the weekly
Standard
DECEMBER 16, 2002
$3.95

WOLFOWITZ IN TURKEY
STEPHEN F. HAYES
ABRAMS IN THE WHITE HOUSE
FRED BARNES

He's Back

Noemie Emery on Al Gore's scarred psyche

Plus
Sam Dealey on Gore's stealth trip to China


Yes. For our supporters the grass
does happen to be greener.
With the help of communities, businesses and people like you,
The Nature Conservancy preserves special places
close to your heart and home. Help us save the
Last Great Places around the world. Visit
nature.org or call 1-888-2 JOIN TNC.
The Nature Conservancy®
Saving the Last Great Places
nature.org

Contents

December 16, 2002 • Volume 8, Number 14

Articles

Cover: Getty Images.

Features

Books & Arts

the weekly Standard

THE WEEKLY STANDARD (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly (except the first week in January, the second week in July, the third week in August, and the first week in September) 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

www.weeklystandard.com

Blix's Black Rose

On Nov. 28, the *Washington Post* broke the news—startling to many—that one of the members of Hans Blix's United Nations weapons inspection team for Iraq was Jack McGeorge. A 53-year-old munitions analyst from Woodbridge, Virginia, McGeorge has also held leadership roles in various sadomasochistic sex clubs, a fact that did not turn up in his background check, which is understandable since the United Nations didn't conduct one.

Many in the media were aghast, and began picking over his résumé, taking note of the fact that his S&M expertise seemed to surpass his munitions expertise, since McGeorge merely holds an associate's degree in security management from a community college, while he has been honored as a "doctor of S&M arts and letters" from something called "Leather University." For all the hubbub, the whole thing felt like Old Home Week to THE SCRAPBOOK.

Reading in the *Post* that one of the sex clubs McGeorge cofounded is named Black Rose, we were reminded of a piece written by our own Matt Labash nearly seven years ago ("It's an S&M Kind of Thing," Jan. 15, 1996). Labash was reporting on the S&M scene in the supposedly buttoned-down suburbs of Washington in the interest of—well, who knows what his interest was, but he attended a Black Rose conference. Labash identified the speaker, a former Secret Service agent, as "Bilbo" for his "uncanny resemblance to Tolkien's Hobbit." But in fact, the speaker was Jack McGeorge.

The piece noted that McGeorge was good for all sorts of useful tips in a "How to Conduct an Interrogation" seminar, which he delivered in his Inquisition rig: black tights, executioner's mask, Sherwood Forest blouse. McGeorge said that the best investment he ever made was the $7,500 medieval dungeon he constructed in his suburban Virginia basement, which he used for playing interrogation scenarios, from Downed Pilot to Honduras Hangar With a Car Battery and a Meathook. Whether advising to keep Gregorian chants as soft background music, using oatmeal and rice to sub for weevil-filled gruel, or using Palmolive to replicate the viscous feel of blood, McGeorge was a regular Marquis de Martha Stewart.

While McGeorge has offered to resign from the inspections team, chief inspector Hans Blix has kept him on. Maybe this is because, as a U.N. spokesman suggests, McGeorge is a "highly qualified and competent technical expert." But could there be another reason why the inspections community is loath to jettison McGeorge? Having held on to his notes, Labash now reports that one of the quotes seems eerily prophetic. Seven years ago at the Black Rose seminar, McGeorge told Labash, "I have had several people that I work with come to Black Rose meetings. The chemical and biological warfare areas are rife with kinky people."

In any case, while others fret over McGeorge's appointment, we applaud it. Maybe with the involvement of McGeorge, who once advised that when conducting an interrogation, it's vital to "keep the little bloody buggers tethered down," Saddam Hussein's goons will at least get a good, hard spanking. ♦

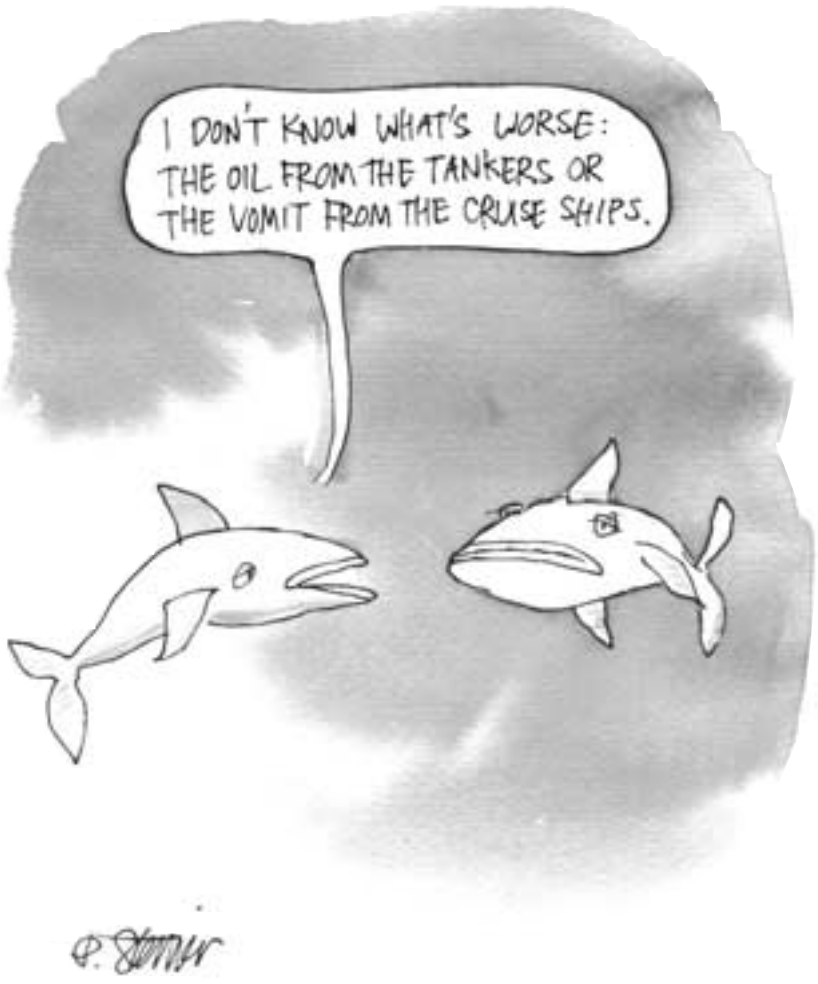
"Call it journalism…"

"There is only one word for our vigor in pursuing a story—whether in Augusta or Afghanistan. Call it journalism." Thus spake *New York Times* managing editor Gerald Boyd in a memo last week defending the paper's crusade to force the Augusta National Golf Club, which hosts the annual Masters Tournament, to allow women as members.

The willingness to mention a major war and a minor editorial campaign in the same pompous breath is a fine example of why *Times*-watching has lately evolved from right-wing hobbyhorse to big-time bipartisan bloodsport. *Newsweek* recently published a major article on bias at the paper of record; last week, the superb *Daily News* columnist Paul Colford came up with his own big scoop on this rich subject; and, following that, media junkie Jim Romenesko posted the memo from Boyd on his MediaNews website.

And yet the *Times* continues to breathe fire on Augusta. It has published 37 stories this year on the club's membership policies. Such obsessiveness, one staffer told Seth Mnookin of *Newsweek*, "makes it hard for us to have credibility on other issues." Another *Times* employee said it has put executive editor Howell Raines "in danger of losing the building."

Mnookin's article describes a growing divide between staff and management. It's just a guess, but this may have something to do with management's effort to squash independent-minded reporters. *Times* editors, Colford reports in the *Daily News*, recently killed two columns on Augusta by *Times* sportswriters—one by Harvey Araton, the other by Pulitzer Prize-winner Dave Anderson. The columns were spiked because they were at odds with the



position taken by the paper's editorial page: that Tiger Woods should skip the Masters until Augusta relents on its men-only membership policy.

After he filed a column arguing that this is not Tiger's "fight or any golfer's fight," Anderson said "it was decided by the editors that we should not argue with the editorial page." Once this was reported in the *Daily News*, managing editor Boyd (speaking for himself and editor Howell Raines) uncorked the above-quoted memo, which says that at the *Times*, "a well-reported, well-reasoned column can come down on any side, with our welcome." But for a column to disagree with the editorial page is, well, "unseemly and self-absorbed." Horrors.

A newspaper is, of course, free to put whatever it wants in its pages, not to mention publicly insult its own writers by suggesting that their columns are not well-reported or well-reasoned. But only the *New York Times* is conceited enough to stifle dissent and then "call it journalism." ♦

Campus Courage

We've pointed out enough campus idiocy on this page to make space for some good news when it comes along. We were heartened by the report in last Thursday's *New York Times* about former senator Bob Kerrey, now president of the famously radical New School. Kerrey is also a founding member of the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq, a group he described last month as intended to explain why "the liberation of Iraq is something the United States ought to do." A few students, thinking this beyond the pale, want Kerrey to resign. Instead, he agreed to what the *Times* reported was "a raucous, often bitter debate, in which Mr. Kerrey was accused of betraying the New School's pacifist legacy and miring the school in controversy."

But Kerrey apparently gave as good as he got. "In a line that drew loud applause, Mr. Kerrey said he did not want 'to set a precedent so this university begins to be led, like so many other universities in America, by presidents who are so concerned by fundraising needs that they have no public opinion on anything that matters.'" ♦

Help Wanted

Casual

All the Wrong Moves

Three years ago, I wrote in this space about a post-Thanksgiving football game my high school friends and I play every year. I bragged about how we ruthlessly tackled each other to the ground without any padding or protection, and scoffed at the idea of one day switching to two-hand touch or even flag football. So it's only fitting that at the game following the article's publication I received my first serious injury.

On the opening drive, my quarterback desperately looked for receivers as the defense rushed him on a blitz. He decided at the last second to dump the ball to me at midfield. I caught it, took three steps forward, and was immediately pummeled by my friend Buck. He landed on top of me with unnecessary roughness. (Too bad there were no referees to see—and hear—this.) After the initial shock of the tackle, I stood up and glanced at my right hand since something felt awry. Sure enough, my pinkie had badly dislocated—popped out of its socket and bent away from me. I was more horrified at the sight of this disfigurement than I was in pain. My QB told me the only thing to do was to snap the finger back in place. Without wasting time, I gave it a good tug.

It didn't work. After the second try, the pinkie fit back in its socket. Sort of. I refused to believe this was anything serious; the last thing I wanted was to be sidelined this early. So I continued playing. A little later in the first half it popped out again, and again I snapped it back in. But by the second half, I was a gimp, trying to tackle players with one hand, to catch with one hand, and hoping to avoid falling in the wrong direction. The good news is my team won. The bad news is, an X-ray showed my finger had been broken.

Was this the signal that the time had come for us to switch to touch football? Hardly. I'm not considered the best player on the team, so the guys figured it was just a freak accident. And indeed, in the next two football games, no real injuries were incurred by anyone—even me. I actually managed two sacks last year against my friend Steve, a perennial quarterback. (Full disclosure: The guy protecting the QB was someone's overgrown nephew. He was only in sixth grade, but was so large he was deemed too big a threat to play football with his classmates. And he takes karate.)

This year's post-Thanksgiving game had all the makings of another epic battle. Everyone matched up well—except for me. As a result, I was traded back and forth five times, in a scene reminiscent of gym class. But this wasn't the worst thing that happened. Five minutes later, playing defense, I was trying to prevent Quarterback Steve from completing a pass. It was second down and I decided to rush him. He faked me out, juking to the right. My cleat, meanwhile, was firmly dug into the frozen soil. My body twisted to the right but my left leg was still planted to the left. That's when I heard the sound no player ever wants to hear: "pop-pop-pop." It was my knee. And with the second step, I crumpled to the ground.

The QB and another defender carried me off the field and everyone else applauded. (After all, this isn't Veterans Stadium.) Worse than the pain was being forced to watch my friends from the sidelines. Unlike in years past, it was freezing cold. The skies were gray. It started to drizzle.

At least my team won, 12-10. I've been on a winning team for three years straight now. Aside from all the ribbing I got for this humiliating injury—one that ranks up there with Gus Frerotte's celebratory head-butt/concussion and Bill Gramatica's victory dance/sprained knee accident—the guys were actually concerned about my condition. But not concerned enough to raise the issue of touch football and flags.

This doesn't bother me at all. Rather, it means I have a whole year to train for what might finally be my breakout game. "You're watching your football career go by you," joked a friend. He's wrong. I don't think I'm washed up just yet, destined to be a mere spectator at future games or maybe to videotape them. All I need is one more year. And besides, I'm still finding ways to prove my youthful strength and tenacity.

For instance, after the big game, we headed to McDonald's. Without hesitation, I went for the Surf 'n' Turf (Quarter Pounder with cheese and a Filet-O-Fish) and Super-Sized fries.

"Why are you eating so much? You didn't have a big game today," asked one of the guys.

True. I might not have played like a champion. But at least I can still eat like one.

Victorino Matus

SETTING THE STANDARD FOR GREAT PRODUCTS

The Weekly Standard Online Store

www.weeklystandard.com

Quality is something the Weekly Standard takes seriously. Our full line of Weekly Standard products reflects that commitment. Visit our website at www.weeklystandard.com to view our catalog. You may order online, by phone or by fax.

the weekly Standard

www.weeklystandard.com

PHONE 1-800-388-8755 OR FAX 502-499-9187

Air Farce

As a recent college graduate, I seethed as I read Peter Kirstein's visceral, nauseating tantrum against the hapless Air Force cadet in Jed Babbin's "When Professors Attack" (Dec. 2). Such is the state of academia today that an ivory tower pacifist like Kirstein could have the gall to call American pilots "cowards," particularly when some of Kirstein's generation, lacking his peculiar brand of "courage," eschewed the false security of appeasement, apology, and ivy-covered walls, and flew missions against the Viet Cong (whom Kirstein predictably rallies behind) and never returned.

Apparently unaware of the irony, he rebukes the Air Force for fighting unfairly against an enemy "without the possibility of retaliation." Perhaps he would feel differently about leveling the playing field if he was doing the fighting.

But what I found particularly telling were the contents of Kirstein's second, ostensibly genuine apology to any and all whom he may have offended. The statement might have been credible were the contents of his original invective not so utterly consistent with the true feelings of the self-proclaimed "revisionist" leftist professors like Kirstein. Throughout academia they taint the quality of our education with their bias even as they scold us for suggesting that the corrosive ideological imbalance on today's campuses is anything other than "right-wing" hysteria.

As one scrolls down to the end of the apology, the reader is slapped by Kirstein's indefatigable pride in the form of his signature: "Peter N. Kirstein, Ph.D." After disgracing his profession and his title, he is still unable to refrain from reminding us of his "qualifications." Even in his contrition he is condescending. Perhaps I might suggest a different title: "Peter N. Kirstein, So.B."

Thomas M. Rickers
Washington, DC

Jed Babbin writes in "When Professors Attack" of Saint Xavier University's decision to punish one of its professors for what the university charges were his "inflammatory, anti-military comments." "The issue," he opines, "is whether someone like Kirstein . . . is fit to teach at any college."

With this, Babbin manages to get the Kirstein affair upside down. The real issues are (a) whether a tenured academic at an American university enjoys the freedom to express his views, and (b) whether an American university has the courage to defend one of its own in the face of a pack of jackals calling for his dismissal over speech they dislike.

The answers are (a) not in the case of Peter Kirstein's anti-military views, and (b) not at Saint Xavier University. We are all worse off for Saint Xavier's sacrifice of its professor.

David Peterson
Evergreen Park, IL

Boyle Bashing?

The Scrapbook's mention of Professor Francis Boyle was on target, but as a second-year law student at the University of Illinois, I have a few more tales out of school to supplement The Scrapbook's account (Dec. 2). A little-known fact about Professor Boyle, though one that should come as no surprise given his record, is the daily campaign he wages against the free speech rights of the University of Illinois College of Law's students.

Professor Boyle's outlandish response to the Irish Law Students Association's sponsorship of a Pre-St. Patrick's Day Bar Crawl (picked up by the *Wall Street Journal*'s Best of the Web) was just one example of his astonishing behavior. Accusing the event and its sponsors of being "anti-Catholic" and "racist" on the law school's electronic mailing list, Boyle triggered an e-mail war in which many students weighed in on the ridiculousness of his claims. In response, Boyle threatened to file a complaint with the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Civil Rights for "hostile work environment," alleging that his posting precipitated a stream of insulting e-mails directed at him—at least one of which he claims was from a member of the school's administration. But the story does not end there.

Just last week, Boyle caused another e-mail war when, in response to a wholly unrelated posting that merely made a passing reference to his name, he sent out a mass mailing with the subject line "To Department of Justice, Office of Civil Rights: 'Boyle Bashing,'" and threatened to report and forward the e-mails of any students critical of him and his extremist postings to the bar association's character and fitness committee—a blatant attempt to stifle any speech not in agreement with his own.

As testament to the law school's commitment to free speech, its latest dean, Heidi Hurd, immediately fired back a strongly worded but respectful e-mail in defense of the student body, affirming the students' right to speak without fear of sanctions or retaliation. She noted that that right extended to the criticism of administrators and faculty members, and publicly scolded Boyle for his inappropriate threats.

"Any school that teaches First Amendment freedoms must practice what it preaches," Dean Hurd wrote, "and both the administration and the faculty take very seriously the obligation to protect the free exchange of ideas and opinions here at the College of Law."

No doubt, this is not the last we will hear from Professor Boyle, but Dean Hurd's e-mail was certainly a refreshing example of one case where a law school has gotten it right. Despite Professor Boyle's best (or worst) efforts, free speech lives on at the University of Illinois College of Law.

Dominique Fanizza
Champaign, IL

the weekly Standard

Sultan of Spin

Needless to say, everyone in Washington politics and journalism is accomplished and popular and physically attractive. But even here, there are some among us whom Allah has clearly singled out for special blessing. And Adel al-Jubeir is one of them. He's the 40-year-old "foreign policy adviser" to Crown Prince Abdullah, managing partner of Saud and Sons, the well-established and widely respected Middle Eastern tyranny. You can't buy al-Jubeir's kind of luck.

For one thing, he's never been made to work at the home office, where business practices are a little old-fashioned and people can get stoned to death for "sorcery," stuff like that. Which is fine, don't get us wrong, it's just that back in the Kingdom an ambitious young Saudi fellow feels a bit, you know, confined. Not so in bohemian Denton, Texas, where al-Jubeir was fortunate enough to spend his college years at North Texas State University, studying economics with a then-unknown professor named Dick Armey. And not so, next, here in Washington, where over the past twenty years al-Jubeir, playing all-purpose fixer for the Saudi embassy, has quietly racked up a list of triumphs that few NTSU alums—and even fewer Arabian peninsula princelings—would ever dare dream of.

Item the first: According to the *New York Times*, in his spare time al-Jubeir serves as "an occasional escort" to NBC White House correspondent Campbell Brown. When this happens, Ms. Brown not infrequently exposes her face and ankles to public view. And yet she is never imprisoned as an embarrassment to womanly virtue. Nobody even spits on her! Ask yourself: Would the same be true were al-Jubeir's boss, the Saudi ambassador, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, to take a comparable stroll through the streets of Riyadh with his wife, Princess Haifa al-Faisal? How do you say "No way, José" in Arabic?

Item the second, speaking of Princess Haifa: It's lately become news that she has a beautiful soul—such that she routinely gives away huge sums of money to perfect strangers. One such stranger, a year and a half ago, was a Saudi woman to whom the princess sent thousands of dollars in personal checks, for "medical treatment." Some part of which boodle then made its way, through a cut-out, into the hands of two men, also Saudi, who soon crashed a large airplane into a building called the Pentagon.

An unfortunate coincidence, to be sure. Also a tad suspicious, you might think. Not to worry, though. Prince Bandar has asked Adel al-Jubeir to reassure his well-placed American friends that Princess Haifa's contribution to mass murder was "inadvertent"—and that Saudi Arabia, as much as any country on earth, remains a staunch American ally against terrorism. This reassurance al-Jubeir has now delivered, at an embassy press conference last Tuesday and during follow-up interviews with all the leading television personalities. Adel al-Jubeir is suddenly a star.

His reviews have been excellent. He is "dapper," "dashing," "polished," "earnest," "well-tailored," and "ultra-modern." He "beguiles." He is "the Sultan of Spin." And this is just the sober stuff, from the unimpeachably serious *Post* and *Times*.

The thing of it is, though—and this is the part that makes you think al-Jubeir leads a truly charmed existence: He's actually a lying sonofabitch.

No, we don't pretend to have proof that Princess Haifa deliberately helped pay for one of the September 11 hijackings. We doubt whether that kind of conclusive evidence will ever emerge, one way or the other. And we don't think it matters, either, because the already available evidence is plenty bad enough. What does it *mean*, after all, that Saudi Arabian royalty could be but two short steps removed from the bank accounts of suicide pilots who murdered nearly 200 U.S. government employees? Can anyone imagine having to ask such a question about the first political family of any other American "ally"?

Nor do we intend to waste ink pointing out how preposterous it is for al-Jubeir to insist that his country—home of bin Laden, and 15 of the 19 hijackers, and most of the Taliban detainees at Guantanamo, and all of official-export Wahhabi dogma that fevers such creatures in the first place—is free of blame for reactionary Islamic terrorism. Technically speaking, of course, this claim is a falsehood. But nobody could possibly be stupid enough to believe it, so we'll let it pass.

However. One thing al-Jubeir said at his press conference cannot be let go. This, first, because for sheer audacity it can hardly be topped. And, second, because this particular piece of "polished," "ultra-modern" mendacity likely sailed—completely unrecognized—right over the heads of even the most intelligent people who witnessed

it. The controversy in question is not one a lot of people are familiar with. Which is a shame. The subject is important.

Adel al-Jubeir was asked about a series of kidnappings in which little boys and girls, U.S. nationals abducted from their American mothers by abusive Saudi fathers, have been spirited across the globe and held captive for years—in unspeakable conditions (beatings, rapes, forced conversions to Islam, arranged marriages for 12-year-old girls) and all under color of Saudi law. The "beguiling" al-Jubeir kept cool: "I couldn't have asked for a better question, sir. Thank you." And then he coolly beguiled: Among the world's 10,000 unresolved international child custody disputes, he said, only 4 involve the United States and Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom has done "as much if not more than any other country" to find an effective solution to this problem. But "at the end of the day, these are strictly personal matters between parents," so what's a royal family to do? Next question, please.

Not so fast, buddy.

First, however, a word about Rep. Dan Burton of Indiana. Over ten terms in the House, Burton has regularly courted controversy, and has been regularly mocked for it. We have made sport of him ourselves. But now we take it all back, and apologize to him for not doing so earlier. Here's why: This past year alone Dan Burton has covered himself in glory and made his entire public career worthwhile. Specifically, Burton and his House Government Reform Committee staff (with notable publicity assistance from *Wall Street Journal* editorialist Bill McGurn and Mike Wallace of CBS's *60 Minutes*) have worked month after month to keep the Saudi child abduction story—and the flickering hopes of its great many victims—alive.

Because of Dan Burton, we know that there aren't just 4 kidnappers now being shielded behind the Saudi border, but 46 of them—according to State Department case files that name at least 92 U.S. citizens apparently being held against their will. Because of Burton we know that most of these abductees are girls, that some have been hostage so long they are now adults, and that even these adults are helpless before their captors: Saudi Arabia is the only nation on the planet where no female of the species, not even a grown woman, is permitted to travel abroad without the express, written consent of her father or husband.

Because of Burton we also know that Adel al-Jubeir is, we say again, a lying sonofabitch—that there is, too, something more the Saudi government could do to reunite these desperate American children with their desperate mothers. Otherwise, why would senior Saudi diplomats be personally intervening to keep such people apart? As Adel al-Jubeir himself has intervened in two recent cases.

Back in the first week of September, Dan Burton led a congressional delegation to Saudi Arabia, having badgered its government into allowing him interviews with a number of kidnap victims—and having heard vague hints that he might actually be able to bring 3 of them home: a pair of sisters, Alia and Aisha al-Gheshayan, abducted from their mother, Pat Roush, in 1986, and a third American, Amjad Radwan, whose mother, Monica Powers, was expelled from the Kingdom in 1985 after discovering that her Saudi husband was a psychotic bigamist.

The last time Pat Roush saw her daughters, a two-hour meeting in a Riyadh hotel room seven years ago, the elder girl, Alia, begged her, "Please, Mama, don't leave us here." Monica Powers has not had quite so excruciating a wait; she's been back in Riyadh on and off since 1990, moving her daughter from house to house so as to protect her from a sexually abusive stepbrother and uncle. Amjad's father has tolerated his ex-wife's meddling. But until Dan Burton's trip, there was no sign the man might ever let his daughter go home. A lot was banking on that trip, in other words, and hopes were very high.

But on the day Burton arrived in Riyadh, the al-Gheshayan sisters were not there. They'd left for a rush "vacation" to a London hotel room, where, surrounded by male Saudi relatives and coached by a Saudi lobbyist from the American PR firm Qorvis Communications, which should be ashamed of itself, the two girls told an Associated Press reporter, who should be ashamed of herself, that they hate their mother and "will not rest until she dies." This grotesque scene was then reported back to the States by a second invited witness, whose gullible boss, Fox News talkshow host Bill O'Reilly, promptly pronounced it credible. O'Reilly should be ashamed of himself, too. But the man who should be most ashamed of all is Adel al-Jubeir. Because he set the whole thing up.

While in Riyadh, Dan Burton was able to interview Monica Powers's daughter Amjad. She was weeping and her hands were trembling and she told Burton, "I want to go to America, I want to be free." But just the night before, Amjad's father had forced her to marry a 42-year-old Saudi Arabian air force officer, and this man was now right there, watching, while she answered Burton's questions. Amjad looked over at her "husband," lowered her head, and told Burton that what she wanted wasn't important—that she couldn't leave, "not now."

What's the deal here, Mike Wallace asked Adel al-Jubeir a few weeks later on *60 Minutes*? "We were accused of not allowing her to leave," he replied. "I'm telling you, she has a passport and she has a visa. Why doesn't she leave?" When did Amjad get this passport, Wallace wanted to know? "Mike, as soon as we found out about it, we fixed it, which means we move very quickly. I told you, I didn't know about this case until—what?—a month ago."

Whereupon Wallace showed his *60 Minutes* audience a 14-year-old document by which the Saudi government washed its hands of responsibility for Monica Powers's daughter. The document was signed by Adel al-Jubeir.

Sultan of Spin, indeed.

—David Tell, for the Editors

Wolfowitz Talks Turkey

The serious war planning is under way.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Ankara

THE INSIDE OF AN Air Force C-17 is like a warehouse. The cavernous dark green plane that shuttled Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and his delegation to England, Turkey, and NATO headquarters in Belgium last week logged more than 10,000 miles over four days, stopping for meetings with representatives of most of the U.S. allies important for the coming war in Iraq.

Wolfowitz, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Marc Grossman, and the other "principals," as the big-wigs are called by their handlers, traveled inside a shiny silver pod that sits in the middle of the aircraft. Known as the "Silver Bullet," this chamber looks like a 1960s-vintage trailer. The inside of the pod has leather seats, a CD player, television, VCR, and secure cable and phone lines. If you have to be on a plane for 30 hours over the course of a few days, it's not a bad way to fly.

Still, the pod is luxurious only by comparison with the spartan accommodations provided for the rest of us. There are two rows of commercial-airline-style seats, each seating five, and seats for everyone else lining the walls of the plane and facing the middle. Six bunk beds are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Once the aircraft takes off, it buzzes with activity. Daily print journalists—there were five of them on this trip—transcribe interviews or write stories they'll file upon landing. Military support staff set up computer terminals and printers where they'll rewrite speeches, tinker with talking points, or draft debriefing memos after a visit. Air Force personnel in green one-piece suits dart about with the seriousness of purpose of a brain surgeon.

We took off Sunday night, December 1, and after a brief stop in London for a speech, mostly about Turkey, and a few hours of sleep on the ground, we flew to Ankara. The first thing you notice upon landing in the Turkish capital is an acrid smoky odor that hangs like a blanket over the entire city. After Wolfowitz makes a short, so-happy-to-be-here statement at the airport, we're whisked to a waiting motorcade—sedans for the principals and a small purple Hyundai van for the rest of us.

The drive to the ministry takes 45 minutes. Although the delegation has a police escort—three white Suburbans and a small fleet of euro-style Matchbox-sized cars—we're soon caught in chaotic midday Ankara traffic. The two lanes in each direction are clearly marked, but judging from the automotive anarchy around us, the signs have the force of mere suggestions. Our driver apparently knows only two speeds, too fast and stopped. A newspaper reporter who has been very quiet throughout the drive finally speaks up. He is Army green. "Anyone have a plastic or paper bag that you don't want back?" Thankfully, he's just being cautious and the delegation arrives without incident.

Secretary Wolfowitz is in Ankara

Stephen F. Hayes is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

to deliver an important message: We need to know where Turkey stands, and we need to know it soon. To that large end, the trip aims to accomplish several particular tasks: demonstrate U.S. support for Turkey's bid for admission to the European Union, reconfirm with the newly elected government a deal Wolfowitz negotiated with its predecessor back in July, giving the United States use of Turkish air bases for military intervention in Iraq, and push for permission to base U.S. ground troops on Turkish soil.

The Wolfowitz trip comes just one week before Saddam Hussein is required to give a "full, final and complete" declaration of his weapons of mass destruction, and is the first in a series of similar delegations intended to solidify support for removing the Iraqi dictator. The effort marks a dramatic shift in the Bush administration's public war planning—from discussing the Iraqi threat in general terms, to taking specific steps to eliminate it.

Wolfowitz explains that presenting Iraq with a serious threat of force is the only way to achieve a peaceful resolution to the conflict. "It's important that he see that he is surrounded by the international community, not only in the political sense, but in a real, practical military sense. And Turkey has a very important role to play in that regard. The more support we get from Turkey, the more chance, the better our chances are, of avoiding war."

Britain, of course, has long been with us. Some other members of NATO, too, are expected to be supportive. Turkey, however, with its recent change in government and its shared border with Iraq, presents a bigger challenge. Early last month, in what many observers described as a "political earthquake," Turkey's Justice and Development party—known here as the AK party—won control of the government. The change in government wasn't itself surprising. Rival parties were tainted after years of trading accusations of corruption. Turkish voters were ready for a change. That they turned in large numbers to the new pro-Islamist AK party, though, was a bit startling.

So despite the fact that Turkey, a NATO member, granted us the use of its airbases in the Gulf War, winning the use of airbases there this time wouldn't be a slam-dunk. Putting U.S. troops on the ground would be an even greater challenge. The U.S. delegation spent all day Tuesday trying to gain assurances on both fronts.

Paul Wolfowitz

Late Tuesday night, the journalists traveling with the delegation gathered in a conference room at the Ankara Hilton. We were exhausted. Most of us had gotten no more than three hours of sleep in London the night before. Eighteen hours after leaving England for Turkey we had come to interview Omer Celik, a top adviser to AK party leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Celik, sometimes described as Turkey's Karl Rove, was coming to us directly from a meeting with Wolfowitz and other top U.S. officials about potential Turkish cooperation in the coming war. He explained his ruling party's view of U.S. troops on Turkish soil.

"There could be two reasons for having U.S. military positioned in Turkey," he told us, speaking through a translator. "One is to show some determination to Saddam Hussein to get him to clean Iraq of all weapons of mass destruction. The second is a possible operation against Iraq. Our party's last choice is a war."

Celik, who serves as a member of the Turkish parliament in addition to his duties advising Erdogan, came to the meeting with two advisers of his own. On the right sat his translator. And on the left, Egemen Bagis, a corpulent fellow with big hair and a mustache who represents Istanbul in parliament and also advises Erdogan on foreign policy.

I was sitting directly to the left of Bagis, at one of the corners of the rectangular seating arrangement, when I noticed a piece of graph paper about the size of a 3 x 5, facing my direction. It contained notes in English.

9 DEC – TGS briefs new government on U.S. plan.

MID TO LATE DEC – site surveys conducted

EARLY JANUARY – U.S. presents results on site surveys to government, pending approval of U.S. engineering forces on Turkish soil

15 JANUARY – construction would begin

Celik was in the middle of a lengthy explanation of why Turkey favors a second U.N. resolution expressly authorizing the use of force in Iraq when I began copying the information on the piece of paper. He finished his answer before I finished writing, so to buy time, I asked him how he felt U.N. inspections were going. When he was done answering, I asked whether the U.S. delegation had provided the Turks any kind of a timeline on war planning.

As Celik gave a meandering, evasive answer that amounted to "no,"

Bagis slid the piece of paper with the timeline across the table so that Celik could see it. As the journalists bent over their notebooks recording the response, the Turks shared a quiet chuckle.

Government sources later confirmed that the notes did, in fact, reflect the timeline U.S. officials had proposed to Turkish leaders at their meeting two hours earlier. The contents are revealing, but require some interpretation.

"TGS" is short for the Turkish General Staff—the Turkish military. The first briefing on "the U.S. plan" will take place on December 9, one day after Saddam Hussein is required by U.N. Resolution 1441 to make that "full, final and complete" declaration of his arsenal.

After the initial briefing, the U.S. military will spend a month in Turkey assessing the suitability of sites in southern Turkey for U.S. troops. The Turkish government would have to consult with both the parliament (controlled by the AK party) and the military before allowing U.S. troops to be based on their soil. But if approval were granted, construction would begin January 15.

That approval will be granted. Wolfowitz said Wednesday that his delegation "got very strong affirmations of Turkish support for the United States in this crisis with Iraq," from all levels of government. "Turkey has been with us always in the past and will be with us now. Turkey's support is assured."

Wolfowitz wouldn't comment on a timeline, but he spoke in general terms about planning.

"The immediate focus of our planning efforts needs to be to identify how much investment we've got to make in various bases if we are going to use them. We're talking potentially about tens of millions, probably several hundred million, dollars of investment in various facilities that we might use. So it's not a small step. It's a step that we want to tee up for a political decision quickly, because it's an important step to take. But I think that's an immediate military task."

All of this, of course, assumes a false declaration by Saddam. Even if that weren't a safe assumption given his long record of deception, it's a virtual certainty based on what his government has said over the past week. Iraqi officials indicated last week that the declaration would include "dual use" materials—equipment that could be used to make chemical and biological weapons, but that also has practical, non-military applications. But those same officials continue to insist that Iraq does not possess weapons of mass destruction. That claim, President Bush said late last week, contradicts the "solid evidence" the United States has amassed.

"Clearly what [the Iraqis] do or don't declare on December 8 will be crucial," says a senior administration official. But, the official adds, "We don't have a lot of time beyond this."

How much time? Enough for inspectors to show that Saddam is lying, and perhaps enough time for a second U.N. Security Council resolution that would give several allies the political cover they could use in managing public opinion. But an increasing number of allies have indicated their willingness to support regime change in Iraq even without a second U.N. resolution. At NATO on Wednesday, nine of the nineteen member countries indicated that they were likely to support the United States no matter what. Among them: Britain, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, and Spain.

The Bush administration will use the next several weeks to seek further commitments. But even as diplomacy continues, says a senior Pentagon official, reiterating a message delivered to Turkey, "we're developing military plans that have a certain momentum of their own." The military timetable Wolfowitz discussed with the Turks suggests that momentum might crest in February. ♦

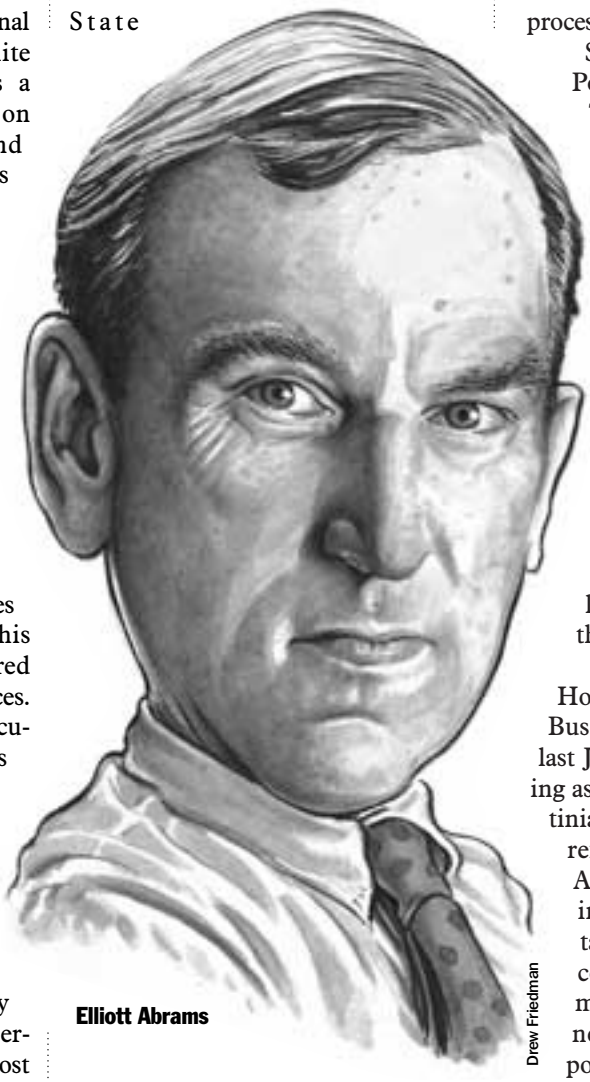
Mr. Rice Guy

The significance of Elliott Abrams's new job at Condi's NSC. **BY FRED BARNES**

SOMETIMES the Washington press corps reports a story, but entirely misses its significance. This was the case with last week's naming of Elliott Abrams to the position of senior director for Near East and North African affairs on the National Security Council staff at the White House. The job makes Abrams a major player in setting policy on Israel and the Palestinians. And Abrams's view of the right policy is quite different—more pro-Israel, less solicitous of Palestinians—from that of Secretary of State Colin Powell and the permanent cast of characters at the State Department.

As early as this week, Abrams will be knee-deep in Middle East affairs. What must be worked out is the so-called road map for pursuing peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Abrams's job is to make certain that the conditions and guidelines laid down by President Bush in his speech last June 24 are not watered down or ignored by the Powell forces. This is easier said than done, particularly since Bush's attention has turned to the war on terror and regime change in Iraq.

The appointment of Abrams, 54, is an important statement by national security adviser Condoleezza Rice—and by Bush—that the White House will not cede control of Middle East policy to Powell. In the past, a foreign service bureaucrat has held the NSC post and more often than not echoed State's view. Until late 2001, a holdover from the Clinton White House, Bruce Reidel, had the post. Over the past year, a fight was waged over who would replace Reidel. One potential appointee after another was blocked. Rice was urged to name someone from inside the system, either from State or the CIA. But she insisted on Abrams, who comes from outside the system and whose pro-democracy, pro-Israel, and anti-peace process views on the Middle East are anathema to the State/CIA establishment.



Elliott Abrams

Drew Friedman

Abrams's background is in Latin American affairs and human rights. But he expressed his opinions on the Middle East in his essay in a book, *Present Dangers*, published in 2000. Most striking was the absence of enthusiasm for resuming the "peace process." He wrote: American interests "do not lie in strengthening Palestinians at the expense of Israelis, abandoning our overall policy of supporting the expansion of democracy and human rights, or subordinating all other political and security goals to the 'success' of the Arab-Israel 'peace process.'"

Such a view pits him against Powell's State Department. There, the key to all good things in the Middle East is thought to be a quick return to the peace process with full-blown negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Abrams's view—and Rice's and Bush's—is that since September 11, 2001, the war on terror is a higher priority. But September 11 has also reinforced Bush's view of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat not as a leader seeking independence for his people, but as someone more like the terrorists who attacked the United States.

At the moment, the White House plans to implement the Bush guidelines from his speech last June. Among these are the easing aside of Arafat, the end of Palestinian terrorism against Israel, and reform of the Palestinian Authority. The Bush speech indicated these steps must be taken first, before moving on to concessions the Israelis might make and, finally, to high-level negotiations. However, State's position is that the Palestinians don't have to complete their required steps, only begin them. Under State's plan, Arafat would merely have to start leaving office, not actually be gone, and reforms would only need to have begun, not be fully implemented. A final administration

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

policy must be reached by December 20. That's when representatives of the "Quartet"—United States, Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations—meet to discuss the Middle East.

It is Abrams's strong public views on the Middle East that make his appointment surprising. No doubt it has caused heartburn at State and among Palestinians and their sympathizers. In Israel, the choice of Abrams was seen favorably as further evidence of Bush's commitment to support both Israel and democracy in the Middle East.

Abrams joined the NSC staff in June 2001 as senior director for democracy, human rights, and international operations. After the Reagan administration, he worked with Latin American interests and then became head of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington. But while out of government, he kept in touch with Dick Cheney, now Bush's vice president. He barely knew Rice at all when he was hired. But he had other contacts, including Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and Rice's deputy Steve Hadley. Wolfowitz is said to have been instrumental in getting Abrams his initial job at NSC, where he helped draft a tough new policy toward Cuba.

Press stories about Abrams's elevation to the new job stressed a single point: Iran-contra. In 1991, Abrams pleaded guilty to two misdemeanor counts of withholding information from Congress, for which he was pardoned by the first President Bush in December 1992. The *Washington Post* headlined a wire story on the Abrams appointment, "Iran-Contra Figure Named To Senior Post In White House." The lede of the story in *Newsday* said, "Iran-contra figure Elliott Abrams, who received a pardon from the first President Bush for his role in the scandal . . . has been promoted to a key post among the current President Bush's national security aides." Neither newspaper mentioned the policy significance of Abrams's appointment. They missed the real story. ♦

The Anti-Dowry

A complaint about our student loan system.

BY ALLAN CARLSON

IF A GOVERNMENT set out slowly to strangle the family life of its people, what would be the best tactic? One diabolical approach would be to saddle young adults in their early 20s with massive debt. Surely, this would delay marriages, as potential spouses shied away from this perverse form of anti-dowry. Even more surely, this tactic would push back childbearing for a decade or more, as potential mothers and fathers put off having children until their debt collectors were satisfied. Such delays would mean more infertility, smaller families, and empty or never-formed homes.

This is precisely the policy being pursued by the U.S. government, in alliance with the nation's colleges, universities, and other post-secondary schools. It's called "Guaranteed Student Loans." In 2002, the average new graduate carried an estimated debt of $22,000, up from $8,200 in 1991. An average couple that contemplated marriage on graduation would calculate a joint debt of $44,000, a heavy burden under which to start a new home. According to the Public Interest Research Group's Higher Education Project, 39 percent of new graduates with loans carry an "unmanageable debt," defined as requiring payments of 8 percent or more of the borrower's monthly income. Even in 1997, when the burden was significantly less, one survey conducted by Nellie Mae (the largest non-profit provider of student loans) reported that 15 percent of graduates had delayed getting married because of their student debt load; 22 percent had delayed childbearing, up from 12 percent in 1991. The figures today are presumably higher.

Allan Carlson is president of the Howard Center and Distinguished Fellow in Family Policy Studies at the Family Research Council.

Indeed, Census 2000 statistics point to a massive retreat by young adults from marriage and children. In that year, 73 percent of women ages 20-24 were in the never-married category, up from 36 percent in the pre-loan days of 1970; for young men, the never-married figure in 2000 was 84 percent. Among 25 to 29-year-olds, the proportion of the never-married has tripled during the era of student loans. Cohabitation, meanwhile, has displaced marriage for many of the young. There were 4.6 million of these unmarried couples in 2000, an increase of 800 percent since 1970. The marital fertility rate in 2000, meanwhile, was a third below the 1965 figure. While obviously not the sole or even perhaps the main cause of these changes, the burden of debt has surely played a part. It creates perverse material incentives for young adults to succumb to cultural trends like cohabitation and the avoidance of parenthood.

And the problem of college costs seems to be getting worse. A new report released last month by the College Board shows public university tuition up 9.6 percent in 2002; at four-year private universities, it's up 5.8 percent (while the overall inflation rate is under 2 percent). The report also underscored the increasing reliance by all institutions on student loans.

How did this happen? When the federal program began, the loans were largely modest supplements to grants, which provided direct support (without the obligation of repayment) to low- and low-middle-income students. Yet the real value of the grants (eventually called Pell Grants) fell over time. Twenty years ago, the average award covered 84 percent of state school tuition, fees, room and board; by 2000, only 39 percent. Loans took up the slack. In addition, federal loans became available to families with high-

er incomes, drawing nearly 60 percent of families with college students into the debt trap.

Moreover, colleges and universities have found student loans to be a wonderful way to expand budgets. During the last decade, the costs of college or university education rose about 6 percent a year. At private four-year colleges, tuition climbed from an average of $10,348 in 1990 to $19,312 in 2000, an increase of 87 percent; among state universities, the increase was 85 percent. And yet the overall Consumer Price Index increased during these years by only 30 percent. Colleges and universities have padded their budgets and avoided financial discipline by loading their hapless students with ever more federally inspired debt.

But it's a game that should not continue. The problem is not so much the default rate (although that remains stubbornly high at 11 to 12 percent), nor the spiraling amount of new education debt being generated each year ($42 billion in 2001, up 35 percent since 1995), nor the approach to a probable limit on personal debt that even giddy undergraduates might recognize. Rather, just as with the infamous Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, we see another federal entitlement undermining the material basis of family formation. Intended this time to encourage investment in education (and so improve "human capital"), the student loan program more actively works to postpone marriage and to prevent the birth of children. As an effective form of contraception, the loans actually keep new "human capital" from forming. Viewed this way, the student loan program corrupts the nation's social order and distorts its future.

What then should be done? One option would be to abolish federal student loans altogether, and let the market sort things out. But alas, federal education loans now account indirectly for up to a quarter of college and university revenues. Going cold turkey would close many schools and disrupt them all. These bloated institutions, found in every congressional district, can be counted on to fight abolition—or even significant cutbacks—to the death. In short, repeal or reform is politically unlikely.

Another option would be to convert future loans into "super Pell grants": college vouchers for most, if not quite all, citizens. But the cost of the Pell program is already soaring: $9.1 billion in 2001, up two-thirds since 1995. To replace all federal education loans with grants, another $40 billion would do the trick for 2003. If we assume even modest inflation in program costs (6 percent annually, as opposed to the 11 percent experienced in recent years), this entitlement would rise to the staggering figure of $157 billion in the year 2020.

Yet there is a third choice, one that's cheaper, simpler, and more appropriate. It would take a program that discourages marriage and children and reverse the incentives. Specifically, for every new child born to indebted married parents, the federal government should pay off one-fourth of their outstanding student loan debt, up to $5,000 each for mother and father (a figure that would be indexed to overall inflation).

This choice would begin removing some of the disincentives toward marriage and childbearing that young graduates now face, creating modest incentives in their place. The birth of four children over the space of 6 to 8 years could eliminate debt of over $40,000. At the same time, this plan would be far more cost effective than the "super Pell grants" noted above. Why? It is highly unlikely that all indebted graduates would have the four children needed to eliminate their entire debt. Moreover, the *cap* on the maximum amount would mean that over half of graduates would still repay a significant share of their obligation, even if they brought four children into the world. Finally, using the overall inflation rate as an index, rather than inflation in education costs alone, would dramatically constrain projected costs.

Allow me to address some of the immediate (and probably frantic) objections:

• *Why favor marriage?* The state has a compelling public interest in the marriage of young adults. Research shows that both married men and women are, on average, more productive, wealthier, healthier, happier, and much more engaged as citizens than the unmarried. Moreover, children growing up in married-couple households are significantly healthier, safer, and happier, more likely to succeed in school and life, and much less likely to be abused or imprisoned or to use alcohol and drugs than children growing up in any other circumstance. These public goods translate into higher government revenues, lower government expenses, more citizen engagement, and a more stable public order.

• *What about young adults who cannot biologically bear children?* The same debt forgiveness could be accorded to those married couples that adopt a child.

• *Why create an incentive for more births?* Other federal policy measures, such as the income tax and the Social Security system, also create incentives hostile to marriage and child-rearing. This modest countermeasure to yet another anti-family policy would encourage the birth of new human life only within relatively responsible married-couple homes. Moreover, the average American life, circa 2002, generates *$1.7 million* in economic gain over the course of its existence (for the children of college graduates, double that). Even if we deduct half of that, $850,000—an extremely high estimate—to cover the cost of each person's public education and possible public care, the net gain is clear. A modest federal investment of $10,000 in parental debt relief at the start of a new life would—for a change—be a good public investment.

• *Won't the Supreme Court declare this measure unconstitutional?* Perhaps. Given the lack of principle guiding the Court in recent decades, *anything* might be declared unconstitutional. In this case, though, a strong argument for the state's compelling interest in targeted debt relief can—and should—be made. The alternative is the accelerated shriveling of family life among America's young adults. ♦

Al Gore's Stealth Trip to China

Between appearances on Letterman and NPR, guess where he had a photo-op. **BY SAM DEALEY**

"IT'S UNFORTUNATELY TRUE," Al Gore told the *Washington Post* last month, "that the painful experiences in life give you more of a chance for growth than the others." In the former vice president's list of painful experiences, the 1996 Clinton-Gore fundraising scandals must rank pretty high. Although Gore was never convicted of any wrongdoing, he engaged in a host of risky schemes to raise campaign money. Among the most striking was the notorious fundraiser at the Hsi Lai Buddhist Temple in Hacienda Heights, California, that netted $166,750 through an illegal straw-donor scheme.

A central theme in the event, as in other Clinton-Gore fundraising outreach efforts, was the desire by Asian donors to have their photographs taken with the president and vice president. There is a good cultural explanation for this: In China and elsewhere in the Far East, pictures with powerful leaders testify to *guanxi*, or connections, and can be used to attest to one's high status, or secure special treatment and favors from officialdom.

What's interesting is that, painful as the fundraising scandals must have been for him (they led to his famous "no controlling legal authority" press conference), Gore didn't seize that "chance for growth." In the midst of his big publicity blitz last month—between an appearance on *Late Night with David Letterman* on Friday, November 15, and NPR's *Morning Edition* the following Tuesday—Gore paid a quiet visit to China to deliver the keynote address on China and the WTO at an economic forum in the bustling southern border city of Shenzhen.

"Basically, he spoke to business executives at a *BusinessWeek* forum," says Gore spokesman Jano Cabrera. Gore was in good company; the roster of fellow speakers reads like a Who's Who in the world of international business. It was the kind of trip about

Thomas Fluharty

which presidential aspirants love to boast. Yet the only mentions of his appearance were brief articles in Xinhua, China's official news agency, and in the *South China Morning Post*.

Why the stealth? Maybe because the trip raises more questions than Gore's team wants to answer. For starters, the event was hosted not by *BusinessWeek* magazine but by the China Development Institute (CDI), a state-run economic think tank, and a host of other official entities, including the Communist party's *Shenzhen Economic Daily*.

But the real embarrassment was the money that changed hands. To help pay Gore's undisclosed speaking fee, CDI sold photo-ops with the former vice president. According to a Chinese-language website and the account in the *South China Morning Post*, the government think tank offered conference attendees the opportunity to have their pictures taken with Gore for 50,000 yuan ($6,000). For corporate sponsors who paid twice that, pictures with Gore were included in the package. "If that was going on, it was without our permission and without us being aware," says Cabrera, who did not accompany Gore on the trip.

The Gore camp insists the event was a *BusinessWeek* forum and that the vice president received no money from Chinese sources. "I can tell you specifically, our contract says dnmStrategies for *BusinessWeek*," says Cabrera, referring to the Hong Kong-based event organizer that counts the magazine among its clients. But this all comes as news to *BusinessWeek*. "This was not an official *BusinessWeek*-sponsored event," says Nancy Sheed, the magazine's spokeswoman in New York. "We paid nothing to dnm to do this. We did not pay any of the participants in the event. We did not pay any of the speakers at the event. *BusinessWeek* was also not aware that anybody had been invited on behalf of *BusinessWeek* to speak at the event." Multiple calls to dnmStrategies directors were not returned.

The following day, November 18, Gore traveled to Hong Kong for a private luncheon with Ronnie Chan and select members of the Asia Society's Hong Kong chapter. Chan is a Chinese-American tycoon who's made hundreds of millions in Hong Kong's dicey real estate market—a feat bespeaking cordial ties with the authorities in Beijing. What's more, Ronnie Chan served as a board member of Enron from 1996 until the company went belly-up this spring. And not just any board member. He sat on the board's audit committee, and is a named defendant in several shareholder lawsuits.

Not that there's anything wrong with a little lunch between friends,

Sam Dealey is a member of the Washington Times *editorial board.*

Don't be a Scrooge this Holiday season . . .

Give a subscription to THE WEEKLY STANDARD!

Our special holiday offer enables you to give a friend or relative THE WEEKLY STANDARD at a cost Scrooge would definitely like —NOTHING!

Simply BECOME A SUBSCRIBER by signing up for a year–48 issues– of THE WEEKLY STANDARD. We'll bill you for just $1.65 per issue, a saving of 59% off the cover price. If you're already a subscriber, just RENEW your subscription at that same low price.

You'll then be entitled to order a gift subscription for anyone you designate. We'll absorb the cost of the subscription.

Think of it as two subscriptions for the price of one!

As soon as you place your order, we'll send you WEEKLY STANDARD gift cards you can use to announce your gifts.

Ordering your gifts has never been easier.
Join Scrooge in saying "Bah, Humbug!" to crowded malls.
Simply complete the postage paid reply card facing this page and return it . . . TODAY!

THE WEEKLY STANDARD® is published 48 times annually. RATES GOOD IN THE U.S. ONLY. COVER PRICE IS $3.95.

but Gore's left-populist allies won't find such chumminess very convenient to their efforts to portray the Bush administration as uniquely cozy with Texas energy companies. And Gore's office isn't pleased to be asked about it. "The fact that Chan was there is completely irrelevant," says Cabrera. "He had no contact with Gore, and [Gore] was not invited to speak at the Asia Society by Chan. It would be akin to Gore giving a speech at the Council on Foreign Relations and there being a former Enron executive in attendance."

Except Ronnie Chan isn't just any member of the Asia Society, and he wasn't just any luncheon attendee. He's the president of the group's Hong Kong chapter and hosted the private pow-wow in his office. Indeed, many in Hong Kong believe Chan's comfortable relationship with Beijing is responsible for the chapter's pro-Beijing slant.

For good measure, Cabrera prevailed on Richard Holbrooke, the former United Nations ambassador under Clinton and now the head of the Asia Society, to attest to the disinterested nature of Gore's China jaunt. "We are grateful that Vice President Gore took the time to speak to the Asia Society Hong Kong," Holbrooke says in a statement. "The Asia Society is the leading non-profit, non-governmental organization in the United States concerned with Asia, and we are proud that Ronnie Chan is a Member of the Board and the leader of our activities in Hong Kong. To suggest that Vice President Gore's activities in Hong Kong were somehow improper because he visited China during his trip—as has every president since Richard Nixon—is ridiculous and smacks [of] old-school McCarthyism."

"I'm not so much worried about McCarthyism as I am the coddling of totalitarianism," says Mark Simon, a Hong Kong business executive with the *Apple Daily*, a leading Chinese voice for democracy. "The fact that they're all running for cover and no one will give an honest answer about any of this is all the evidence you need to know it stinks to high heaven." ♦

The Government of Free Iraq

It's in London—for now.

BY JED L. BABBIN

London

WHATEVER the U.N. semioticians find in Saddam's December 8 "disclosure," it won't be the truth. As Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has said, we know Saddam has chemical and biological weapons, and is single-minded in his efforts to develop nuclear weapons. The December 8 report brings to an end the latest round of inspections, debates, and denials and makes military action inevitable. There is no reason to believe that our military will fail to remove Saddam if the president orders it. But it cannot shape the peace. That task—which is, heaven help us, for the diplomats—will be more complex for two reasons. First, the disunity of the many Iraqi ethnic groups makes formation of a new government difficult. Second, the gaggle of "allies" that refuse to send soldiers to fight will spare no effort to position their shopkeepers to profit from the results of our sacrifice.

Our military action is being planned to minimize damage to Iraq's economy. In the first few hours of the campaign, we will destroy Saddam's command and control assets, disrupting his ability to command what few troops may fight. Concentrations of air power and special forces will aim to capture or destroy his Scud missile batteries and deployed weapons of mass destruction before they can be used. The war should succeed in a week or ten days, and end without the destruction of Iraq's oil production facilities. Afterward, the task of rebuilding Iraqi society will be enormous, given the damage Saddam has done and the possible competition among ethnic and religious groups.

The British report on Saddam's crimes and human rights abuses says that between 3 million and 4 million Iraqis—about 15 percent of the population—have fled. Millions, including about 30,000 well-armed Shiites in Iran, are waiting to return. When they do, they could force Iraq into a "confessional" government in which each ethnic or religious group is represented in proportion to its percentage of the population. The Kurds of northern Iraq could form a separate Kurdish state. Worst of all, Iraq could fall under a radical theocracy if Iran chooses to intervene.

Conservatives recoil at the Clintonoid concept of nation-building. But we can't fail the free Iraqis—and ourselves—by simply watching while the new government is formed. Moreover, as Turkish ambassador Dr. O. Faruk Logoglu told me, President Bush has promised Turkey that Iraq will not be partitioned. Our job is to ensure that free Iraqis choose democracy, not instability. This should not mean an open-ended American military presence or, worse yet, an American military government in Iraq.

The most likely person to be the next Iraqi leader is Ahmad Chalabi, president of the Iraqi National Congress. The INC is an umbrella group for the pro-American Iraqi opposition. Chalabi has been working for ten years, frequently at odds with our State Department, to unify the opposition and position himself to be the

Jed L. Babbin, a deputy undersecretary of defense in the first Bush administration, is a frequent commentator on the Fox News Channel and MSNBC.

next president of Iraq. In the INC's London headquarters on Thanksgiving Day, Chalabi told me, "We broke politics open in Iraq, away from political oligarchs organizing themselves in secret meetings." He believes parliamentary democracy can succeed quickly in Iraq, and rejects the idea of a confessional government. He dismisses the idea of Iranian invasion or the possibility of a theocratic regime taking over. He points out that in 1979 there were about 63,000 mullahs preaching in Iraq. Today, there are fewer than 1,000, hardly the broad base a theocratic takeover would need to succeed.

Chalabi is quite open about his love-hate relationship with the Clinton White House and the State Department. He said, "We have fought Saddam, and then we were hit below the belt by the United States." He gave me a copy of a letter to him, dated August 4, 1993. It says, among other things, "I assure you that we will not turn our backs on the Kurds or the other Iraqi communities subjected to the repression of Saddam Hussein's regime." It's on the letterhead of the Vice President of the United States and signed by Al Gore. Three years later, when Saddam attacked the free Iraqis and Kurds in northern Iraq, the Clinton administration stood by while they were slaughtered.

Chalabi is only slightly less negative about the present State Department. "They want to treat me like an oligarch, and I am not one," he said. In Chalabi's view, the State Department doesn't understand that Iraq is not Afghanistan. Iraq's new government, he insists, can be a parliamentary democracy and need not suffer the disunity that the Afghans still do.

That lack of understanding may soon be moot. On December 2, President Bush appointed of one of Chalabi's friends, Zalmay Khalilzad, as "special envoy and ambassador-at-large for free Iraqis." Khalilzad, also a friend of Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, worked for National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, and had considerable direct contact with the president. Khalilzad's appointment can only be good news for Chalabi and the INC. Because his access to Rice—and, at least indirectly, to the president—will continue, his ideas on how Iraq's new government should be shaped will be heard.

Chalabi wants American involvement in postwar reconstruction. He believes that 25,000 to 50,000 American troops should stay to protect Iraqis' ability to hold a free election and establish a parliamentary democracy. American troops, he says, should "foster and guarantee" the building of the Iraqi democracy, and help rebuild its defense forces.

Chalabi is probably right about Iran and the mullahs, but he is cagey about the rest. The Russians are owed about $8 billion by Saddam, and the French are dependent on Iraqi oil. Germany, whose high tech companies are supplying Saddam with technology even now, will want to keep the business going. When I asked him how the French and Russians would be influencing a new government, he smiled and said that the Iraqi opposition is "conscious" of those deals. These "allies" of ours will work hard to influence the formation of the new government to protect their investments and contracts. We need to work even harder to prevent them from imposing in Iraq the kind of anti-American trade policies that the European Union now proclaims proudly.

Chalabi's weakness seems to be his optimism about how quickly a new government can be formed. It took postwar Germany six years to form a stable government. Iraq will not be destroyed as Germany was. But Germany, for all its weakness, did not have Hitler's trading partners to deal with. With the interference of Germany, France, and Russia, Iraq will face more complications than Chalabi is willing to admit.

We should promote democracy and freedom for Iraq, and not be shy about promoting them along the lines of the American model. And when it comes to participating in the new oil supplies opened by a free Iraq, we cannot be shy about reminding the new Iraqi government by whose grace Iraq is made free. If he is chosen to lead a new, free Iraq, Ahmad Chalabi seems unlikely to forget. ♦

Al Gore's Scarred Psyche

America has gotten over Florida, but he hasn't.

By Noemie Emery

Having a family that rears you for greatness can be a mixed blessing at best. Now and then a George W. Bush or a John Kennedy will exceed expectations, but often the outcome is grim. John Adams and his wife Abigail desperately wanted their three sons to be famous lawyers—and president. One of them made it (John Quincy Adams) but the other two broke under the strain and became alcoholic, one dying young and estranged from his family. John Quincy Adams then wanted *his* three sons to become famous lawyers, and president. One (Charles Francis) became a great Civil War diplomat, but the other two also became alcoholic, both dying young, with one a probable suicide. In 1969, Edward M. Kennedy, 36 years old and having lost two brothers in five years to assassins, was intensely pressured by hysterical Democrats to save them by running for president. He drove himself, and a girl, off a bridge. There are no calamities yet in the saga of Al Gore—groomed for greatness from a young age by his senator father—but there has been a great deal of emotional wreckage. And worse may be yet to come.

The new-new-newest Al Gore has been with us for three months now, campaigning for Democrats, hawking his books, weighing his plans for the 2004 presidential contest, and wearing his heart on his sleeve. Perhaps you thought that September 11 was the worst thing in a great many years to have befallen this country? Silly you. It was really what Hendrik Hertzberg in the *New Yorker* called the "grievous wound" that occurred when the Supreme Court of the United States put an end to the strenuous efforts of the Supreme Court of Florida to make Gore the president. We have moved on, or rather been pushed on, but Gore is still there, as if it were yesterday, brooding over the treasons of Sandra Day O'Connor. In interviews, he has bravely described himself as being well "over it," but you would never know it from his public appearances.

Campaigning this fall at the side of bemused and even stunned Democratic candidates, he turned their events into therapy sessions, as he called on voters to avenge the great wrong done to him. The *New York Times*'s Adam Nagourney reported one such appearance before college students in Iowa: "Do you remember where you were when they stopped counting the vote in 2000; do you remember how you felt?" he asked. "'Cheated!' a few of the undergraduates roared back. . . . His decision to invoke the issue explicitly suggested that after a long silence by many Democrats, Mr. Gore, at least, continued to look at the disputed vote in Florida as a source of continuing anger. . . . 'You were robbed!' one man shouted out when Mr. Gore raised [the issue]. . . . Mr. Gore beamed as he stoked up his crowd."

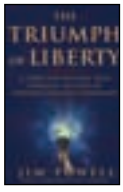
And did this work? Just ask the candidates, most of whom lost. "You can pretty much correlate the Democrats' worst results on Tuesday with Al's travel schedule," wrote Mark Steyn of Canada's *National Post*. "Everywhere he went, [he] had a consistent message: 'This election isn't about the war or the economy, it's about me.'" A staffer at the Democratic National Committee told the *American-Prowler.org*, "He was just a disaster. Whoever was supposed to prep him did an awful job. All he talked about was himself. No upbeat message, no rallying cry for the candidates. Just him."

This self-absorption has also showed up in most of the speeches he gives. It is always Mourning in America under Bush the Usurper with his failed war on terror and lengthening bread lines. "Bitterness is not a policy position," his erstwhile allies at the *New Republic* lamented after Gore's September 23 critique of Bush's Iraq policy. That speech "consisted of neither honest criticism nor honest opposi-

Noemie Emery, a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard, *is writing a book,* Great Expectations: The Lives of Political Sons.

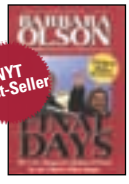
Guaranteed

CONDEMNED



The Triumph of Liberty—Jim Powell chronicles the inspirational stories of 65 individuals who have advocated and defended liberty. This book gives you moving examples of true heroes of freedom including: William Penn, Ben Franklin, Adam Smith, Booker T. Washington, Ronald Reagan, and many more. **Item #5550**

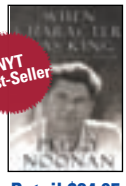
Retail $35.00



NYT Best-Seller

Final Days—"Disgraceful." That was former president Jimmy Carter's word for the final days of the Clinton administration. But as the late Barbara Olson shows in this riveting book, it was worse than disgraceful; it was well-nigh criminal. **Item #5864**

Retail $27.95



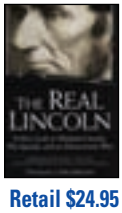
NYT Best-Seller

When Character Was King—At last: a real insider's look at Ronald Reagan—that fully reveals why he's one of the greatest men of our time. Refreshingly free of the made-up characters and sneering liberal bias that mar other portraits of Reagan, Peggy Noonan at last brings you a well-rounded picture of this modern hero. **Item #5912**

Retail $24.95

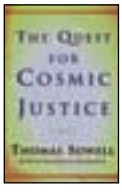
Epidemic—*Epidemic* breaks the story that STDs among adolescents has indeed reached epidemic proportions, and is leaving our kids open to deadly infections, infertility and cancer. Dr. Meeker, who has spent the past 20 years practicing pediatric and adolescent medicine and counseling teens, uncovers the facts about this grave health crisis, and the powerful political and other interests that continue to make it worse. **Item #6086**

Retail $24.95



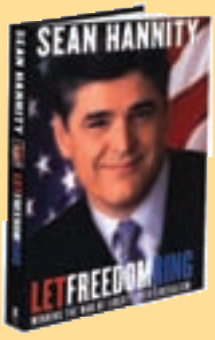
The Real Lincoln—Though Abraham Lincoln will forever be remembered for freeing the slaves, that was never one of his chief political aims. What was? According to Thomas DiLorenzo, Lincoln devoted his entire political career to revolutionizing the American form of government from one that was very limited in scope and highly decentralized to a highly centralized, activist state. **Item # 5958**

Retail $24.95



The Quest for Cosmic Justice—Leading conservative scholar Thomas Sowell demolishes both the practical and moral claims of America's social utopians. He sees a "quiet repeal of the American Revolution" that diminishes our liberties under the guise of "social justice" and progressive utopian ideals. His vision can help combat this downward spiral. **Item #5392**

Retail $25.00

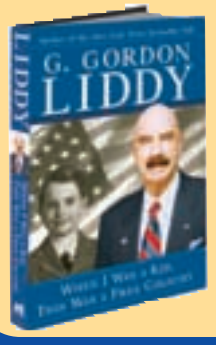


Let Freedom Ring

New York Times Best-Seller

Known for his forthright, courageous style, Hannity pulls no punches declaring that if the Left prevails, the well-being of future generations will be in peril. In his book, Sean shows why liberalism is bankrupt on a variety of issues: terrorism and national security, border security, the economy, taxes, liberal media bias, environmentalism, education, faith, character and the family, and more.

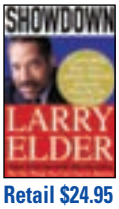
Item #6024 Retail $25.95



When I Was a Kid, This Was a Free Country

So much has changed since G. Gordon Liddy was a kid—and not for the better. In the latest book from the smash-hit radio host, *When I Was a Kid, This Was a Free Country,* he surveys the damage: restrictive gun control laws, bewilderingly complicated and limiting environmental regulations, politically correct strangleholds on free speech and free thought, and even encroachments on our property rights and due process of law.

Item #6070 Retail $27.95



Showdown—In Showdown, Larry Elder takes on the most powerful obstacle to our nation's continued existence as a free society: the increasingly intrusive nanny state—along with the entrenched media elite and special interest groups that support its encroachments on our freedoms. **Item #6071**

Retail $24.95

NYT Best-Seller

Death of the West—American policies have turned white Americans into second-class citizens. And, if we don't pay attention, Buchanan proves the worst is yet to come. This NYT Best-Seller, shows how the U.S. could become a Third-World nation by 2050, unless we take action now. **Item #5909**

Retail $25.95

The Age of Reagan—By most accounts, the year 1964 was a disastrous one for conservatives. The Democratic Party gained its biggest majorities since the glory days of the New Deal. Meanwhile, the conservative movement was quietly aligning itself behind a new leader who would bring it to national dominance. **Item #5855**

Retail $35.00

Shooting Straight—Wayne LaPierre and James Jay Baker show you how fight back against Leftists who want to steal your guns and leave you defenseless. Armed with this book, you'll be prepared to struggle against the left-wing zealots who would threaten your livelihood, your family, and your very life. **Item #6023**

Retail $27.95

Theodore Rex—In 1979, Edmund Morris took the reading public by storm with The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt, the first in a projected three-volume series and winner of both the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award. Now, more than two decades later, Morris has delivered the second installment, covering Roosevelt's presidential years (1901–1909). **Item #5951**

Retail $35.00

NYT Best-Seller

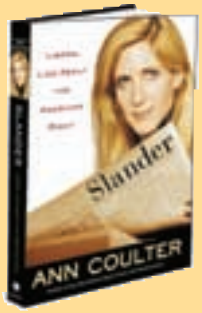
What's So Great About America—America is under attack not only from terrorists, but from leftists, Europeans, and militant Islamic intellectuals who all blame America for every ill in the world. In *What's So Great About America,* best-selling author Dinesh D'Souza takes on all of America's critics and proves them wrong. **Item #5966**

Retail $22.95

Since 1964, the Conservative Book Club has delivered the truth!

Guaranteed RIGHT

Take 3 Books for $1 Each

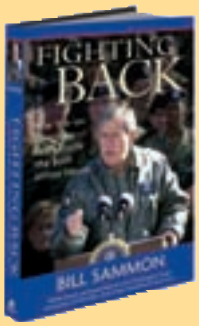


Slander

New York Times Best-Seller

Prominent liberals—desperate to gain even more political power in America—pull no punches in their effort to defame and discredit conservatives. And their pals in the media are forever letting them get away with it. But finally Ann Coulter stands up to call their bluff.

Item #5985 Retail $25.95



Fighting Back

What did President Bush do on September 11th when he discovered that America was under terrorist attack? How did he plan the war on terror? What is his strategy? *Fighting Back* is the ultimate insider account of the Bush presidency during this unprecedented period.

Item #6076 Retail $27.95

TAKE 3 BOOKS FOR $1 EACH

PLUS A 4TH FOR $7.95

Islam Unveiled—Here at last is a book that dares to tell the truth about Islam—and to show you exactly why this religion is so easy to "hijack," and what Islamic authorities really teach about such barbarities! **Item #6008**

Retail $24.95

Invasion—Give us your tired, your poor... your terrorists, torturers and criminal scum? You will not read a more shocking account of just how porous America's borders have become than this book. *Invasion* is based on exhaustive research and interviews with dozens of current and former immigration officials. **Item #6063**

Retail $27.95

Why We Fight—The "Blame-America-First" crowd came out of the woodwork after 9/11, preaching the same self-doubt that has undermined our national confidence for decades. *Why We Fight* eviscerates the culture of appeasement, explaining in no uncertain terms why the war on terrorism is worth fighting. **Item #5956**

Retail $19.95

Breakdown—Ace reporter Bill Gertz reveals how, since the 1970s, liberals have ravaged the CIA and FBI until both have degenerated into "welfare bureaucracies," saturated with the doctrine of appeasement and incapable of effective clandestine operations. **Item #6007**

Retail $27.95

100% Satisfaction Guaranteed

INSTANT SAVINGS! Join today and get any 3 of the books pictured in this ad for just $3 plus shipping and handling. Then take up to two years to buy four more books at regular low Club prices (20–50% below retail) or three books over two years, if you've selected the New Member Bonus. After you have paid for your books, your Membership can be ended by you or the Club. Plus you will also get opportunities to buy from our list of Superbargain books that the Club regularly offers. These books are offered at 70–90% discounts!! (Sorry, Superbargain books don't count toward your book commitment.)

SHOP AT HOME CONVENIENCE! Up to 15 times a year you will receive the Club Bulletin packed with the kind of books you will want to read and own. Each bulletin will describe a Featured Selection chosen just for our members. If you want to receive the Featured Selection, do nothing and it will be sent to you. If you don't want the Featured Selection or you would like an alternate selection, simply indicate your wishes on the handy card enclosed with your Bulletin and return it before the deadline date. CBC is an easy way to build your conservative library from the comfort of your own home.

CBC ONLINE! You can now read about and conveniently order CBC books from our new website. Same discounts apply, of course. And, with regularly scheduled live chats with our authors and members-only bulletin boards, you can keep up with the conservative community on a range of important issues.

100% SATISFACTION GUARANTEED! If you are not completely satisfied with any book, return it and receive a complete credit. Plus you will always have at least ten days to make your decision to receive the Featured Selection. If you ever have less than ten days, you simply return the book at Club expense for a full credit. One Membership per household please.

Join online at www.ConservativeBookClub.com

☑ **YES!** Please enroll me as a **Preferred Member of the Conservative Book Club** under the terms outlined in this ad. Send me the 3 books I've indicated and bill me just $3, plus shipping and handling. I then need to buy only four additional books at regularly discounted club prices over the next two years. *Please write book numbers here:*

_____ # _____ # _____ **C1071AX**

☐ **YES! I want to take advantage of the New Member Bonus!** Please send me a 4th selection as I've indicated below. I understand I will be billed an additional $7.95, plus shipping and handling. I then need to buy only three additional books at regular club prices over the next two years. *Please write book number here:*

_____ **C1071AY**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

• Prices slightly higher in Canada • Membership subject to approval by the Conservative Book Club

www.ConservativeBookClub.com

Fill out this coupon and mail to: CONSERVATIVE BOOK CLUB®

1146 PO BOX 97196, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20090-7196

tion. Rather, it sounded like a political broadside against a president who Gore no doubt feels occupies a post that he himself deserves." In fact, this speech enraged many Democrats, who wanted the war issue to vanish as quickly as possible, and gave new salience to the comment of E.J. Dionne that Gore is the one politician of whom it could be said that he does things for political reasons that turn out to hurt him politically. In the weeks following his speech on Iraq, Gore's favorable ratings, which had hovered for months around the low 50s, proceeded to fall 17 points.

These political ploys having been none too effective, Gore then rolled out his publicity blizzard, at the wrong moment and in the wrong way. Defending his crown as the least lucky man in the country, he launched his grievance revival just as his target—Bush the Usurper—came off the best week of his life. Bush made history for his side by winning seats in his first midterm elections, he won a 15-0 vote in the Security Council, and, in the eyes of all but the most entrenched diehards, settled the question of his own legitimacy by attaining the mandate he had failed to win earlier. Another blow was delivered in Florida, the very scene of the crime. From December 12, 2000, Democrats had looked ahead two years to the midterm elections when they would have the president's brother in their crosshairs. All the voters done in by the chads and the butterfly ballots would flock to the polls to obtain satisfaction. The party elbowed Janet Reno aside and poured barrels of cash into Florida. Jeb Bush was toast. Jeb Bush was history. Jeb Bush was . . . reelected by a 13-point spread. Turns out the outrage was not all that endemic. If Florida works as an issue, it seems to work best for Republicans.

"Do you remember where you were in 2000 when they stopped counting the votes?" Gore kept on asking his audience. Actually, few people want to hear any more about Florida at the end of 2000, and they wanted still less to be hearing about it after September 11, 2001. On September 11, we lost more than 3,000 people, going about their own workaday business, and there is still a huge crater in lower Manhattan. Just weeks after the first anniversary of this disaster, the Washington suburbs fell prey to two snipers who killed ten people, injured three others, and for more than three weeks made millions of people fear for their lives. The day after the snipers were captured, Paul Wellstone and five others were killed.

At this less than propitious moment, the Gores started a book tour and unleashed on the nation the tale of the woes and injustices they have had to endure during and since the 2000 election. These included having to buy their own mansion (a $2.3 million white house in Nashville), stand in line at the airport, and buy their own stuff in the stores. The two big kickoff interviews—a prime-time confession with Barbara Walters, and a long piece by Liza Mundy in the *Washington Post* magazine—focused on their wounded feelings and treated the Gores as a passel of invalids, in recovery from some dreadful ordeal.

Gore let the women and children make the zingiest charges. Sweetly, Tipper said over and over that the mean Supreme Court had stolen their victory. The Gores' older daughters, Kristen and Karenna, told Barbara Walters how beastly it was to be cooped up in the vice presidential mansion while protesters outside expressed displeasure at their father's attempts to disenfranchise absentee voters in Florida. Said Kristen, "We felt sort of like . . . trapped in this . . . you know, little house, with all of these people yelling mean things." No one could predict that the midterm elections would finally legitimize Bush, and knock the props from under Gore's claim that the 2000 result had been very bad for this country. But a defter politician would have figured out that the country had turned a very sharp corner on September 11, and left the culture of self-pity behind. This is no longer Bill Clinton's America. Talking is out and doing is in; Oprah is out and Rudy is in, and the daytime TV sensation is Pentagon briefings. The Gores do not shine in Don Rumsfeld's America. They merely seem whiney, and strange.

The feel of the Gore books—*Joined at the Heart* and *The Spirit of Family*—is *ancien régime*. It is about families—and, you guessed it, feelings—and comes from the era when Bill Clinton's big theme was school uniforms, and faith-based institutions were the biggest things on the president's mind. (For a time before he turned populist, Gore tried to run on a "livability agenda," addressing the pressures of stressed-out suburbanites with such things as a national phone number to help drivers avoid traffic jams.) And for a while, when the Dow stood at 11,000, and terrorists did their dirty work in faraway countries, this sort of thing appeared important: George W. Bush, let us remember, was reading to children when the towers were hit.

Since then, Bush has spent much less time in school rooms, and more time in war rooms. Gore, however, is still in the nursery, pondering the pressures of children and work. This emphasis, another relic of a long-gone era, is not likely to take him too far in this one. "Since the September 11 terrorist attacks, Americans seem less interested in a president who will understand their ordinary stresses than one who will protect them against extraordinary dangers," writes Ronald Brownstein in the *Los Angeles Times*. "Gore's Time Has Come and Gone," he titled his column. Cruel, and astute.

And then the Gore Tour became sharper and shriller, under the stress of bad news. *Time*'s Karen Tumulty inter-

viewed Gore three days after the midterm elections, and it is striking how strident he was. Bush's policies, he told her, were "catastrophic," "horrible," even "immoral," and were "taking the country to a very bad place." Of course it might be that Gore was strident *because* Bush had triumphed; that the success of his rival was too much to bear. Then came more bad news: The books were not selling. Then came a CBS/*New York Times* poll, that put his favorable ratings at . . . 19 percent. After this came the notorious interview with the *New York Observer*, in which a Nixonian Gore blamed a press infested with Republican "fifth-columnists" for blasting his hopes. If 2002 is bringing Bush what he did not get in 2000—the wholehearted support of the public—it is also bringing Gore what he did not get last time, which in his case is wholesale rejection. And this time, he cannot blame the Court.

Gore's view of himself is that he is a victim, and in one sense he is right. In her *Washington Post* profile, Liza Mundy let us see a man she labeled "OtherGore," a serious man with a great thirst for knowledge and intellectual ambitions. OtherGore teaches a course at Fisk College and Middle Tennessee State University, where he immerses himself in research on families. He also hosts a seminar at Harvard, where he and a clique of like-minded professors discuss global warming, information technology, and the theory and nature of speech. In this world, OtherGore seems as happy and fluent as PoliticalGore appears stilted and strained. In a better world, Gore would be spending his life in rooms with these people, discussing the things that interest him and bore most politicians. But it was his bad luck, which for a long time seemed his good luck, that he was born to two well-placed and fiercely ambitious political players, who saw him from his birth as a possible president, and who told him his role was to lead.

It would perhaps have been better for Gore if he had lost big at the outset, so that he could have gone on to his true métier and calling. But the curse of Al Gore is that he always looked too good on paper, and when sheltered by others seemed to do so well. He won his father's old seats in the House and the Senate as the appealing young Harvard grad-veteran son of his father, and he was elected vice president as the gravitas partner of Bill "Slick Willie" Clinton, a flighty and weightless political natural.

It was only when he ran on his own that his weaknesses were glaring. In 1988, and then again in 2000, he proved unable to do what George W. Bush had done easily—assemble a loyal and competent team that could work well together, plot out a strategy, and stay with a theme. This set Gore up for the 2000 debacle, when he entered the field with a strategic edge and managed to lose through his poor political instincts, such as his decisions in crucial debates to try to bully and hector his rival. It is likely that Gore always seemed like an ugly campaigner because he was a poor one; like an amateur actor who over-emotes, pulling faces and screaming, when the lift of an eyebrow would work very well. His attacks and his pieties were both overdone, and both made voters uneasy. The political Gore never seemed real, because the real Gore was never political. And this real Gore has never been in public view.

Gore seems a man of impressive abilities, who is achingly stupid in politics. He is the man who in 1996 decided to give his "no controlling legal authority" press conference to damp down charges of fundraising malfeasance, and thought he had done a good job. He is the man who decided to give a six-Kleenex speech at the 1996 Democratic Convention about how his sister's death in 1984 from lung cancer had made him an obdurate foe of the tobacco industry, even though he was still bragging about his role as a tobacco grower as late as 1988. He is the man who stood beside Bill Clinton when he was impeached, and called this disgraced figure one of our greatest American presidents. He is the man who thought it was smart to pay Naomi Wolf $15,000 a month to make him an Alpha Male dressed in earth tones; who thought it was a good idea to roll his eyes and sigh loudly in the first presidential debate in 2000; and who then went against the advice of all of his consultants to stalk over to Bush and hover above him, to the bemusement of everyone watching. (Gore later thought he had won the debate.)

This is not the record of somebody born to be president. This is the profile of somebody born to work for a think tank. "The only way to make sense of Al Gore," wrote Marjorie Williams when he lost in 2000, "is to see him as a man for whom politics is an ill-fitting trade, adopted under the duress of family legacy. . . . Politics has always had, for Gore, the quality of a second language, learned by the class grind not naturally gifted in this area, mastered by rote and sheer force of will." Add to this the agonizing conditions of the 2000 election—the closeness, the doubts, and the margin of error—and you have for yourselves a terrible story, as Gore tries over and over to make things turn out different and better, and by trying makes everything worse.

Like Gore or not, this is an unbearable story. "Do you remember where you were when they stopped counting the votes in 2000? Do you remember how you felt?" he keeps asking. It is clear enough now that *he* will never forget it, that in the dark night of his soul it is always still 10:01 in the evening of December 12, 2000. The wound, as it seems, is in him, not in his country. And it seems now it will never heal. ♦

The Jesus Market

Christianity may be struggling in the public square, but it's prospering in the public bazaar.

By Stephen Bates

Christian merchandising today has *many* mansions. Start with faith-on-your-sleeve fashion, such as the T-shirts promoting J. Christ instead of J. Crew, Fruit of the Spirit instead of Fruit of the Loom, Christ Supreme instead of Krispy Kreme. This "witness wear," a manufacturer's rep explains, evokes the familiar logo without quite crossing the line to trademark infringement—"We have lawyers."

A half-dozen companies produce Scripture-clad candy. Some truncated verses on wrappers work nicely: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Others could use a bit more context: "Because thou art lukewarm . . . I will spew you out of my mouth"—not a sentiment one expects from a peppermint.

Then there's the Bible Bar, featuring the seven foods listed in Deuteronomy 8:8—"Nutrition As God Intended." *The Women of Color Study Bible.* The Last Supper jigsaw puzzle. And the "Depend Upon Christ the King" rubber ducky.

Godly retailing got started in the late 19th century with Grandmama's Sunday Game of Bible Questions and a handful of other products. Today it's a $4 billion-a-year business, with bestsellers and Grammys and trademark lawyers. Once available only in Christian bookstores, many of the items now command premium space in Wal-Mart and Borders. Christians may be struggling in the public square, but they seem to be prospering in the public bazaar.

I started looking into this world in 1999, around the time of conservative activist Paul Weyrich's open letter advocating Christian separatism. The culture war is over, Weyrich declared, and Christians lost to the "enemies of our traditional culture." Now, Christians should hunker down. "What steps can we take to make sure that we and our children are not infected? We need some sort of quarantine."

The new godly merchandise, I figured, represented the quarantine at work. Instead of protesting obscene gangsta rap, Christians were listening to Gospel Gangstaz and Lil' Raskull. Instead of trying to transfigure the mass culture, they were building a cloistered subculture, a gated community of faith. Jesus' Great Commission—"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations"—was giving way to the Great Escape.

That was my preconception. Then I visited a Christian retailers' convention in Atlanta, attended concerts, read books, listened to CDs, watched videos, ate spiritual candy, and, along the way, discovered something more complicated than quarantine. More complicated and, at least to an outsider—a lapsed Episcopalian with only a spectator's feel for evangelicalism—a bit more unsettling.

To start with, the parallel world is spilling beyond its borders. Some Christian artists and merchandisers endorse cultural segregation, but many others advocate

Stephen Bates is literary editor of the Wilson Quarterly *and the author of* Battleground: One Mother's Crusade, the Religious Right, and the Struggle for Our Schools *(1993).*

integration—mingling people and products of faith with Weyrich's enemies of traditional culture.

Take music. The separatists favor songs with an explicit Christian message, performed before Christian audiences and sold in Christian stores. The integrationists want obliquely Christian songs—plenty of crossover appeal, and not much "noisy vocabulary of religion," in the words of rock group Jars of Clay—performed before mainstream audiences and sold in secular superstores. In this schism, the separatists think the integrationists are sellouts, while the integrationists think the separatists are mired in a ghetto mentality.

Their area of disagreement, though, may be less significant than their common ground. The separatists and the integrationists both seek to make a difference and, in the process, make a buck. For both groups, moreover, mimicry is ministry: They're doing God's work by putting a Christian gloss on American popular culture.

The two sides unite in embracing contemporary pop culture, in retooling God's message to fit drastically different forms, and in celebrating the fact that, as a 14-year-old girl tells *YM* magazine, nowadays you can be "cool *and* Christian."

Today's Christian music still features Up With People wholesomeness—perky female trios, well-scrubbed boy bands, earnest Michael W. Smith (whose publicity photos show him bowed in prayer)—but you can also find shaved heads, body piercings, tattoos, soul patches, spandex, and Goth makeup. Music styles include hyper pop-punk, holy hip-hop, and something called hybrid death tuneage. A reviewer in the Christian music magazine *HM* salutes Green Olive Tree for "the best worship disc for butt-rockers I've ever heard."

Although some singers complain about the market's JPM quota—Jesuses per minute—a lot of contemporary Christian music seems more contemporary than Christian. Some is instrumental, including a couple of albums that sound like New Age's Second Coming (John Tesh is, in fact, a major draw at Christian music festivals). In other songs, only the lyric sheet discloses that "I love you" is actually "I love You." Faith may be expressed in acronym (the band Phat Chance takes its name from Praising Him at All Times) or allusion. "When will you begin your killing spree? / Let it begin with me," sings S.S. Bountyhunter, a sentiment that *HM* construes as a metaphor for "offering ourselves to the Lord." Born-again Christian Alice Cooper deems his concerts, with their simulated beheadings and spattering blood, "very anti-satanic."

Of course, listeners can disregard even straightforward lyrics if they feel like it. According to *Christianity Today*, Jars of Clay's song "Flood" became a favorite in gay dance clubs. *People* praises Jennifer Knapp's "Lay It Down" as "good music that just happens to have a Christian subtext," and adds: "If so inclined, the listener can screen out the religious elements and just enjoy the music. Hey, it works with Bach."

Some groups, especially the hugely successful ones, try to dodge the Christian label. "No, we are not a Christian band," declares Creed's website. "A Christian band has an agenda to lead others to believe in their specific religious beliefs. We have no agenda!"

Many Christian musicians do harbor an agenda, and they're eager to advance it by reaching beyond fellow believers. "Jesus didn't hang out in the churches all the time," Michael Tait of the group dc talk told one interviewer. "He hung out in the weird places and He hung out with people who were ostracized by society, and the freaks, because they were the ones that needed to hear." "We would reach a lot more unsaved people if we weren't so boxed in," says singer Natalie LaRue, 18, who, with her brother Phillip, 21, forms the pop duo LaRue.

But there are plenty of questions about just what integration means. Some musicians make the transition from Christian market to mass market and never look back. Toby Mac of dc talk says Christian music isn't supposed to be a "minor-league experience" for musicians dreaming of secular glory.

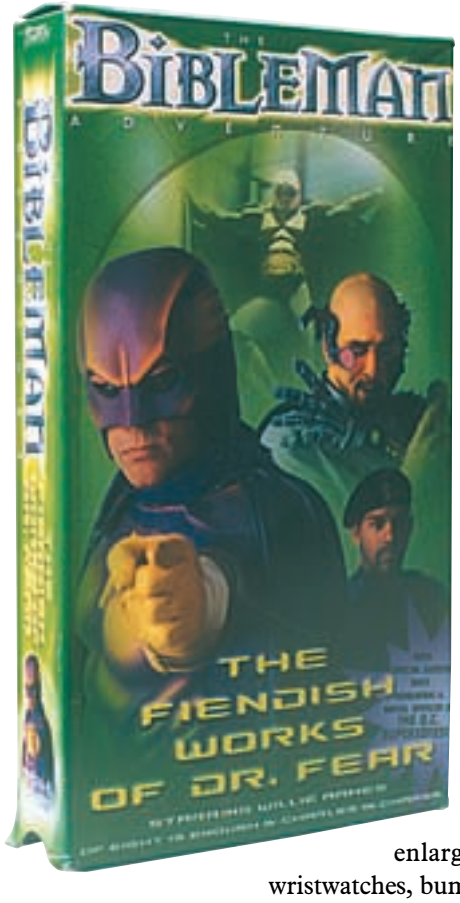
I raise the crossover issue with Bill Anderson, president of CBA, the Christian retailers' association that's sponsoring the immense trade show in Atlanta. (Formerly the Christian Booksellers Association, it's now simply CBA, reflecting the fact that these stores sell lots more than books.) "For Christian artists who had their start in the Christian market," Anderson says, "there is a certain sense that we helped them get started. Will they continue to be our artists, or everybody's? Our people applaud the idea of taking the message into the broader market. But the issue for us in crossover is, did they take the *cross over*?"

While some missionaries go native, sacrificing message purity for street cred and stardom, others continue producing Christian songs but have trouble adhering to role-model standards. "A lot of the music world can be a bit hard, the road life especially," Natalie LaRue tells me. "You can get off track, and think you're not out there to minister to people but to make money. . . . And you get exposed to a lot you maybe don't want to see." "It's not, like, drugs-sex-rock-'n'-roll," says her brother Phillip. "But there's *definitely* temptations."

Not everyone can resist. Nikki Leonti, a teenage singer who touted abstinence between songs, got pregnant. She told Christian music magazine *CCM*: "If the God of the universe can forgive me, I'd hope people would be willing to as well."

Many in the industry still can't forgive superstar Amy Grant—she merits five entries on *CCM*'s list of the "100 Greatest Albums in Christian Music," more than anybody else—for divorcing Christian musician Gary Chapman and marrying country singer Vince Gill. In a letter to *CCM*, one reader announced that he wouldn't be buying a ticket to Grant's Christmas tour. "I would have a hard time listening to Amy sing 'Home for the Holidays,'" he wrote, "knowing that she is not."

As in music, just about every publishing genre has inspired a godly counterpart. Magazines include *Christian Computing*, *Christian Cruise*, and *Christian Motorsports Illustrated*. On the health shelf, you'll find Christian books addressing fibromyalgia, obesity, anorexia, and menopause (*Holy Hormones!*). *Redeeming the Season* will help your family vanquish Christmas commercialism—just $16.99. One self-help volume is called *How to Live Through a Bad Day: Seven Powerful Insights from Christ's Words on the Cross*—talk about your bad days.



The message has been updated and streamlined. Hendrickson markets small paperbacks with splashy layouts, including *The Bible Made Easy*, *Prayer Made Easy*, and (a note of humility) *Knowing God's Will Made Easier*. *God.com* promises to lead you to the Almighty's home page. The *Extreme Teen Bible* features "edgy study helps" and "funky book introductions." Available in "slimey limey" and other "hip fashion colors," it's part of Thomas Nelson's Extreme for Jesus line. The brand manager honed her teen-marketing skills at Nike—from swoosh to cross.

The king of recent Christian nonfiction is an obscure figure from, as the *Los Angeles Times* puts it, "one of the dullest sections of the Old Testament." In the Book of Chronicles, a man named Jabez utters a one-sentence prayer: "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain." God grants the prayer, and that's the last we hear of Jabez. Not much to work with, but Atlanta preacher Bruce Wilkinson made it the centerpiece of a book.

"God really does have unclaimed blessings waiting for you, my friend," Wilkinson writes in *The Prayer of Jabez*—but "if you didn't ask Him for a blessing yesterday, you didn't get all that you were supposed to have." Be sure to ask extravagantly: "For you, nothing but God's fullest blessing will do." Don't worry about coming across as selfish, for this is "exactly the kind of request our Father longs to hear." Routinely utter the Jabez prayer and "you will be so overwhelmed with God's graciousness that tears will stream down your face." You may even find yourself telling God, "It's too much! Hold some of Your blessings back!"

Chronicles describes Jabez as "more honorable than his brothers." Might that explain his success? Could it be that you have to cultivate honor, and not merely incant magic words, for God to enlarge your territory? *Prayer of Jabez* doesn't say. On the website *prayerofjabez.com*, Wilkinson says Jabez's honor may have preceded the prayer, or the prayer may have instilled the honor—we have no way of knowing. "My own viewpoint is, don't worry about it. Don't worry about it."

Wilkinson's 93-page, $9.99 *Prayer of Jabez* was the bestselling nonfiction title of 2001, according to *Publishers Weekly*. It has sold more than 9 million copies, spent 24 weeks atop the *New York Times* bestseller list, and spawned endless spinoffs: a devotional volume, an illustrated gift edition, a journal, a Bible study course, *Prayer of Jabez for Women*, and *Prayer of Jabez for Little Ones* ("Dear God, Please bless me in a great big way!"), not to mention greeting cards, calendars, mugs, mousepads, and a planned feature film.

Those are the *licensed* products. The enlarge-my-territory prayer also appears on wristwatches, bumper stickers, pens, candy bars, *Jabez: A Novel*, and much else. "It's from the Bible, so I guess they couldn't copyright it," muses one CBA exhibitor. Several others tell me that editors are scouring the Bible in search of another nobody with star quality.

While Wilkinson's book led last year's nonfiction chart, the bestselling novel was *Desecration*, the ninth book in the Left Behind series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. Since the original *Left Behind* appeared in 1995, the novels and children's versions have sold more than 50 million copies, beating the Harry Potter books, and spawned a new genre, what *Publishers Weekly* calls "prophetic/apocalyptic/endtimes thrillers." The 10th installment, *The*

Remnant, was released July 2 with a first printing of 2.75 million hardcovers and a *Time* cover story. Books 11 and 12 are scheduled for 2003 and 2004. And LaHaye is branching out: For four novels about a born-again Indiana Jones (more mimicry), Bantam Dell is reportedly paying him an astronomical $45 million.

Repackaging the endtimes for our times, several movies also feature, as a character in the film *Apocalypse* calls him, "the infamous Antichrist." Cloud Ten Pictures has produced a half-dozen Revelation-based films since 1998, resurrecting such circa-1980 stars as Gary Busey, Margot Kidder, Howie Mandel, Corbin Bernsen, and Mr. T. Along with its own productions, Cloud Ten handles *Waterproof*, a celebration of "emotional and spiritual rebirth," which stars Burt Reynolds, fresh from *Boogie Nights*, a celebration of pornography.

Cloud Ten produced *Left Behind: The Movie*, starring "former *Growing Pains* heartthrob Kirk Cameron." Publicity materials speak of "the runaway bestselling novel" but scarcely mention its authors. That's no accident: LaHaye has filed suit against Cloud Ten, alleging that the film falls short of what was contractually promised. The suit is still pending, though it hasn't kept Cloud Ten from moving ahead with *Left Behind II: Tribulation Force*, released on video in October, and a planned *Left Behind* TV series.

Lawsuits, of course, are commonplace in Hollywood. "On the one hand, all of this does show that Christian filmmaking is coming into the mainstream," Cloud Ten's Peter LaLonde told the Christian Broadcasting Network. "But it may also seem to show the mainstream world that we are just like them."

The just-like-them issue arises in retailing, too. In the words of one pending trademark application, WWJS: Where Would Jesus Shop?

The owners of Christian stores fret when *Prayer of Jabez* and other huge-selling products end up in secular outlets. The Christian retailers crave and sometimes demand exclusive marketing rights. They argue loyalty (we made your products a success), ministry (it's more than a business to us), expertise (we can help customers find what they need), and necessity (if the hottest items are available at superstores, especially at a discount, fewer people will shop in our stores).

"Milk is always at the back of the store because they want to pull you through," says CBA's Anderson. "So there's a lot of importance in having lead products that people need. In the Christian market, those are bestsellers and household names."

But Christian manufacturers want to sell their products to non-Christians and to the many Christians who don't shop at religious bookstores. ("If you want to reach the Christian population on Sunday, you do it from the church pulpit," Ralph Reed once said. "If you want to reach them on Saturday, you do it in Wal-Mart.") The manufacturers note that Christian stores gladly sell secular products with a godly subtext, such as the *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* soundtrack. Why shouldn't secular stores carry Christian products with broad appeal? The retailers' ministry may demand segregation, but the manufacturers' ministry demands integration.

And, it seems, everybody's ministry demands self-promotion. At *leftbehind.com*, you can click on one taskbar button to "SEEK GOD" or the neighboring button for "WHERE TO BUY." At a Christian concert last year, a preshow announcer urged audience members to hurry on down and buy CDs, "only a few left," though they actually had multitudes—treading the thin line between puffery and false witness. Some retailers offer special discounts to pastors as a way of "saying thank you for all you do for the Kingdom," in the words of the Family Christian Store website.

With 330 stores, Family Christian is the largest chain of Christian retail outlets. "We're a business as well as a ministry," says Les Dietzman, a director of the company who until recently was president and CEO. He consciously tempers his competitive instinct: "Daily my prayer, my petition, my request to God is guard my heart, guard my motives." But, he notes, "retailers by nature are competitive people. . . . If somebody comes right in your face, I know how to compete. I know how to cut the legs out from under somebody."

Christian products provoke a good deal of mockery. Arlo Pignotti of *godisdead.com*, for instance, entertains atheist conventions with his collection of Bible action figures and other "holy paraphernalia." I was surprised, though, to find equally pointed jabs coming from evangelical Christians.

In 1978, the *Wittenburg Door* magazine published a *Where's Waldo*-type challenge—"find the hidden Christ" in a photo of a Christian trade show. The answer: "We can't seem to find Him either, but keep looking. He must be in there *somewhere*." Now called *The Door Magazine*, it still skewers from an evangelical perspective, with editors asking themselves, "Who would Jesus mock?"

Editors of the Christian magazine *Credenda Agenda* have published hilarious, dead-on parodies of *Prayer of Jabez* and *Left Behind*. The parodists explain, referring to their targets, "These are our brothers who write these things; they represent us too. We have no doubts about their sincerity and good-hearted goals and wonderful characters, but we all must do light years better. . . . In

order to mature, evangelicals need to move beyond the bumper-sticker shallowness of the past four decades and long for true wisdom."

"They're schlock," author and columnist Cal Thomas says of Christian bestsellers. "I think my next book is going to be *Recipes for the Endtimes*."

I ask CBA's Anderson whether, in wandering around the Atlanta trade show, he has seen any products that make him cringe. "Yes," he says. "A lot of times it's backed by good intentions." But, as he points out, the secular marketplace has plenty of schlocky goods too. "Hopefully there are fewer of those in the Christian market, but we're certainly not exempt from bad taste."

Taste, though, is only part of what's disconcerting. There's also the blending of faith in things not seen with things seen, sold, flaunted; ultimate concern embodied in plastic. It's like Evelyn Waugh's anecdote about touring a crucifix factory and hearing a worker boast: "You can *stomp* on 'em and they won't break!"

To be sure, believers have always commemorated intangible faith through tangible things. The University of Utah's Colleen McDannell observes in *Material Christianity* (1995), "People build religion into the landscape, they make and buy pious images for their homes, and they wear special reminders of their faith next to their bodies." Old forms, perhaps like old religions, may seem more decorous—cross necklaces but not cross tongue studs, crucifixes but not Jesus action figures (now available with light or dark skin). The familiar gets grandfathered, or Our Fathered, in.

But times change, and so do Christians. According to a Barna Research survey in 2000, born-again Christians are just as likely as other Americans to have cable TV, VCRs, DVD players, and satellite dishes. "Born-again adults," the study reports, "spend an average of seven times more hours each week watching television than they do participating in spiritual pursuits such as Bible reading, prayer, and worship." Why not follow the flock?

It's hardly a new question. In *Selling God* (1994), Cornell University historian R. Laurence Moore charts nearly two centuries of "interpenetration of American religion and commercial popular culture." As entertainment and leisure options expanded in the 19th century, organized religion first condemned the newcomers and then, when that didn't repopulate the pews, began endorsing moral variants. Three-quarters of a century before *God.com*, adman Bruce Barton's *The Man Nobody Knows* (1925) depicted Jesus as a glad-handing sales guru, "the founder of modern business." Even evangelicals, often deemed implacably resistant to modernity's pressures, have adopted and adapted secular forms. Examining popular evangelical books of the 1950s through the early 1980s, University of Virginia sociologist James Davison Hunter found prominent strains of hedonism and narcissism, those staples of the secular self-help genre.

Perhaps, though, there's something different about this latest round of cultural appropriation. In *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes* (1989), Kenneth Myers cautions that pop culture promotes attitudes of autonomy, self-centeredness, and "careless restlessness," as well as a yearning for immediate gratification. The medium may subvert the message. "Rather than starting our own TV networks, movie production companies, or imitations of *People*," he writes, "we would do much better to make the church a living example of alternatives to the methods and messages of popular culture."

But, for better or worse, the average Christian kid's choice these days probably isn't between dc talk and a church activity; it's between dc talk and Eminem. By the same token, a kid who's not religious is probably more open to hearing a Christian message from dc talk than from some unhip preacher.

To its defenders, godly pop culture simply answers the Scriptural admonition to be in the world but not of the world. "Jesus was never irrelevant to the people he was speaking with," says Bill Anderson. "He is our master model. Whether He was talking to the woman at the well or a child or a fisherman or a lawyer, He was able to connect with people where they were and take them to the Father's truth without compromising."

In this view, pop culture represents simply one more dialect to master. Writing in *CCM*, author John Fischer revises Paul's counsel in Corinthians ("To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews") for today: "To the punks I became like a punk; to the skinheads I became like a skinhead."

Along with language and style, shared assumptions change. Anderson observes, "Back in the '40s, '50s, you could talk about certain values that people held quite widely. . . . There wasn't the challenge in the face: 'Really? You believe *that*? Why?'" Principles once taken for granted now require reasoned articulation. A couple of generations ago, nobody wondered (a current book title) *How to Talk About Jesus Without Freaking Out*.

Which makes perfect sense. There's much, in fact, to respect about this new-time religion and the people behind it, including near-pervasive sincerity, pockets of remarkable artistry, and faith that's not confined to Sunday morning. Yet aspects still inspire unease—the seeming commandment to be fruitful and accessorize, the gimme gospel of Jabez, the materialism suffusing material Christianity, the T-shirt drawers where J. Crew lies atop J. Christ (the Word become logo), plus the suspicion that the reigning credo isn't "I am the way, and the truth, and the life," but rather "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em."

Anderson suggests that it's a mistake to view Christian merchandise in isolation. The products are intended to supplement Scripture, not to supplant it. But if some Christians *are* getting total spiritual nutrition from this stuff, what are they missing? What does *Left Behind* leave behind? What gets lost when the Bible becomes *The Bible Made Easy*? What happens to teachings that can't be made trendy, lucrative, "extreme," or instantly gratifying? Does spreading the Word—casting it in new directions, new forms, new genres—sometimes conflict with keeping the faith?

A partial answer comes from a survey of CBA's best-selling books of 2001, published in *World* magazine in July. Writer Gene Edward Veith found that family and women's topics accounted for nearly half of the titles. Of the 100 books, just 6 were about the Bible, 4 about Jesus, and 3 about evangelism. "The Christianity of the best-seller lists tends to be personal, private, and interior," writes Veith, "with little attention to objective theology or to the church." The Army of God meets the Army of One.

Anderson acknowledges that the market can skew the message. "The books on success tend to be more popular than the books on how God uses suffering to shape character," he says. "That's human nature." But aren't Christians instructed to seek mastery over their flawed natures?

Maybe this parallel world is just the latest manifestation of a tendency that sociologist Will Herberg observed half a century ago: Many American Christians don't like to let faith get in the way of pride, prosperity, leisure-time diversions, or, indeed, much of anything. What some observers termed cultural Christianity, a watered-down version of the real thing, now has been diluted a bit more. The result: pop-culture Christianity. When a 20-year-old woman delights in discovering "music that fit my personality and was also God-related," as a P.O.D. fan tells *YM* magazine, you suspect that the personality fit held top priority, followed, perhaps distantly, by God.

In *The Gravedigger File* (1983), evangelical scholar Os Guinness criticized Christian consumerism and other developments that, he wrote, signaled the church's slide "from culture-blind to culture-bound to culture-burnt." Nearly two decades later, he's in Atlanta, gamely promoting his latest book, *Long Journey Home*. It's a witty, erudite analysis of Christian and non-Christian views of life's meaning, a book that, as he would be the first to admit, isn't likely to outsell *Prayer of Jabez*.

Perhaps, Guinness tells me, Christian pop culture is expanding to fill a vacuum. Fewer evangelicals these days are absolutists on elaborate matters of doctrine. Seminaries and other evangelical institutions have lost some measure of authority. Household-name Christians Billy Graham and Bill Bright are elderly and infirm, and nobody has risen to take their places.

"Who speaks for evangelicals?" asks Guinness. "No one. It's just chaos." He gestures toward the exhibit floor, that vast acreage of action figures, holy hip-hop, witness wear, and Extreme for Jesus books. "In many ways," he says, "it's held together by this." ♦

The Vatican Has Her Back to the Wall

So said a leading French cardinal in a public attack on a high-ranking cardinal in the Roman Curia. Because of that, said the French cardinal, certain decisions "cannot suffer further delay" and must be made "promptly." What decisions? The French cardinal cited certain "disciplinary and doctrinal knots" — e.g., sexuality, marriage, and the role of women in the Church.

Now, it's our understanding that decisions about those matters were authoritatively made long ago by the Church, and that there are no "knots" here — certainly no *doctrinal* knots — that need untying.

The French cardinal continued: "The times we live in are marked by a profound evolution of the moral...conscience. Couldn't this evolution bring us [in the Church] something new...something that would present itself in a 'rationality' other than that of antiquity and of the Middle Ages?... Should we not further expose some of our concepts and practices to the challenge of the rationality and the sensitivities of today...?"

For those of us familiar with the code language of cardinals, it's clear that the French cardinal was saying that the Church is stuck in antiquity and the Middle Ages, and needs to appease the Spirit of the Times by overhauling her teachings.

The mindset of that French cardinal is typical of the large "progressive" (or accommodationist) bloc in the Church. And he made bold to say, "Those in charge [in the Vatican] have their backs to the wall."

And maybe he's right. *But so what?* St. Athanasius had his back to the wall. So did St. Thomas More. And so did Winston Churchill at the beginning of World War II. None of them capitulated.

Yes, Rome *does* have her back to the wall, but in no small measure because many prelates have refused to defend papal teaching, have chosen to play the role of Neville Chamberlain or Marshal Pétain in today's Church.

Today we need prelates, priests, and laymen with Churchillian spirit. A mere 18 days before the fall of France, Churchill said that even if all the Continent should fall to the Axis powers, "We shall not flag or fail.... We shall fight in the seas and oceans...we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing-grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender...."

The struggle ahead will be difficult. We know that many loyal Catholics feel beset on all sides — outmanned, outgunned, isolated. That too was Britain's plight. She stood alone. But she did not flinch — and she prevailed.

St. Paul urges us to "fight the good fight" (1Tim. 6:12). And so, to paraphrase Churchill on the day after the fall of France, let us orthodox Catholics brace ourselves against those who collaborate with the *Zeitgeist* and let us so steel ourselves for victory that even a thousand years from now men will say, *This was their finest hour.*

To get yourself in fighting trim, you must read the NEW OXFORD REVIEW, an orthodox Catholic monthly magazine that forthrightly addresses all the problems in the Church — and takes no prisoners. We're "Catholicism's intellectual prizefighter," says the ace Catholic apologist Karl Keating, and we "belong in every loyal Catholic's arsenal," says the indomitable Fr. Joseph Fessio. Subscribe!

(Please allow 2 to 8 weeks for delivery of first issue.)

SPECIAL DISCOUNT RATES FOR FIRST-TIME SUBSCRIBERS

- ☐ One-year subscription ..... $14 (regularly $19)
- ☐ One-year student, unemployed, or retired person's subscription ..... $12 (regularly $16)
- ☐ Two-year subscription ..... $23 (regularly $35)
- ☐ One-year non-U.S. subscription ..... US$24 (regularly $29) Payment must be drawn in U.S. Dollars.
- ☐ Sample copy $3.50

➔ Our prices are *so low* because you can't pay by credit card and payment must accompany order. Send letter or this coupon with check payable to NEW OXFORD REVIEW. Mail to:

NEW OXFORD REVIEW
Room 124
1069 Kains Ave.
Berkeley CA 94706

Name (Please print or type)

Street Address or P.O. Box

City State Zip

A poster for one of the many 1850s plays based on *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Hulton / Archive.

The Great American Novel?

Uncle Tom's Cabin *after a century and a half*

By Algis Valiunas

The close of 2002 brings with it the close of the 150th anniversary of the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. But you would hardly have known it from America's premier journals and magazines, which showed little interest in giving *Uncle Tom's Cabin* its due in the course of the year. No other book before or since has had so dramatic an effect on American consciousness—or American history—as Harriet Beecher Stowe's epoch-making novel.

Abraham Lincoln's famous welcome to Stowe when she came to the White House—"So this is the little lady who made this big war"—has the tang of country-boy ribbing, but it also recognizes the impact Stowe had on popular thought and sentiment about slavery. In 1852, its first year in print, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sold 300,000 copies in the United States and 2.5 million copies around the world. The British found it especially to their liking, perhaps because Stowe's compassion for the downtrodden and eloquent exhortations to do them justice reminded them of Dickens, whom she emulated (and who reciprocated her regard). Russians, too, took it to their sorrowing hearts.

But it was to Americans in particular that Stowe directed her cannonade of black pain and white failure. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* alternates barrages of withering opprobrium with bursts of uplift. By the end of the decade Americans had bought over a million copies of the novel. In the North, her readers came to admit the worst that Stowe told them about themselves, and it is not fanciful to say that many resolved to live and die worthy of the examples of virtue she showed them.

In the South they pronounced her a lying whore who (in the words of poet William Grayson) *with prostituted pen assails / One half her country in malignant tales*. Reply-novels such as *Aunt Phillis's Cabin* and *The Master's House* defended the South against Stowe's charges of endemic and unconscionable barbarity. In *Life on the Mississippi*, Mark Twain laid the blame for the Civil War on Sir Walter Scott, whose chivalric romances thickened the skulls and compressed the brains of the Southland. But the appeal of Scott's medieval fantasies was in part a revulsion against Stowe—a steeling of the Southerners' resolve to live as their fathers had done, which, in turn, convinced the Northerners that such a mode of life could not be tolerated in a nation founded on the principles of equality and freedom.

Stowe drills home her teaching—and if there ever was a novel whose life was inseparable from its message, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is the one—with a tigerish force. The book does not trouble itself with moral nuance and scru-

A writer in Florida, Algis Valiunas is the author of Churchill's Military Histories.

ple. Some of the white characters are well-meaning weaklings, but most are greedy fools who seize upon the nearest rationalization. To Stowe, the most urgent question facing America admitted only of one answer, and she knew she was chosen—divinely elected—to provide it.

The vision of Uncle Tom's martyrdom came to her one day in church, she said, and the rest of the story fell into place from there; she was also given to declaring that God had written the novel and used her as His amanuensis. (More than one reader has observed that, if such was the case, the weak novels she wrote afterward were strictly her own doing.)

Stowe constructs her novel along a north-south moral axis. The worst things happen in the deep South, and the best thing that can happen to a slave is to find refuge in Canada. The plot encompasses the descent of Uncle Tom into the infernal pit of bondage at its most cruel—the slavemaster Simon Legree is probably the most notorious literary archvillain since Richard III—and the blessed flight to freedom of the slaves George and Eliza Harris and their young son.

Dastardliness abounds, but every bit as distressing as the raw malignancy is the complicity in evil of ordinary men and women, spiritual mediocrities, who might have lived lives no worse than most but for the baneful institution that corrodes all it touches. Stowe recognizes that the façade of decorousness is the foulest ruse, and that there is really nothing banal about an evil so comprehensively monstrous. "A slave warehouse! Perhaps some of my readers conjure up horrible visions of such a place. . . . But no, innocent friend; in these days men have learned the art of sinning expertly and genteelly, so as not to shock the eyes and senses of respectable society. Human property is high in the market; and is, therefore, well fed, well cleaned, tended, and looked after, that it may come to a sale sleek, and strong, and shining."

Stowe is as acute a critic of the art of sinning as American literature, which is traditionally strong in the penitential line, has produced. To Stowe's mind, the matter of race is the spiritual battleground where the fate of America will be decided, and she conceives of the nation's political life in the largest sense as the summary of the condition of its citizens' souls.

In fact, she considers the existence of racial distinction—the strange fact that there happens to be by nature so striking a difference between one group of human beings and another—a divinely ordained mystery and spiritual trial. The test is whether one can recognize as one's brother or sister a person so markedly different from oneself.

The question posed by slavery thus cannot be reduced to a matter of prudence or politics. Americans must learn to live by nothing less than the truth of the national promise of liberty

Hulton / Archive

Harriet Beecher Stowe

and equality. Race presents the supreme spiritual problem of the age, and how each man or woman responds to it will determine the fate of his immortal soul.

Stowe is not bashful about preaching a mission in this novel. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is a sort of remedial primer for those souls that have become entangled in what passes for wisdom and that have forgotten the simplest truths. From the mouths of babes, such as the beatifically moribund little Evangeline St. Clare, the daughter of one of the owners through whose hands Uncle Tom passes, and from the simple but noble soul of Uncle Tom himself, issues the essential teaching, which puts all the theological temporizing of ostensibly holy men to shame. "'What is being a Christian, Eva?' 'Loving Christ most of all,' said Eva."

What it means to be a Christian really occupies the core of the novel, and that question is indistinguishable from the racial question: People in the novel talk of little besides slavery and God, as though life has been effectively distilled to those two obsessive concerns. The hot injustice of slavery brings the problem of evil to a painful, blazing focus. Slaves, including the pious Uncle Tom at his most desperate, wonder bitterly how God could have arranged the world so they have to suffer as they do, but ultimately Uncle Tom and others entrust their tribulations to the all-healing heart of Jesus.

To put such faith in divine love when there is such evidence of divine indifference requires a Christian heart of capaciousness and purity. When Simon Legree orders Uncle Tom to whip another disobedient slave, Tom refuses; contemptuous of Tom's religion, Legree warns that he will yet make Tom a convert to the slavemaster's own church, in which he is the presiding deity, but Tom submits to prolonged and murderous torture rather than do what he knows to be wrong.

Uncle Tom may not be the exemplar of angry black manhood that is now in fashion, but he is no "Uncle Tom" in the current sense of the phrase: shuffling and grinning and pitiably cringing. His triumph is heroic endurance in the name of God, and he possesses a humility that is paradoxically an entirely admirable spiritual pride. He is willing to die for the truth he cherishes.

What's more, his example played no small part in inspiring good men to do likewise in the years that followed the publication of Stowe's novel. Whatever the flaws in Stowe's art—and there are lapses into treacly sentimentality, melodramatic plotting, and a style more often oaken than supple—the novel lives, and continues to move the reader to question whether he does too. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is the great Christian American novel, and one can only wish it had more competition. ♦

The Academic Liberal

John Rawls, 1921-2002.

BY PETER BERKOWITZ

John Rawls, who died on November 24 at age eighty-one, was the towering figure of academic liberalism. A gentle, dignified, self-effacing man, he taught philosophy at Harvard for more than thirty years and exerted a commanding influence on his profession, single-handedly shifting its dominant picture of itself and the world.

Before Rawls, professors of philosophy, when they addressed questions about politics at all, restricted their analysis to the use of words and their logical relations. But with his 1971 masterwork, *A Theory of Justice*—remarkably, his first book, which he labored on for more than twenty years and did not publish until age fifty—Rawls inaugurated a new era. From intuitions that he held to be all but self-evident, he sought to provide a rigorous deduction of the fundamentals of a well-ordered state. By virtue of its protection of certain basic individual rights combined with its redistribution of wealth to achieve a substantially more egalitarian society, the well-ordered state constructed by Rawls turns out to be the progressive, liberal, welfare state.

The influence of Rawls's work has been massive. One quickly saw professors doing nothing but elaborating or applying ideas from Rawls's theory. And those who did not occupy themselves with criticizing Rawls—those who attempted anything in political philosophy not defined by the Rawlsian project—were thought not to be practicing political philosophy at all. Rawls is rightly praised for his vital contribution in restoring exploration of the moral foundations of liberalism to a place of honor among professional philosophers. But the anti-intellectualism and illiberalism nourished by his thought—which equates liberalism with Rawlsian liberalism, and Rawlsian liberalism with political philosophy itself—is also a major part of Rawls's legacy.

The mixture of humility and hubris that animates the Rawlsian project can be seen from the start, in the guiding aspirations of *A Theory of Justice*. Rawls's avowed aim was large but limited. Beginning from purportedly austere assumptions about morality and human nature, he set out to identify the principles of justice under which it would be reasonable for people to choose to live. In contrast to liberalism's utilitarian strand, which he took as his great adversary because it allowed for the sacrifice of individuals in the name of maximizing the public good, Rawls argued that reasonable choices were limited because "each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override." But far from sanctifying the status quo, the inviolability of certain basic rights required, in Rawls's view, that reasonable people choose that government should regulate social and economic life energetically to improve the lives of the least well-off.

Rawls illustrated the reasoning by which one could arrive at this progressive and interventionist liberalism with a philosophical construct he called the "original position." Imagine a condition in which you were stripped of all morally irrelevant information about yourself. For Rawls, this included knowledge of your attachments and associations, your memories, your awareness of your particular passions, talents, and virtues and vices. All this, in Rawls's view, was "arbitrary from a moral point of view." Imagine, in short, that you had been rendered ignorant of everything that made you a unique human being. What you would be left with is the knowledge of what you shared with other human beings: the formal capacity for choice and a rudimentary sense of justice.

Now, having imagined yourself in such a position, ask yourself this question: Under what basic rules would you choose to live? Assuming that anyone in this position will be risk averse—an empirical proposition that Rawls, somewhat arbitrarily, imports into the original position and treats as universal—you would reasonably choose two principles of justice, Rawls argues. First, you would embrace "an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others." Second, you would require the arrangement of inequalities in society so that they are "to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, and attached to positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity."

The enduring truth in Rawls's account of justice is that the guarantee of rights in a liberal democracy is necessarily related to the social and economic conditions under which those rights can be exercised effectively. What remains eminently disputable after Rawls—not only from the point of view of morality but also from that of liberalism and democracy—is the extent of government's capacity and obligation to provide for the social and economic bases of equality.

Despite its avowedly limited aims, Rawls's theory was in fact exceedingly ambitious. His supposedly austere assumptions were not really austere at all. The inviolability of individuals was not, as his argument sometimes suggested, a deduction from non-moral premises but rather a grand moral judgment masquerading as a deduction. He demanded the primacy of individual choice in his theory and the

Peter Berkowitz teaches at George Mason University School of Law and is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

assumption that on all morally relevant choices all individuals must reason and choose in exactly the same way. But these are not really conclusions yielded by the original position but foundation stones out of which it was constructed.

The corollary moral and metaphysical idea—that our vices, like our virtues and accomplishments, are "arbitrary from a moral point of view"—flies in the face of common sense and is anything but axiomatic for moral and political life (though Rawls wielded it at crucial junctures in his argument and came close to presenting it as a truth of reason). So, too, Rawls's contention that human beings are basically risk averse, and would choose to live under rules of justice that would ensure generous government guaranteed minimums for them in case they found themselves in the worst off position in society, was more than debatable as a universal proposition about human psychology. And perhaps most fateful for the intellectual vitality of professional philosophy, Rawls dressed up a partisan interpretation of liberalism—that the state had a moral obligation to intervene aggressively in society and the economy so as to promote a more egalitarian distribution of basic goods and life opportunities—as if it were a universal, necessary, and objective moral law.

Rawls was not without his critics, but the criticism of his theory that had the biggest impact by far on his thinking was a version of communitarian criticism. Perhaps not coincidentally, this version of communitarian criticism was essentially another form of progressive liberalism, which in no way challenged the far-reaching redistributivist implications of *A Theory of Justice*. Nor did it take exception to the implicit Rawlsian claim that the primary task for political philosophy was to justify a left-liberal interpretation of American democracy. Rather, it reaffirmed (in the idiom of analytic moral philosophy that it shared with Rawls) a point at home in the liberal tradition though obscured in Rawls's work: Human beings do not exist in isolation; rather, we are in part constituted by the associations—friendships, family, neighborhoods, clubs and committees, nation, and religion—of which we are a part. And although we often do not freely choose these associations, membership in them is an important good that the state must respect in the process of respecting us as individuals.

Twenty years after *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls published a major revision of his views that appeared to be, in significant measure, a response to his liberal communitarian critics. In 1993, with *Political Liberalism*, he sought to provide a defense of a redistributivist liberalism that was "political, not metaphysical," that is, that did not purport to be derived from first principles but which rather gave reasonable political expression to widely shared values. And in one sense his aim was on target. In the United States, the commitment to equality in freedom runs deep, and any serious exploration of American liberalism must begin from its grip on our hearts and minds.

Courtesy Harvard University

John Rawls

Yet Rawls was no more interested in *Political Liberalism* in the choices and policy preferences of actual people than he had been in *A Theory of Justice.* His theme remained what people would choose if they reasoned properly, and so he continued to focus exclusively on general ideas and what he took to be their political implications and not on the actual wants, needs, and desires of his fellow citizens. Moreover, despite the variety of competing conservative and progressive interpretations of liberal democracy, Rawls once again in *Political Liberalism* gave to a particular partisan interpretation of American liberalism the color of universality, objectivity, and necessity.

This certainly had consequences inside the academy. As the Rawlsians rose to positions of power and prominence in the university world, they created an environment in which to disagree with them about what the principles of justice required in regard to abortion, affirmative action, welfare reform, or any number of other divisive questions of public policy was, in their eyes, to place oneself beyond the boundaries of reasonable discourse. For many who see themselves as carrying forward Rawls's project, the philosophically valid and the politically correct have become increasingly difficult to distinguish.

In his last major contribution, *The Law of Peoples*, which appeared in 1999, several years after his retirement, Rawls extended his reasoning about justice to international relations. When it comes to foreign affairs, it turns out that Rawlsian philosophy remains reliably left-liberal, suggesting that reason itself entails a progressive, interventionist, international human-rights agenda. Thus Rawls's style of thinking provides support for the increasingly self-righteous view among Europeans (and a sizeable number of international human-rights lawyers in the United States) that elite bureaucrats can, on the basis of study and reflection and conversation among themselves, bring about peace among nations by laying down universal rules for the world to follow.

While Rawls's writings seem to give theoretical expression to an increasingly popular and worrisomely undemocratic way of thinking about politics, those who have chosen to follow in his

footsteps and practice political philosophy in his manner have paradoxically revealed themselves to lack, to a stunning degree, political relevance. On the great issues in recent years—the impeachment of President Clinton, the election 2000 controversy and *Bush* v. *Gore*, the ethics of cloning, the September 11 terrorist attacks, the war against the Taliban and al Qaeda, the showdown with Iraq—hardly anyone speaking from the Rawlsian paradigm has had anything to say for public consumption that was influential or illuminating.

One of the reasons for this is the obscure and leaden technical language for analyzing politics that Rawls helped establish. Another reason is the drastic limitations on the subject matter of political philosophy imposed under his reign. Although Rawls did not elaborate formal strictures concerning the proper domain of political philosophy, his single-minded focus for a half century on the question of the logic of formal liberal principles of justice contributed to the legitimation of an indifference to, if not disdain for, a variety of topics also critical to the understanding of liberal democracy: virtue and vice, constitutional culture and constitutional design, religion, and war.

When no one else in his profession seemed to be giving it much thought, John Rawls restored rigor and respectability to thinking about liberalism. His books, the work of a lifetime of patient and devoted labor, are very likely to constitute a permanent contribution to the liberal tradition. But part of the task of properly conserving his achievement consists in confronting and taking the measure of the weighty ambiguities of his legacy.

The liberal in John Rawls would have it no other way. ♦

BCA

City of Darkness

Michael Connelly's mysterious Los Angeles.

BY DAVID KLINGHOFFER

William J. Bratton, having won his crime-fighting laurels in the first Giuliani administration, was recently inducted as the new chief of the Los Angeles Police Department. There was something discordant about the erstwhile top cop of New York City taking over in Los Angeles. The two cities are just so different.

It's not a question of statistics, though in L.A. violent crime is rising at an alarming rate, murders having vaulted upward by 27 percent since 2000. To get a sense of what makes the city unique in the arena of murder and mayhem, you have to read Los Angeles crime novels, a genre unto themselves, starting with the greatest practitioner of the art form, Raymond Chandler, and continuing through its current master, Michael Connelly.

Chasing the Dime
by Michael Connelly
Little, Brown, 400 pp., $25.95

Of course, if Bratton's record in New York is any indication of what Los Angeles might have to look forward to, then the very twistedness of the Los Angeles crime story may be in danger. The *L.A. Times* reports that Bratton would like to make the LAPD "an open department with no secrets." For L.A. residents, that's good news. But for those who enjoy crime from a safe distance, the dark soul of the city, including the tradition of Rampart-style police corruption, is something we'll miss.

But for now, there is still Michael Connelly, who, like Chandler, conveys an atmosphere of dread mixed with grit mixed with sunshine. His new novel, *Chasing the Dime*, is a bit of a departure. Previous books tracked the career of a Philip Marlowe-esque homicide detective, Hieronymus "Harry" Bosch. Cynical and hardened on the outside, compassionate and righteous on the inside, Bosch is someone even a heterosexual male can admit is sexy. The name of the character was not chosen at random. In one novel, *A Darkness More than Night*, paintings by the fifteenth-century Dutch painter of supremely violent and surreal landscapes are clues in solving a grotesque murder that someone wants to pin on Harry.

In Connelly's last book, *City of Bones*, Harry Bosch revealed the story behind the bones of an abused 12-year-old boy buried in the Hollywood hills. The book came out just as the U.S. Park Police were trying in vain to figure out how the bones of Chandra Levy ended up scattered in Washington's Rock Creek Park. Bosch proved to be a whole lot swifter than the capital cops. Unfortunately, at the end of the book, he seemed to have made a conclusive decision to retire. We shall see if Connelly brings him back.

In *Chasing the Dime*, Connelly evokes the same Boschian cityscape, invoking the painter by name to underline the point. But the protagonist Henry Pierce—a surfer-turned-chemist seeking a way to harness molecules as super-microcomputers—believes he has escaped the sun-heated gloom by retreating into his Santa Monica lab: "The outside world might be dark and in shambles. War and waste. A Hieronymus Bosch painting of chaos. Women selling their bodies to strangers who would take them and hide them, hurt and even kill them. But not in the lab. In the lab there was peace. There was order."

So thinks Henry, until an apparent telephone-company glitch results in his receiving call after call for a woman named Lilly, an "escort" listed on a sleazy website for "VIPs Only." It becomes clear that something bad has

David Klinghoffer is the author of The Discovery of God: Abraham and the Birth of Monotheism, *to be published by Doubleday in April 2003.*

Bettmann / CORBIS

A 1931 breadline in Los Angeles.

happened to Lilly. Henry, whose sister was lost to drugs and prostitution when he was at Stanford, quickly becomes obsessed with rescuing Lilly, if she's still alive. Within 24 hours he has uncovered an apartment in Venice (the California Venice, just south of Santa Monica) where the bed is stained with month-old blood that, as police will confirm, is Lilly's. Problem is, the cops are convinced that Henry killed her.

He's got very little time to prove his innocence, which means entering the $10-billion-yearly electronic sex industry, and more generally the parallel universe of L.A.-style death and decay, which he thought he had locked out by locking himself into his laboratory. There's a lot at stake, Henry's life as well as a potentially world-changing molecular computing system—the "dime" of the book's title—that his company has invented and that someone may want to steal or otherwise put a halt to.

Connelly's fiction isn't as densely evocative as Chandler's, not by a long shot. He is a quieter type of writer, but he has some Chandler-style evocations of people—a woman, the mother of a prostitute, whose voice sounds "like a broom sweeping a sidewalk," a high-tech entrepreneur with a "smile as wide and hard as the concrete bed of the L.A. River."

Most enjoyable of all is the way Los Angeles itself emerges as a character. The Pacific, such a different ocean from the Atlantic—wider and deeper, somehow wiser, but with a calm that conceals unfathomable anger—is never distant from the action. Henry is always peering out on its "blue-black water"—yes, that's exactly how it looks—set against "the burnt-orange color of a smoggy sunset," as if he's hoping the waves will yield up Lilly's poor, broken body.

Even so, Connelly is mainly interested not in painting word portraits, but in spinning out a tale that will keep you with your nose between the pages. He tells a story better than Chandler. Notoriously indifferent to keeping plotlines straight, the latter couldn't really be bothered with storytelling. On page 41, another Internet escort tells Henry that Lilly is "long gone and whatever happened to her . . . just happened. That's all." From about this point, like Henry, we're hooked. Connelly effortlessly builds suspense up to and including a climax that, while not completely satisfying, is definitely surprising. You don't see it coming, yet it makes sense.

Another point of comparison: In their overlapping L.A.-centered realities, both writers take it as a given that, for all the hurt and cruelty, ultimately justice is done. There is indeed an order in Creation, however difficult it may be to discern. Toward the end of *Chasing the Dime*, Henry sits "behind the wheel [of his car] thinking about what he had done, about his sins. He knew he got what he deserved. Most people did."

What does Michael Connelly deserve? No, he isn't quite on the level of Raymond Chandler, but given that very little in literature is on the level it was fifty years ago, he should be recognized as a worthy successor. ♦

Trotsky Lives!

Hollywood does the painter Frida Kahlo and her times. **BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ**

The real star of *Frida*, the much-hyped film biography of the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, is not Salma Hayek, the beautiful Arab-Mexican actress who handles the lead role, but Mexico—in all its legendry, folklore, and intensity of color and passion. Mexico has remained in large part untouched by the globalization of architectural dullness, and it provides the film a setting so magnificent it almost overcomes the film's tendentiousness.

So, too, the real subject of *Frida* is not Kahlo as she actually was, but Kahlo as she has become since her death: a global feminist icon. Indeed, one could imagine no more severe indictment of contemporary feminism than the real Kahlo. This woman artist clearly followed the path of her life with complete freedom, yet returned again and again to a male lover, the painter Diego Rivera, who, with some justice, is equated here with King Kong. (Actor Alfred Molina is not as fat as the real Rivera, but, padded up, portrays him credibly.)

But the actual life of Kahlo has been set aside, for what *Frida* is mostly about is the need of the American Left for a passionate myth of the radical past. To find a parallel, you have to go back to Warren Beatty's fictionalization of John Reed's life in *Reds*. Just as one could not imagine the Russians making a picture like *Reds* back in 1981, so one cannot imagine a Mexican film about Kahlo looking or sounding anything like this work—and it has been universally panned by Mexicans.

But neither can one imagine such a film being made about any other idol of the American Left. Any takers on an image of Woody Guthrie making love to Salma Hayek, as Leon Trotsky (played by Geoffrey Rush) does in *Frida*? The historical memory of revolutionary Mexico and of the bohemian radicals of the 1930s, from New York to Paris and back, combines conveniently with the tortured biography of the unibrowed heroine to give lefties an epic of their own, at a time in which their ideology, inspiration, enthusiasm, and equilibrium have become exhausted or disoriented.

The cult of Frida Kahlo has ballooned in the past two decades in ways that few could have imagined at the time of her death a half century ago. The surrealist poet and critic André Breton, who did much more than anyone else to establish her reputation, gets short shrift in this film. But Breton was right when, the artist still in her thirties, he deemed Kahlo a more important painter than Rivera—for Rivera's sort of socialist mural painting has disappeared from most of the globe (except in places known for reactionary tastes, like San Francisco, Belfast, and southern Lebanon).

In the past twenty years, Kahlo's work has appeared on everything from cocktail napkins to baseball caps. It's not so much that her paintings are actually in vogue, but that Frida Kahlo had it all in terms of politically-correct victimization: She was a half-Jewish, Hispanic, leftist, bisexual, female artist, who suffered a crippling accident, was oppressed by a phallocratic husband, and made love to a Russian exile. What more could one ask of a culture heroine today?

On the screen, *Frida* submerges historical detail under nostalgia for the heroic Left of generations past. The screenwriting credit to novelist Clancy Sigal is notable: Sigal's 1962 classic *Going Away* was a high-pitched, sentimental lament for the old Commies who had been betrayed by history and left in the dust by consumerist America. (Unfortunately, a lot of people who read and loved Sigal's book were, in turn, betrayed by history—but many of them make do with the consolation of academic tenure, consumerist America's most exalted reward.)

Yet notwithstanding the concessions to faddism—including amateurish and pretentious special effects and a gratuitous lesbian sex scene bringing Kahlo together with a look-alike of American jazz singer Josephine Baker—*Frida* remains worth seeing. The story is presented graphically and vividly, reinforcing its essential connection with the Mexican physical and intellectual environment. In a back-street cantina, Diego Rivera pulls a gun on his rival, the Communist hack David Alfaro Siqueiros (well acted by Antonio Banderas), but he hurls only curses at Nelson Rockefeller, who in 1933 commissioned the famous Rockefeller Center mural and then turned it down the following year.

Rockefeller is played by the weedy Edward Norton, which seems almost as poor a casting choice as the pale Ashley Judd, who plays the photographer and Soviet secret police assassin Tina Modotti as an airhead. Norton seems to have chosen the Rockefeller role with a similarly obscure sense of irony. (Norton, who is Hayek's real-life boyfriend, helped rewrite the script.) The chronology of events and production of paintings is fudged in this film. A Communist demonstration in Mexico City in the mid-1920s, at a time when such turbulent efforts often ended in street fighting, is presented like a teach-in at a midwestern American college, and the slogan "The people united will never be defeated" is chanted, although it only became popular in Allende's Chile of the 1970s. Similarly, a priest is shown in his vestments at the funeral of Frida's mother, at a time when the Catholic church functioned underground in revolutionary Mexico, and clerical dress could not be worn in public.

Stephen Schwartz is a frequent contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

In a real gaffe, the film fails to convey the considerable size and effect of Rivera's Rockefeller Center mural. The controversy over these frescoes has entered the history of modern art. Nelson Rockefeller had commissioned Rivera and two other painters, the Mexican José Clemente Orozco and the Spaniard José Maria Sert, to decorate the new building with large panels. Rivera designed a massive tableau with a human "controller" at its center, and a nearby representation of a second man joining hands with humanity. Rivera provided various ambiguous answers when asked if the second figure would be a portrait of a specific person, but it was, in fact, a portrait of Vladimir Lenin, architect of Soviet communism.

Unfortunately, in this film, Lenin's place in the mural is presented as if it were an incidental image. This makes Rivera seem more innocent, and Rockefeller more destructive. The painter had set his mind on a serious artistic and political provocation, and Rockefeller's reaction was entirely predictable. (It was, after all, his wall, as Norton points out here.) From *Frida* one would erroneously conclude that the mural was utterly lost when it was removed from Rockefeller Center. Actually, it was repainted by Rivera, Lenin and all, in Mexico City.

A personal break between Trotsky and Rivera, inevitable considering the two men's egos, is also presented inaccurately in *Frida*, as though it were caused primarily by sexual rivalry over Kahlo. Above all, the film omits the most significant moral incident in Frida Kahlo's biography: After Trotsky's assassination, she and Rivera stridently rejoined the Stalinists. Her museum in Mexico City displays one of the last of her obscene works: an unfinished portrait of Stalin.

But history has sided with Trotsky, more than with Stalin—a fact of which this film is itself dramatic proof. Trotsky: The name remains challenging a half century after his assassination. Few former adherents of the man ever fully gave up their attachment to him. Saul Bellow was in Mexico City at the time of Trotsky's murder and memorably records in *The Adventures of Augie March* "the instant impression he gave . . . of navigation by the great stars, of the highest considerations, of being fit to speak the most important human words and universal terms, . . . an exiled greatness, because the exile was a sign to me of persistence at the highest things."

But Trotskyism without Trotsky, as a political movement, was nothing. Most of his better followers, beginning with James Burnham, became interventionist partisans of capitalist democracy against Stalinist dictatorship. Jean van Heijenoort, Trotsky's secretary and revealer to the world of the Trotsky-Kahlo love affair, ended up a supporter of Ronald Reagan and the Nicaraguan contras. In the generation after the neoconservatives, the most active converts from the radical Left were former acolytes of Trotsky, though they never knew him in life. Among Americans who remained faithful to Trotsky's socialism, the only one of distinction was Irving Howe (whose relationship to Trotsky resembles that of the Soviet cultural commissar Andrei Zhdanov to Stalin).


Miramax

Alfred Molina and Salma Hayek in Frida.

Breton and the Parisian surrealists called their movement "the communism of genius." Take the socialism out of Trotsky's life, and only genius remains. What did we inherit from Trotsky, and what is the essential aspect of this man that made it possible for him to be the subject of a romantic, even erotic film, decades after his death? Once, long ago in the socialist movement, there was a concept called "swimming against the stream." But it faded out after the coming of Soviet communism. In a sense, Trotsky was the last to swim against the stream, when he denounced Stalinism, the Russian purges, and the other crimes of the dictatorship he had helped create.

Today's Left, including its pathetic bands of so-called Trotskyists, know nothing of swimming against the stream; they can only float in the swamp. The Pakistani Trotskyist Tariq Ali sees no shame in comparing Osama bin Laden to Trotsky, favorably of course; the rest of the rabble chase after Milosevic, Castro, and Saddam. Trotsky's legacy is summarized in *Frida* when he describes himself as "alone and without friends against the world's biggest killing machine." Perhaps the best scene in this film comes when Trotsky and Frida, the old man and the cripple, climb to the top of the great pyramid at Teotihuacan, surrounded by the unmatchable Mexican sky and the treasures of the country's ancient culture. In the new world, in the Americas, free of Europe's illnesses and horrors, Trotsky avers that he feels alive for the first time in many years.

Frida is a good film, if only because it proves wrong another statement of Bellow's about Trotsky: "Out in Russia was his enemy. . . . He'd kill him. Death discredits. Survival is the whole process. The voice of the dead goes away. There isn't any memory. The power that's established fills the earth and destiny is whatever survives, so whatever is *is* right." Many may see the parables of Frida Kahlo and Leon Trotsky as having to do with personal survival. Others, however, will perceive something more—something having to do with the voices of the dead that have not gone away. Today we can barely make them out. ♦

Books in Brief

***The Last Jihad* by Joel C. Rosenberg (Forge, 304 pp., $24.95).** Amid the hemming and hawing about how to confront Saddam Hussein, Joel Rosenberg, former aide to Steve Forbes and Benjamin Netanyahu, uses fiction to convey the threat Iraq poses to international security. Though the picture painted by Rosenberg is disconcerting, the possibilities he raises are real.

Several years after Bush completes his second term and his successful war on terror, another popular Republican president is surfing a surging economy and unprecedented domestic security. That is, until an Iraqi agent attempts to kamikaze a private aircraft into the presidential motorcade. Though terror cells have been squashed, the Iraqi threat remains. After the United States aborted military action to dethrone the Iraqi autocrat in 2002, a vengeful Saddam Hussein has plotted his final nuclear revenge against the United States and Israel, his last jihad.

Rosenberg's plot unravels at breakneck speed and is packed with entertainment, intrigue, and plausible situations. Saddam's attempt to nuke Israel is thwarted—and now President MacPherson must not only respond to an assassination attempt but also massage Israel's response to Iraq.

Behind the scenes, an American cabinet-level mole and a Russian nationalist have allied to manipulate the United States' response to Iraq, driving MacPherson further down towards nuking Iraq. But how can MacPherson dissuade Israel from responding to Iraq, a move that will surely inflame the Arab world?

Enter Jon Bennett, a liberal Wall Street millionaire and close friend-turned adviser to the president. He's just discovered massive eastern Mediterranean oil reserves, which promise to bring billions in revenue to the warring region. President MacPherson contends that giving the Palestinians and Israelis initial profit offerings will mean peace for the ancient dispute. Delicate diplomatic brokering elevates Bennett's private deal to the defining feature of MacPherson's vision for the Middle East: peace through prosperity. After a second unsuccessful attempt on the president's life, Iraq and MacPherson converge on a path of mutual nuclear destruction. Can the president derail Iraq's effort before the last jihad is revealed?

Much of Rosenberg's plot is reminiscent of Frederick Forsyth's 1994 bestseller *The Fist of God*. And Rosenberg's conclusion echoes Forsyth's: Strike Saddam before he strikes our allies or us.

—Bryan Auchterlonie

***Bet Your Life* by Richard Dooling (HarperCollins, 340 pp., $25.95).** Richard Dooling writes formula fiction—but the formula is his own invention. Imagine Scott Turow with a sense of humor. Throw in Tom Wolfe's manic knowingness. Add a tincture of Swiftian satire and a pinch of Gogol, and you begin to approximate the distinctive Dooling mix. *Bet Your Life* is set in Omaha: a bulletin from the heartland that is the best insurance-scam novel since James M. Cain's *Double Indemnity*, and one of the most enjoyable of the year.

If it's not Dooling's best—I'd vote for *Brain Storm*, but *White Man's Grave* has its partisans—that's a measure of how good Dooling can be. He's reported to be collaborating with Stephen King on the script for a four-part ABC miniseries, *Kingdom Hospital*, inspired by a Danish TV production directed by Lars von Trier, the bad-boy of the "Dogma 95" school of filmmaking. King and Dooling could be as potent a team as any of Hollywood's Golden Age duos. Stay tuned.

—John Wilson

***Rolling with the Stones* by Bill Wyman and Richard Havers (DK, 496 pp., $50).** In *Rolling with the Stones* Wyman, now sixty-six, empties his archives, and for rock 'n' roll fans it's a deluge of rare material. *Rolling with the Stones* is a mammoth coffee-table volume that includes more than three thousand photos. See the Stones on the beach at Malibu, Keith Richards and his wife Anita Pallenberg arguing as their home burns, Jimi Hendrix and Stones drummer Charlie Watts backstage in 1969, and Mick Jagger getting throttled by a photographer.

Wyman's method of weaving in and out of the archival material succeeds in telling the Rolling Stones' story. The narrative has some lighthearted moments, like Keith Richards's mom recalling her son was "a bit of a mother's boy." But Wyman acknowledges darker memories. "Recording in Keith's basement [in 1970] had not turned out to be a guarantee of his presence. Keith was getting out of it a lot, and in retaliation, Mick wouldn't turn up some nights." Saddest of all, Wyman details the death of Brian Jones, who drowned in his swimming pool in 1969, just twenty-seven years old.

Despite the tragedies and disappointments, readers will get the sense that Wyman thoroughly enjoyed his ride with the Rolling Stones, their adventures, and the music they made together. Wyman underscores with Keith Richards's words why the Stones are still going after forty years, even as Wyman himself enjoys retirement with the children he once thought he'd have to save all his clippings to prove his rock stardom to.

Still, Wyman remembers, "Keith [said] in 1977, 'Nothing is the end of this band. We'll always be able to play somewhere. We're a determined group of lads. Nothing short of nuclear weapons are gonna put this lot out of action.'"

—H. Andrew Schwartz

Parody

Abortion Foes Angry over Holiday Card; Planned Parenthood Greeting Reads "Choice on Earth"

—News Item