmony of ancient philosophy, Christianity, the English republican and common-law traditions, and the thought of John Locke. And he suggests that the common strand in all these sources is a notion of man as an "in-between being," neither god nor beast, and therefore both in need of law and capable of liberty.

One wonders, of course, if the views Sandoz draws together aren't really more at odds than he suggests. Is the right to the "pursuit of happiness" enunciated in the Declaration of Independence really founded on the premodern concept of the summum bonum? Encouraging people to pursue happiness wherever they believe it lies sounds rather like the denial of a genuine highest good. Still, Sandoz engages and provokes even when one disagrees with him. Particularly interesting are his discussion of Edward Coke, the great English lawyer, and his examination of the "civil theology" of Locke's Second Treatise, which draws on Leo Strauss's reading of Locke.

—Peter J. Hansen

***Uncivil Wars: The Controversy over Reparations for Slavery*, by David Horowitz (Encounter, 147 pp., $21.95)** David Horowitz has a knack for getting under the skin of his former soulmates on the left, particularly campus radicals. The latest example occurred last spring, when he tried to place in college newspapers nationwide an ad offering "Ten Reasons Why Reparations for Slavery Is a Bad Idea—And Racist Too." The response from student journalists, administrators, and faculty—the refusal of most papers to run the ad, the theft of copies of those that did, and the denunciations of Horowitz as a racist—served as a reminder of the hypocrisy, intolerance, and cowardice entrenched on American campuses.

In *Uncivil Wars*, Horowitz recounts this episode as part of a larger examination of the reparations controversy. As a reformed leftist, he sees better than most that the reparations movement is motivated not primarily by a concern for justice. It exists instead to denigrate America's founding ideals—ideals that contributed to slavery's end—and to perpetuate a sense of race-based entitlement and victimhood that harms blacks today far more than does the legacy of slavery. One can take issue, as many do, with Horowitz's pugnacious methods, but the force of his argument is impossible to deny.

—Lee Bockhorn

Book of the Week

American Cassandra

Steven Emerson's prophetic warning BY J. BOTTUM

American Jihad: The Terrorists Living Among Us, by Steven Emerson (Free Press, 261 pp., $26)

Among the terrorist groups that President Bush explicitly named in his Jan. 29 State of the Union address were Hamas, al Qaeda, and Islamic Jihad. These are also some of the groups that Steven Emerson shows, in his new book *American Jihad*, have reached deep into America to find money, organization, and recruits. That's one of the astonishing pieces of information to come to public notice since the attacks of Sept. 11—but the most astonishing part may be that Emerson has been saying it since 1992.

Like Daniel Pipes and a few others who've been prophesying for years about imminent assaults from radical Islamic terrorists, Emerson must be tired of being dubbed an "American Cassandra." He must be even more tired of being called a racist, a bigot, and a monomaniacal hater of Muslims. A chance encounter with a radical Islamic group in Oklahoma City while he was a reporter for CNN led Emerson to make a documentary called "Jihad in America," which PBS aired late in 1994. From then on, the denunciations have been unrelenting. He reported the hate spewed forth against Israel and America at meetings of various Islamic youth groups, charities, and theological discussion centers—and, as a result, his own name was routinely chanted at such meetings, joining the Jews and American politicians as another who must be destroyed. In a recent column in the *Boston Globe*, Jeff Jacoby reported that National Public Radio in 1998 banned Emerson from appearing as an expert on Islamic groups. "You have my promise he won't be used again," producer Ellen Silva wrote to Ali Abunimah of the American Arab Action Network. "It is NPR policy." The FBI warned him that a Muslim group from South Africa may have been sent to the United States to kill him.

At last, however, America seems to be listening to him. The key information in *American Jihad* concerns the use of organizations in the United States that have clear philanthropic and religious purposes. Emerson insists that most Islamic agencies are what they seem to be—just as he insists, despite the accusations hurled against him, that the vast majority of American Muslims are law-abiding opponents of terrorism. But the American Islamic establishment has provided what he calls a "zone of legitimacy" within which terrorist groups can work. An organization like the Muslim Arab Youth Association doesn't practice terrorism, but it espouses radical Islam—and thereby, wittingly or unwittingly, provides cover for fund-raising and recruiting by the groups that do practice terrorism.

Worse may be the way the legitimizing groups gained their own legitimacy through being embraced by mainline American universities and religious organizations, always in the name of diversity and multiculturalism. (The struggle of Judy Genshaft, president of the University of South Florida, to disembarrass her school of its associations with Palestinian radical Sami Al-Arian is a case in point.)

All of which means that there were a large number of people with a vested interest in believing Steven Emerson wrong in 1992, and there remain nearly as many today. Cassandra had the same problem back in Troy. ♦

. . . URGENT AP BULLETIN . . .

Canada Declares War On "Axis of Evil"

The government of Canada declared war on Russia, Poland, China, Ukraine, and France this evening. "C'est la guerre! It's war!" declared Canadian premier Jean/John Chrétien, naming the host countries of the judges who denied Canadian skaters Jamie Sale and David Pelletier a gold medal in the Olympic figure skating pairs competition.

"In the 5.8 score that the Ukrainian judge gave to our skaters for what was clearly a 5.9-worthy double-axel-triple-kowtow combination, we have found our mission and our moment! The Evil Ones seek to take away our gold medals, but the Evil Ones will not triumph!" the prime minister continued.

The Canadian psyche has been transformed by the events of 2/12. A peaceful, contented country has become a vigilant, vengeful one. "I plan on writing a really stern letter to the editor of the *Globe and Mail*," one outraged Toronto resident declared. Other Canadians have been whipped into a frenzy of blood lust. "If I met the Russian judge at a party, I would say hello, but it would be a frosty hello, I can assure you!" vowed a longtime Ottawan.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has rallied national opinion: "As Gunnar Myrdal observed, if justice is denied to bouncy, small women and men of dubious heterosexuality in tight-fitting pants, then justice is in peril for the whole world." The Canadian armed forces are girding for war, with Special Forces units planning to sneak into Russia and hold candlelight vigils until units from the Red Army begin to feel so guilty that they surrender.

The country has been united by the trauma as never before, with many Canadians putting Unité/Unity bumper stickers on the backs of their cars. In a stirring display of Canadian solidarity, the citizens of Quebec vowed to place a 15-day moratorium on their efforts to secede.

European nations, meanwhile, have been alarmed by the simplistic Canadian reaction. "Perhaps the Canadian score could be adjusted to a 5.85, and some sort of gold and silver alloy metal could be created," a German diplomat suggested. In the United States, though, the Bush administration was quick to support its northern neighbor. "We declare war on those countries too! And anybody else you care to name!" President Bush announced, widening what his advisers call Stage III in the war on terrorism to include ice skating judges, dog show administrators, surly convenience store clerks, and anybody else who might someday hurt somebody's feelings.

The editors of The Weekly Standard magazine, delighted finally to find a nation willing to declare war on China, have relocated to Vancouver.

How to Undermine the High School Diploma

Diane Ravitch is a research professor, New York University; distinguished visiting fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

For many years, educators and policymakers at state and national levels have been trying to persuade young people to finish high school. Dropping out without a diploma, it is widely recognized, is associated with lower wages and scant economic prospects over one's lifetime. Consequently, we have regularly seen advertising campaigns by public officials and private industry encouraging teenagers to stay in school and improve their life chances.

Yet **the U.S. Department of Transportation recently indicated that a high school diploma is not especially important.** Last fall, when Congress passed legislation to improve airport security, it federalized the nation's 28,000 screeners of passengers and baggage. The legislation directed the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to hire, train, test, and deploy those responsible for screening access to our nation's airplanes. The public assumed that the purpose of this legislation was to heighten security.

At first, the FAA said that it would require a high school diploma for those jobs. But when it was discovered that some 7,000 current airport screeners do not have a high school diploma, the FAA reversed course and decided that it would accept a year of relevant work experience in lieu of a high school degree. In other words, the current workforce, which allowed massive security lapses on September 11, is good enough. Even though its starting salaries will be doubled (to an average of $30,000), the workforce will remain unchanged and its qualifications will not be increased.

There are two problems here: (1) the legislation is a sham if it does not raise minimal standards for those who hold these sensitive jobs; (2) the FAA's decision sends a message to students that it is not necessary to have a high school diploma to get a good job, even one that is crucial to the nation's security.

Why should screeners have a high school diploma? Teachers and principals will tell you that school completion indicates a certain level of persistence, self-discipline, literacy, and accomplishment. Young people who lack the motivation to complete their high school studies are not the best pool from which to select those who are expected to read passengers' faces and behavior, to assess the contents of their bags, and to do so quickly and accurately.

How can teachers persuade their students to stay in school and get their diploma if the FAA says that the degree doesn't matter? To his credit, Senator Charles Schumer of New York has complained about this unfortunate decision.

Members of the American public were led to believe that the federalization of the workforce would raise standards for those entrusted with their safety. The FAA's willingness to suspend educational standards for one-quarter of airport screeners sends a negative message not only to airline passengers but also to the nation's students and their teachers.

— Diane Ravitch

WHAT DO A SHOE, A RACE CAR AND A CABLE GIANT HAVE IN COMMON?

They all like to play monopoly.

Seen the headlines lately? Yet another cable mega-merger is underway. This time, it's AT&T and Comcast, and they've already said they're going to raise prices.

Cable rates have climbed more than three times faster than inflation for the past five years. Why can cable companies be so arrogant about their rate hikes?

Because they don't have to worry about competition. Cable controls 70% of the high-speed Internet market — not because they offer a better service, but because the rules in Washington treat cable companies differently than some of their potential competitors.

The Tauzin-Dingell bill would ensure competition in the high-speed market by making all companies play by the same rules. And, fair competition will give American consumers greater choice and competitive pricing.

Of course, we could just keep the status quo. Just remember, in monopoly, the first thing you do is eliminate the competition. Then, you raise prices through the roof. Sound familiar? Too bad you can't use play money to pay your cable bill.

Let's turn this game around for consumers.
Free the high-speed Internet.

"VOTE YES" ON TAUZIN-DINGELL.

USTA
UNITED STATES TELECOM ASSOCIATION