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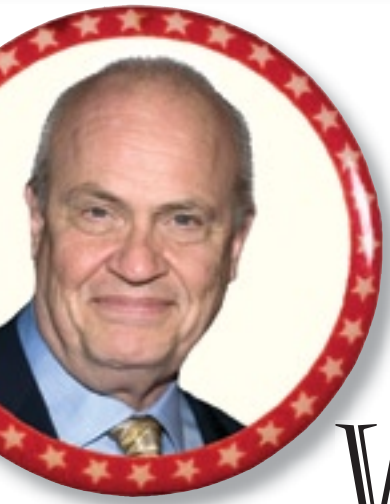
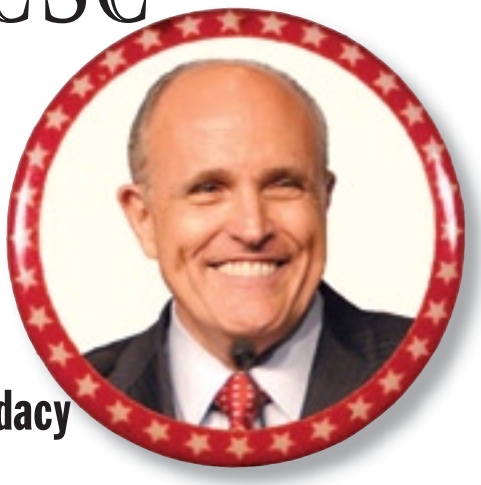


Why Are These Men Smiling?



MATTHEW CONTINETTI
on the unconventional Giuliani candidacy

STEPHEN F. HAYES
on the zero-to-60 Thompson campaign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How the West *Really* Lost God

A new look at secularization

What secularization theory assumes is that religious belief comes ontologically first for people and that it goes on to determine or shape other things they do—including such elemental personal decisions as whether they marry and have children. Implied here is a striking, albeit widely assumed, view of how one social phenenomenon powers another: that religious believers are more likely to produce families because religious belief somehow comes first. . . . What has not been explained, but rather assumed throughout that chain of argument, is why the causal relationship between belief and practice should always run that way instead of the other, at least some of the time. . . . In brief, it is not only possible but highly plausible that many Western European Christians did not just stop having children and families because they became secular. At least some of the time, the record suggests, they also became secular because they stopped having children and families.

—Mary Eberstadt

Terrorism, the Military, and the Courts

What kind of process is due detainees?

This essay . . . is for those who live in that gulf between the centers of gravity of elite and mass opinion—those not content to give the president a free hand in a messy, unending quasi-war but also suspicious that courts can and should supervise detentions and interrogations and doubtful that such operations are, in any event, easily subjected to absolute moral rules. This is uncomfortable territory, for the slope is indeed as slippery as slopes get—and slippery, I should say, on a hill with two distinct bottoms. At one lies a government capable of torture with impunity, the very essence of tyranny. At the other lies a government incapacitated from expeditiously taking those steps necessary to protect the public from catastrophic attack. . . . In reality, however, this is the intellectual and practical territory in which wars have been won with liberty preserved.

—Benjamin Wittes

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For more information and to read our *Principles for Federal Policy on Climate Change* see www.Christiansandclimate.org.

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

Tancredo's Tall Tale

During the Republican presidential debate on CNN last week, Congressman Tom Tancredo of Colorado repeated a tale he's been telling for years. "Some time ago," he said, "2003 I think it was, I got a call from Karl Rove who told me that because of my criticism of the president, I should never darken the doorstep of the White House."

What everyone drew from this, of course, was that Tancredo had neither been invited to the Bush White House nor gone there in the aftermath of his unpleasant chat with Rove. For the offense of having publicly disagreed with the president, the congressman was persona non grata at the White House, banned for the life of the Bush presidency.

Turns out you'd have been wrong if you thought that. Tancredo was invited to the White House twice each year in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006, and once in 2007, with a second invitation about to be sent his way. And, lo and behold, he accepted and showed up on most, if not all, of those occasions. True, these weren't policy meetings but social occasions like barbecues for members of Congress or Christmas parties or gatherings for all House Republicans. But Tancredo has darkened the door of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue multiple times.

What prompted the dispute between Tancredo and Rove were comments by the congressman to the *Washington Times* in April 2002. Tancredo said President Bush favors an "open door" policy on immigration. According to the newspaper's paraphrase of what Tancredo said, he called this an open invitation to terrorist attacks. "Unless we do something significant to control our borders, we're going to have another event with someone waltzing across the border. Then the blood of the people killed will be on the hands of this administration and this Congress."

When Rove read the story, he called Tancredo to complain. Earlier, he had invited Tancredo to the White House for an hour-long chat. And a White House official says Tancredo had written Rove, asking him to speak at a Tancredo fundraiser. This time, the conversation was less chummy. But Rove never said Tancredo wouldn't be invited to the White House, according to the official, and never used the phrase "darken the doorstep."

There goes Karl Rove's reputation as the Dr. Evil of the Bush White House. ♦

Excusing Iran

As Reuel Marc Gerecht wrote in last week's issue, Iran's clerical regime "has aided and abetted virulently anti-American, radical Iraqi groups, exported to Iraq sophisticated automatic explosive devices designed to kill American and British soldiers, pushed forward defiantly its construction of uranium-enriching centrifuges, and kidnapped at least five American citizens in Iran. . . .

"Utterly bogus espionage charges have been hurled at three, including Haleh Esfandiari, the director of the Middle East Program at the Wilson Center in Washington. Like her boss, former congressman Lee Hamilton, a chairman of the Iraq Study Group, Ms. Esfandiari has been an advocate of reconciliation between the United States and her homeland."

As Gerecht noted, the espionage charges were a calculated outrage—a thumb in the eye of the U.S. government lodged the day after the May 28 talks in Baghdad between U.S. and Iranian officials. The accused Americans have "absolutely nothing to do with U.S. intelligence and would have recoiled from any advocacy of 'regime change.'"

Comes now *Time* magazine to defend the Iranian government. "Did the U.S. Incite Iran's Crackdown?" asks *Time* in its headline, and as usual with such phony rhetorical questions, you know the answer is yes even before reading the story.

"Tehran's jailing of Haleh Esfandiari, a 67-year-old grandmother," *Time*'s correspondent finds, is the fault of the Bush administration for having "trumpeted its $61.1 million democracy program" aimed at undermining the Iranian dictatorship. Esfandiari's jailers, you see, were provoked. "Akbar Ganji and Emaddeddin Baghi, two of Iran's most prominent pro-democracy activists, who have served long prison sentences for their activities, are among those who protested the U.S. democracy program. In a letter to international human rights organizations after Esfandiari's imprisonment, Baghi denounced the program as morally unjustifiable for effectively putting Iranian activists in harm's way."

But wait, there's more: "The pro-democracy program is not Tehran's only sore point with the U.S. Apart from the ongoing nuclear controversy, Iran is angry over the continuing detention of five of its diplomats, arrested during a U.S. raid in Iraq in January. There was some speculation that the arrest and interrogation of Esfandiari and other Iranian-Americans might be an attempt to set up a 'hostage exchange'—the U.S. citizens in return for the Iranian diplomats." *Time* fails to report the contention of the U.S. government that the "diplomats" are in fact members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, which is providing assistance to our enemies in Iraq.

It used to be that dictators had to rely on the likes of Ramsey Clark or Lord

(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of January 20, 1997)

Haw-Haw to provide this quality of one-sided advocacy. Now they can just depend on the Bush-bashing predilections of the American press. ♦

We're Not Gonna Take It

Last week at a conference of black clergy, Illinois senator and presidential hopeful Barack Obama recalled the 1992 Los Angeles riots and argued that race riots have been erupting in this country ever since—we just don't notice them: "Those 'quiet riots' that take place every day are born from the same place as the fires and the destruction and the police decked out in riot gear and the deaths. They happen when a sense of disconnect settles in and hope dissipates."

We don't know about you, but when we heard the phrase "quiet riot" our thoughts turned ineluctably to the defunct '80s 'hair band' of that name. And sources tell us Obama plans to advance this line of criticism next with a speech questioning the president's Metal Health and describing the White House as a Mötley Crüe with an Appetite for Destruction, issuing policies of Poison. Often seen as the Cinderella candidate, Obama preaches inclusiveness regardless of race, gender, creed, and sexual orientation—including those who are AC/DC—while the president, in his opinion, "ain't talkin' 'bout love." ♦

Congratulations!

The ninth annual Eric Breindel Award for Excellence in Journalism has been awarded to Max Boot, a WEEKLY STANDARD contributing editor, for his exceptional foreign policy analysis and reporting. The pieces that earned him the award included "Bush Didn't Start the Mideast Fire" (*Los Angeles Times*), "The Power of the Pentagon" (*Wall Street Journal*), "Darfur Solutions: Send in the Mercenaries" (*Los Angeles Times*), and "The Second Lebanon War: It Probably Won't Be the Last," which appeared in this magazine's September 4, 2006, issue.

Sponsored by the Eric Breindel Memorial Foundation, and generously supported by News Corporation, Breindel's longtime employer and this magazine's corporate parent, the award carries a prize of $20,000 and is presented each year to the columnist or editorialist whose work best reflects the spirit that animated Breindel's own writing: love of country, commitment to democratic institutions, and determination to bear witness to the evils of totalitarianism. Congratulations, Max. ♦

Help Wanted

THE WEEKLY STANDARD has a full-time position available for a staff assistant. This is a clerical position working with the editors. Duties will include answering phones and emails, updating our website, research, and record-keeping. Candidates should address a cover letter and résumé to *hr@weeklystandard.com.* ♦

Casual

With Malice Toward Some

According to writers with a weakness for self-pity—which is to say, writers—writing a book is a dispiriting, unhappy enterprise. "No one who ever did it would willingly go through it again," said George Orwell, who nevertheless managed to get out eight books before the last one finished him off at age 46. So when I decided that what the world needed was another book about Abraham Lincoln and that I was just the man to write it, I was prepared for some discouraging moments.

But not quite so discouraging as this: a conference about Lincoln, held in Springfield, Illinois, filled with a hundred or so buffs, historians, curiosity seekers, retirees, and people in off the street, plus a moderator, who suddenly asked for a show of hands.

"How many people here are working on a book about Abraham Lincoln?" he said.

I confidently raised my arm—and so did half the people in the room.

Nobody likes excessive competition, but if you venture into the world of Lincoln book-writing you need to be prepared for a crowded field. At least 14,000 books have been published about Abraham Lincoln since the unpleasantness at Ford's Theater transformed him from politician to martyr, saint, and goldmine. The pace shows no sign of slackening. The last few years alone have brought us books pondering Lincoln's sex life, his psychological depressions, his finances, his religious beliefs, his political acumen, his prose style, his vacation house (two books! within a year of each other!), and even his eating habits. This last, called *The Taste Is in My Mouth a Little*, was written by the greatest living Lincoln historian, Wayne C. Temple, who has also produced a seminal work on Lincoln's pets.

My own bright idea for a Lincoln book was to ask, in effect, why so many Lincoln books should have been written in the first place. Put another way: Why can't we get over him? No other American inspires the same inexhaustible fascination—not Washington, who may have been more important historically, and not Jefferson, who was more complicated intellectually, and not Kennedy, who was much cuter and had a nicer looking wife. Lincoln stands alone, an object of unparalleled interest and curiosity. I thought I might be able to explain his uniqueness by approaching him from an untried angle: indirectly, through the people who revere him, imitate him, study him, obsess over him, and, in some cases, despise him.

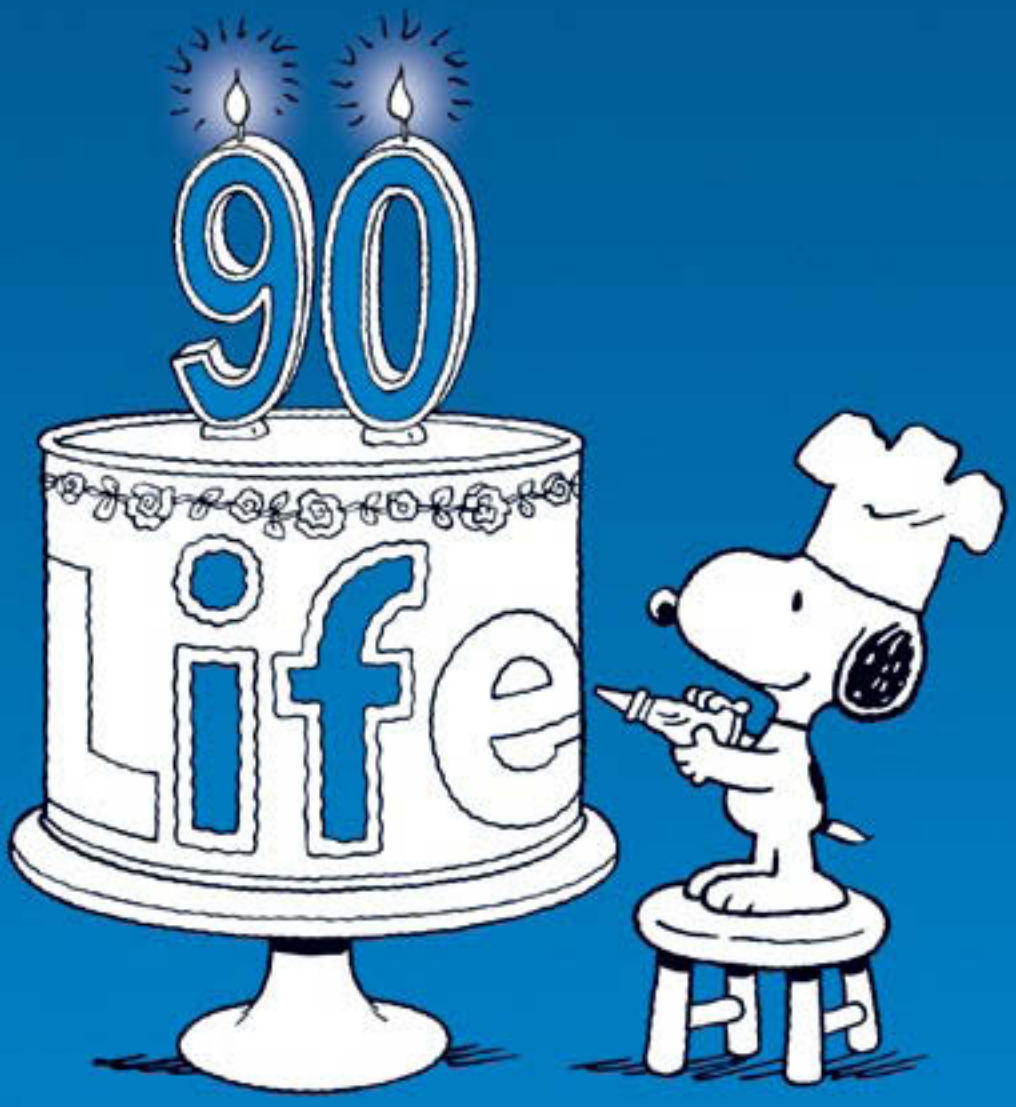

Darren Gygi

This proved harder to do than I would have thought, because it quickly became apparent that there were almost as many different Lincolns as there were Lincoln enthusiasts. He has been claimed by Democrats and Republicans, Communists and libertarians, Bible-thumpers and pagans, neocons and One Worlders, all with equal fervor and always with the deep conviction that he was one of their own. This elasticity can breed a certain cynicism. "After years of living with Abraham Lincoln," one Lincoln expert told me, "I can give him to you any way you want—cold or hot, jazz or classical. I can give you scandalous Lincoln, conservative Lincoln, liberal Lincoln, racist Lincoln, Lincoln over easy or Lincoln scrambled."

By the time the expert told me this I knew precisely what he meant. Nosing around, I'd wound up at a convention of Lincoln impersonators, sat cross-legged on the floor of the vault of a Lincoln collector in her Beverly Hills mansion, and faked my way through a leadership-training seminar where Lincoln was held up as a sage of corporate management. I'd held a handwritten copy of the Gettysburg Address, and stood dumb as an elderly immigrant couple on the west side of Chicago laid out a full meal before his likeness, as an offering of thanks for the blessings he had bestowed on them. Lincoln people were invariably charming and sincere, helpful and open, but at times I despaired of finding, amid the many privatized, cut-to-fit Lincolns that each of them had built for himself, a *Lincoln* Lincoln—a plausible and universal Lincoln, a real man with significance for the rest of us.

I did finally find him, though. At least I think I did. That's what the book is about, anyway. And when I finished I realized how silly I was to have been discouraged by the show of excessive competition I'd seen in Springfield. Our enduring preoccupation with him is evidence of robust national health, a sign that we still respond to the most important things. The day we become indifferent to him, on the other hand—the day a moderator like the one in Springfield asks who's writing a Lincoln book and no hands go up—is when we should get discouraged. But somehow I think that day is a long way off.

Andrew Ferguson



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Sacred Soil

Having read Jonathan V. Last's, "The Memorials We Deserve" (May 28), we would like to provide a more accurate description of the Flight 93 National Memorial design, which incorporates a great diversity of input, including that of the Families of Flight 93, community members, design professionals, and the National Park Service.

We do agree with Last that the temporary memorial is a moving place. It is intimate, heartfelt, and personal, but it is not for those who "prefer their monuments to be monumental."

In seeking a design for the permanent memorial, Flight 93 partner organizations called for more than a single monument—rather, a memorial landscape. If one is looking for a monument, the Tower of Voices, nearly 100 feet tall, marks the gateway to the park. The tower features 40 wind chimes, which memorialize the passengers and crew, many of whom left their last memory through their voice.

Visitors will leave a long road from the tower to enter the bowl area along a walkway that marks the flight path of United Flight 93. Walls three feet thick and as high as the plane flew overhead will frame the sky and offer the first view of the crash site and expanse of the Field of Honor.

Trees encircle the bowl to formally sanctify the field as "A common field one day. A field of honor forever." Additionally, a tree-lined walkway and 40 memorial groves extend a mile around the field. The walkway leads visitors through a variety of landscape features and culminates at the Sacred Ground.

To impose a monument at the Sacred Ground, where the plane crashed, would be disrespectful, preempting its primary significance as the final resting place of the Flight 93 victims and as the focal point of the 2,200-acre national park. Here the public will be able to approach the edge of the crash site (the temporary memorial, on the other hand, is a distant quarter mile away). Contrary to the assertion that it won't allow left-behind tributes, the walls at the Sacred Ground are designed to accommodate public tributes at the heart of the memorial and where the names of the 40 heroes will be

inscribed. The Visitor Center will also offer such opportunities.

Not through "obelisks or domes" but in forms unique to the event and its place, the permanent memorial will pay tribute to 40 selfless patriots who saved our nation's Capitol. Such heroism is "monumental." And through the Flight 93 National Memorial, such heroism will be appropriately and enduringly remembered.

Gen. Tommy Franks (ret.)
The Hon. Tom Ridge
Honorary Co-Chairmen
Flight 93 National Memorial Campaign

Bloomberg Report Card

In "The Mystery of Michael Bloomberg" (May 14), Fred Siegel and Michael Goodwin mistakenly claim that "math scores in middle schools have declined" since Mayor Bloomberg won control of New York City's public schools in 2002 and installed Chancellor Joel Klein. In fact, the percentage of the city's 8th graders scoring at or above grade level on the state math test rose 9.1 percentage points during this time. By comparison, the rest of the state increased by 4.9 points.

Siegel and Goodwin say that "student performance has been basically flat" except for reading gains at the elementary school level. Yet in both 4th and 8th grade—the two grades the state has tested throughout the Bloomberg administration—New York City students since 2002 have made substantially larger reading and math gains than the rest of the state. In this year's reading results, released two weeks ago, 8th-grade scores rose 5.2 points, the largest increase for city middle-school students since the state implemented standards-based testing in 1999.

The counterpart to these gains is the city's climbing graduation rate, which has risen 9 points (to 60 percent) during the last five years, triple the increase of the five years preceding mayoral control. While New Yorkers should demand continued improvement from their schools, Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein have made measurable progress.

David Cantor
Press Secretary
NYC Department of Education
New York, N.Y.

Fred Siegel and Michael Goodwin respond: After six and a half years in office, sole control of the schools, and

an additional $4 billion in school spending, Mayor Bloomberg still has little to show in the way of educational reform. More than half the math gains Bloomberg cites occurred before his policies were put into place. He cites a 5.2 point jump in reading scores, but state scores, bereft of Bloomberg's billions in spending, went up 7.7 points. And as for graduation rates, leaving aside dumbed-down standards, according to the state only 50 percent graduate—not the 60 percent Bloomberg claims. The pace of improvements has been so slow as to fall within the range of statistical error.

School's Out Forever

There was a lot to agree with in David Gelernter's "A World Without Public Schools" (June 4). But the "Age of Consensus" he describes was more an "Age of Coercion." In the 1800s, American public education was drenched in the unsavory politics of the nativist Know-Nothing movement, with anti-Catholics at the lead who sought to use the schools to blanch out threatening "papist" views brought over by Catholic immigrants.

These "reformers" tried to channel children into their public but nondenominational (or "nonsectarian" as the word was defined then) Christian schools by making those institutions the only ones that were free. Some states passed laws saying kids had to go to schools only in their districts, and Oregon even passed a law, championed by the KKK, outlawing private schools—though it was subsequently overturned by the Supreme Court.

This Age of Coercion still haunts us today, as a new breed of reformers has to fight voucher battles in the courts as well as in the public square in an effort to attain the future that Gelernter envisions—where public education is redefined as the public's responsibility to fund children's education, at the schools of their parents' choice.

Libby Sternberg
Lancaster, Pa.

I want to praise David Gelernter for having the guts to make an eminently logical—but politically deadly—proposal: Give public education money to parents instead of government-run, conflict-ridden public schools. I also want to deny Gelernter's assertion that public schooling enjoyed an Age of Consensus from roughly 1820 to 1970. No such golden age ever existed.

The 19th century was wracked by battles between Protestants and Roman Catholics, conflicts that ultimately produced not a consensus within public education, but a separate Catholic school system that by 1965 enrolled almost 5.5 million students. And Catholics were not alone in being left out of the public school consensus. Many Lutherans and Seventh Day Adventists felt the need to run their own schools, and by the 20th century religious people of numerous stripes were battling secular groups for control of public education.

Gelernter's age of consensus also saw regular grappling over nonreligious issues. People who thought that public schools should push most children into vocational training, for instance, were locked into regular battle with those who wanted to open academic tracks to everyone. There were also widespread debates over whether some groups, including African Americans and Asians, should be permitted to get any public education at all.

Thankfully, none of this undermines Gelernter's ultimate point: that no consensus exists today about what public schools should teach; therefore, it makes much more sense to base public education on parental choice than government control. Indeed, knowing the full, strife-laden history of American public education only solidifies Gelernter's point, demonstrating that far from forging consensus, public schooling is inherently divisive.

Neal McCluskey
Washington, D.C.

David Gelernter responds: Libby Sternberg and Neal McCluskey raise valid objections centering on the anti-Catholic prejudice that infected the American public during the period I call the Age of Consensus. Of course, it would be foolish to believe that our public schools at the brink of the Cultural Revolution of modern decades were solely, even mainly, the result of nativist prejudice. To some extent this view reflects modern historians and intellectuals' dislike of the "great man" (or great Mann) view of history. Horace Mann (1796-1859) is only the most celebrated of the many educators and big thinkers who built our public schools with idealistic and not reactionary goals in mind. Mann fought for universal, nonsectarian public schools his whole life. Among many other achievements, he became the first head of the path-breaking Massachusetts state board of education.

It's also true that even if every last American Catholic agreed on education during my Age of Consensus, and everyone else agreed in opposing the Catholic view, nothing remotely approaching today's split down the middle would have been possible. Today, Catholics are roughly a quarter of the U.S. population; in 1906 they were around 17 percent and in 1850, 5 percent. These figures represent huge numbers of human beings and great scope for bigotry and conflict. But today the story is different. A population that is split down the middle on basic questions offers no purchase for any kind of consensus, progressive or reactionary; pro- or anti-anything.

But the numbers are a side issue. Here is what really matters: Although Protestants, Catholics, and Jews differed on fundamental religious and moral questions (and still do), there's no reason to doubt that most Americans during the Age of Consensus, Protestants and Catholics and Jews, would have agreed with Teddy Roosevelt when he described his ideal (which happened to be his father): "He combined strength and courage with gentleness, tenderness and great unselfishness. He would not tolerate in us children selfishness or cruelty, idleness, cowardice, or untruthfulness. As we grew older he made us understand that the same standard of clean living was demanded for the boys as for the girls." Elsewhere TR commends "ordered discipline" as good for moral and physical culture. Honesty, courage, discipline, absolute moral standards based ultimately on the Bible and Judeo-Christian tradition—these were widely agreed throughout America, in outline if not in detail, during my so-called Age of Consensus.

And now it's gone. Better face that fact and make the best of it (while hoping for its eventual return) than ignore it and let our children suffer while we dream on. ♦

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the weekly Standard

Don't Feel Terrible, Mr. President—Act

Three months ago, after Scooter Libby was convicted of perjury and false statements, we argued in these pages that pardoning Libby was in President Bush's interest and in the country's interest. And we suggested that if the president did intend to pardon Libby, there was no reason to wait.

The president waited. He explained he was "pretty much going to stay out of it" until the case had run its course. Now we are near the end of the course, with a sentence of 30 months in prison and a $250,000 fine, and the judge's stated inclination not even to let Libby stay out of prison pending his appeal. The federal probation office had filed a statement that the applicable guidelines would suggest a sentence of 15 to 21 months—and that there were grounds for a "downward departure" from that range. The judge rejected his own probation office's recommendation.

Why the "unusually harsh sentence," as William Otis, a former federal prosecutor who served on the advisory committee on sentencing guidelines, put it? Because, the judge explained, "people who occupy these types of positions, where they have the welfare and security of the nation in their hands, have a special obligation not to do anything that might create a problem." Of course, Sandy Berger, national security adviser to Bill Clinton, hid original documents on his person, took them out of the National Archives, destroyed them, and lied to investigators. One might think of this as "creating a problem." But Berger got no prison time and a fine one-fifth that imposed on Libby.

Libby's sentence—to say nothing of the original prosecution—is unfair and vindictive. But there is little point in complaining or second-guessing. Scooter Libby, special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald, and Judge Reggie Walton have done what they have done. One man must now choose to act—or not to act. That is George W. Bush.

For now, Bush seems inclined to duck. Bush spokeswoman Dana Perino, noting that an appeals process was underway (and ignoring the indication by the judge that he might imprison Libby despite his pending appeal), said that "the president has not intervened so far in any other criminal matter and he is going to decline to do so now." She also emphasized that "the president said that he felt terrible for the family, especially his wife and his kids."

Whatever the intention, this touch is a bit chilling. Bush doesn't seem to have much sympathy for Libby himself—he was just hired help, and hired help sometimes gets thrown overboard. Normally, though, staff who get thrown overboard simply lose their government job. They don't go to jail. Nor, incidentally, has the president said that he feels terrible for what the *Wall Street Journal* correctly called "the cowardice and incompetence of his administration"—an administration whose CIA leaked its referral of the Plame matter, and whose Justice Department panicked and appointed a special prosecutor, all of which has finally brought us to the present pass.

In any case, it's not about Bush's feelings. The Constitution says nothing about the president's feelings. It does, however, in Article II, Section Two, give the president the power to pardon. To govern is to choose. Not to pardon is, now—given the verdict, and the likelihood of a prison term—itself a choice. Not to pardon would be a foolish and unjust choice for the president to make. But more important, not to pardon—or, at the very least, not to commute the sentence by eliminating the jail sentence—would be a dishonorable choice. For one could only interpret such a choice as driven by vanity and fastidiousness—the president's desire to separate himself from someone who has gotten into trouble, a desire not to tarnish his own legacy by pardoning the top staffer of his unpopular vice president. One might add that Libby's "crime" came about as he tried to defend the Bush administration from the charge that it knowingly—that the president knowingly—lied us into a difficult and unpopular war.

Injustices happen in politics. Sometimes presidents have to put the general good over individual cases of justice or humanity. But Bush can't believe any general good is served by Scooter Libby's going to prison. Quite the contrary. All that stands against a pardon—or at the very least commutation of the prison term—is a short-sighted, selfish, and petty desire to avoid some additional criticism. We would like to think better of George W. Bush.

—William Kristol

The Zero-to-60 Thompson Run

Fred gears up for 2008.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

In early March, only a handful of Fred Thompson's good friends knew that he was even thinking about a bid for president. Three months later, according to several polls, Thompson is in second place nationally, trailing frontrunner Rudy Giuliani. He spends his days raising money and assembling an increasingly sophisticated campaign operation. His advisers hold daily conference calls to discuss issues and to craft a schedule that includes visits to states with early caucuses and primaries. Rival campaigns are adjusting their strategies to account for his inevitable entry into the race.

Ask people closest to Thompson how this happened and they often give you the same story: The former senator was simply minding his business when out of nowhere there arose a powerful Draft Fred movement, the likes of which have rarely been seen in American politics. "The groundswell for Fred is the closest thing to a real, genuine draft that I've seen in my 40 years of politics," Senator Lamar Alexander said recently in Chattanooga.

In truth, we hear some variation of this almost every four years. Average Americans who have never before shown much interest in politics rise up and demand that so-and-so provide the country the leadership it's been lacking. They form a movement. The reluctant noncandidate says he is surprised and flattered. He promises to give it serious consideration, not because he wants to, of course—he couldn't be happier in his private life, really—but because he owes it to the people.

Think Wes Clark, June 2003: "I'm amazed at the draft movement. It started without any knowledge on my behalf. . . . I think it's more a testimony to the crying need in this country and what people see as a need for leadership . . . than it is, frankly, a reflection on me." On that last point, at least, Clark was right.

The Draft Clark movement did lead to a campaign—which went nowhere. And this is worth bearing in mind as a worst-case scenario for Thompson. The Thompson effort feels different, though. It does have more of a real bottom-up, voter-driven aspect. But that doesn't mean Thompson and his small team—three or four close advisers—sat by passively and waited for a groundswell.

On November 29, 2006, Tennessee senator Bill Frist said that he would not be running for president. The same day, the *Wall Street Journal* noted that the announcement "leaves a Republican void in the South, and underscores the absence of any major center-to-right Southern figure in the Republican Party's presidential field thus far."

Others saw the same void. Thompson fielded calls from several friends and former colleagues in the following days. Spencer Abraham, who had resigned as George W. Bush's secretary of energy shortly after the 2004 election, knew Thompson from their days in the Senate. He urged his old friend to consider running. Tennessee congressman Zach Wamp called to say much the same thing. In public, there was very little discussion of a possible Thompson candidacy, though he was mentioned as a possible replacement for U.N. ambassador John Bolton.

Thompson's wife Jeri, a savvy Republican strategist with Capitol Hill experience, asked Mark Corallo, an old friend and public relations guru, to see what he might do to raise her husband's profile in Washington. Thompson had not altogether retired from politics when he left the Senate in January 2003: He was serving as chairman of the State Department's International Security Advisory Board. He was a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a member of the U.S.-China Economic Security Review Commission, and a commentator for ABC Radio.

Corallo had left his job as spokesman at the Justice Department to open a media consulting firm and agreed to take on the low-intensity work as a favor and without pay. He quietly began to highlight Thompson's activities, in particular calling attention to Thompson's radio work. When the provocative radio commentaries were published on *National Review*'s popular website beginning in January 2007, other conservative websites began to link to them with some regularity—viral marketing, as they say in the online world, and arguably the informal beginning of Thompson's campaign.

In early March, when Thompson acknowledged on Fox News Sunday that he was seriously considering a presidential run, support for a potential bid exploded. Thompson and his friends were flooded with phone calls from would-be supporters eager to start raising money. Public officials began to endorse Thompson without any promise that he would become a candidate—a risk in the trade-and-barter world of politics.

On April 7, Carl Bearden, the speaker pro tem of the Missouri House of Representatives, sent an email to colleagues expressing his support for Thompson and encouraging them to do the same. In time, 60 of the 92 Republicans in the Missouri House signed a petition backing a Thompson run. The lawmakers did so despite the fact that two of the state's leading Republicans, Governor Matt Blunt and Missouri House speaker Rod Jetton, had endorsed Mitt

Stephen F. Hayes, a senior writer at The Weekly Standard, *is the author of* Cheney: The Untold Story of America's Most Powerful and Controversial Vice President, *which will be published next month by HarperCollins.*

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Romney. (So confident is Bearden that he offered some good-natured smack-talk to Blunt and Jetton. "I told them to enjoy it while it lasts, because when Fred gets in, it'll be over.")

In Texas, Jerry Patterson, the colorful commissioner of the General Land Office (a statewide elected office that is more powerful than it sounds), began to circulate a petition encouraging Thompson to run. By late April, he had gotten the signatures of 58 Texas Republican lawmakers. "No other presidential hopeful from either party is close," reported the *Houston Chronicle*. According to Patterson, that number now stands at 67, and includes 59 of the 81 Republicans in the Texas House.

Patterson had no previous ties to Thompson. "I've never seen any of his movies and I'd never seen his TV show," he says. "The things that others say are his weaknesses, I see as strengths. He's not enamored of elected office. He's not just running to be president."

As the spring rolled on, Thompson's media appearances increased, and so did his poll numbers. He came in second in a *Los Angeles Times* national poll in mid-April and tied for second in a Rasmussen poll later that month. On May 12, Thompson won the Wisconsin Republican party straw poll with 31 percent of the vote (to 27 percent for former Wisconsin governor Tommy Thompson). Six days later, he won a straw poll of Republican delegates to the Georgia Republican convention with 44 percent of the votes cast. He has the support of more than 30 state legislators in that state, too.

Straw polls are just that—straw polls. And signing a petition to encourage a run is not quite the same thing as an endorsement. Still, by late spring it was clear that there was something to the Thompson boomlet.

Behind the scenes too, the activity was picking up. Thompson's top advisers gathered more frequently for planning meetings around the banquet-sized dining room table at his home in McLean, Virginia. On Saturday, May 12, as Thompson won the Wisconsin GOP poll, he met there with two men he does not know well but who will nevertheless play a major role in his bid to become president. David McIntosh, a former congressman from Indiana, and Lawrence Lindsey, President Bush's top economic adviser in his first term, came expecting to discuss tax reform, or social issues, or perhaps the long-term stability of Medicare. They would get to that, eventually.

First, Thompson wanted to talk about growing up in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, and the many experiences that have shaped his conservatism. Thompson did the same thing when I interviewed him in March, but that made more sense. He was thinking of running for president, and I was writing a profile. His background—in small town America, in the South, in the law, in politics—is something that might convince potential Thompson supporters that (despite years as a TV and movie star) he is just like them. But Thompson evidently believes his experiences so inform his views that his policy advisers have to understand that background in order to understand him.

In that meeting and in two long sessions that followed, the three men discussed a broad set of issues, ranging from general principles of governance (federalism, the Constitution, political philosophy) to topics likely to be at the center of debate in the Republican primary (abortion, Second Amendment rights, immigration, and spending).

Thompson made clear that he intends to campaign on "big issues"—entitlement reform at home and the imperative of an America that shapes world affairs rather than reacts to them. He indicated a willingness to criticize his own party's failings, particularly on government spending. and a desire to return Republicans to their limited-government moorings. "He recognizes that a 'first principles' campaign is what the American people want," says McIntosh.

Thompson has been talking foreign policy with Richard Allen, Ronald Reagan's first national security adviser, who has agreed to serve as an adviser. He has also met with former U.N. ambassador John Bolton, who has spent time with other GOP candidates as well and remains uncommitted.

McIntosh, who in 1982 helped start the Federalist Society, the well-known national organization for conservative lawyers and students, is widely regarded as a serious conservative thinker and someone who is in touch with the ideas that animate movement conservatives. McIntosh says Thompson is a conservative's conservative. "When I first talked to Fred, I thought either he's a better actor than anyone I've ever met, or this is really him. Having spent more time, I know he's a real conservative."

With the formation of his "testing the waters" committee, Thompson, meanwhile, has continued his non-campaign campaign. In a late May conference call with the candidate, some 80 Thompson supporters agreed to raise $46,000 each by June 4, the day the committee would begin accepting donations. Although several news organizations—including The Weekly Standard—reported that Thompson was expected to release the results of that effort, the committee has not yet provided them. Advisers to other Republican campaigns have speculated that this means the fundraising was not as successful as predicted.

Thompson advisers dismiss claims that there are any problems with fundraising. They point to other indications that the overall effort is going strong. Republican media strategist Mary Matalin signed on to advise the Thompson effort, and George P. Bush, the son of Jeb Bush and nephew of the president, endorsed him. California Republican consultant Ken Khachigian, a veteran of the Reagan machine, is on board.

Thompson last week also picked up the endorsement of the third-ranking Republican in the House, Rep. Adam Putnam of Florida. Putnam is the highest-ranking House Republican to endorse a candidate. "I see in him an ability to create an excitement in our grassroots that none of the other candidates have been able to do thus far," Putnam said in a phone interview.

The 33-year-old Putnam is widely

regarded as one of the rising stars among conservatives in the House. He was first elected in 2000, the first cycle he was old enough to run. Six years later, his colleagues chose Putnam as chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee, making him the fourth-ranking member. He has served as chairman of the House Republican Conference since the beginning of the current session.

As important to the Thompson campaign as Putnam's congressional chops are his extensive ties among Florida Republicans—he served for four years in the state legislature before being elected to Congress. Putnam says the phone lines in his campaign office have been "flooded" since his endorsement of Thompson was first reported. He has heard from voters as well as lawmakers. "All the worker bees have been calling in to ask what they can do to help," he says. "And several of my former colleagues have been shooting me emails asking how they can sign up."

Florida could play a major role in the selection of the Republican nominee with its early primary. And because the primary date was moved up just recently, Thompson's late entry matters less than it does in Iowa and New Hampshire, where his rivals have been building organizations for months or years.

Thompson will be in London for a speech on June 19. His schedule later this month includes speeches to Republicans in New Hampshire and South Carolina. He does not currently have plans to travel to Iowa and has not decided whether to participate in the Iowa GOP straw poll on August 11. Rudy Giuliani and John McCain announced last week that they would bypass the straw poll.

How Thompson decides to handle Iowa is one of many unanswered tactical questions his campaign will have to confront. But one thing is clear in his zero-to-sixty presidential run: He is already a serious contender for the nomination. And Thompson himself points out something that is often overlooked about his candidacy.

"You know," he says, "I haven't spent a dime yet." ♦

An Unconventional Candidate

Can a pro-choice mayor of New York win the GOP nomination?

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

The schedule for June 7 said Rudy Giuliani would address the 38th annual meeting of the Airport and Seaport Police at 8 P.M. at a Marriott hotel here in downtown Washington. Campaign and event staff said not to hurry, however. Giuliani routinely begins his events late, and in this case he had to attend a fundraiser at the Hard Rock Café downtown, where GOP senator David Vitter of Louisiana was introducing him. After that, he was to arrive at the Marriott and accept the first-ever Fred V. Morrone Memorial Award. Morrone was superintendent of the New York and New Jersey Port Authority police when he died inside the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

Giuliani knows how to make an entrance. After the somber police officers emceeing the award ceremony go through their introductions, the former New York City mayor enters through a side door, accompanied by his two-man security detail and a few staff members. (Giuliani has five security guards; two of them are with him at all times.) The audience, almost all men and almost all wearing dark suits, rise for a standing ovation. Giuliani delivers his speech, saying Morrone was a hero who "found himself on the front lines of a war of terrorists against us." The delivery is smooth, but you can tell the candidate hasn't spent much time with the text. Giuliani keeps looking down at the words on the lectern.

The audience doesn't seem to mind. They applaud at the appropriate moments and nod their heads when Giuliani criticizes the Senate immigration deal and evokes the horrible events of September 11, 2001. "Political correctness cannot stop us from describing clearly, and seeing clearly, our enemy," Giuliani says. He outlines two programs—BorderStat and PortStat—that would track the government's progress in maintaining border and port security. Then he's done. He poses for a few photos, seeks out former Homeland Security undersecretary for border and transportation security Asa Hutchinson for a handshake, and leaves by the side door through which he came. Giuliani won't be available to the press, a communications aide tells disappointed reporters. The mayor will spend the night in D.C. and leave the next day.

If you've ever thought there's a fly-by-the-seat-of-one's-pants feeling to the Giuliani presidential campaign, you are probably right. None of Giuliani's senior staff—campaign manager Mike DuHaime, senior adviser Tony Carbonetti, political director Mark Campbell, and communications director Katie Levinson—has much experience in presidential politics. An aide says Giuliani is playing catch-up, having made a relatively late entry into the race. Compared with the hyperorganized campaign of former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney, Giuliani's is haphazard. Sometimes schedules are handed out just 24 hours before the events in question. Statements from the candidate or senior staff happen on the order of a few a week, not the constant barrage of emails that come from Team Romney.

Matthew Continetti is associate editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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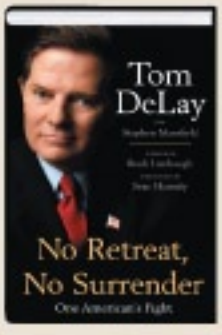

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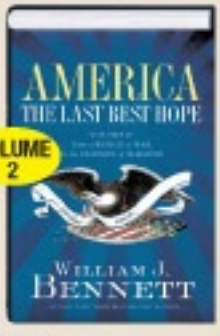

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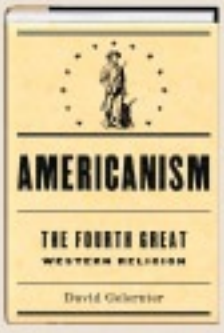

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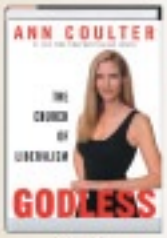

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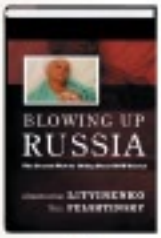

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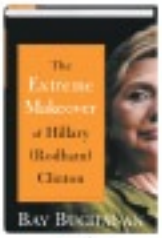

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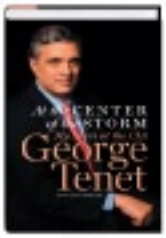

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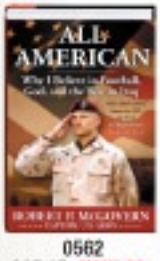

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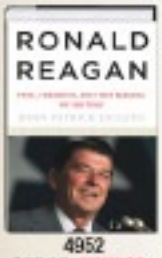

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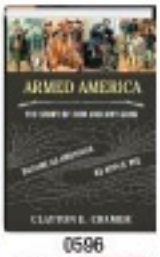

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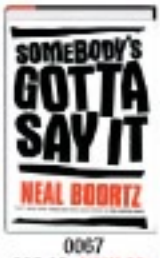

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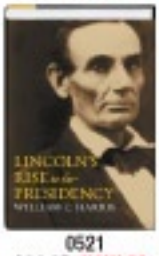

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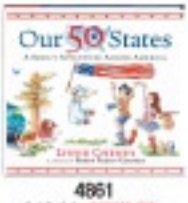

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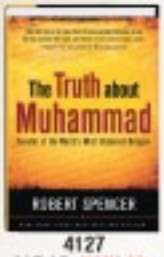

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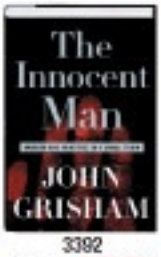

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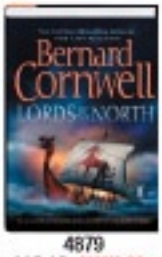

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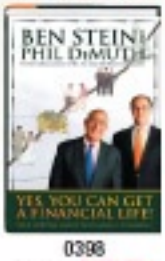

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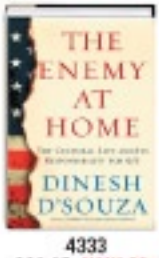

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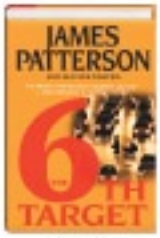

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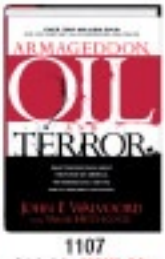

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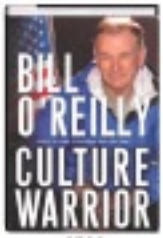

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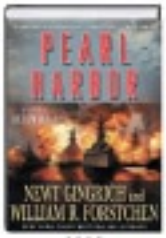

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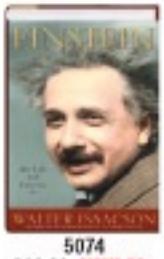

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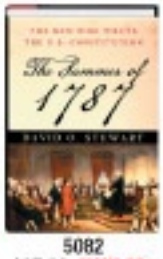

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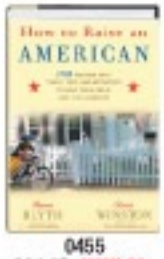

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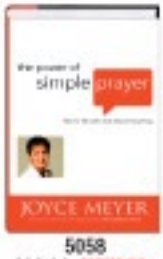

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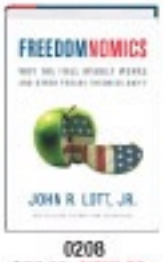

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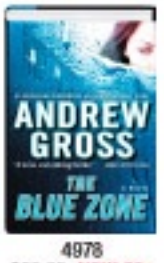

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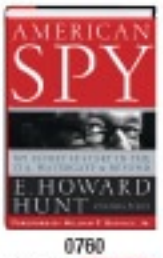

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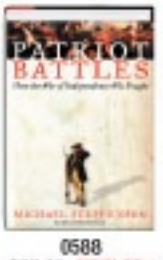

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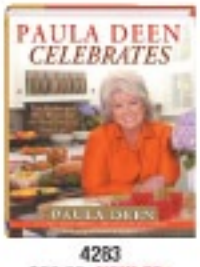

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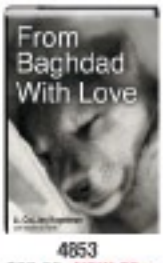

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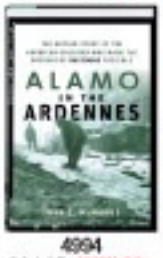

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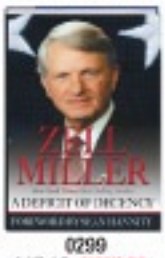

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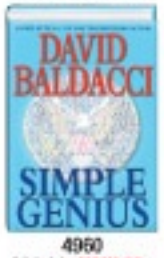

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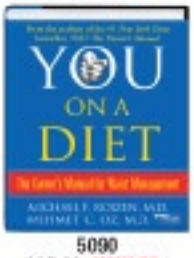

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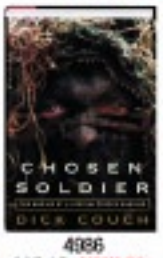

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Giuliani is just beginning to assemble policy advisory groups in the areas of health care, energy, Iraq, and the Middle East. Former Indianapolis mayor Stephen Goldsmith and Stanford economist Michael Boskin are key domestic policy advisers, while Harvard's Stephen P. Rosen and Yale's Charles Hill handle foreign policy. Over the last few weeks Giuliani has outlined programs for restoring accountability to government and making health care more competitive and health insurance more individualized. He rarely delivers speeches from a prepared text, preferring to extemporize from notes.

The candidate's worst—and best—moments are unscripted. A few months ago Giuliani got himself into trouble over conflicting statements on federal funding for abortions. Conservatives and the press criticized his performance at the first GOP debate, when he seemed ambivalent about the future of *Roe* v. *Wade*. Still, Giuliani's attack on Rep. Ron Paul at the second GOP debate was also unscripted. And his humorous, ad-lib response when lightning struck outside the debate hall during his answer on an abortion question last week disarmed the audience.

It's an unconventional moment in American politics, and Giuliani is an unconventional candidate. "This is an unprecedented campaign," says a longtime conservative activist. It's the first time since 1952 that there is no incumbent president or vice president running in either party. There's also no clear frontrunner. The failure of the more conventional conservative candidates to connect with voters, combined with Giuliani's assured presence on the stump and in debates, has left the GOP race open to hizzoner. For now, it simply doesn't seem to matter that his campaign isn't as well organized as some of the others.

There are challenges, however. "Giuliani is trying to throw conventional wisdom out the door," says a GOP lobbyist sympathetic to John McCain. This was brought home once again last week, when campaign manager DuHaime said the mayor would skip the August 11 straw poll in Ames, Iowa. It was a difficult decision. It's been the subject of debate inside the campaign for months. The carnival-like straw poll is a fundraiser for the Iowa GOP. It costs millions of dollars for the campaigns to bus in supporters from throughout the state. Right now Giuliani has neither the staff nor the resources in Iowa to compete in Ames. Last week, there were "more than 12 people" in the state working for Giuliani, says a senior aide. That's not exactly

what you call an army. What's more, DuHaime opened Giuliani's Iowa headquarters and named the campaign's state chair only last week.

The sudden announcement a few hours later from the McCain campaign that the senator would also skip Ames surprised Team Giuliani. They took it as a sign McCain's campaign is ailing. Giuliani still faces two problems in Iowa, however. The first is that no candidate in the last 30 years has ignored Ames and gone on to win the Iowa caucuses in January. Yet Giuliani aides say the mayor still plans to compete in the caucuses. Which leads to the second problem: Giuliani and McCain will remain on the straw poll ballot in August. They won't do well, which could demoralize their Iowa supporters preparing for January. Skipping Ames could be the first step toward leaving Iowa altogether.

And that could lead to more problems. Giuliani strategists believe their candidate's national celebrity, strong fundraising, and proven ability to appeal to disaffected independents and Democrats lend him a strong advantage in primaries in Florida, California, New York, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. With the new, frontloaded primary calendar, those states will all vote within a few weeks of Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina. Giuliani seems to be banking on a January 29, 2008, Florida win to propel him to the next round of big-state primaries on February 5. "The calendar has changed things an awful lot," says the senior Giuliani aide.

Here's the question: Does the frontloaded primary schedule make the first contest, Iowa, either more or less important? One longtime GOP strategist thinks it will be more important. The bounce the winner(s) of Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina will receive should not be underestimated. The risk for Giuliani is that after Iowa comes New Hampshire, and candidates who have held statewide office in Massachusetts tend to overperform there. Think Dukakis in 1988, Tsongas in 1992, and Kerry in 2004. You can even go back to Amb. Henry Cabot Lodge winning New Hampshire in the 1964 Republican primary. So that favors Romney.

Then there's South Carolina. Voters there tend to go along with caucus-goers in Iowa—and the winner in Iowa and South Carolina is more likely to determine the GOP nominee than the winner in New Hampshire. In 1996, Bob Dole won Iowa, lost New Hampshire to Pat Buchanan, then won South Carolina and went on to receive the nomination. In 2000, George W. Bush won Iowa, lost New Hampshire to John McCain, then won South Carolina and went on to become the nominee. The historical record suggests it's difficult to win the nomination without winning two of these three states. The Giuliani campaign seems willing to risk testing that proposition.

Photo by Lev Nisnevitch

Giuliani is unusual in other ways. The most prominent is his stance on abortion, which is not only pro-choice but also seems to be pro-*Roe* v. *Wade*. If Giuliani were to win the nomination, he would be the first GOP nominee in more than 30 years to hold these positions. Gerald Ford typically is cited as the last pro-choice Republican nominee, but the history is more complicated than that. The 1976 GOP platform was explicitly anti-*Roe*, but Ford himself was more equivocal. He said that he opposed abortion and that *Roe* had been wrongly decided, though he opposed a constitutional amendment to return the issue to the states. Betty Ford's strong support for abortion rights further complicated her husband's position and has shaped the historical record.

After his performance in the first GOP debate, when he seemed ambivalent and confused on abortion, Giuliani steadily lost ground in national GOP polls. Now those numbers appear to have stabilized. In some cases they've improved. The media attribute this to Giuliani's May 11 speech at Houston Baptist College, where he unequivocally supported abortion rights and civil unions for gay couples. The truth is the May 11 speech said little that was new, and Giuliani's stabilizing in the polls more likely can be attributed to his good performance in subsequent debates and his success at guiding the campaign back onto national security and economic policy terrain. A good day for Giuliani is when no one talks about social issues.

In the meantime, the peculiarities pile up. Giuliani would be the first Italian American to win the presidential nomination of either party. He would be the first Catholic ever to win the GOP nod. He would be the first former mayor to win a presidential nomination since Theodore Roosevelt. He would be the first GOP nominee to have supported Mario Cuomo for state office. All of this has never happened before. But I hear there's a first time for everything. ♦

The 'Grand Bargain' Comes Undone

Where were the Democrats?

BY FRED BARNES

Where was Barack Obama? The moment was perfect last week for the Illinois senator and champion of bipartisanship to step forward and help save the compromise immigration bill from a premature death. All he needed to do was switch his vote to oppose an amendment whose passage was going to shatter the Senate coalition that negotiated the bill. By switching, Obama would have substantiated his claim to be a politician eager to reach across the partisan aisle and end the bitter polarization in Washington. But Obama was not heard from. A day later, with the deliberations on the bill in turmoil, Senate majority leader Harry Reid yanked it off the Senate floor. Obama voted with Reid on cloture, which failed, prompting the shutdown.

It may be unfair to single out Obama for backing a so-called poison pill that would have weakened the proposed temporary worker program (by terminating it after five years). Obama wasn't alone. Two Democratic presidential candidates—Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden—voted with him, as did Reid, Chuck Schumer, and Dick Durbin, Reid's colleagues in the Senate Democratic leadership. What made Obama's vote different was his hypocrisy. The others are hard-core partisans. Obama professes in speeches and his best-selling book, *The Audacity of Hope*, to rise above crass party interests. Not this time.

The press attributes the collapse of the "grand bargain" on immigration reform to Republicans: the senators who declined to limit debate, President Bush, the angry conservative base, and Republican senator Jim DeMint, who emerged as a leading opponent of the bill. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell did indeed ask that more Republican amendments be allowed, requiring several more days of debate. Reid refused. Bush, however, was scarcely a factor. The base? DeMint was its agent, and a clever and opportunistic one at that.

But Reid was the dark figure in the immigration drama. After halting consideration of the bill, he told two maudlin stories about illegal Hispanic immigrants he'd encountered in Nevada. Then he insisted he really wanted to pass the bill. "I have every desire to complete this legislation," Reid said. He had a funny way of showing it. A pro-reform senator said Democratic senator Ted Kennedy had been "dragging Reid along"—a reluctant Reid—on the immigration issue for weeks.

Reid astonished the senators who drafted the bill by blaming Bush for its demise. Surely he knew better. "This is the president's bill," he declared. "Where are the president's men? Where are the president's people helping us with these votes?" In truth, the Bush administration was invited to join the negotiating sessions at which an immigration compromise was reached—but days after the talks had begun. Bush had little influence. The bill was the bipartisan product of a dozen senators.

While stubbornly opposed to McConnell's demand to bring up more Republican amendments, Reid let a

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

deal-breaking amendment by Senator Byron Dorgan be voted on twice. It would sunset the guest-worker program and was strongly backed by organized labor. The amendment was defeated, 48 to 49, before the Memorial Day congressional recess, and then was voted on again last week. It passed, 49 to 48.

Republican backers of the bill said they were partly responsible for having allowed the amendment a second vote. But all they could do once the vote came was label it a poison pill, meaning that its passage would shatter the bill's delicate compromise and jeopardize its passage. Yet Reid voted for it, along with Obama.

Reid will have a chance to revive the bill this week when McConnell, Kyl, and other Republicans present him with a reduced list of a dozen or so amendments. They'll ask for two or three extra days of debate, then a final vote. Approval may depend on dropping both the Dorgan amendment and a successful amendment by Republican senator John Cornyn that angered Democrats. But nothing can happen unless Reid calls up the bill again. The fate of immigration reform is entirely in Reid's hands.

It was the Dorgan amendment on which DeMint played a pivotal role. Unlike his South Carolina colleague, Lindsey Graham, DeMint is dead set against the immigration reform bill. He has promised to stage a filibuster to block it. Until the immigration debate, DeMint had operated in Graham's shadow. Now he's a hero of the conservative movement.

By switching their votes on the Dorgan amendment, DeMint, Republican senators Jim Bunning, Elizabeth Dole, and Mike Enzi, and Democratic senator Bob Menendez tipped the balance. Only four senators had switched the other way, from aye to nay on the amendment. The nays were one vote short.

Obama was a late addition to the group of senators who had met regularly for three months to draft the bill. But he managed to get two minor changes into the bill. As one of the "grand bargainers," if only briefly, Obama was tacitly obligated to support the compromise. At least Graham thought so.

Nevertheless, Obama proposed last week to put the new merit-based system for selecting immigrants on trial for five years, rather than make it permanent. This struck at a critical part of the compromise for Republicans. And Graham rose in furious disagreement on the Senate floor, all but calling Obama a phony with his sweet talk of bipartisanship.

"Bipartisanship is music to the American people's ears. When you are out on the campaign trail, you are trying to bring us all together. You are trying to make America better. Why can't we work together?" said Graham. "This is why we can't work together—because some people, when it comes to the tough decisions, back away."

Graham said Obama's amendment would take the "bi" out of bipartisanship and kill the compromise. The amendment lost, 55 to 42. ♦

Dissident in Chief

George W. Bush meets with democrats.

BY TOD LINDBERG

Prague

In January 2005, George W. Bush delivered what will surely go down as one of the most ambitious inaugural addresses in presidential history. He pledged the United States to "the ultimate goal of ending tyranny" in the world through the promotion of "democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture." In other words, he proposed the eradication of the most consistently recurring character in politics since its misty origins in prehistory, the dictator or ruler or strongman.

No small number of people thought this was perfectly crazy at the time. But what is perhaps more startling is how many people thought what Bush had to say was an aspiration worthy of a nation founded to vindicate the rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Moreover, some, including me, went farther, viewing Bush's project favorably not just as the latest articulation of the longstanding American declaratory obsession with saving the world by example and deed, but as a plausible one in terms of policy, especially given the less-remarked sentence two paragraphs later, in which Bush described the task he set out as "the concentrated work of generations."

But there are, of course, serious questions here: What is a policy dedicated to "ending tyranny" supposed to look like? For that matter, is the best way to end tyranny really to promote "democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture," and, if so, how and on what timetable? And what about those pesky tyrants who have something of use to the United States, such as oil or information, or something the United States might fear, such as nuclear weapons? Do they get a pass, and, if so, for how long? And if years turn into decades and then generations, isn't such a policy more properly described as one of accommodation of tyrants when necessary?

And of course, now we have the problem of Iraq, a war that began for security reasons, turned into an attempt to create a democracy, and now seems primarily intended to avert civil war, genocide, or the triumph of a religiously inspired terrorist ideology. Kanan Makiya, a proponent of the war and once of the proposition that Iraq was ripe for democracy, described the pass we have reached at a gathering last week in Prague of current and former dissident promoters of liberalism and democracy from all over the world: Iraq, he said, is the "sword of Damocles" hanging over democracy promotion.

In the context of domestic politics, the Democratic rank and file, once sympathetic to such concerns as human rights and opposition to authoritarian governments, has now largely flipped, rededicating itself to the proposition of leaving well enough alone. When I told a fellow soccer dad, a smart, witty, and politically attuned Washington lawyer and unabashed partisan Democrat, that I was going to miss the team party because I was off to Prague for a conference on democracy promotion to which, ahem, Bush was going, he noted ruefully, "Sure, there are plenty more places we can screw up in the name of democracy."

Republicans probably ought to take a moment to ask themselves what they would think about Iraq if Bill Clinton had decided to go to war there in 1998, which he nearly did, and run into the same problems we now have. Republicans, after all, arrived late to the nation-building party, for which the George W. Bush and Condoleezza Rice of campaign 2000 openly expressed something close to contempt. And if, as things were going from bad to worse in Iraq, Clinton had given a speech sounding the theme of the Bush second inaugural, it's hard to imagine the GOP response wouldn't have been to declare him a dangerous Wilsonian lunatic.

As matters stand, even for those who sympathize with the Bush vision, there's one more problem, and it is not small: What exactly has Bush done since January 2005 to "promote democratic movements and institutions," let alone "in every nation and culture"? Where is tyranny now on the run as a result of new U.S. pressure? China hasn't budged except to redouble its engagement with dictatorial regimes abroad in defense of the claim that a country's form of government is nobody's business but those who run it. Russia's Vladimir Putin has become increasingly authoritarian, bombastically so.

Venezuela's Hugo Chávez is even more egregious rhetorically, and his recent policy decrees amount to the farthest-reaching repudiation of market principles since the end of the Cold War. Chávez seems to have found a willing stooge in Bolivia's Evo Morales. In Ukraine, the sheen of the Orange Revolution is gone. Vietnam is locking up Catholic priests. The Cedar Revolution in Lebanon is tottering atop a weak state structure barely able to withstand the brutal forces of the neighborhood. Egypt's Hosni Mubarak pocketed the adulatory congratulations of a success-hungry Bush administration for deigning to allow an actual opposition candidate in his 2005 presidential "election," while making sure the opposition was too weak to mount a serious challenge.

There's more, of course. To the list of places where things are getting worse, one must append a list of places where things aren't getting any better. The buzz in the social-science literature these days is about "sustainable autocracy" and the capacity of tyrants to learn from the mistakes

Contributing editor and Hoover Institution fellow Tod Lindberg's new book, The Political Teachings of Jesus, *is out this month from HC/HarperCollins.*

that brought down their predecessors.

And the Bush administration's response has been? Well, let's just say that if your declared policy is to promote "democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture," you ought to have an answer to the question of what activities you are undertaking to that end. The administration does not have such answers.

Indeed, one of the swiftest criticisms of the Bush second inaugural was that Bush didn't really mean it. By this account, the rhetoric was always empty and was intended to be. Some of the critics raising objections along these lines, for example on the *Washington Post* editorial page, were sincerely concerned to close the gap between high-minded principle and dubious practice in favor of more vigorous action in support of the principle. Other critics were more interested in "gotcha," the exposure of Bush hypocrisy, an accusation that conveniently allowed them to avoid saying which side they came down on.

Now, one should not underestimate the difficulty of undertaking a major transformation of U.S. foreign policy, or the internal resistance one is likely to run into. In certain respects, the Prague meeting on "Democracy and Security" seemed queued up to assist Bush in the task. It was organized by two of the most prominent and successful dissident freedom fighters the world has produced, Natan Sharansky (late of the Soviet Union, now a former Israeli parliamentarian and author of *The Case for Democracy*) and former Czech president Václav Havel, plus José María Aznar, prime minister of Spain from 1996 to 2004 and the guiding hand on its hugely successful economic reform.

The meeting brought together dissidents and activists from around the world, including Saad Eddin Ibrahim of Egypt (sentenced to seven years but freed by an appeals court under international pressure), Chinese Uighur advocate Rebiya Kadeer, Moscow Helsinki Group chair Ludmilla Alexeeva, Amir Abbas Fakhravar (imprisoned and tortured by the Iranian government), Belarus opposition leader Aleksandr Milinkevich, former Bolivian parliamentarian José Brechner, Palestinian democracy advocate Issam Abu Issa, and Garry Kasparov, for 20 years the world's top-ranked chess player and now a leading advocate of democracy in Russia.

This only begins the list. Then you have to add the number of people present who were active in Solidarity and Charter 77 or other opposition groups back in the day. The amount of moral courage represented at the Czech Foreign Affairs Ministry's Czernin Palace, in the very meeting room where the Warsaw Pact was dissolved, ought to give even the most cynical a moment of pause. I found myself speaking on a panel that included Iraqi women's rights advocate Zainab Al-Suwaij and Eli Khoury, one of the leaders of Lebanon's 2005 Cedar Revolution.

Bush is a well-known admirer of Sharansky and his latest book, and that apparently was the connection that got the president to stop over in Prague on his way to the G-8 meeting in Germany. The speech he gave was a variation on the theme of the second inaugural: "The most powerful weapon in the struggle against extremism is not bullets or bombs—it is the universal appeal of freedom. Freedom is the design of our Maker, and the longing of every soul. Freedom is the best way to unleash the creativity and economic potential of a nation. Freedom is the only ordering of a society that leads to justice. And human freedom is the only way to achieve human rights." He went on to say, "In the eyes of America, the democratic dissidents today are the democratic leaders of tomorrow," and referred specifically to the cases of several he was about to meet—and to a number of others stuck in jails around the world from Belarus to Vietnam.

Bush's rhetoric was characteristically lofty; as for new policy, potentially the most important piece was Bush's announcement of a directive that would be sent out by Secretary of State Rice to all U.S. embassies in unfree countries: "Seek out and meet with activists for democracy. Seek out those who demand human rights." The importance of American contact with dissidents cannot be overstated. Former Secretary of State George P. Shultz has described such contacts as one of the key elements of U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union in the 1980s. Bush's directive seemed almost like a response to an appeal Richard Perle had made from the podium barely an hour before, namely, that Bush must "close the gap between what he says and believes and what the machinery of our government actually does."

It's unclear how much such gap-closing Bush can or will be able to do in his remaining time in office. There is no more time for major new initiatives; he had an opportunity to do some retooling of democracy promotion in the first year of his second term, but it came to nil. And the ritual repudiation by domestic political opponents that greets every move he makes is not going to change.

He does have one serious asset at his disposal, however. And that is the power of his own presence. When the president of the United States personally meets with and affirms those who are working for democracy and human rights against formidable odds, it matters. It makes a difference to them, as any former dissident will tell you, and their stories stand, as they did at Prague, as a living rebuke to those who would like to turn their backs on the complicated challenge of aiding reformers and checking autocrats. The denunciations that Bush's Prague remarks provoked from China and Egypt are an indication of this power of presence.

Bush devoted the concluding minutes of his Prague speech to a point-by-point rebuttal of some of the arguments critics of democracy promotion have put forward: that "stability" is a better goal, that democracy can empower radicals or lead to chaos, that the project of "ending tyranny" is unrealistic. The far more eloquent rebuttal in Prague, however, was a handshake with Rebiya Kadeer or Aleksandr Milinkevich. That may be the best thing Bush can keep doing to advance his freedom agenda in the time he has left. ♦

Crime's Up

An old issue is about to resurface.

BY ELI LEHRER

During the late 1990s, police superintendent Edward F. Davis III presided over epic crime reductions in Lowell, Massachusetts. Under his leadership, the city's crime rate fell almost 60 percent from 1995 to 1999. An economic revival followed, and the city, once among the most dangerous in New England, came to rank among its safest. New stores opened downtown, the city's biggest office tower skyrocketed in value, and jobs flooded in. Although its decrease in crime was remarkable, Lowell wasn't alone: Between 1992 and 2000, crime fell in roughly 85 percent of sizable American cities and 48 out of 50 states.

Late last year, Boston mayor Thomas Menino tapped Davis to take over that city's 2,075-officer police department. And he walked into trouble: Boston's violent crime rate has risen for three years running, and its police force has declined by more than 100 officers since 2000. From assault to robbery, violence has risen throughout the city. Murder alone is up about 50 percent from its modern lows of the late 1990s. "The government's attention at all levels is focused away from the crime problem," Davis says. "You take your eye off the ball and bad things start to happen."

Boston has begun hiring more police officers, and Davis says he feels the mayor is committed to getting crime down, but the trends in Boston are not that different from the rest of the country. For the first time in nearly a decade and a half, the news on crime is bad. Preliminary 2006 statistics released by the FBI last week show that the 2004-2006 period will represent the first time violent crime increased for two consecutive year-over-year periods since 1990-1992. Although the three largest cities—New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago—continue to see falling crime rates, they're almost alone. Last year, violent crime rose in over 70 percent of American cities with more than 100,000 residents.

To be sure, these figures are relative. After taking population growth into account, the 2004-2006 period will likely see a violent crime increase only a tad over 1 percent. Property crime has continued to fall. Although the nation still has one of the highest murder rates in the developed world, overall crime rates in the United States remain lower than those in Canada, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany.

Nonetheless, between 2005 and 2006, violent crime increased in all but one commonly reported category. (That category, rape, has long been considered the least accurately measured.) "We are seeing a new volatility in violent crime numbers that we haven't seen in some time," says Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, an academically oriented group of police leaders.

So why is it happening? Two commonly cited factors, demographics and the economy, can't explain anything. The economy is healthy, and in any case crime fell during the Great Depression and the severe recession of the early 1980s but rose during economic booms in the 1950s and 1980s. Demographic trends also reveal little. While men between 15 and 29 commit over 60 percent of all crime, the growth in their numbers—2.5 million since 2000—probably did not cause the increase in crime either. The 1995-2000 period saw a similar growth in the population of younger men and a decrease in crime.

Two other factors frequently cited in mainstream media reports—fewer police boots on the ground and shrinking police-specific federal grants—are less persuasive than they might appear at a glance.

Between 1995 and 2000, America's police agencies put over 60,000 additional warm bodies on the street; from 2000 to 2005 (the most recent data available), they added only the 10,000 officers they needed to keep up with population growth. Given how hard the post-9/11 deployments of military reserves hit police agencies—statistics compiled by the Democratic Leadership Council show that in cities like Los Angeles, Virginia Beach, and Milwaukee about 1 cop in 15 is in the reserves—the actual number of police on the streets has likely declined more than official headcounts show. The need to devote more police to homeland security duties has also reduced crime-fighting resources.

But it still remains difficult to tease out a relationship between police headcounts and crime rates. When comparing cities with similar demographics, population density, and transportation systems, those with more cops have lower crime rates. But newer, less-dense, auto-oriented cities—the places that are growing the fastest—need fewer cops to maintain order.

Although federal funding for cops has also declined a great deal since President Bush took office, police haven't faced a total cutoff. On one hand, police groups frequently observe that the budgets of the two major Department of Justice programs that help local police—the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and the Office of Justice Programs (OJP)—have seen funding declines of 75 percent and 70 percent respectively under Bush. On the other hand, a bevy of new homeland security grants more than make up the difference theoretically in total funds available to

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state and local governments for law-enforcement tasks.

For at least three reasons, however, these new grant programs have proved less useful for police. First, while the 1990s saw police grants distributed largely on a competitive basis—expert panels reviewed proposals and funded those judged best—the homeland security money flows largely as population and density-based block grants, with states taking 5 percent off the top for "administrative costs." As a result, particularly needy agencies find it hard to get more than the federal formulas specify. Second, fire departments, disaster management agencies, and others compete for the same pot of money. Third, the nature of the homeland security grants makes it easier for police agencies to use the money for personnel than for equipment.

While nobody in policing seems to like this system, the best police chiefs have figured out how to work it. William Bratton, who created the mechanisms that led to New York City's historic decline in crime, says he's managed to find adequate federal money to fund several innovative "dual use" efforts to deploy new intelligence-gathering technology and work with DNA evidence at his current job as Los Angeles's chief of police.

What, then, can explain the rise in crime? Three factors stand out: flagging federal leadership, prison neglect, and the growth of inner-city "street" culture.

More than the federal money, the best police leaders miss the sense that the federal government cares about crime and thinks about policing. The changes in the grant programs have hurt the most. Over the past two decades, New York pioneered a widely used set of police management techniques, Minneapolis pioneered a system for monitoring pawn shops, and small cities like Garden Grove, California, and Arlington, Texas, made nationally notable innovations in neighborhood renewal and training respectively. These departments all would have innovated without federal grants, but the competitive nature of federal grant programs proved vital in spreading their ideas. Since cities now get money whether or not they come up with good proposals, an important incentive to innovate no longer exists. The intellectual disengagement seems broader: While Justice Department leaders still show up at law enforcement conferences, a mass exodus of skilled civil servants (many of them former police executives) from COPS and OJP has dismantled a tremendous resource that once informally disseminated practical knowledge about policing innovations across the country.

In addition, we're paying a price for our inability to reintegrate convicts into society. Today, over 2.2 million people—including about 1 percent of all adult males—are behind bars. Each year, more than 650,000 get out. While imprisonment is well worth

the money—Vanderbilt University law professor Mark Cohen has shown that a single thug left out can easily do a million dollars' worth of damage in a year—current prisons do almost nothing to break convicts of the bad habits that got them in trouble.

Programs that force prisoners to stop taking drugs, work at real jobs, and learn to read all help keep them on the straight and narrow after release. But out of "get tough" zealotry, most states have cut funding for such efforts. For the most part, modern state prisons rely on a mix of television, psychotropic drugs (more than half of prisoners have clinically diagnosable psychological problems), and racial nationalist gangs to keep order.

Efforts to deal with criminals outside of prison, particularly through probation and parole, don't get adequate support either. Through a mix of intense monitoring (random, unannounced searches) and efforts to help people in trouble with the law acquire basic job skills, places like Boston and Orange County, California, managed to make a dent in the career criminal population during the 1990s. But these programs—which blurred the lines between police and probation/parole officers and thus proved unpopular with rank-and-file police—have seen enormous declines. "They just didn't become part of standard operating practice," says Jeremy Travis, the president of New York's law-enforcement-focused John Jay College and a scholar of prisoner reentry. "They need to become part of the organizational culture."

Some cultural factors, many of them peculiar to inner-city African-American neighborhoods, may also explain the increase in crime. During the 1990s, clergy-police partnerships like Boston's TenPoint Coalition, coupled with neighborhood organizations sick of violence, created room for what University of Pennsylvania sociologist Elijah Anderson refers to as the "decent" culture of working, churchgoing, upwardly mobile inner-city residents. But the decent culture seems to be receding.

Policies that lock up enormous numbers of black men have produced resentment in many communities when convicts return home even worse than when they went in. A gang-backed "stop snitching" grassroots "advertising" campaign replete with websites, DVDs, and T-shirts has intimidated witnesses around the country.

"What you're seeing here is intense alienation," Anderson told me. "And it's gotten worse." He contends that increased immigration—both legal and illegal—has also helped to displace young African-American males "who look like criminals" and thus "don't get hired" when they make efforts to join the legitimate economy.

Bratton has an even more dismal assessment. "In the 1980s, we were seeing a lot of violence around the drug trade, but the younger genera-

tion seems to engage in a lot more wanton violence. . . . To some extent, it's the super-predator complex," he says, referring to a theory proffered by William Bennett and John DiIulio that a rising tide of youngsters growing up in "moral poverty" would swamp the nation in violence.

Weighing these factors and responding to them will take time and research but, at the moment, nothing appears likely to reverse the trends leading to increased crime. And, of course, after years of decline, crime was bound to go up eventually. Nonetheless, social concern over rising crime played a major role in every presidential election from 1960 until 1992. Since 1996, however, dropping crime rates have taken criminal violence off the political agenda. Any politician who wants to look like a prophet would do well to start talking about crime. We aren't in a crisis yet, but, without action, crime will come back as a political issue. ♦

After Musharraf

Pakistan's uncertain future.

BY ABBAS WILLIAM SAMII

The continuing political crisis in Pakistan—triggered in March by President Pervez Musharraf's suspension of the country's top judge for alleged corruption, and heightened by the subsequent violence in Karachi that took 40 lives—creates uncertainty about the country's leadership. We should be watching closely, because Pakistan is a vital partner in our long war against terrorism and religious extremism, and the United States may have to decide whether or not to continue to back the beleaguered president.

Musharraf is facing increasing pressure to step down. According to Article 49 of the Pakistani constitution, the chairman of the Senate (currently Mohammedmian Soomro, a former banker) takes over if the president resigns or dies. An election to fill the presidency must be held within 30 days of its becoming vacant, a period that is extended if it coincides with legislative elections—and legislative elections are currently slated for this autumn. But whether the process would proceed so smoothly is unclear, not least because Musharraf himself came to power extralegally. Musharraf ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in October 1999 and took over as chief executive. He had himself declared president in June 2001, and his term was extended by five years in April 2002. He is currently trying to have it extended again, presumably by another five years.

There are several exiled political figures who would like to lead Pakistan, including former Prime Minister Sharif, who heads a branch of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who heads the more liberal Pakistan People's party. These two figures may find a return to power problematic, however: Musharraf decreed on May 18 that neither Sharif nor Bhutto will be allowed to return before this fall's parliamentary elections. In early June, furthermore, police arrested hundreds of opposition party workers in Punjab.

Islamist political parties could also vie for a more decisive political role were Musharraf suddenly to depart the scene. The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), an alliance of six religious parties, won power in two provinces (Baluchistan and Northwest Frontier Province) in elections in October 2002. Although the MMA until recently supported the government, its platform in 2002 included criticism of Musharraf's policies. Its leaders have expressed a preference for Islamic rule, and there are media warnings of "Talibanization" in the two provinces, as well as sporadic instances of extremism in the rest of the country.

In the last few months in Islamabad, a sort of morality campaign against video shops and music stores has been underway, emanating from Islamist circles. An article in the April 30 issue of *Jinnah*, an Islamabad daily owned by a prominent businessman with alleged military connections, dismissed the warnings. The author of the piece, a cleric named Abdul Rashid Ghazi, wrote that what some describe as instances of extremism are merely protests against the dilution of Islamic values and demands for legitimate rights.

Ghazi is deputy head of Islamabad's Red Mosque, which in April established an Islamic court that promptly issued a *fatwa* against tourism minister Nilofar Bakhtiar. Her offense: Pictures were published of her hugging a paragliding instructor in France. Bakhtiar resigned the next month. Then in late May, several police officers were held hostage in the mosque, supposedly to be exchanged for men described by local media as "Taliban." When the hostages were released, police abandoned plans to storm the mosque.

The party purportedly responsible for the bloodshed in Karachi on May 12, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, is believed by some commentators to have received encouragement from the Musharraf government, which they say wants to create a crisis as a pretext for postponing the elections. There is speculation that some banned parties, such as the Lashkar-

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e-Taiba and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (listed by the U.S. State Department as, respectively, a "foreign terrorist organization" and a "group of concern"), are tolerated because their patrons are politically well connected. In any case, these are just two of the many Pakistani organizations calling for restoration of the Caliphate.

There are other actors who influence the country's internal politics, either by backing candidates in elections or through the use of money. The most significant of these is the military. Musharraf is chief of staff of the army, and in late May he accused the former chief justice, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, of insulting the armed forces. There have been repeated calls for Musharraf to resign as chief of staff, but Musharraf told the BBC that he does not see forsaking the uniform. In the still unlikely event that he changed his mind, Musharraf presumably would be succeeded by his deputy, Ahsan Saleem Hyat.

The multiethnic composition of Pakistani society also affects political developments. For example, the 14 million residents of Karachi include Baluchis from the country's west, Mohajirs who immigrated from India, Pashtuns, northeastern Punjabis, and Sindhis. The Muttahida Qaumi Movement, which was behind the Karachi violence, is made up of Mohajirs. And Baluchis have been fighting the central government for many years, demanding a greater share of the province's income from natural resources (principally natural gas). Two members of the Baluchistan Liberation Army were sentenced to death at the end of May for setting off a car bomb two years ago that killed four people.

Because Musharraf is viewed in Washington as an ally in the war on terror—and because he has dampened longstanding tensions with India—his leadership style has been accepted. The Pakistani military, however, has reduced its activities against al Qaeda and Taliban fighters over the last eight months, and the actual tempo of operations and level of aggressiveness is considered inadequate. This despite U.S. payments of "coalition support funds" worth $1 billion annually, according to a May 20 report in the *New York Times*, and total U.S. payments close to $10 billion since 2002.

On the one hand, should President Musharraf step aside and permit real elections to take place—that is, allow parties to organize and hold public meetings (now banned), permit exiled political leaders to return, and end restrictions on the media including the ban on live broadcasts—his successors might be more committed to fighting terrorism and extremism. On the other hand, given the volatility of Pakistani politics, elections might not have the desired effect. Indeed, some believe that Musharraf serves as a bulwark against growing Islamist power and even ultimately an Islamist takeover.

This leaves U.S. policymakers facing difficult alternatives, with no guarantee that any option they back will actually advance U.S. interests in the war against terrorism. ♦

Unhealthy Policies

Prepare for lots of bad health care proposals in 2008. BY DAVID GRATZER

Michael Moore has just finished a documentary on the problems of American health care. But it turns out Michael Moore is the problem with the U.S. system. Well, not exactly Moore, but people like him, if you follow the logic of Senator Hillary Clinton. Americans are obese, costing the system billions of dollars, says Clinton. And that will change if she's elected president. Though, for the record, Clinton adds, Moore and other obese people should pay no more for their health insurance (that would be discrimination). Also, we need to better understand ways to make Moore thin. So Clinton pledges a new government organization called the Best Practices Institute. After Moore and people like him shed a few pounds, she estimates that we'll save about 6 percent of our annual health expenses.

That, in a nutshell, is Hillary Clinton's health care platform, unveiled two weeks ago in a carefully planned speech at George Washington University.

More than a decade ago, Hillary Clinton promised a sweeping plan to remake our nation's health care system; today, she offers a plan to shrink our waistlines. Talk of a new American system is out; talk of a new American is in. "About 30 percent of the rise in health care spending," she explained at George Washington University, "is linked to the doubling of obesity among adults over the past 20 years."

Besides thinner Americans, what does she suggest? Better "prevention." She also likes computers. Electronic medical records are the ticket, she says, saving billions a year. And she favors several mainstays of Democratic policy: reimporting prescription drugs from Canada, regulating the insurance industry to stop its profiteering, and expanding coverage by expanding government programs.

Start with her desire to reimport prescription drugs. While the topic makes for great rhetoric—Don't

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Americans deserve the inexpensive meds our neighbor gets?—the reality is this: Other countries impose price controls on medications, we don't. Reimportation would (re)import price controls, undermining the profitability and thus the innovation of the pharmaceutical industry. Politicians like Clinton like to suggest that we should buy American drugs at Canadian prices. Notice what they never mention: Canadian innovation (or the complete lack thereof).

Further regulation of the insurance industry also sounds tempting. Clinton says Americans should be guaranteed health insurance but not punished for poor health. At the state level, such laws have been disastrous, since the young and healthy stop buying coverage, leaving a pool of older, less healthy people. It's the major reason a 30-year-old man will pay $200 a month for health insurance in New York while his Connecticut cousin pays an eighth of that for the same policy offered by the same company. Even liberal Washington state shelved these laws years ago.

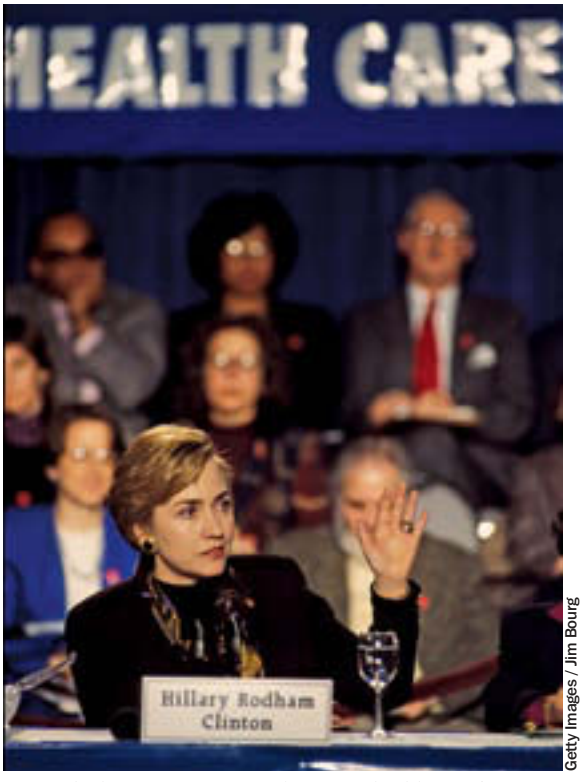
Expanding government programs seems to make sense with so many uninsured. But the reality is that most program expansion has led to private insurance being replaced by public coverage. The State Children Health Initiative Program, up for renewal this year, could be a case study: For every dollar spent on SCHIP, Jon Gruber of MIT estimates, 60 cents out of the Treasury simply replaces private insurance.

Prevention? No one could be opposed to better prevention, but it's not clear that government policy has much influence on the dinner choices of America.

Here, though, is the clue to what's happening to the health care debate in America: In her first major address on health policy, Clinton said little that could not be found in a press release from the Democratic House caucus.

And the differences with her main rival Barack Obama are almost nonexistent. In his speech earlier this month, Senator Obama made similar proposals: prevention, a new institute to study effective treatments, regulation of insurance, and more coverage through more government programs. He hasn't yet come up with a name for his institute, but he too likes computers.

At first glance, it would seem Democrats are trying to distance themselves from the issue. Where they once were bold, they now tread lightly.



Getty Images / Jim Bourg

In the beginning: a December 1993 health care forum

Here's another explanation: Democrats feel they're winning. Health care is again a major issue. Most polls show it as one of Americans' two top domestic policy concerns (the other being the overall state of the economy). Americans now say they favor universal health care. And the mood in the boardrooms is hardly different: CEOs increasingly see rising health costs as undermining competitiveness. It's one reason coalitions of union leaders and CEOs are springing up and demanding a fix (read: government takeover).

America is implementing HillaryCare on the installment plan: We are slowly succumbing to government-financed health care. Clinton proposes little because, in some ways, she's already won the arguments of the 1990s. As Washington these days debates expanding SCHIP, the only question is by how much. Proposed legislation would widen the scope of the FDA more than at any time in the past 45 years. States from California to New York are pushing to expand Medicaid.

The Republican presidential candidates need to take note and take action. It's true that Americans favor Democrats on the issue. But when it comes to general policy ideas, Americans have never been more cynical about wage and price controls, distrustful of government programs, or accepting of market reforms. In principle, they oppose everything in Hillary Clinton's plan.

The GOP contenders should consider some of the health policy ideas floated by the Bush administration: correcting the historic bias of the tax code to favor employers and individuals, and empowering people with health savings accounts. But the candidates also need to learn from the administration's failure: Six years after moving into the White House, President George W. Bush has not moved the debate, in part because he never invested much political capital.

The party of welfare reform can now become the party of Medicaid reform. The GOP should champion breaking the wage and price controls of Medicare, fostering competition within health care through deregulation, and challenging rising costs by further empowering people with more market-friendly options like health savings accounts.

Senators Clinton and Obama want to talk platitudes about obesity. The Republican candidates need to offer Americans a better prescription. ♦

How Tyranny Came to Zimbabwe

Jimmy Carter still has a lot to answer for

By James Kirchick

In April 1979, 64 percent of the black citizens of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) lined up at the polls to vote in the first democratic election in the history of that southern African nation. Two-thirds of them supported Abel Muzorewa, a bishop in the United Methodist Church. He was the first black prime minister of a country only 4 percent white. Muzorewa's victory put an end to the 14-year political odyssey of outgoing prime minister Ian Smith, the stubborn World War II veteran who had infamously announced in 1976, "I do not believe in black majority rule—not in a thousand years." Fortunately for the country's blacks, majority rule came sooner than Smith had in mind.

Less than a year after Muzorewa's victory, however, in February 1980, another election was held in Zimbabwe. This time, Robert Mugabe, the Marxist who had fought a seven-year guerrilla war against Rhodesia's white-led government, won 64 percent of the vote, after a campaign marked by widespread intimidation, outright violence, and Mugabe's threat to continue the civil war if he lost. Mugabe became prime minister and was toasted by the international community and media as a new sort of African leader. "I find that I am fascinated by his intelligence, by his dedication. The only thing that frustrates me about Robert Mugabe is that he is so damned incorruptible," Andrew Young, Jimmy Carter's ambassador to the United Nations, had gushed to the *Times* of London in 1978. The rest, as they say, is history.

That second election is widely known and cited: 1980 is the famous year Zimbabwe won its independence from Great Britain and power was transferred from an obstinate white ruler to a liberation hero. But the circumstances of the first election, and the story of the man who won it, have been lost to the past. As the Mugabe regime—responsible for the torture and murder of thousands, starvation, genocide, the world's highest inflation and lowest life expectancy—teeters on the brink of disaster after 27 years of authoritarian rule, it is instructive to go back and examine what happened in those crucial intervening months.

To understand the genesis of that oft-forgotten 1979 election, it is necessary to revisit Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965, when the British colony joined the United States as the only territory in history to separate successfully from the British Empire without its consent. Five years earlier, in a speech to the South African parliament, British prime minister Harold Macmillan had warned that the "wind of change" was blowing through Africa. "Whether we like it or not," Macmillan said, "this growth of national consciousness is a political fact." Rhodesian whites would not stand for the British policy of "No Independence Before Majority African Rule," however, and in 1964 they overwhelmingly elected Smith premier. When the Rhodesian government reached an impasse with the British over conditions for autonomy, Smith, widely supported by the country's whites, declared Rhodesia independent. And so, on November 11, 1965, the sun abruptly set on another outpost of the British Empire.

The move was immediately condemned as illegal ("an act of treason") by the British government, the Commonwealth, and the United Nations. Independent Rhodesia was not recognized by any country; even apartheid South Africa sent no ambassador to Salisbury, the capital. Britain and the U.N. imposed economic sanctions, and many Rhodesians worried that an oil embargo would cripple their landlocked country.

Over the next decade there followed a series of failed negotiations between the two sides. The British demanded majority rule, but would consider at most a phased plan that would gradually bring a black government to power. Smith, whose Rhodesian Front party was consistently reelected, would have none of it. He spoke of Rhodesia's defense of "Western, Christian civilization" and out-

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maneuvered a succession of British prime ministers, who all had to contend with the embarrassing "Rhodesia problem." Somehow, this tenacious little former colony held out against the world's once-great British Empire, busting sanctions, increasing white immigration, and keeping domestic black political opposition at bay with a succession of authoritarian laws that effectively banned political dissent.

Smith's obstinacy played a role in emboldening—and radicalizing—his enemies. The refusal of the country's whites to accept black rule created the vacuum in which leaders like Robert Mugabe, of the Chinese-backed Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU), and Joshua Nkomo, of the Soviet-supported Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU), emerged. In 1972, these two organizations started a civil war, aiming to overthrow the white regime by force. ZANU and ZAPU viewed Smith as a mortal enemy, but they were hardly more pleasant to each other, in spite of forming an official alliance, the Patriotic Front, in 1976. With rival superpower backers and different staging grounds (ZANU in Mozambique, ZAPU in Zambia), the two groups spent about as much effort fighting for control of the revolutionary movement as they did against the white regime. Both the white government and the guerrillas demonstrated remarkable ruthlessness, and the seven-year Bush war would claim some 20,000 lives in a country of 7 million.

Moderates to the rescue

By 1977, it was clear that change was coming. Aided tremendously by the shuttle diplomacy of Henry Kissinger during the Nixon and Ford administrations (Kissinger enticed the apartheid government of South Africa with promises of greater international legitimacy if it would give the boot to the friendly white regime on its northern border), Smith finally came to accept the principle of majority rule, though with major conditions. He insisted that whites maintain control of key government institutions like the army, civil service, and judiciary. He also required that whites have a disproportionate number of seats in parliament so as to prevent any radical constitutional changes. And Smith ruled out serious land reform.

Despite these vestiges of the old regime, Smith's acceptance of majority rule was momentous: It opened the way for a peaceful transition. For years, Smith had tried to negotiate a settlement with several black nationalist leaders who had renounced violence in their campaigns for nonracial democracy. Primary among them was Muzorewa, a small, American-educated pastor who avoided the internecine fighting that had characterized Zimbabwean resistance politics throughout the 1960s. He was a forthright critic of the government's racial discrimination and had supported civil disobedience and mass protest in the past. The United Nations had honored him for Outstanding Achievement in Human Rights. "If religion just means to go to church and pray, then it is a scandal. The gospel is concerned about where a man sleeps, what a man earns, how he is treated by the government," he told congregants. The other black leaders with whom Smith pledged to work were the Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole, a Methodist founder of ZANU who had been imprisoned for 10 years for opposition activities—including an alleged assassination attempt against Smith—but who had forsworn violence, and Chief Jeremiah Chirau, a tribal elder who had long been amenable to white interests. Smith and his moderate black allies hoped that if a multiracial government could be cobbled together, black African states would withdraw their support for the guerrillas and make way for an anti-Communist black government.

Muzorewa and Sithole, contrary to the patronizing and ugly attacks that would soon come from the Carter administration and the Western left, were not stooges (although Chirau, it should be noted, was funded by the Rhodesian government and depended on it for his status as a recognized tribal leader). Sithole had actually led the guerrilla fight against the white regime until the power-hungry Mugabe deposed him. Muzorewa's speeches regularly drew crowds of hundreds of thousands, and he was widely considered the most popular black political leader in the country. He solidified his antigovernment bona fides when the Smith regime branded him a Soviet lackey (as it did all its opponents) even though he was staunchly anti-Communist. These moderate black leaders were motivated, first and foremost, by a desire to end the bloodshed. By contrast, Mugabe and Nkomo made it clear that their Patriotic Front would not give up the fight and participate in elections unless they were assured of victory. In so doing, the guerrilla leaders removed any doubt that they had no interest in democracy.

African politics, Carter-style

Into this picture stepped Andrew Young. Early in his tenure at the United Nations, Young, a former mayor of Atlanta, displayed a naive, if not baleful, outlook on southern African affairs, remarking that Cuban troops brought a "certain order and stability" to wartorn Angola. Young had earlier called Smith a "monster" and likened him to Uganda's mass-murdering Idi Amin. Nevertheless, Carter made Young his point man on Africa. According to Martin Meredith, a former southern Africa correspondent for the Sunday *Times* of London,

Supporters of Bishop Abel Muzorewa, April 27, 1979, Chirlonga, Rhodesia

"Young was not, perhaps, the best choice the Americans could have made" for negotiations in Rhodesia. "He had a reputation for being recklessly outspoken on subjects about which he appeared to know little, and Rhodesia was no exception." *Time* said some State Department careerists thought of Young as an "unguided missile."

In September 1977, the Carter administration announced its "Anglo-American plan," drawn up in conjunction with the Labour government of Prime Minister James Callaghan. The plan called for British administration of Rhodesia backed up by a U.N. peacekeeping force, a constitution ensuring universal adult suffrage, and majority rule by 1978. Majority rule was to be tempered, however, by the reservation of 20 out of 100 parliamentary seats for whites. The proposal also called for the incorporation of ZANU and ZAPU guerrilla units into the new country's army and, more important, the participation of the two nationalist movements in the country's elections. Smith, along with the moderate black leaders, opposed this plan because it would have led to a military dominated by Mugabe and Nkomo's forces.

Instead, Smith came up with what he and his popularly supported black allies termed the "internal settlement." In March 1978, they formed an executive council that would serve as a transitional government until democratic elections were held the following year. This internal settlement called for the promulgation of a new constitution establishing majority rule, but maintaining 28 out of 100 seats in the new parliament for whites. This was not a perfect proposal, but Muzorewa—no doubt expressing the desires of the country's justly impatient black majority—declared that it created "the machinery for dismantling the structure and practices of colonialism and racism and of minority rule." Muzorewa, Sithole, and Chirau understood the economic necessity of keeping the white population engaged in Zimbabwe's future, and hoped that an agreement acceptable to both black and white would discredit the guerrilla groups and help put an end to the Bush war. Eighty-five percent of the country's whites supported the agreement in a January 1979 referendum: The illusion of perpetual white rule was dead. Elections were scheduled for April 1979. Both Mugabe and Nkomo—in spite of their commitment to violence and opposition to democracy—were offered seats on the Executive Council along with the other black leaders but, fearing this would hurt their chances of ever gaining absolute control over the country, they refused.

It was not altogether unreasonable to protect the interests of the white minority, as the functioning of the Zimbabwean economy depended on the skills of educated whites who, by the late 1970s, were fleeing the country at the rate of 1,000 per month. To understand what sort of fate might befall a Rhodesia conquered by Marxist rebels, one had only to look to the former Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola, which, when overthrown in 1975 after the fall of the Caetano regime a year before, witnessed the immediate mass emigration of Portuguese citizens (about a quarter of a million from each country) and the collapse of those nations' economies. In light of these disastrous post-colonial developments, the desire to keep as many skilled whites as possible within Rhodesia after the transition to a black government was not just the selfish concern of the whites themselves; the presidents of African states that depended on Rhodesia for trade understood that

white interests would have to be protected for an extended period of time. This was not an unusual consideration; Kenya, Tanzania, and Zambia, former British colonies all, reserved extra parliamentary seats for whites for a transitional period. Alas, it did not stop the three countries from turning into dictatorships.

The 1979 election

The Carter administration, the Labour government in Britain, and the international left all insisted that Mugabe and Nkomo be part of the negotiating process—on its face a concession to terrorism. Presaging the edicts of Al Qaeda in Iraq, both guerrilla leaders pledged violence against any black Zimbabwean who dared take part in the April balloting. Nkomo called for a "bloodbath." A year earlier he had ridiculed the "all party nonsense" advocated by the moderate black leaders and said, "We mean to get that country by force, and we shall get it." Mugabe, not to be outdone, issued a public death list of 50 individuals associated with the internal settlement, including the three black leaders of the executive council. ZANU described these individuals as "Zimbabwean black bourgeoisie, traitors, fellow-travelers, and puppets of the Ian Smith regime, opportunistic running-dogs and other capitalist vultures." Mugabe also expressed his belief that "the multiparty system is a luxury" and said that if Zimbabwean blacks did not like Marxism, "then we will have to reeducate them." This was the same Mugabe whom Young, in that 1978 interview with the *Times* of London, had called "a very gentle man," adding, "I can't imagine Joshua Nkomo, or Robert Mugabe, ever pulling the trigger on a gun to kill anyone. I doubt that they ever have."

"The only thing that frustrates me about Robert Mugabe is that he is so damned incorruptible," said Andrew Young, Jimmy Carter's ambassador to the United Nations.

Nevertheless, in April 1979, in a scene reminiscent of the recent Iraqi elections, nearly 3 million blacks came out to vote under a state of martial law and with armed guerrillas actively seeking to disrupt the balloting. Although 100,000 soldiers protected the polling places, 10 civilians were killed by Mugabe and Nkomo's forces. Even so, the election was a resounding success and produced a clear verdict. An overwhelming majority of voters chose Muzorewa to become the first black prime minister of Zimbabwe Rhodesia, as the country was now called.

Sadly, this democratic outcome was a chimera. Muzorewa—spurned by the West, deemed illegitimate by the African dictatorships, and forced to contend with Communist-armed insurgents—would hold power for a mere matter of months. The betrayal of Muzorewa is one of the more craven episodes in American foreign policy.

Liberal international opinion condemned the election before it ever took place. Andrew Young called the interim government "neofascist," and the *New York Times* editorialized that the election would be a "moral and diplomatic disaster." In March 1979, 185 individuals signed a statement calling it a "fraud" and opined that "free elections require . . . freedom for all political parties to campaign," presumably even parties committed to one-party rule and violence if they do not win. Then, once the election took place, the left discredited it as a charade. A cover story in the *Nation* by British journalist David Caute, entitled "The Sham Election in Rhodesia," featured a cartoon with a smiling white man in safari outfit holding a gun as sheep with black faces ("electoral livestock," in Caute's words) lined up to vote. Caute likened the new black government to Vichy France.

The appearance of a popularly elected, black-led, anti-Marxist government in Africa confronted Western liberals with a challenge: Would they accept this interim agreement, widely endorsed by the country's blacks, as a step on the path to full majority rule, or would they reject the democratic will of the Zimbabwean people in favor of guerrilla groups that supported Soviet-style dictatorship? Caute at least had the honesty to admit that "Mugabe, indeed, openly espouses a one-party state and makes no secret of the fact that any election won by ZANU would be Zimbabwe's last."

Bayard Rustin, the black civil rights leader who had been the chief organizer of the 1963 March on Washington and the national chairman of the Social Democrats USA, observed the April election as part of a Freedom House delegation. A founder of the Committee to Support South African Resistance, Rustin was outraged at the response of those on the left. "No election held in any country at any time within memory has been more widely or vociferously scorned by international opinion than the election conducted last April in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe Rhodesia," he wrote in *Commentary*. The Freedom House delegation, whose members had previously monitored elections in 26 countries, interviewed over 600 black voters and visited more than 60 polling stations throughout the country. Rustin determined the elections to be "remarkably free and fair." Even the *Nation* editorial board conceded that the elections had "undeniably mobilized a genuine outpouring of sentiment for peace among

black Rhodesians." The *New York Times*, like Mugabe and Nkomo, however, did not care about the democratic means employed, only the end result. "The real issue is not how the election was conducted, but what it was about," the *Times* intoned, snidely referring to the black political organizations participating in the elections as the "collaborating parties."

"The contrast between how the election was viewed by most Zimbabweans (the name preferred by blacks) and how it was described by critics outside the country is nothing less than extraordinary," Rustin wrote. With the United States openly deferring to the wishes of ZANU, ZAPU, and their enablers among the African tyrannies, Rustin said, "We have found ourselves, until now, tacitly aligned with groups armed by Moscow, hostile to America, antagonistic to democracy, and unpopular within Zimbabwe Rhodesia itself." Rustin appropriately referred to the Patriotic Front as a "paper political alliance" that claimed not only a base of popular support it did not have, but also, and more ominously, a natural right to everlasting power it certainly did not merit. Rustin was hardly the only liberal supportive of the interim government; it should be noted that accompanying him on the Freedom House delegation was the former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, Al Lowenstein (the founder of the 1968 Dump Johnson movement), who aggressively lobbied Congress to support the nascent, democratic Zimbabwe Rhodesia.

Corbis / Sygma / Selwyn Tait

Andrew Young and South African foreign finister Pik Botha, April 1978

After the election, the Patriotic Front continued to wage war on the new multiracial government, which proceeded to defend itself with an army and police force that were, respectively, 85 percent and 75 percent black. But the government also extended an olive branch to the guerrillas in hopes of achieving a ceasefire and promised that any and all guerrillas willing to put down their guns would have a "safe return" to civilian life without fear of punishment. Would the guerrilla groups maintain their campaign against Zimbabwe Rhodesia now that a black prime minister had been elected? The government got its answer in May. Four of Prime Minister Muzorewa's envoys to the guerrillas were seized by Mugabe's forces, displayed before 200 tribesmen, and shot as an example of what would become of those who negotiated with the new black government. Six weeks later, 39 representatives of Rev. Sithole were also murdered.

The question remained of how the United States would relate to the new democratically elected black government. In 1978, Congress had passed the Case-Javits Amendment, which compelled the president to lift the sanctions on Rhodesia (in place since a 1966 U.N. Security Council resolution) if the regime held free and fair elections and showed a good-faith effort to negotiate with guerrilla leaders. Undoubtedly, the April 1979 election and the interim government's invitation to the Patriotic Front to participate met these conditions. Appropriately, two weeks after the election, the Senate passed a nonbinding resolution 75-19 calling on the Carter administration to lift sanctions. Unable to challenge the validity of the Zimbabwe Rhodesia government on the merits as stipulated by Congress, Carter persuaded congressional allies to pass a new bill that would allow him to maintain sanctions in order to protect America's national interests in Africa, which he believed would be threatened if the United States recognized a government not favored by the thugs and tyrants on the continent.

In July, Muzorewa came to the United States determined to "remove the blindness" of the Carter administration. He said that there were "some people who are sick in the head in the international world" for maintaining sanctions against a country that had transitioned peacefully from white power to majority rule. Muzorewa was far too sanguine about his ability to persuade Jimmy Carter and Andrew Young; their blindness was incurable. In October, all four members of the Zimbabwe Rhodesia executive council traveled to the United States to plead for recognition, and Carter refused to meet with them. Disappointed by the West's rebuff, Muzorewa noted that while Zimbabweans "are prepared to forget the past and work together with our white brethren, . . . some people in Britain, America, Africa, and other parts of the world appear unwilling to allow us to do so."

Of the election that had catapulted Muzorewa to power, Martin Meredith wrote, "However much disappointment there was with a constitution which entrenched white privilege, the opportunity to vote for a black leader who

promised peace was worth having." But as Muzorewa immediately discovered, to the Carter administration, no government without Robert Mugabe in charge was worth having.

The shame of 1980

Ultimately, what guided the thinking of the British and the Americans was the fear that siding with Muzorewa and other black moderates over Mugabe would alienate black African states and thus imperil Western diplomatic objectives in sub-Saharan Africa. Because of a narrow Cold War calculus insistent on the notion that black Africa be prevented from turning pro-Soviet (at least those states that were not already in the Soviet camp) and a postcolonial guilt that awarded moral superiority to the first generation of African leaders (many of whom were no better, and in some cases worse, than their colonial oppressors), the pronouncements and interests of the African states weighed far too heavily in the Carter administration's foreign policy.

But the decision to oppose the internal settlement was faulty for two reasons. First, if the United States and Britain had supported the pact, there is no telling what further diplomatic pressure they might have brought to bear on Smith to wrangle more concessions for the country's black majority. Western support for the internal settlement would have elevated Muzorewa's standing as a legitimate black leader and thus further deprived the guerrilla groups of the ideological oxygen needed to sustain their war. And with Western backing, Muzorewa would have been better equipped to convince his African neighbors to end their support for Mugabe and Nkomo. In 1978, Chester Crocker (who would later serve as Reagan's assistant secretary of state for African affairs) wrote in the pages of the *New Republic* that, "given the weak, war-torn economies and minimal military strength of its neighboring states, a black Zimbabwe government which issued from the internal talks would have a good opportunity to establish itself." Sadly, because of misguided Western policy, that black government never had a fighting chance.

Second, the Carter administration's preening before black African countries was morally bankrupt. Few of the nations that made up the pro-Patriotic Front Organization of African Unity showed much concern for democracy; it was quite rich to see presidents Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, both of whom had instituted one-party rule soon after independence, giving instructions on democracy to America and Britain. The military dictatorship of Nigeria, threatening to cut off oil to the United States, had the audacity to term one of the rare African democracies "the outcast puppet regime of Bishop Abel Muzorewa." The one-party, pro-Soviet dictatorship of Mozambique (host to Mugabe) offered similar invective. Rustin aptly wrote that "if the presidents of Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Angola have their way, majority rule will take a form more or less similar to what exists in their own countries; which is to say that it will be a dictatorship by a small black elite over a destitute black population." In response to Carter's refusal to accept the legitimacy of the April 1979 election, the *Washington Post* editorialized that the administration was "ignoring fairness and impartiality in order to court those black African states, mostly petty dictatorships or paper democracies."

And so the guerrilla war against Zimbabwe Rhodesia went on unabated. His country laboring under continuing sanctions, Muzorewa could do little to reassure the black population that he had the ability to bring the peace he had promised. Demoralized by the rejection of Great Britain, the United States, and their African neighbors, the leaders of Zimbabwe Rhodesia agreed in late 1979 to a new set of negotiations to be held at Lancaster House in London, in which the Patriotic Front would participate. The agreement that emerged was essentially the same as the internal settlement, except that it reduced the number of white parliamentary seats from 28 to 20, established a land reform policy of "willing buyer, willing seller" funded by the British and Americans, and, most fatefully, allowed ZANU and ZAPU to participate in a new election, to be held in February 1980.

If the international community had rejected the 1979 election, it should have been utterly disgusted with the one held less than a year later. Mugabe insisted that the two wings of the Patriotic Front run separately; he knew that with 75 percent of the country's blacks belonging to his Shona tribe, he would be catapulted into power and could shunt Nkomo (a member of the Ndebele tribe) to the sidelines. Lord Christopher Soames, charged by the British with overseeing the election, found, according to Meredith, that "the scale of intimidation in eastern Rhodesia [bordering Mozambique, which had sheltered Mugabe's ZANU guerrillas] was massive. . . . The mere presence of Mugabe's guerrillas in the villages was enough to deter the local population from showing support for any party other than ZANU." ZANU apparatchiks once again compiled "death lists," making clear to black servants and local tribesmen that they would pay the consequences for not supporting Mugabe.

In the weeks leading up to the February election, the British Combined Operations Headquarters was informed of at least one political murder every day. Ultimately, Soames's election observers concluded that in five of Rhodesia's eight electoral provinces, "conditions for a free election no longer existed." Both Muzorewa and Nkomo demanded that

ZUMA Press / Newscom / Arthur Grace

Robert Mugabe and Jimmy Carter at the White House, August 1, 1980, with Andrew Young looking on

Mugabe not be allowed to participate in the elections, but, fearing that any rebuke to Mugabe would restart the guerrilla war, the British and American governments insisted on his participation. In an early indication of what sort of ruler he would become, Mugabe demanded that a Kalashnikov rifle be the ZANU election symbol. At least the interim British administration rejected this ominous request.

To top matters off, Mugabe announced in advance that he would abide by the elections only if he won. According to Martin Meredith, throughout the Lancaster House negotiations, Mugabe's "real fear, as it had been all along, was that a negotiated settlement threatened his aim of achieving revolutionary change in Rhodesia." Mugabe finally agreed to the British terms only because the African leaders could no longer put up with the consequences of the Bush war (during the conference, Smith's army bombed crucial railways in Zambia and Mozambique) and because Nkomo went along with the settlement, isolating ZANU. Everything in Mugabe's history indicates that if he had lost the 1980 election, he would have reverted to war. For Rhodesia's beleaguered blacks—who had suffered more than anyone else not only from the oppressive counterinsurgency operations of the white minority government but also from the unforgiving tactics of the guerrillas—the threat of a worsening, protracted civil war all but assured victory for Mugabe.

The election result was announced on March 4, 1980. Mugabe took 64 percent of the vote, with over 90 percent of eligible blacks voting. No doubt the higher participation in 1980 had to do with the fact that, in contrast with 1979, guerrillas did not violently suppress turnout. Nevertheless, British election commissioner Sir John Boynton reported that death threats, the murder of candidates and their supporters, property destruction, violent intimidation, and, most portentously, the threat of continued war all occurred with disturbing frequency in the two-month campaign. Mugabe's forces were responsible for 70 percent of ceasefire violations.

And lest anyone doubt that Mugabe was the favorite of the front-line states that had aided him in his war against Muzorewa, he left the country during the balloting for meetings with the leaders of Mozambique and Tanzania, a presumptuous act for a would-be president. In the midst of the election, Mugabe announced he would "seek the aid of our friends in Africa if needs be." Freedom House found that "the open or implicit threat by the formerly externally based parties [ZANU and ZAPU] that they would renew the insurgency should they not win represented an important indirect form of intimidation" and that "threats by black and white African states of nonrecognition or intervention in the event of particular electoral outcomes were an external form of intimidation."

The Carter administration had declared that though the 1979 election of Muzorewa had been conducted in a "reasonably fair way," it did not merit the United States' support because Mugabe was not involved. The 1980 election, on the other hand, which Mugabe won largely by threatening violence, the Carter administration declared to be "free and fair," leading to the lifting of sanctions. Mugabe, it seems, would have liked to return the favor. In 1980, mere months before Carter would resoundingly lose his reelection bid to Ronald Reagan, Zimbabwe's new prime minister told African-American leaders at a White House ceremony that if Carter "were running in our territory, he would be assured of victory."

The defeat of Muzorewa and the triumph of Mugabe cast the West's Rhodesia policy in stark relief: If Muzorewa had chosen Marxist revolution over diplomacy and had endeared himself to African dictators, he would have won

Western support. Critics of Muzorewa alleged that his inability to stop the civil war during his brief tenure as prime minister demonstrated ineffectual leadership. In fact, it reflected the determination of Mugabe and Nkomo to keep fighting until they secured power for themselves. The United States and Great Britain gave Mugabe and Nkomo legitimacy by indulging the demands of the African dictators.

Muzorewa warned what would happen if Mugabe won: "Any talk of democracy, freedom, and independence will be turned into an impossible dream. . . . This country will find itself wallowing in the dust of poverty, misery, and starvation." To Mugabe's Western enablers, particularly Andrew Young, this must have seemed like the jealous sniping of a man who had been turned out of office. Yet from the vantage point of 2007, Muzorewa's prescience is plain for all to see.

Tyranny sets in

The Carter administration's victory in Rhodesia was a hollow one. It is true that not every fearsome forecast was immediately borne out: Mugabe did not turn out to be the Soviet or Chinese agent many thought him, and the conflagration raging in Angola did not spread into Zimbabwe. But fatal damage was done. As early as August 1981, just over a year after taking power, Mugabe called for a referendum on whether Zimbabwe should be a one-party state. In 1982 he proclaimed, "ZANU-PF will rule forever," just as he had promised throughout the Bush war. And writing in the *New Republic* in early 1983, Xan Smiley, an editorial writer for the London *Times*, reported that Mugabe's "rhetoric of egalitarianism and the demands of traditional authoritarianism mean that individuals are going to get crushed." Not just individuals, but whole groups of people would be crushed. From 1983 until 1987, Mugabe unleashed his North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade troops against supposed Ndebele plotters in the Matabeleland massacres, slaughtering an estimated 25,000 people.

The country's black leaders who dared to oppose Mugabe received the treatment inevitably meted out by a paranoid tyrant. In 1983 Mugabe jailed Muzorewa for 10 months, accusing him of plotting with South Africa and Israel to overthrow the regime. He now lives quietly in Zimbabwe, ignored by the world that spurned him nearly 30 years ago. The same year Nkomo, Mugabe's erstwhile ally, fled the country fearing assassination. Mugabe persuaded his old comrade to return and in 1987 forced him to agree to a virtual one-party state, in which ZANU absorbed ZAPU and took 147 out of 150 seats in parliament. Nkomo spent the next 12 years of his life in obscurity. Also in 1987, rightly fearing for his safety, Sithole sought political asylum in the United States. He later returned to Zimbabwe and was elected to parliament. But in 1997, Sithole was convicted of attempting to assassinate Mugabe and was barred from returning to office. Other political opponents either fell into line or have been imprisoned or killed.

For some years, Mugabe kept his promise to leave the whites alone. But in 2000 he instigated the forcible seizure of private farmland, which has brought Zimbabwe economic collapse, famine, and a massive refugee crisis. One-third of the country's population is estimated to have fled in the past seven years. The dictator, now 83, having brought his country to its knees, is hanging on only by the support of his armed forces and his fellow African leaders, who share a residual admiration for this hero of African "liberation."

Carter is unrepentant about his administration's support for Mugabe. At a Carter Center event in Boston on June 8, he said that he, Young, and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance had "spent more time on Rhodesia than on the Middle East." Carter admitted that "we supported two revolutionaries in Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo." He adopts the "good leader gone bad" hindsight of Mugabe's early backers, stating that "at first [Mugabe] was a very enlightened president." While conceding that Mugabe is now "oppressive," Carter stressed that this murderer of tens of thousands "needs to be treated with respect and assured that if he does deal with those issues [democratization and human rights], he won't be punished or prosecuted for his crimes." Though it has supervised elections in over 60 countries, the 25-year-old Carter Center has no projects in Zimbabwe, nor has Carter (who demonstrates no compunction about lecturing others) attempted to atone for the ruin that his policies as president wreaked.

History will not look kindly on those in the West who insisted on bringing the avowed Marxist Mugabe into the government. In particular, the Jimmy Carter foreign policy—feckless in the Iranian hostage crisis, irresolute in the face of mounting Soviet ambitions, and noted in the post-White House years for dalliances with dictators the world over—bears some responsibility for the fate of a small African country with scant connection to American national interests. In response to Carter's comment last month that the Bush administration's foreign policy was the "worst in history," critics immediately cited those well-publicized failures. But the betrayal of Bishop Muzorewa and of all Zimbabweans, black and white, who warned what sort of leader Robert Mugabe would be deserves just as prominent a place among the outrages of the Carter years. ♦

Artist as Hero

Ralph Ellison, indivisible man

BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

Bernard Gotfryd / Hulton Archive / Getty Images

Ralph Ellison, 1967

The novelist Ralph Ellison grew up, poor and black and (past the age of three) fatherless, in Oklahoma City under the reign of Jim Crow. After working at various servile jobs, he was able to scrimp up enough money to go off—riding the rails, hobo-fashion, to get there—to Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. His first ambition was to become a composer of classical music; he also played trumpet. At Tuskegee he was stymied by lack of funds and a homosexual dean of students who made life difficult for him. He did encounter a few gifted teachers at Tuskegee and a librarian who befriended him and introduced him to the great modernist writers: T.S. Eliot, André Malraux, James Joyce, and William Faulkner were the main figures in his literary pantheon.

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Departing Tuskegee without a degree, Ellison moved to New York in the middle of the Depression, where he fell in with men and women connected to the Communist party. He was befriended by Langston Hughes and Richard Wright, both of whom turned his ambitions away from music, and a passing interest in sculpture, and onto literature. He wrote journalism and criticism for *The New Masses* and other party publications. But literature for Ellison meant the novel. After publishing a number of short stories, he worked for more than seven years on *Invisible Man*, which he published in 1952, at the age of 39. *Invisible Man* was the one novel he would complete in his life, a book that was immediately recognized as the powerful and subtle and richly complex work that it is. The novel lent him renown of a kind that he was able to live off for the remainder of his life (he died in 1994, at the age of 81).

Ralph Ellison
A Biography
by Arnold Rampersad
Knopf, 672 pp., $35

The fame of *Invisible Man* brought Ralph Ellison lucrative university jobs (with little teaching required), gave him an allure as a candidate for membership on boards of various nonprofit organizations from the early National Council on the Arts to the founding of public television to the Williamsburg

Foundation. In good part, his attractiveness to the people who made such appointments was that, during the most feverish days of the civil rights movement, he refused to conduct himself as angry or in any way as a victim. Instead, Ellison relentlessly insisted on the complexity of Negro (a word he took and used as an honorific) experience in a pluralist America he hoped would continue along an integrationist path.

Although Ralph Ellison had all the accoutrements of literary and intellectual success—those boards, lots of honorary degrees and other awards, high lecture fees and other emoluments that fall into the laps of the famous—his was far from a happy life. Because of his stand on racial matters, he was often under attack by militant younger blacks, who accused him of being a sellout, calling him an Uncle Tom; in their view he was, as sixties radicals liked to say, part of the problem.

Then there was the blasted question of the second novel, the novel to follow *Invisible Man* that, like Godot, was long awaited but never arrived. (Some of the parts were assembled after his death by his literary executor and editor, a man named John F. Callahan, to form a disappointing book called *Juneteenth*.) *Invisible Man* was Ralph Ellison's first extended work of fiction; *Invisible Novel* might cruelly be said to be his second. His inability to complete this book had to have been a crushing weight on Ellison, as an artist and as a man.

So what looked from the distance to be a charmed life was, viewed from closer up, a complicated, in some ways even a quite sad, life. But possibly the saddest thing to have happened to Ralph Ellison came after he died, when the assignment of writing his biography was given to Arnold Rampersad. The author of two previous biographies—one of Jackie Robinson, another of Langston Hughes—Rampersad is an academic (a teacher at Princeton, now at Stanford), a writer one thinks of as reverential and hence quite uncritical toward his subjects. But in *Ralph Ellison*, far from being reverential or uncritical, he is unrelenting in the persistence of his pinpoint attacks on his subject's character and politics and highly critical of much of his writing, only rarely giving his subject the least hint of the benefit of any possible doubt.

The tip-off for the kind of book Rampersad has written comes in its blurbs, four of five of which are provided by writers who comprise the main body of the African American intellectual establishment in America: the literary critic and historian Henry Louis Gates Jr., the biographer (of W.E.B. Du Bois) David Levering Lewis, the philosopher Cornel West, and the novelist Toni Morrison. (Where, one wonders, was Maya?) In his play *Purlie Victorious*, Ossie Davis has one of his characters say to another, "You are a disgrace to the Negro profession." This, really, is the charge, the organizing principle behind Arnold Rampersad's attack on Ralph Ellison: He was a disgrace to the Negro (now African-American) profession. Ellison would, of course, have understood, for there were few things he disliked more than the notion of black establishments and an African-American profession.

Here, without the tedium of his repeated charges, is Rampersad's bill of complaint against Ralph Ellison: He was an ungrateful son, a bad brother, a cheating and otherwise often cruel husband, an unreliable friend. He was a spendthrift (on himself), a cheapskate (when it came to other people), a snob, an elitist, an ingrate, ill-tempered; also condescending, disloyal, a sloppy, sometimes mean, drunk. Did I neglect to mention that he was a misogynist, pretentious, and without elementary sympathy for the young? And, oh yes, he was a boring teacher—though, for some unexplained reason, he failed to sleep with his students. Other than that he was not at all a bad guy.

Rampersad's is a full-scale biography, running to 672 pages including scholarly apparatus, and has the dead, heavy feel of *the* definitive work on Ralph Ellison. The book is filled with useful information—in the Oklahoma City of Ralph Ellison's youth, blacks could buy clothes in shops owned by whites but were not allowed to try them on (nor, one assumes, return them if they were ill-fitting)—and is richly detailed about its subject's personal life. Ellison's correspondence, diaries, income tax forms, financial life generally have all been carefully scrutinized by his biographer. Just about everyone still alive who knew Ellison has been interviewed for this book. (I was not, though my single, utterly delightful meeting with Ralph Ellison, a four-and-a-half hour lunch he stood me to at the Century Association in New York, is duly recorded on page 516.) Rampersad has put together what at times feels like a day-to-day chronicle of the life of a writer who, increasingly as the years passed, did less and less writing.

The theme of *Ralph Ellison* is set out on the book's second page:

> Clinging fearlessly and stubbornly to the ideal of harmonious racial integration in America, [Ellison] found it hard to negotiate the treacherous currents of American life in the volatile 1960s and 1970s. Although he always saw himself as above all an artist, and published a dazzling book of cultural commentary in 1964 [*Shadow and Act*, a collection of essays], his later successes were relatively modest. For some of his critics, his life was finally a cautionary tale to be told against the dangers of elitism and alienation, especially alienation from other blacks.

Everything in this indictment is true. Ralph Ellison did consider himself, above all, an artist; he did believe in the ideal of integration of the races in America, with blacks never losing the valuable cultural experience that was theirs alone; he was an elitist, insofar as he believed in the importance of pursuing the best in Western and American Negro folk culture above all others; and finally, in the realm of art, he saw no reason to favor, or even lend particular sympathy, to black writers simply because they happened to be black. Such are the counts on which Rampersad puts Ralph Ellison on trial. The question is, Do any of them constitute real crimes, or do they bring honor to the man who has been put into the dock by his prosecutorial biographer?

Ellison, in fact, thought himself

primarily an artist and, as such, felt that his art came before his politics. In this, he joins a long tradition of writers. Ivan Turgenev, who felt as Ellison did, wrote: "I pay attention to politics only in so far as a writer is called upon to depict contemporary life must." Of course, Ellison knew that the Jim Crow laws in the South were intolerable, for he grew up under them; he knew, too, that, though things in the North were better, race prejudice remained very much a going concern there, too. He could be quite properly ticked, sometimes to the point of rage, when he felt himself the victim of racial discrimination.

At the same time, Ellison felt it important to keep a careful distance from full engagement with political action, and never sought to be a spokesman for his people. He loathed the notion of blacks as pure victims, which gained currency during the 1960s; he abominated the heightened racial rhetoric of Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, and other of the young radical civil rights figures, rhetoric that is, alas, still occasionally put into play today.

Although Rampersad does not do so in any large-scale way, the figure whose career Ralph Ellison's might be most profitably compared to is that of James Baldwin. As a young man, Baldwin wrote against the protest novel; as an essayist, he commanded a prose style that seemed neither black nor white, but instead was authoritative, elegant, above race, in the best sense. (Baldwin's fiction, much overrated, was described, accurately, by Truman Capote as "ballsachingly boring," though this hasn't stopped it from being enshrined in the Library of America.) But Baldwin soon found another, more popular, way. As described by Rampersad, "he was attracting celebrities and many younger blacks alike with a combination of militancy and supplicating eloquence, his sensual hugging of America and yet his rejection of it." Rampersad quotes, without comment, a standard Baldwin utterance: "I don't want to be fitted into this society. There's no difference between being fitted into this society and *dying*." Those may be fighting words, but they are also foolish and not in the least helpful ones.

Ellison did not think much of James Baldwin, who he thought was trying "to inflate his personal problem to the dimension of a national problem." (Saul Bellow, always mindful of the possibility of malice extended to a fellow scribbler, once told me that Baldwin's problem was simple: "He wanted to be Martin Luther Queen.") The rhetoric of public rage and the tactics of easy demagoguery never impressed Ellison, who held a low view of those who specialized in it, which included Malcolm X, LeRoi Jones (later, in his anti-Semitic phase, known as Amiri Baraka), and the youthful advocates of the Black Power movement. Ellison saw the latter as "a disruptive force that depended on insult, rage, and antagonism." He never says so directly, but it is clear that Rampersad would have preferred it had Ellison drop his critical scruples and got on the bus by showing a simpler, more direct solidarity with fellow blacks, no matter what their foibles.

Ralph Ellison was an artist and an independent intellectual and he didn't want anyone to tell him what stands to take or how he ought to interpret his own experience as a Negro, an American, or a writer. When the critic Irving Howe wrote an essay in the early 1960s suggesting that Ellison and (the not-yet-militant Baldwin) ought to write in the tradition of Negro protest, Ellison wrote a scorchingly brilliant reply that removed what remained of the scant hair on Howe's head: "The greatest difficulty for a Negro writer," Ellison wrote, "was the problem of revealing what he really felt, rather than serving up what Negroes were supposed to feel, and were encouraged to feel."

For these same reasons, Ellison was an early opponent of sociology, with all its studies of how American blacks lived and felt and believed. This enmity toward the social sciences plays throughout his career; he rejected the Moynihan Report, arguing that Daniel Patrick Moynihan "looked at a fatherless family, and interpreted it not in the context of Negro cultural patterns, but in a white cultural pattern." His case against social science generally was that it treated people "as abstractions and ignored the complexity of actual experience." The artist is always interested in the exception that proves no rule.

Ellison insisted on the complexity of his own experience as a Negro, feeling that no one from outside that experience was in a position to interpret it. So strongly did he believe this that he even wrote a strongly negative review of Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*, even though the book was a strong argument against the injustice of American social arrangements to African Americans.

Arnold Rampersad does not entirely ignore such problems and issues in Ellison's life and in America itself. But the greater impression his biography leaves is of Ellison as a man of almost uniformly wrong, and therefore ultimately pernicious, opinions. Most of these opinions, as we shall see, violate the canons of political correctness.

Here are the opinions, or absence of acceptable opinions, for which Rampersad holds Ellison at fault:

He gave insufficient credit to the influence of the writers of the Harlem Renaissance on his own career. He had a low view of all-black colleges. He held to a line of "liberal cosmopolitanism," which meant that he remained committed to the grandeur of high modernism in art and cultivated friendly contact with whites. In a letter about Vermont to his friend Ida Guggenheimer he failed to mention "the tragic fate of the Algonquin and Iroquois nations." He tended to be optimistic in matters of race. Sometimes he spoke as if there were things more important than race: "Here's to integration," he wrote in later years to one of his teachers at Tuskegee, "the only integration that matters: integration of the personality." He even claimed that "my problems are not primarily racial problems, that they are the problems of a writer." The developing countries, those in Africa prominent among them, meant little to him, or at least he failed publicly to voice his concern about them; he never even had an African in his and

his wife's home. He "refused to blame [the poverty and squalor of Pakistan and India] on European colonialism." He was not for affirmative action, even thought it in fact likely to be deleterious to young blacks.

The list goes on: He didn't care for the dark, often drug-driven Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Charlie Parker strain in jazz, preferring the music of Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong. He didn't think Norman Mailer much of a writer, and thought that he and the Beats were "all trying to reduce the world to sex." He never opposed the Vietnam war, having felt indebted to Lyndon Johnson for his civil rights legislation and for his personal courtesy to him, Ellison. His response to the death of Martin Luther King "would remain muted." He preferred to be called "Negro." He argued for the need for a solid black middle class. Once a member of the Century Association in New York, he put forth no fellow blacks and opposed the membership of women when it was up for a vote: "No women, and especially young black women," were among his inner circle of friends. The only black artist that he praised without qualification was the painter Romare Bearden. And to complete the checklist, though he was generally liberal, "exuberant gay culture offended him."

With such ghastly opinions as these, is there anything that could redeem Ellison? Redemption isn't Rampersad's game; instead he sets out to nail his subject more firmly to the cross by filling us in on all his personal peccaddilos. A man on the wrong side of so many right opinions cannot, surely, be very decent generally; how else would he come to hold such wretched opinions if, in the first place, he did not suffer grave flaws in character?

Rampersad highlights those flaws. He portrays Ralph Ellison as a thoughtless son. He is always the operator; apropos of a woman with whom Ellison had an affair, Rampersad notes that "he was already a cautious man [whose] instinct was to avoid risk." Speculating on the bust-up of Ellison's first marriage, his biographer writes: "Perhaps his coldness and cruelty—the result of his own lifetime of suffering—had worn her down." He was early on to "the shrewd cultivation of whites on which Ralph, eager to succeed and optimistic about human nature, would build much of his success."

From here it is a short hop to the fact that, in his winning the National Book Award for *Invisible Man*, Ellison "was lucky in having three young, progressive Jewish writers on the [judging] panel." Rampersad is excellent at finding quotations from others to use against Ellison. Gore Vidal and Fred Dupee (a once-famous teacher in the English Department at Columbia) thought Ralph was "pompous and overbearing." He used his friendship with John Cheever to get himself elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He wanted to live the WASP life, at least as he imagined it; here Rampersad quotes William Styron saying that "Ralph had a deep-seated need to be a member of the establishment." He and his wife had close friendships with Robert Penn Warren and Richard Wilbur and their wives—not, apparently, a good thing. He really didn't know many blacks, Rampersad contends, though he allows that Ellison's two closest friends, Albert Murray and Nathan Scott, were black.

At the most trivial level, Rampersad describes Ellison wearing a fedora in a photograph on the cover of the *Atlantic* "covering his baldness." At the most serious, and vicious, he writes that "each terrible event [referring to the riots and assassinations of 1968] meant, perversely, more prestige and money for Ralph" in honors and speaking fees. This biography is, in short, a lynching, and the coarse rope used to hang the victim is political correctness.

This endless picking-away at Ralph Ellison's ostensible flaws, political and characterological, is finally put to the service of a literary criticism meant to supply the reason for Ellison's inability to complete a second novel: "His inability to create an art that held a clean mirror up to 'Negro' life as blacks actually led it," Rampersad writes, "especially at or near his own social level, was disabling him as a writer. As a novelist, he had lost his way. And he had done so in proportion to his distancing himself from his fellow blacks."

This is unpersuasive, for various reasons. The first is that Ralph Ellison knew African-American culture with a depth of understanding available to few others, and he demonstrated this in a number of brilliant pieces in his two essay collections (*Shadow and Act* and *Going to the Territory*). He did not cut himself off from blacks, but merely kept his distance from those whose calling card was the race card. He was cold to Toni Morrison, Rampersad reports; he chose not to eulogize James Baldwin at his funeral. But what if he simply hadn't much regard for either Morrison or Baldwin, as a person or as a writer? One has only to read Ellison on jazz and gospel music to realize how little cut off he was from African-American culture.

If one has to arrive at a reason for Ellison's failure to complete a second novel, my own best guess is that the enormous critical success of *Invisible Man* was too tough an act to follow. *Invisible Man* was a novel that not only won all the prizes of its day, but in 1965, in a poll of critics and writers, was voted the most distinguished American novel written since World War II. It is probably still entitled to that accolade. Although the book reads less powerfully today, having perhaps too heavy an anchor in the time of its creation, when the American Communist party was still a force and Jim Crow was a bird found aloft everywhere in American life, *Invisible Man* remains a dazzling achievement.

"Enchanted cigarettes" is what Balzac called books writers dream about but never get around to writing. Poor Ellison puffed away on his always-almost-nearly-completed second novel for more than 40 years. Bits and pieces of it appeared in little magazines; a large portion of it was said to have burned in a fire in his house in the Berkshires, though Ellison tended to exaggerate the extent of his loss; the

number of its pages was reported (by Ellison) to be in the thousands. But the fact is, it was not close to finished—he could not give shape to all his scribblings on the book—and perhaps not really finishable.

Perhaps it is not a good idea to write a great book the first time out. Kingsley Amis made this mistake in writing *Lucky Jim*, which he never topped, but Amis went on to write a long line of less good novels. But then, American literary ambition operates differently than English: Can You Top This? is the name of the game as it is played here. Thomas Heggen, who wrote *Mr. Roberts*, and Ross Lockridge Jr., who wrote *Raintree County*, two enormous commercial successes, each killed himself because he couldn't finish a second work. "The greater the ambition," remarked Stanley Crouch apropos of Ellison's inability to complete a second novel, "the greater the failure." The torture of this great failure for Ellison must have been always present, souring all his private achievements.

Reading Rampersad's highly tendentious biography has had, at least on this reader, the reverse effect its author intended: It has convinced me that Ralph Ellison was an even greater man than I had thought. His greatness consisted of his never suggesting, when so many people would have been pleased to hear him do so, that America was a racist country and every black person in it born a victim; of his relentlessly insisting that we all make our own way, each with the unpredictable combination of gifts and talents and temperament that culture and race and nationality bestow; of his love for the black culture in which he was born and his deep understanding of its true richness; of his unflagging assertion that separatism, racial or any other kind, is always a mistake; of his keeping cool during a time of frenzy and easy rage while being insulted by many of the people who should have admired him most of all.

Arnold Rampersad understands none of this, which is why, my guess is, his *Ralph Ellison* figures to be a strong candidate to win next year's Pulitzer Prize for biography. ♦

BCA

Justices on Trial

Can Senate confirmation ever be less tortuous?

BY EDWARD WHELAN

Benjamin Wittes, a former editorial writer for the *Washington Post*, has written an insightful and evenhanded exploration of the Senate's role in judicial confirmations. Taking the long view of the confirmation process for both Supreme Court and lower-court nominations, Wittes finds that the process "has changed fundamentally and for the worse" over the last couple of decades. The confirmation process takes ever longer, especially for lower-court nominees, whose ultimate confirmation rates are also falling. Further, the process for Supreme Court nominees "has grown uglier, meaner, and rougher."

Confirmation Wars
Preserving Independent Courts in Angry Times
by Benjamin Wittes
Rowman & Littlefield, 168 pp., $22.95

Why these changes? Wittes offers a two-step answer. First, since its 1954 ruling in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, the modern Supreme Court has "leveraged [the power of judicial review] into political influence across a far greater range of policy areas." As epitomized by *Roe* v. *Wade*, the courts "now intervene in a breathtaking array of democratic decisions and reserve the power to regulate questions of social policy at the core of Americans' sense of autonomy and identity." Second, the changes in the confirmation process are an "institutional reaction by the Senate" to this growth of judicial power. The "new institutional position of the Senate," Wittes laments, "is that any senator is entitled to ask any nominee any question and hold his answer or his refusal to answer against him if the senator so chooses."

From his study of the history of confirmation hearings, Wittes discerns that the grilling of Supreme Court nominees "is, and has always been, either to wring concessions from would-be justices or to tar them as unworthy"—not to inquire genuinely about judicial philosophy. In practical reality, if not in abstract principle, judicial nominees are therefore correct, Wittes maintains, to refuse to answer questions on issues that might come before them. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg succinctly stated the standard: "No hints, no forecast, no previews." Senators' grilling, Wittes warns, threatens the independence of the courts by placing nominees in the "absurd dilemma" (especially acute when the Senate majority is of the opposite party from the president) of answering questions in a manner that compromises their conduct of the judicial role, or of jeopardizing their confirmation.

What can be done to improve the process? Wittes sees "no comprehensive solution" but instead proposes two steps "to better manage the conflict."

First, he recommends "eliminating—or at least limiting—live testimony of nominees at their hearings." We have learned "virtually nothing" about nominees from their live testimony, and eliminating that testimony would "remove the central event to which [the confirmation battle] builds." Wittes doubts that the Senate will ever abolish live testimony and, instead, urges that the president, publicly backed by the chief justice, "simply refuse to let his nominees appear before the committee."

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AFP / Getty Images / Jim Watson

Sen. Arlen Specter, Justice-designate Samuel Alito, Sen. Patrick Leahy, January 9, 2006

Second, Wittes suggests that the majority party in the Senate could demand prenomination consultation "as a condition of giving its consent for any nominee" and "could even refuse to confirm a nominee not selected from a preapproved list of its devising."

Wittes offers many sound judgments. Notably, he embraces the core of the conservative explanation of the confirmation wars: He agrees that "many liberals are concerned principally with achieving or protecting specific results from the courts and will tolerate just about any judicial methodology to get them"; that liberal academics "devote huge amounts of time to defending legally indefensible propositions"; and that the confirmation process is, for many on the left, "nothing more than an opportunity to exact loyalty oaths to *Roe* v. *Wade* and other sacred cows."

Likewise, he finds that the liberal counternarrative—that Republican presidents are packing the courts to roll back civil rights and undo the New Deal—is badly off the mark: "Mostly, [Republicans] contemplate a return in a prospective fashion to a more traditional judicial methodology, one better focused on explicit text and clear history." But the strengths of Wittes's book—including a fine summary of ideological opposition to various Supreme Court nominees from Louis Brandeis forward—are undermined by three deep flaws.

First is Wittes's central thesis, his "institutional" explanation of senators' behavior. Taken seriously, an "institutional" explanation would suggest that senators, who are so notoriously jealous of their own fiefdoms, have somehow responded to the massive growth of judicial power by approaching judicial nominations with the interests of the Senate as an institution in mind. Were this so, one would expect a bipartisan Senate consensus in favor of judicial deference to federal legislation, no matter what policy interests were at stake, and an insistence that senators, far from being obligated to accept Supreme Court decision-making as binding precedent, have an independent power and duty to construe the Constitution and to challenge the Supreme Court's power grabs.

What Wittes apparently means by his "institutional" explanation is something very different, and not really institutional at all. Senators of various policy stripes, hoping to get from the courts what they want and to block what they don't, regard judicial confirmations as one of the institutional *means* available to them to advance their interests. Unfortunately, Wittes's "institutional" misnomer deters him from probing more deeply the incentives that shape senators' conduct—and from exploring whether those incentives apply differently to different groups of senators.

Second, beyond displaying the virtue of evenhandedness, Wittes appears to suffer from a rare dogmatism of moral equivalence. Most starkly, at the end of a long litany of liberal misdeeds towards conservative nominees, Wittes suddenly declares that the "*moral equivalence* [between liberal and conservative opposition to judicial nominations] *is exact*." This dogmatism, which manifests itself repeatedly, prevents Wittes from examining seriously the two pieces of evidence that directly challenge his picture of a bipartisan degradation in the process: the Senate's confirmations of the only two Democratic nominees to the Supreme Court since Richard Nixon

became president in 1969, Ruth Bader Ginsburg (confirmed by a 96-3 vote in 1993) and Stephen Breyer (87-9 in 1994).

Why did leading Republicans rush to embrace Ginsburg and Breyer, even before reviewing their records? Why were those confirmation hearings such tame and courteous affairs with, to take but one of endless examples, Senator Strom Thurmond assuring Ginsburg early on that "you don't have to answer to any [questions] if you feel that you shouldn't"? Why was the Republican vote overwhelmingly in favor of these two nominees?

Wittes's only answer, made in passing, is that the "opposition party" will not fight if it "deems the nominee as close to its views as it can hope for from the administration—as happened with Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer." But this answer is deeply unsatisfactory. How, for starters, was John Roberts further from what Democrats could reasonably hope for than Stephen Breyer was from what Republicans could hope for? How was the superbly qualified Samuel Alito more conservative than the former ACLU activist and feminist Ginsburg was liberal? Yet Roberts was viciously attacked by Senate Democrats and the left as hostile to civil rights, as condoning violence outside abortion clinics, and as a "Neanderthal."

Further, as Wittes nicely points out, the 22 votes against him exceeded the combined total for all the then-sitting justices other than Justice Clarence Thomas and would have been much higher if Senator Patrick Leahy and other Democrats had not made the tactical decision to preserve their ammunition for the next nominee. And Alito faced a vitriolic hearing, an unprecedented partisan filibuster effort, and 42 votes against his confirmation.

The difference, others contend, is that President Clinton consulted with leading Republicans like Senator Orrin Hatch and received their clearance on Ginsburg and Breyer. The factual predicate is accurate, but the explanation is largely question-begging. Hatch (for whom I then worked) openly invoked the principle that Clinton was entitled to considerable deference on his Supreme Court nominees, and he never drew a jurisprudential line in the sand. He objected to candidates like Bruce Babbitt and Mario Cuomo on the ground that their prominent political profiles, and the enemies that they had earned over the years, would make it difficult for him and other Republicans to support them. He was, in short, eager to help Clinton avoid a fight.

By contrast, can anyone imagine any serious proponent of judicial restraint who would receive preclearance from Patrick Leahy, Edward Kennedy, and Charles Schumer?

I do not mean to suggest that the typical Republican senator acts from more noble motives on judicial nominations than the typical Democrat. But I do believe that there is a significant difference in their conduct—and in the incentives that shape their conduct. In particular, many Republicans have conditioned themselves to believe that, on a high-profile matter like a Supreme Court nomination, the course that is in their self-interest—the easiest path to reelection—is to keep the nomination from becoming controversial and to support the nominee even, or rather especially, when the nomination is by a Democratic president. Republicans will use obscure procedures to obstruct lower-court nominees, but they shy from public battles. Democrats with national ambitions are driven, even at their political peril (recall Tom Daschle), to fight Republican judicial nominees tooth and nail.

Unfortunately, Wittes's dogma of moral equivalence blinds him from recognizing, much less exploring, the reasons for, this disparity.

The third basic defect in Wittes's book is that, despite his stated concern about separation of powers, he evinces little interest in examining which judicial philosophy best comports with the judicial role under our constitutional system. Maintaining his posture of neutrality, he treats as interchangeable all exercises of judicial power that strike down legislation. But the confirmation wars are rooted in competing understandings of the judicial role and in sharply conflicting views of which exercises of judicial power are legitimate. There is no process solution to these battles.

Indeed, Wittes's two specific recommendations would likely make the process worse. It may well be, as Wittes asserts, that we learn "virtually nothing" about the nominees from their live testimony. But we did learn quite a bit, during Roberts's and Alito's testimony, about the quality and integrity of their Senate attackers. Wittes's second proposal is even worse. Having devoted most of his book to documenting the poor behavior of senators, Wittes then recommends enhancing their power during the prenomination phase. But the problem with senatorial behavior is not, as Wittes would have it, that it is misfocused on the confirmation phase. It is, rather, that too few senators have both a sound understanding of what good judging is and an interest in promoting it.

Wittes's proposal, if it were adopted, might well lead to quieter confirmation processes, but it would also make it much more difficult for a president to make quality appointments. To put the point concretely: If Democrats had been in the majority during 2005, it is inconceivable that they would have put either John Roberts or Samuel Alito on their "preapproved list." Wittes's proposal, in short, would invite even more senatorial irresponsibility and gamesmanship.

In the end, the confirmation wars that Wittes decries are only a symptom of a deeper illness—not, as Wittes asserts, the mere growth of judicial power, but rather the judicial usurpation of American citizens' power of self-governance on a broad range of issues that the Constitution, fairly construed, leaves to the political processes. The long-term remedy for that illness is the appointment of justices who will restore the judicial role to its properly modest realm. That prospect requires that senators be driven to support nominees whose records indicate that they will practice judicial restraint—and to oppose vigorously those whose records indicate they won't. ♦

Straight to Video

The comic novel as moviemaking device.

BY DAVID SKINNER

Larry Doyle is a sit-down comic, a rather successful one. He writes funny stuff for the *New Yorker*'s Shouts and Murmurs, a section that, to be honest, is not always funny. He was a writer and producer for three seasons of *The Simpsons*, which of course has been funny with incredible frequency over the years, and he's worked on a number of other shows and movies—more funny than not, to my knowledge. And now he's written a novel.

I Love You, Beth Cooper
A Novel
by Larry Doyle
Ecco, 256 pp., $19.95

These days, a novel is what you write when you don't already have *Simpsons* writing credits on your CV. It's not as if Doyle deserves a medal—especially since, from his acknowledgments, it sounds like he knocked the thing out in a couple of months—but still, his authoring an actual book speaks well of him.

Unless *I Love You, Beth Cooper* turns out to be just another way to get a movie project started. Did you ever notice how nothing quite irks book reviewers like the possibility that the novel they're being paid less than the hourly minimum to read and review is a mere prelude to a lucrative development deal?

To banish such thoughts, Doyle could have written a novel so uncinematic, so internal in its concerns, so much like the plotless dramas of MFA graduates that no one would ever think to make a movie of it. Much more sensibly, he has written a novel of updated stock characters and larger-than-life silly events, which he sets amidst the new Bobo suburbia. The style is comedy in bold letters, matched by a playful font and a drawing by the cartoonist Evan Dorkin at the beginning of each chapter. Doyle takes his laughs when he can get them, which is pretty often, and his book has one major virtue: The story's action drives with beguiling speed to its conclusion. The reader never yawns waiting for something to happen.

The words "I love you, Beth Cooper" are spoken by the book's hero, debate team captain and class valedictorian Denis Cooverman, in his graduation speech, as he urges his classmates to seize this last opportunity to say what they've really been thinking the last four years. Telling Beth Cooper he loves her is Denis's way of following his own advice. He also hopes it will lead to something. But until this moment, Beth Cooper, captain of the cheerleading squad, has been only vaguely conscious of Denis Cooverman's existence. And yet, she is flattered, and so she deigns to speak afterwards to Denis, who invites her to his house for a party.

The rest of the story is a slapstick romp through the familiar teenage wasteland of socially awkward parties, reckless behavior, and lax parental supervision. There is one line of dialogue so dirty that were its meaning spelled out, it would not have gotten past even the copy editors at *Hustler*: A girl uses a strange word connoting a bizarre sexual act, then tells a nonplussed bystander to Google it. Unfortunately, I did.

What Doyle does best is depict the inner world of a cartoonishly nerdy nerd whose little nerd head is filled with hyperbolically nerdy thoughts. When Beth Cooper actually shows up at Denis's house for the party, he is momentarily paralyzed: "Adrenaline, epinephrine, seratonin, corticosterone, testosterone and several other exotic hormones squirted from various glands or were being synthesized like crazy throughout his body, in far beyond prescription strengths, and so all nonessential functions such as thinking had shut down." It's not unlike Lisa Simpson in her own nerd mode (as opposed to her progressive lib or dutiful-sibling mode).

The other characters, excepting Beth Cooper herself, seem little better than their average-quality teen movie counterparts, whom they are intended to upstage. If your expectations are set at *She's All That* or even *American Pie* (with which it shares a certain scatological tendency), you'll be surprised by what Doyle has captured—less so if your expectations are set at, say, *Clueless* or *Ten Things I Hate About You*.

The blurbs make *I Love You, Beth Cooper* sound like this era's most perfect representation of the American teenager. But really, it is more a demonstration of the power of good comic writing (which here comes down to having lots of funny and obvious joke lines) than a demonstration of the author's literary gifts or his powers of seeing into the heart of a nerd or a cheerleading captain.

"Knowing and wise," says one of Doyle's blurb friends on the back cover. But that is exactly what the book is not. At times it seems to be barely a novel at all: more like a comic book with fewer pictures.

There's nothing novel in Doyle's chosen milieu of babes and geeks and muscleheads and the cruel caste system of the American high school or the device of this social hierarchy being temporarily upended by the events of one unforgettable night. Nor are many of Doyle's jokes likely to be around for the ages. In fact, the book's humor so often depends on the reader recognizing brand names and evanescent movie lines that many of its jokes may be dated before *I Love You, Beth Cooper: The Movie* can even go into production. But the whole thing charges forward with such zip that you forgive it its sins and enjoy the ride, sometimes laughing really hard. ♦

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Existential Anglican

Remembering John Macquarrie, 1919-2007.

BY EUGENE THOMAS LONG

John Macquarrie, one of the most influential and prolific theologians of the 20th century, died May 29, a few weeks short of his 88th birthday. Walking the boundary between existential philosophy and Christian theology, Macquarrie was a mediator between the secular and the religious, between contemporary culture and religious faith. Sometimes referred to as a progressive, or even a radical, in theology he was more traditional in church practice, always emphasizing the importance of consensus while respecting diverse views. He had a significant impact on the thinking of theologians and priests, but he was also an inspiration to many among the laity who read his work or attended his public lectures. A canon in Christ Church Cathedral, he could often be found in his retirement years reading the Gospel in his neighborhood parish, his voice still reflecting his early years in Renfrew, a small town along the River Clyde a few miles from Glasgow.

Macquarrie's grandfather was a native Gaelic speaker who had come from the island of Islay to work on the Clydeside, and his father was a skilled shipyard worker. It was his Celtic heritage, Macquarrie said, that initially drew him away from what he considered the rather dreary evangelical Protestantism of his early years to the more catholic tradition that he found in the "High Kirk" movement in the Church of Scotland, and later in the Anglican communion.

Macquarrie graduated in 1940 from the University of Glasgow with a first class honors degree in mental philosophy. A student of C.A. Campbell, the well-known Scottish philosopher and Gifford Lecturer, Macquarrie was particularly drawn to the work of the great English idealist philosopher F.H. Bradley, and found Bradley's idea of the supra-rational Absolute very congenial and compatible with his own, somewhat pantheistic religiosity. Macquarrie was less enthusiastic about his studies in divinity, saying that, at the time, he found the theology of John Calvin and Karl Barth insufferable, and dogmatic theology little more than systematic nonsense. He was attracted to Rudolf Otto's classic, *The Idea of the Holy*, which resonated with his Celtic heritage, with its emphasis on the sense of the presence of God. He was also fascinated by a course of lectures on Buddhism.

In 1943 Macquarrie volunteered in the Royal Army Chaplaincy Department where, following the war, he was given responsibility for organizing services for large numbers of German prisoners of war being held in camps in the Middle East. He was released from the Army in 1947 and, while serving as a minister in the ancient city of Brechin, began research for his doctoral thesis at Glasgow under the direction of Ian Henderson, a graduate in philosophy and a pioneer in the English-speaking world on the work of the great German biblical theologian Rudolf Bultmann. This was a perfect fit for a person of Macquarrie's background and training and his doctoral dissertation became his first book, *An Existentialist Theology: A Comparison of Heidegger and Bultmann* (1955). Soon after, Macquarrie and Edward Robinson were invited to translate Heidegger's *Being and Time*, arguably the most important (as well as the most difficult) work in German philosophy in the 20th century. These works, along with *The Scope of Demythologizing* (1960), quickly established Macquarrie as a leading authority in contemporary German existential philosophy and theology.

Macquarrie was appointed to a lectureship in theology at Glasgow in 1953, where he was known among students and colleagues for his unpretentiousness and clarity of style, whether discussing world religions, theology, Heidegger, or British philosophy of language. His fair and informed expositions, his critical but judicious analyses, and his quiet, unassuming manner led students to identify him as "an existentialist without *angst*." Given that the Glasgow chair holders at the time were relatively young, it is not surprising that other universities were interested, and in 1962, he accepted an invitation to become professor of systematic theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York.

He considered his life to be a series of fortunate accidents, he often said; and to the extent this is true, the move to New York may have been one. From the age of 17 he had been drawn to the Anglican communion but, out of deference to his parents, was reluctant to make the change. The appointment to Union, however, marked a new beginning, and Macquarrie and his family soon began attending a small Episcopal church on 126th Street at the edge of Harlem. In 1965 he was ordained to the diaconate, and then to the priesthood, feeling (as he said at the time) a real sense of spiritual renewal.

During his career, Macquarrie published more than 30 books and numerous articles. One of his most important works, *Principles of Christian Theology*, was begun at Glasgow and completed in New York in 1966. It has been, and continues to be, used in theological seminaries of many denominations in many parts of the world.

The first part of *Principles* is devoted to his proposal for a new style of natural theology that would press back beyond the traditional arguments for the existence of God of natural theology to examine the convictions behind them. Macquarrie retains the tradi-

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Carolyn Macleod Long

John Macquarrie (left), Jenny Macquarrie, and the author

tional purpose of natural theology—to bridge the gap between our ordinary, everyday knowledge and the knowledge of faith—but he uses a phenomenological or descriptive method which, beginning from the experience of our common humanity, seeks to show the structures and experiences that lie at the root of the life of faith. If, he argues, humans are creatures of, and dependent upon, God, then this should show itself in a study of the human. Further, if we can show that humanity points beyond itself to transcendent reality, we can show where the word "God" appears on the map of meaningful discourse.

Macquarrie's conception of God or "holy being," developed in conversation with Martin Heidegger's understanding of being, aligns him with the tradition of the Church Fathers. But he diverges from classical theism in his emphasis on the temporality of God and the intimate relation between God and the world. He shares some common ground with American philosophers and theologians who speak of themselves as panentheists. But he prefers to use the expression "dialectical theism" to make it clear that, while he seeks to avoid the one-sidedness of classical theism and the difficulties it brings with it, his view is a species of theism, and closer to theism than pantheism.

Macquarrie said that some of his best years were at Union Seminary, but with the Vietnam war something of a crisis emerged at the seminary. Students were discontented, the faculty became divided, summer examinations had to be cancelled, and radical students occupied offices. Macquarrie believed that the whole authority structure was breaking down, and anything in the way of academic activity became virtually impossible. In the midst of this he was offered the Lady Margaret Professorship of Divinity at Oxford, the oldest chair of divinity in the English-speaking world.

Although reluctant to leave New York, the Macquarries visited Oxford in 1969 to assess the situation. Having been told that the official who was to show them around Christ Church would be delayed because of a crisis in the college, the Macquarries feared they might be leaping from the frying pan into the fire. When it was later explained that the crisis had to do with neighbors threatening legal action because the baying of the college hunting beagles was keeping them awake at night, Macquarrie whispered to his wife, "I think I could live with this kind of crisis." In 1970 they took up residence in the medieval Priory House in Christ Church, the college to which his professorship was attached.

The Macquarries took to the eccentricities of Oxford, and settled in quickly. John's wife, Jenny, began teaching mathematics at the Cathedral School while Ian (as John was known to family and friends) attracted students from all over the world. His steady output of scholarly works continued, including most notably *In Search of Humanity* (1982), followed by the Gifford Lectures at St. Andrews University, published as *In Search of Deity* (1984). A third book, *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought* (1990), published after his retirement, completed this important trilogy.

Oxford also provided Macquarrie a context for concentrating on some of the traditional doctrinal elements of Christianity, including the nature of doctrine itself, the sacraments, and the place of Mary in the Christian tradition. These interests were often related to a long-term interest in Christian unity which, he argued, should not exclude diversity. Macquarrie always hoped for closer relations between the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches, but he insisted that the important question was not what separates Anglicans from Romans but what separates Romans and Anglicans within the Church to which they both belong. He continued lecturing and publishing on philosophical and theological topics long after retirement, and his last book, *Two Worlds are Ours*: *An Introduction to Christian Mysticism*, was published three years ago.

My wife and I last visited the Macquarries almost exactly a year ago. The occasion was the publication by SCM Press of a collection of articles by students, friends, and colleagues celebrating the golden jubilee of one of its most distinguished authors. In addition to the presentation at the Deanery in Christ Church, we had a Sunday lunch in a nearby pub and a quiet dinner at the Macquarries' home. On our last day, which happened to be Ian's 87th (and last) birthday, we brought a cake, lit a candle, and sang Happy Birthday. ♦

Our Mr. Brooks

Kevin Costner kills people with kindness.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Hollywood loves serial killers so much that it has just released a movie with a selfless, thoughtful, well-meaning serial-killer as its hero. *Mr. Brooks* stars Kevin Costner as a successful Portland manufacturer who attends 12-step meetings because he so desperately wishes to stop killing. He is married to a beautiful woman (Marg Helgenberger), has a beautiful daughter (Danielle Panabaker) at Stanford, and lives in a beautiful house with a beautiful basement art studio.

Mr. Brooks
Directed by Bruce A. Evans

That basement is packed to the rafters with all sorts of secret hidden panels and closets full of clothes and guns and money and fake IDs. Evidently, when they were building the house, his wife was not privy to the details of the basement's construction, or Mr. Brooks murdered his contractor to keep the secret.

It is my belief that any movie in which a person murders his building contractor will gross in excess of $5 billion in its opening weekend because murdering your contractor is perhaps the fondest dream of every American who has ever done so much as install a new light switch. *Mr. Brooks*, however, is not that film.

It is, rather, a film in which the world's most careful serial killer fails to notice that the blinds are open when he murders a couple in the throes of sex. "It's almost as if I want to get caught," Mr. Brooks muses in a rather transparent effort by screenwriters Bruce A. Evans and Raynold Gideon to explain away one of the 342 plot inconsistencies in their magnum opus. Mr. Brooks is seen *in flagrante killicto* by a creepy guy (Dane Cook) who eagerly asks to be brought along on the next murder.

Suddenly *Mr. Brooks* merges the serial-killer movie with another Hollywood chestnut: One of those mentoring stories in which the noble old veteran teaches a green rookie everything he knows. (There are echoes here of 1972's *The Mechanic*, one of the most peculiar movies ever made, in which Charles Bronson plays a cultured hit man with a hippie apprentice.) Costner played exactly this role in last year's *The Guardian*. He even played it 19 years ago when he schooled Tim Robbins in the art of being a successful baseball player in *Bull Durham*, and he was only 32 then.

I assume Costner chose to produce and star in this film because he wanted to broaden his horizons by playing a psychopath. And indeed, in most respects, Mr. Brooks is your standard-issue Hollywood serial killer; which is to say, he possesses supernatural intelligence, godlike powers, and exquisite taste. He can move about undetected. He is a master of disguise. He can hack into computer systems. He has unlimited access to cash. He's so rich he even owns a cemetery.

But this is Kevin Costner, after all. The last time he tried to play a villain, as a redneck kidnapper in an endless Clint Eastwood thing called *A Perfect World*, his character somehow morphed into a loving father-figure to the young boy he had snatched. And that's what happens here, too. The really nasty ideas rolling around Mr. Brooks's brain aren't given voice by Mr. Brooks himself, but rather by an alter-ego named Marshall, played by William Hurt.

Of course, we know Marshall doesn't exist, but movies are a very literal medium. The fact that William Hurt is talking about how to kill people rather than Kevin Costner means that Costner is spared having to speak the despicable words himself. Instead, Costner talks about wanting to quit, needing to quit, wanting to kill himself, needing to have the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, and so on.

We do see Mr. Brooks kill two people, but he's so wonderfully neat about it there isn't much to recoil from. And in the course of the movie (caution: spoilers ahead) he proves to be a very generous and self-sacrificing serial killer. He beams with joy at the news that his daughter is pregnant, and begs her not to abort the child. Later, when he fears his daughter, too, has become a killer, he weeps at the evil that has passed to her through his genes—and travels to her college to kill somebody else and throw the cops off the scent.

It's not only his daughter whom he rescues. He also takes an interest in the plight of a sultry police detective played by—I can hardly believe I am typing these words—Demi Moore. She is a poor little rich sultry police detective worth $60 million who is being blackmailed by her ex-husband and his trampy lawyer. So Mr. Brooks kills the ex-husband and the trampy lawyer. She is also being stalked by *another* serial killer, so Mr. Brooks arranges for her to find that guy in such a way that she can kill him off and spare herself from his evil. What a guy!

Mr. Brooks is almost entertaining. It's like listening to someone make a really dumb point, realize that he's making a really dumb point, and try to talk his way out of his really dumb point only to deepen the logical hole into which he is frantically digging himself ever deeper. That kind of *faux pas* has a perverse fascination all its own. But it lasts five minutes at most. *Mr. Brooks* lasts two hours, and through some of those two hours, you have to watch Demi Moore attempt to speak an English sentence. That might be an acceptable punishment for serial killers, but what did the rest of us do to deserve such a stiff sentence? ♦

John Podhoretz, a New York Post *columnist, is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

"Clinton described herself as a 'praying person,' and credited her ability to get through difficult times to her 'extended faith family' and what she described as 'prayer warriors'—friends and strangers who have prayed for her over the years. She said she prays for courage and discernment and joked that some of her prayers were 'trivial and self-serving,' including requests to lose weight faster, that inspire 'eye-rolling' from God." **—Washington Post, *June 5***

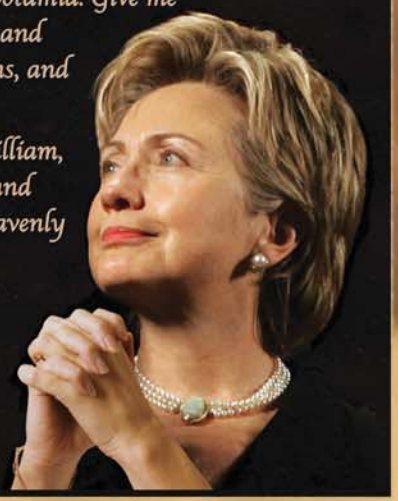
Hillary's Prayer

O Lord, this is Hillary Rodham Clinton, National Merit Finalist, Wellesley '69, Yale Law '73, First Lady of the United States 1993-2001, United States Senator from New York 2001-, and candidate for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States of America.

For two score years, I have listened to the Americans, and I expect that Thou hast been listening to me. Grant me the humility and wisdom that are Thine to bestow and forgiveness for mine enemies that Thy grace instilleth. Teach me what little I have left to learn, and lead me to the greener pastures where, surely, I am destined to lie down.

As Thou shouldst be aware, it has not always been easy to do Thy will, surrounded as I am by naysayers and malefactors who form vast conspiracies to destroy me, and know not Thy divine plan, neither for the nation's health nor the politics of meaning. Yea, though I have testified before the juries of grandeur, and profiteth from the cattle, and Thou hast led me beside the waters of White, Thy rod and my staff, they comfort me; and I am not afraid.

Now, Lord, I am harried on my journey by the Moor of Chicago and by the Chaser of Ambulances, who deny me, and who speak with smooth tongues that would leave me to perish on the plains of Mesopotamia. Give me strength to smite Thine enemies, who are mine also, and capture the tribes of Iowa, and the South Carolinians, and the New Hampshirites, in Thy name.



Remember, Lord, that when I lay down with William, who had gone astray, and I kept mine own counsel and smiled before the multitude, Thou offered me my heavenly reward with these words: "Ye shall be as presidents!"

I expect Thee to keep Thy promise.

Amen.