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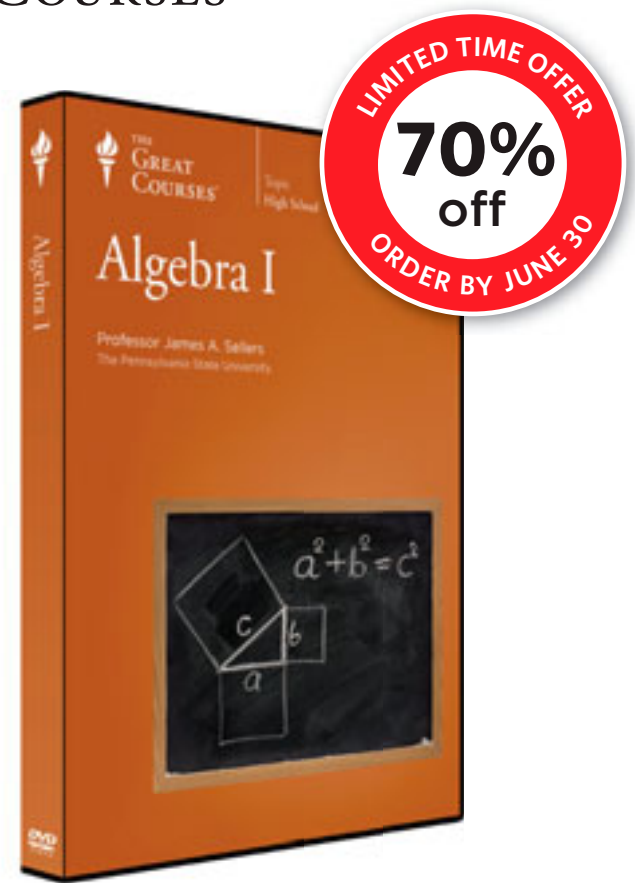

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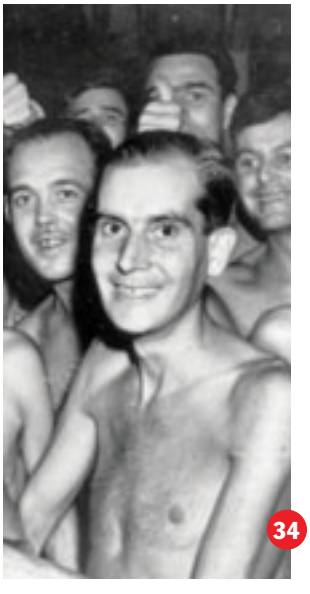

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Annals of Hackery

It used to be said that the most dangerous place in Washington was located between the Rev. Jesse Jackson and a television camera. Nowadays, Senator Charles Schumer, the New York Democrat, is the standard punchline on that one—which works well as a joke since it is not too far removed from reality.

But The Scrapbook disagrees with the premise. For us, the most dangerous place in Washington is not between a preening politician and a camera—in a city where there are plenty of both—but somewhere in the no-man's-land between a self-important columnist and the search for higher meaning. Whether it's Thomas L. Friedman (of the *New York Times*) predicting the end of the world on a monthly basis, or Richard Cohen (the *Washington Post*) casually name-dropping for effect, the spectacle of journalists searching for metaphors, allusions, parallels, and Lessons of History reminds us, as Alexander Pope taught, that a little learning is a dangerous thing.

Consider, for example, *Post* columnist Dana Milbank's recent meditation on the Anthony Weiner scandal. Milbank is a curious case: a reporter-columnist whose contradictory stock in trade is (a) smirking accounts of public officials making fools of themselves, and (b) lamentations that the public doesn't take public officials seriously. The Weiner case fits perfectly onto Milbank's template: It enables him to poke fun at a member of Congress who sends naked photographs of himself across the Internet and at the same time to complain that the lurid details about Anthony Weiner distract us from pressing issues of greater importance.

But not content with this ancient, and all too obvious, insight—that

One of these men is not like the other.

humans would rather be entertained than instructed—Milbank shows off his columnist's chops by compiling a list of labored, and mildly crackpot, analogies to drive home the point.

Yes, he says, Weiner's conduct has been reckless and deplorable; but so is the conduct of members of Congress whose opinions on economic issues and public policy are different from Milbank's: "Each man operate[s] as if the normal rules didn't apply to him," writes Milbank, "rolling the dice just as the tickle fighters and scantily clad self-photographers do." Get it? Republicans in Congress don't have principled convictions, like Dana Milbank; they prefer to cause as much damage as possible without pondering the consequences, just like Anthony Weiner!

> Consider [Rep. Paul] Ryan, who has lived a charmed life in politics, reelected many times even though he has floated ideas to privatize Social Security and Medicare. . . . When Republicans won control of the House and Ryan received the budget chairmanship, he cast aside bipartisan solutions in favor of his biggest risk yet: pushing a voucher plan for Medicare through the House.

Hardy-har-har. This is the same kind of tone-deaf "equivalence" that people like Milbank used to draw between the liberal democracy of the United States and the Communist dictatorship of the Soviet Union: There are food lines in Moscow, and there are food banks in Washington; what's the difference?

The difference is that Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-N.Y.) has been sending obscene photographs of his genitals to young women on the Internet, and Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) is the author of a careful, conscientious, and responsible plan to control federal spending and save Medicare from bankruptcy.

A columnist in the pulpit of a prestigious newspaper who sees no distinctions here—or, worse, perceives the differences but chooses to practice partisan hackery—neatly illustrates why journalists, as much as members of Congress, are held in such low public esteem. ♦

The Two Faces of The *New York Times*

For all the attention lavished on the *New York Times*'s editorial-page columnists, the actual, unsigned editorials at "the paper of record" are all but ignored. That may be because even those who agree with the paper's liberal slant find them embarrassing. Case in point, the paper's June 7 editorial suggesting that states should resist federal immigration enforcement efforts:

> The idea that the federal government can commandeer states' resources for its enforcement schemes seems ripe for legal challenge. And it's wrong to make state and local police departments the gatekeepers of [federal] immigration enforcement.

Aha! You're probably thinking that it's about time the *Times* finally recognized the logic of protecting states' rights from further encroachment by an ever-expanding central government! Well, not exactly. Here's the *New York Times* editorial from

WEINER: NEWSCOM; PAUL RYAN: AP / CAROLYN KASTER

May 29—only nine days before the editorial quoted above—decrying the conservative Supreme Court justices' more expansive view of states' rights:

> States' rights has been a politically charged concept for even longer. It was a basis for secession and then for years of Southern defiance on segregation. Now it is used as an excuse for rejecting national immigration policy.

That's an ideological gymnastics routine so impressive even an East German judge would be forced to give it a 10. By their own roundabout admission, it seems the *Times* editorial board cares more about pushing an agenda with the nearest weapon to hand than they do about any semblance of intellectual consistency. ♦

Weiner's Defenders

Some of us can't wait for the Anthony Weiner saga to end—if you find bad puns annoying, you're probably in a fetal crouch by now. But the episode does have its upside. For the liberal commentariat, it seems it's hard to defend a Weiner without making an ass of yourself. (Sorry; we're afraid it's just an involuntary response at this point.)

Reactions to the scandal have proved as amusing as they are clarifying. Three days after the Weiner scandal broke, CNN host and *Daily Beast* media critic Howard Kurtz took to—where else?—Twitter to announce: "To twerps demanding I cover Anthony Weiner Twitter scandal: Whole thing appears to be faked. Sometimes it pays to wait for the facts." For a "media critic," sometimes it also pays to know what the heck you're talking about before spouting off.

New Yorker writer and CNN legal analyst Jeffrey Toobin said, "To turn it into something more than a mild prank, hack, whatever you want to call it, seems really excessive," adding, "I just don't think it's a big deal." Note that a few years ago, married Toobin had a child out of wedlock with the daughter of CBS News's Jeff Greenfield, who subsequently had to sue him for child support. If anyone would like to downplay spousal betrayal, it's Toobin.

The biggest hypocrite of all, however, might be the *Washington Post*'s Richard Cohen, whose purple pen spewed forth the following defense of Weiner—*after* Weiner confessed to lying about his online affairs:

> Another Christian has been thrown to the lions. The "Christian" in this case is a Jew, and the lions are the news media but the general idea is the same. For the entertainment of the people, yet another man was subjected to near-death by mortification. Anthony Weiner, you have committed no crime—none that has been alleged or proved, anyway—[but] that is a mere technicality. It is the spectacle that matters. . . . We are doing a terrible thing here—we hypocrites of the press.

This, of course, is the same Richard Cohen who was reprimanded by the *Washington Post* in 1998 for contributing to a "hostile working environment" by acting inappropriately toward a 23-year-old editorial aide. According to an article in the *Washingtonian*:

> Among the allegations reported to [then Post deputy managing editor Milton] Coleman: Cohen asked Spurgeon to come into his office and close the door, then queried her about her generation's view of oral sex. Also at issue: a conversation where Cohen said it's too bad Bill Clinton is the only one who can grope in his office and get away with it. He also is said to have intimidated her with references to his connections with top *Post* editors, such as Tom Wilkinson, who can hire and fire. No one said Cohen

touched her or hit on her. Still, when Coleman asked the reporters if they considered Cohen's comments sexual harassment, three said yes.

Hypocrites of the press, indeed. ♦

Open Season on Palin

Leave it to the "lame-stream media" to live up to the nickname Sarah Palin gave it. The news that the state of Alaska would be releasing 24,000 emails sent to and from Palin when she was governor has created such a frenzy at the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* that they are resorting to crowd-sourcing their reporting. In perhaps their first mass hire in years, the *Post* said they were looking for 100 people to help the reporting staff "investigate" the emails:

"We are looking for 100 organized and diligent readers who will work alongside *Post* reporters to analyze, contextualize, and research the emails. Think of it as spending some time in our newsroom. Our hope is that working together, we can efficiently find interesting information and extract new stories that will lead to further investigation. We don't know what we'll find, but we want you to be ready and open for the challenge."

The *Times*, for its part, wanted readers to make a weekend of it:

> We're asking readers to help us identify interesting and newsworthy emails, people and events that we may want to highlight. Interested users can fill out a simple form to describe the nature of the email, and provide a name and email address so we'll know who should get the credit. Join us here on Friday afternoon and into the weekend to participate.

The papers' obsession with Palin isn't news, but this latest display left The Scrapbook wondering: Where was the legion of investigative readers when there were over 6,000 pages of Obamacare regulations to dissect? ♦

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Based on Balls

If I were smarter than I am I might be able to argue myself into believing that there's hope for the Washington Nationals. If I were more realistic than I am I would define "hope" downward to mean merely the possibility, however remote, that the team could win almost as many games as they lose this year. But I'm dumb and unrealistic enough to know this is a foolish fantasy: The Nats are cellar dwellers, doomed to defeat, this year and probably next.

I know the Nats are doomed this year not only because of the team's pathetic play—as I write, they're tied for the worst team batting average in baseball—but also because of a recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* by Matthew Futterman. In the long, sordid history of journalistic party-poopery, Futterman's article will stand as a landmark. "Contradicting some of baseball's most cherished clichés," said the headline, "statistics show that your team's fate may well be sealed by June 1."

There are so many things I dislike about that sentence I scarcely know where to begin. Is there a phrase in the English language that has ushered in more baloney than "statistics show"? Maybe "studies show," but that's the only one. I gather headline writers at the *Journal* have never heard of Mark Twain, or if they have they're dismissing his famous line about "lies, damn lies, and statistics" as just another cliché. They hate cliché, these wised-up guys. They're cliché killers. The premise of the headline is that statistics (science and cold dispassionate reason) are the solvent that destroys clichés (sentimentality and wishful thinking). Another thing I dislike about the headline is that it might be right.

I won't bore you with the details, but Futterman and another statistician have demonstrated to their satisfaction that teams with losing records on June 1 rarely go on to win enough games to make the playoffs at season's end. The odds that the losers will reverse direction and become winners are one in ten. This revelation, if that's the word for it, comes on the heels of new statistics about the count in the batter's box, reported by the great baseball writer Thomas Boswell. Statistics show that once a batter has two strikes, his chances of getting a hit fall to near zero. The average big league batter facing a count of 0-2 has a batting average of .156. "Don't slumber through a game thinking, 'This bum'll never get a hit,'" Boswell wrote. "Oh yes he may. As long as he hasn't got two strikes yet."

DAVID CLARK

Reading this, I thought: "Why bother with the third strike, then?" People complain that baseball games are too long already. Imagine how much brisker the pace would be if we just acknowledged the statistically obvious and ordered the batter back to the dugout after two strikes, since he wasn't going to get on base anyway. A batter with two strikes who insists on a third strike is just wasting his time and ours.

People complain about the length of the baseball season too. The commissioner could rationalize the process by eliminating all losing teams on June 1—just tell them to pack the gear, roll out the tarp, warehouse the hot dogs till next season. We already know they're not going to make the playoffs; and if they don't like it, well, show them the numbers. The numbers don't lie. In eight weeks we could knead the stats again and make another cut. The whole season could be wrapped up by Labor Day. Hell, why not Memorial Day, once our statisticians learn to slice the numbers finely enough? In time we will reach perfection: Statisticians can tease out the probabilities from the first game of the season, eliminating the need to play past April 1. Some day, as the science of numbers continues to improve its predictive powers, we won't have to play the game at all.

There's no such thing as bad knowledge, of course, but not everything is worth knowing. It's an acute distinction, now that our smartest people have succumbed to Science, including social sciences, as the ultimate explainer and predictor of human experience. For a scientific true believer, in the full bloom of his pride, a mystery is just a puzzle that hasn't been solved yet. But it will be soon enough, once reality can be reduced to its constituent parts. The word *mystery* not so long ago had a humbler meaning, to denote aspects of life that were by their very nature unexplainable, beyond the reach of reason and the soundings of science. Love was a mystery, and so was the Trinity—so were charity, the wellsprings of art, the origins of self, the admiration the French feel for Jerry Lewis.

I liked living in a world where mystery held a permanent place. As far as I knew, damn near anything could happen. The frog might turn into a prince. A horse might sprout wings. The Nationals might get hot down the stretch and finish above .500.

Andrew Ferguson

Competition is everything.

Competition is the steady hand at our back, pushing us to faster,
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Competition is the father of rapid progress and better value.

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which inspires us to think about the planet,
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Don't Block Up the Hall

Is Newt Gingrich getting out? Could be—or maybe you don't need a staff to run. Is Rick Perry getting in? Why not? Who else combines governing success and Tea Party credibility? What about Rudy Giuliani? He apparently intends to see whether the second time's a charm. In the Senate Dining Room, John Thune's getting encouragement to reconsider from some of his colleagues, while Jim DeMint and Tom Coburn are conferring to see if one of them should carry the deficit hawk banner. What about Sarah Palin? Is September too late for Paul Ryan? Is November for Chris Christie? Isn't the world a pretty dangerous place? Calling John Bolton . . .

Newt Gingrich

Rudy Giuliani

Rick Perry

Bob Dylan

And others are lurking in the wings, taking importuning phone calls. One has the last name of Bush.

Welcome to this year's Republican presidential contest. It's wide open. It's chaotic. The control freaks in the political establishment have a case of agita. The donor class—who made fortunes taking risks but who want certainty in politics—are uncomfortable. The media have lost control of the narrative, and—in between reading Sarah Palin's old emails—they're all muttering and grumbling. But the fact is, a wide-open primary season will likely prove good for the Republican party, good for the conservative cause, and good for the country.

Competition is good, after all. Road testing is useful. Surprises are fun. If the filing deadlines for the primaries aren't until after November 1, then let candidates think and explore and test until the fall. The economy, the world, public sentiment, politics—all are unpredictable. Why engage in the fatal conceit that one can know who the best candidate will be before any campaigning?

So let's enjoy the frustration of those who desire early certainty and easy predictability in their politics. Let's allow the political free market to work. Let's encourage voters to kick the tires. Let's watch as candidates try out themes. Let's observe some electoral price discovery and market testing. Let's permit the auction to go on long enough for voters to know what's out there, and what's lacking. Let's have a little creative destruction, and a healthy struggle for survival.

Then—with much, much more valuable information than they have now—GOP primary voters can decide whom they want to nominate to take on President Obama in the fall.

Meanwhile, to all the political and media and financial elites who want to narrow the choices, who are eager to shut the doors and regulate entry and exit, who think they have the right to demand hall passes for admission to the political auditorium:

Come senators, congressmen
Please heed the call—
Don't stand in the doorway
Don't block up the hall. . . .
There's a battle outside and it's ragin'. . .
For the times they are a-changin'.

—William Kristol

NEWSCOM

Panetta's Duty

At his confirmation hearing on June 9, Secretary of Defense nominee Leon Panetta faced questions from Democrats and Republicans alike about President Obama's intention, hastily announced in April, to cut $400 billion from national security spending over the next 12 years. Unfortunately, Panetta seemed to have little concrete information about the president's plans.

What Panetta was willing to say, however, was that such defense cuts should not be undertaken lightly. Asked

whether he agreed with outgoing Secretary of Defense Robert Gates about their potential impact, Panetta said:

> I share his concerns. I share his concerns about the possibility of hollowing out our force. I think that would be a terrible mistake. I share his concern about some kind of automatic, across-the-board cuts and just, you know, implementing some kind of formulaic approach to cutting defense, when we have to look at each area, determine where we're going to achieve savings in order to protect defense.

"To protect defense." That wouldn't be a bad motto for Panetta to adopt during his tenure at the Pentagon. It's not something that was accomplished the last time Panetta was involved in decisions about defense spending. When he served in the White House during the Clinton administration, the Pentagon was forced to go on a "procurement holiday" that left it unprepared when the expected post-Cold War peace dividend failed to materialize. Panetta acknowledged at his hearing that the Clinton approach "might not have been the best way to achieve those savings."

AP PHOTO / JIM HOLLANDER

Almost two decades later, a Democratic president is once again entertaining the prospect of deep defense cuts. And this after the experience of 2009 and 2010, when defense was treated differently from the rest of the federal government. Gates pruned away at his department while his cabinet colleagues ladled on more gravy. Now we face an ever more uncertain strategic landscape. American men and women in uniform are engaged in military operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya. Who knows what the future holds in Yemen or Somalia—or elsewhere in the Middle East? Iran, already a menace to our allies in the region, is approaching a nuclear weapons capability. And a rising China increasingly challenges us in Asia.

Despite all of this, President Obama still appears unwilling to protect defense, even as he continues to protect the programs that are the true source of our fiscal woes—entitlements and runaway domestic spending.

As we have pointed out before on this page, America now faces a "period of consequences," like the one Churchill predicted in the 1930s as he warned that Britain was increasingly unprepared for the challenges that lay ahead.

Speaking to the House of Commons in 1935, Churchill said:

> One would imagine, sitting in this House today, that the dangers were in process of abating. I believe the exact contrary is the truth—that they are steadily advancing upon us, and that no one can be certain that a time may not be reached, or when it will be reached, when events may have passed altogether out of control. We must look at the facts. Nourish your hopes, but do not overlook realities. . . . It would be folly for us to act as if we were swimming in a halcyon sea, as if nothing but balmy breezes and calm weather were to be expected and everything were working in the most agreeable fashion. By all means follow your lines of hope and your paths of peace, but do not close your eyes to the fact that we are entering a corridor of deepening and darkening danger, and that we shall have to move along it for many months and possibly for years to come.

Fresh from what seems to have been responsible leadership of the CIA in fighting the nation's covert wars, Leon Panetta will not, we trust, be inclined to overlook the reality of the deepening dangers ahead. But there will be pressures to cut, including from members of Congress of both parties seeking to avoid, or to make more palatable, hard decisions elsewhere. And the example of his commander in chief, cavalierly announcing $400 billion in defense cuts for political purposes, with no justification and no rationale, isn't encouraging.

Panetta's confirmation hearing came as reports emerged that the bipartisan deficit commission, led by Vice President Joe Biden, is considering cuts that go up to or even beyond the president's $400 billion. Responsible members of Congress, on both sides of the aisle, will resist such proposals, which could be catastrophic to our nation's security. We hope that Panetta will, too.

For when Panetta takes the oath as our 23rd secretary of defense, he won't swear to support and defend his president or his former colleagues in Congress. He'll swear that he'll "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic," and that he "will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office." That means protecting defense.

—Jamie M. Fly & William Kristol

A Cain-Do Candidate

The pizza magnate Republicans are flipping for.

BY JOHN MCCORMACK

THOMAS FLUHARTY

Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell's "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" serenades long-shot Republican presidential candidate Herman Cain as he makes his way to the stage in the Turf Valley Resort's ballroom. He offers perfunctory thanks to the cheering crowd, but the 300 Howard County, Maryland, Republicans continue to applaud, and applaud, and applaud. "*Awwwww* shucky ducky!" says Cain. "That's an old saying from back down home, folks. You all just don't know how welcome you make me feel."

Cain is feeling great, as a new round of polls have shown him surging in the Republican presidential race. In a rich baritone voice that was destined for a microphone, Cain tells the Lincoln Day Dinner crowd the good news.

When his campaign began in January, Cain says, "the skeptics . . . and the critics . . . were skeptical . . . and critical, that a guy that did not have high name I.D., did not have a kajillion dollars, had never held public office before" (applause for his lack of government experience) "they basically wrote off the dark horse candidate."

"And then just this week, all of a sudden the dark horse candidate shows up tied for second in an Iowa poll," says Cain. "Do you know who I tied? Sarah Palin."

The big question: If the not-very-well-known Cain is tied for second in Iowa with Palin, what happens as more voters get to know him? If candidates were judged by biography alone, Cain's star might continue to rise. The 65-year-old has built an impressive résumé of a successful businessman-turned-Tea Partier: ballistics analyst at the Department of the Navy, pizza magnate, National Restaurant Association chairman, Kansas City Fed chairman, (unsuccessful) Senate candidate, talk radio host, associate Baptist minister.

Five years ago, he earned another title: cancer survivor. He was diagnosed with stage IV colon cancer and given a 30 percent chance to live, but he beat the odds. "If God gives you an opportunity to stick around here, it's not to try to improve your golf game," he said during a June 4 speech to the Faith and Freedom Coalition in Washington, D.C.

Before his keynote that evening, Cain and I met for lunch. He ordered a crab cake, a small Caesar salad, and a glass of Chardonnay. "I like it because it's nice and delicate, not too dry," Cain said. "You know, a midday wine."

Life wasn't always so comfortable for Cain. "I couldn't afford to buy lunch in the school cafeteria every day when I was in elementary school," he told me. His father gave him a quarter each week for lunch.

Luther and Lenora Cain, the grandchildren of sharecroppers, worked hard to give Herman and his younger brother Thurman a better life. Both of Cain's parents grew up on subsistence farms in the South and left home in their teens to strike out for Mansfield,

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Ohio. When his parents moved back to Atlanta his mother was a domestic worker, and his father worked three jobs: janitor, barber, and chauffeur. Luther eventually found himself driving R.W. Woodruff, the president of Coca-Cola, who tipped his chauffeur with stock.

"I didn't come from a well-to-do family economically, but we were well-to-do spiritually and emotionally," said Cain. "I grew up poor, but I didn't know it."

Growing up, Cain attended segregated schools, English Avenue Elementary and S.H. Archer High School. "I still remember riding the buses, and they had the sign in the front, 'Whites seat from front. Colored seat from rear,'" Cain told me. "It didn't say, 'White folks sit in the front, black folks sit in the back.' That would have made too much sense."

Heading into his senior year of high school, Cain had the opportunity to be in the first class of black students to integrate Atlanta high schools. But he didn't choose the path of the Little Rock Nine. "I was a good student, and my principal and my counselor came to me and asked if I would be willing to be one of the kids to be bused to another part of town," Cain told me. "I talked to my dad about it, and he didn't say 'Don't do it.' But he said, 'Well, you could do that if you want to, but that's not your fight by yourself. You've got a chance to go on to college,' which he couldn't do."

How could leaving Archer have kept him from college? "I could have gone over there, and they could have made it so unbelievably difficult that I might not have graduated. We didn't know what to expect." He paused to take a few bites. "Remember, the world wasn't fair then. Okay? So I prayed about it, decided not to do it."

Cain went on to graduate second in his class, became the first person in his family to attend college, and graduated from Morehouse with a major in mathematics and a minor in physics.

"I had 25 job offers when I graduated," Cain says. He listed a few: "Amoco Oil, Department of the Navy, Kellogg's company, some of the biggest banks in America because they were all trying to diversify their workforce because of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and they were actively going to black campuses."

Cain took the job at the Navy Department as a civilian ballistics analyst and was granted deferments from the draft. In 1971, he earned a graduate degree in computer science at Purdue and went back to the Navy, making considerably more money. He then began to climb the corporate ladder at Coca-Cola, where he worked for four years, before heading to the Pillsbury corporation. While there, he managed 400 Burger Kings in the Philadelphia area. Then he was placed in charge of Godfather's Pizza, a company on the verge of bankruptcy, and turned it around. In 1988, he bought the company with a group of investors.

His experience at Godfather's is when he started "to make the turn to conservative," Cain says. "When I took over Godfather's Pizza, started to make some real money, . . . I started to see how much I was paying in taxes. I started to see how minimum wage legislation was impacting my ability to keep Godfather's going."

Cain's first experience in the political spotlight came at one of Bill Clinton's 1994 town hall meetings on health care. Cain told the president that he would have to lay off employees if Hillarycare became law. Clinton disputed Cain's claim. "Mr. President, with all due respect, your calculation on what the impact would do, quite honestly, is incorrect," Cain replied.

Cain became active in Republican politics and served as an adviser to vice presidential candidate Jack Kemp in 1996. In 1999, he briefly opened up a presidential exploratory committee before dropping out and endorsing Steve Forbes. In 2004, he ran for Senate in Georgia in a three-way primary with two sitting congressmen, Johnny Isakson and Mac Collins. Isakson won the primary with 53 percent of the vote. Cain came in second, at 26 percent, 5 points ahead of Collins.

If Cain couldn't win a Republican Senate primary in Georgia, why might he fare better in a presidential primary? First, the mood of the party is far less establishment-oriented now. And in 2004, Cain didn't have much of a profile in Georgia, when he was hammered by Isakson for having given money to "pro-choice Democrat Senator Kerrey" (that would be Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, where Godfather's is headquartered) and for endorsing "Bush's opponent" (that would be Steve Forbes).

After working as a talk radio host in Atlanta for the past few years, Cain is now riding the talk radio and cable news circuit and drawing a lot of attention. "There is a real interest in Herman Cain," says conservative Iowa congressman Steve King. "He has all the right positions, and he's a personality that people are attracted to." King, a close ally of Michele Bachmann, said that both candidates "have good relations with Tea Parties across the country, and I don't know whether one of them has an advantage there."

King adds that people underestimate "how much strength Mike Huckabee [who won Iowa in 2008] got from his support for the Fair Tax"—abolishing the income tax and replacing it with a 30 percent national sales tax.

While Cain's support of the Fair Tax and Paul Ryan's Medicare reform may endear him to some Tea Partiers, one issue that could hurt Cain with that cohort is his endorsement of the Troubled Asset Relief Program, which Bachmann voted against.

"The concept of TARP, I did support because I studied the financial meltdown," Cain says. "It's about understanding a little bit of economics. So the Bush administration, they were giving us the correct assessment of the financial meltdown. . . . We had to do something drastic."

But, Cain says, he disagrees with how TARP was administered and insists his initial support for the multibillion-dollar government bank bailout won't hurt him. "TARP didn't inspire the Tea Party, runaway spending inspired the Tea Party," he says. "Then it was the legislation forced down our throats with the health care bill." Whether or not TARP "inspired" the Tea Party, most conservatives don't seem to be holding it against Sarah

Palin, Paul Ryan, and Tom Coburn, who also supported it.

Cain's service as chairman of the Kansas City Fed is another source of criticism from some Tea Partiers. Cain is unapologetic about his work but says the Fed now needs to be fixed. "They've inflated the currency too much," he says. But saying we should get rid of the Fed is "like saying, 'Let's just get rid of the air traffic control system,'" Cain told me. "You'd have planes running into each other all the time. It's stupid. Okay? It's crazy."

Cain is cautious, critics would say evasive, on a number of issues. On Afghanistan, Cain says he doesn't know what he would do until he has classified intelligence information. "There's more that I don't know than I know," Cain said. "I'm not going to pull a plan out of my ass."

"I'd want to know what do our intelligence sources tell us about the state of the Afghan government. I don't know whether I can trust Karzai or not. It's a divided government. How divided is it? What parts can you depend upon?" Cain said. "Can we win in Afghanistan? If the answer is yes, after assessing all of this, then we'd figure out what it would take and whether we'd be willing to make that sacrifice. If we can't I'd want an exit strategy." Asked for a couple of potential foreign policy advisers, Cain mentions John Bolton and K.T. McFarland.

Should ethanol subsidies be abolished? "It depends," Cain said. "I want to talk about a complete solution, 'cause I can see it now, 'Cain does not support ethanol subsidies.' I'm not falling into that trap."

Are there circumstances under which he thinks abortion should be legal? There's a four-second pause. "Ahhh," he sighs, going silent for 16 seconds. "You're asking, are there circumstances in which it should be legal?" Yes. "Let me get back to you on that. I need to mull this over because that question can be a trap either way you go. I don't want to be inconsistent with what I have said in the past."

In 1998, Cain said in an interview, "I am pro-life with exceptions, and people want you to be all or nothing." He added: "I am not a social issue crusader. I am a free-enterprise crusader." It's not clear what the exceptions were in 1998; in 2004, he supported only one: when the life of the mother is at stake.

Cain tied himself in knots when asked in March by a Center for American Progress Action Fund blogger if he would feel comfortable appointing a Muslim to his cabinet. "No, I will not," Cain replied. He later tried to explain his comment, saying: "I did not say that I would not have them in my cabinet. If you look at my career, I have hired good people regardless of race, religion, sex, gender, orientation." But then on June 8, he took two steps back, saying he'd require Muslims to "prove" they were faithful to the Constitution. "Would you do that to a Catholic or would you do that to a Mormon?" interviewer Glenn Beck asked. "Nope, I wouldn't," Cain replied.

Cain's silver tongue is a double-edged sword. His rhetoric can be both uplifting and strident. He preaches the gospel of self-help, talking about "commonsense solutions," the "spirit of America," and how we need to move from an "entitlement society to an empowerment society." He has also said that President Obama's decision not to defend the Defense of Marriage Act is a "breach of presidential duty bordering on treason."

"President Obama's approval ratings are still hovering around 50 percent because that 50 percent has no clue. And you've heard me say 'Stupid people are ruining America!'" Cain told the Howard County Republicans. "That means that the other 50 percent—us—have got to out-vote them, out-work them in order to take this nation back."

Do his strident words make him seem less presidential? "Does it undercut my message with some people? Yes," Cain said. "They're not going to vote for me, so I'm not going to try to be politically correct. And I'm not going to try to pander and make statements like, 'Well some people are just not properly informed.' That's trying to be politically correct and not sound so harsh. I happen to believe that the American people need some harsh talk." ♦

A Dream of Spring

Arabs against themselves.

BY LEE SMITH

Half a year after the fall of Tunisia's Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, it's time for a partial reckoning of the Arab Spring. Verdict: Uncertain.

Last week's demonstrations on the Golan Heights commemorating the 44th anniversary of the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war are evidence that the regional ground is in some ways shifting, dangerously. At least ten Palestinians were killed on the Golan last week. Syrian authorities claim Israeli troops were responsible, while the Israelis explained that the fatalities were caused by landmines on the Syrian side of the border. A dozen more people were killed when relatives of the dead called to account the armed Palestinian faction that sent their loved ones on a suicide mission. The gunmen answered by opening fire.

American and Israeli authorities understand that the more desperate Bashar al-Assad becomes to save his regime, the more likely he is to launch missiles against Tel Aviv to draw Israel into a war. And even if Assad were to lose his war as badly as Gamal Abdel Nasser lost in '67, he must believe his war with the Zionists would unite the Arabs as surely as the Egyptian demagogue's did. The protest on the Golan was a warning.

What's most disturbing is that Assad's theory of the case may be right. The Syrian opposition now braving the bullets of Damascus's security apparatus might indeed be swamped in a tide of agitation against Israel. Advocates of the "peace process" would argue that this is why we need a comprehensive deal between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Opponents say the conflict is unsolvable because it is not about land; it is an existential conflict because the Arabs reject Israel's right to exist. But in a way Israel is merely a placeholder for a much larger struggle that has little to do with the Jewish state: the Arabs' own existential crisis. All of this is about the Arab civil wars.

More than half of the Arabic-speaking Middle East is under the age of 25, meaning that those likeliest to fight any future war with Israel have no memory of the 1967 debacle. Since for many Arabs the war is only a sorry totem from the past, there is something almost comforting about conflict with Israel. What a Syrian Sunni may be tempted to say about the Alawite sect that rules his country is taboo and potentially dangerous to his health. Cursing the Zionists, however, is a habit. Relatively speaking, it is a more "normal" hatred than the passions that animate intra-Arab conflict. The Arab civil wars are too dark to bear, even for the Arabs themselves, while the war against the Zionists means a truce between the Arabs.

What comes after spring?

JONATHAN RASHAD

The Arab Spring, the rebellions and uprisings fueled by hope, anger, frustration, and material deprivation, both unified and divided the Arab house. And if the fall of Saddam Hussein and George W. Bush's freedom agenda merit some credit for inspiring the Arab Spring, then the aftermath of the Iraq invasion, which saw Sunnis and Shiites at each other's throats, presaged today's violence.

The Arab Spring is Bahraini Shiites demanding equal rights as full citizens, but it's also Bahraini security forces putting two bullets in the head of 51-year-old Bahia al-Arady when she went to fill her car with gas. The Arab Spring is Egypt's young middle-class activists taking responsibility for their political lives, but it is also their demand for the blood of the Mubarak family. The Arab Spring is members of the Syrian opposition going to the streets week after week even if they know exactly what the ruthless Assad regime has in store for them. But it is also the fear that must have coursed through the blood of 13-year-old Hamza Ali al-Khateeb as he was being tortured to death, and the ghastly human being that broke the child's neck and mutilated him.

All of these events are part of the Arab Spring because the Spring itself is the outgrowth of the Arab civil wars, with sects pitted against each other as well as tribes, clans, and families, and with states squared off against their own people. Toppling regimes like Mubarak's and Ben Ali's has shown the problem is not merely the regimes. The problem is the character of the societies that gives rise to these regimes.

To rebuild or merely stay solvent in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, many of the Arab states (excepting, of course, Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms) need money. This will call on the resourcefulness and patience of the democracies. What the Arabs need most, though, is their own peace process, reconciliation and confidence-building among themselves. And that will call on a White House that has understood the last six months in the Middle East in all its dimensions, and comprehends the bounding hope as well as the keening despair of the Arab Spring. ♦

Lee Smith is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD. *His book* The Strong Horse: Power, Politics, and the Clash of Arab Civilizations *(Anchor) has just been published in paperback.*

Debt Limit Dangers

A tricky negotiation for House Republicans.

BY FRED BARNES

Even as they bask in good political news—Weinergate, President Obama's ineptitude on the economy—Republicans are headed for trouble. The reason is the gap between what grassroots Republicans want and what Republicans in Washington can deliver.

The gap will come into play once an agreement on raising the debt limit, now being negotiated by congressional Republicans and the White House, is reached this summer. Republicans insist the increase must be accompanied by spending cuts and budget caps, and it will.

But here's the problem: Republicans may force Obama to accept cuts that by the standards of Washington and history are unprecedented, yet in doing so won't satisfy a multitude of conservatives, Tea Party people, Republican presidential candidates, and talk radio hosts, all of them outside the Beltway.

Many oppose any hike in the debt limit, regardless of what is attached to it in spending reductions. Others are likely to be unsettled by a compromise that includes concessions to Obama, perhaps even a tax increase. In short, the debt limit agreement is a recipe for exacerbating the division among Republicans.

Once the deal is done, Obama is bound to claim he got the upper hand, just as he did after the compromise with Republicans on taxes and spending in the lame duck session of Congress in December. Though he hadn't truly prevailed back then, the mainstream media insisted he was the winner. Now, whatever the outcome in the debt limit talks, the media are poised to give Obama credit again.

Look who's talking: Joe Biden, negotiator

Not only that, they'll play up a split between Republicans on Capitol Hill and the party's grass roots. If indeed there is a rupture, it will come at an unfortunate time, as Republicans begin to gear up to defeat Obama, capture the Senate, and hold the House in 2012.

To put it another way, Republicans may achieve the best possible deal under the circumstances—that is, when confronted with Democratic control of the White House and Senate. But the deal is likely to fall short of satisfying Republicans excited by the political potential from the 2010 election.

This situation may be unavoidable. To get spending cuts equal to an increase in the debt limit in excess of $2 trillion, as House speaker John Boehner has proposed, Republicans would have to concede something to Obama in return. And it's clear what Obama wants. He told House Democrats he is committed to a tax increase in exchange for spending cuts.

The White House envisions a debt limit compromise as a repeat of the lame duck agreement that gave the president a boost in the polls. For that to happen, Obama will have to make concessions serious enough for the agreement to pass the Republican-controlled House.

So far in the negotiations under the direction of Vice President Biden, the White House has offered practically none. Obama's representatives are allergic to cuts (or reforms) in entitlements, while eager to cut defense spending. They want any caps that, if unmet, allow for tax increases to curtail the deficit. Given their intransigence, an agreement is nowhere in sight.

In fact, the White House doesn't appear to understand why the December agreement gave Obama a lift. For one thing, he not only gave up on a tax increase, but he also said tax cuts would spur the economic recovery. (Since then, Obama has renewed his call to end tax cuts for "billionaires and millionaires.")

It was Obama's willingness to yield on taxes and reach a compromise with Republicans that appealed to independents, the critical voting bloc that supported him in 2008 before overwhelmingly backing Republicans in 2010. To attract independents again, Obama has to go along with many Republican demands.

"It's like Nixon going to China," a Republican involved in the

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TOM WILLIAMS / ROLL CALL PHOTOS / NEWSCOM

negotiations says. "It's like the Sister Souljah moment for Clinton." The point is that Obama would benefit from doing things he has routinely opposed and moving to the right.

It's reasonable to assume this is where Obama aims to go. But first he has to oppose Republicans to show liberal Democrats—his political base—that concessions to Republicans were made only grudgingly and then only to secure an increase in the debt limit and avert a default.

You can imagine what Obama or his minions will say about an agreement that reduces spending significantly and trims the deficit. They'll claim the president has come to grips with the debt problem. They'll brag about spending cuts. They'll say he protected entitlements from major damage.

The actual agreement, however, will be far less to Obama's liking. A compromise overloaded with concessions to the president wouldn't stand a chance in the House, even with Treasury secretary Tim Geithner screaming about an imminent default and economic debacle. This strengthens the hand of the chief Republican negotiators, Senate whip Jon Kyl and House majority leader Eric Cantor.

But one stone hard fact remains: There will be an increase in the debt limit. True, Obama needs it more than Republicans do. But they don't want to risk an economic plunge either. Republicans can pass a short-term increase (with a dollop of spending cuts) if Obama resists. What they'll never get is outright surrender by the White House.

That takes us back to the trouble ahead. I suspect the Republican base, stiffened by the Tea Parties, isn't attuned to the necessities of a divided Washington. Polls have shown conservatives, young and old, rich and middle-class, strongly preferred a government shutdown to the stopgap spending bills, with cuts, enacted earlier this year.

A hike in the debt limit—even with cuts, curbs, and caps to which Obama has agreed—will be harder still for conservative Republicans to swallow. And dreams and reality will clash. ♦

Be Clear!

Or be defeated.

BY DAVID GELERNTER

Obamacrats think their man is in trouble because (as usual) he's got "communication problems." He seems to suffer from these all the time, which is odd given that he was elected mainly because of his flair for communicating; given that the queen of England is still, no doubt, enjoying the audio versions of his greatest speeches which he presented to her a couple of years ago (unless she's memorized them by now and no longer needs the royal iPod). And now this formidable speaker can't even make himself understood? Probably he is over our heads. But his difficulties are no excuse for Republicans not to speak clearly.

Paul Ryan

When the Republican Jane Corwin got beaten in the special congressional election in New York's conservative 26th district, the word was that she hadn't explained Paul Ryan's budget clearly enough. She'd let her opponent create the impression that Republicans hated Medicare (if not old people in general) and planned to destroy it as soon as no one was looking.

But I'm not sure Ryan himself has explained his plan clearly enough. This topic demands perfect clarity: Anyone who talks about financial or economic plans starts with two strikes against him. This week, Republicans believe the 2012 election will hinge on unemployment; last week they had a different theory. In any case, they will never succeed in changing the national trajectory unless they can make themselves understood.

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Medicare seems to be dying, bleeding to death. It's easy and natural to turn away from this grim spectacle—especially when the Democrats are urging us to do exactly that. (They're probably thinking, "Let's just win one more presidential election, and then we'll fix the problem." For Democrats and some Republicans, giving up spending is like giving up smoking, only harder; it almost seems easier to die of lung cancer.)

But a nation that is serious, and not expecting other countries to step in and bail it out, can't look away. Reactionary, status-quo liberalism has never been more dangerous. Ryan Republicans want to step in and save Medicare; Democrats are willing to stand aside and let it bleed and die.

If Ryan and other thoughtful Republicans believe this, they ought to say it.

Whether or not he runs for president, Paul Ryan is central to Republican plans for governing. He owes it to the nation to speak clearly. That doesn't mean talking down to the public. It means refusing to dash from cliché to cliché as if you were ducking under awnings in a rainstorm; it means venturing out, instead, into the bright sunshine of the glorious English language and taking the trouble to say precisely and vividly what you mean.

In Ryan's recent speech to the Economic Club of Chicago, he introduced his topic by saying, "I'll come to the point. Despite talk of a recovery, the economy is badly underperforming."

No matter what audience is in the theater, Ryan is addressing the nation and should speak as if he knows it.

NEWSCOM

"The economy is badly underperforming" is *not* coming to the point. It's just tired jargon. Jargon and clichés are boring. Each cliché or jargon phrase makes the audience tune down its attention just a little, and the effect is cumulative.

"People are out of work and the economy is struggling: It should be back on its feet by now but it can barely sit up, much less stand"—that's coming to the point. (And there's no need to say, "I'll come to the point." Just come to it.)

But there's a more basic problem for Republicans. They want to fix the debt and get the economy moving. The two goals are connected: Less government spending will help the economy and create jobs. But how? And why do we care so much about debt anyway? Ryan and other Republicans give different answers at different times, sometimes in the same speech. No doubt the various answers are all correct. But anyone who suggests many valid answers to one question must take the trouble to explain his strategy first. If you have a point, just say it, but if you have three equally valid answers to one question, explain that fact at the start to avoid confusion.

In April, Ryan did a Republican radio address about his budget proposal. The budget must be reformed, he explained, "because it is unconscionable to leave the next generation with a crushing burden of debt and a nation in decline."

A few sentences later, the budget must be reformed because, "by removing the anchor of debt that weighs down our economy and advancing pro-growth tax reforms, this budget [Ryan's proposal] is a jobs budget."

And a few sentences later, "Each day that Congress fails to act, the government takes one step closer to breaking its promises to current retirees."

Which is it? A problem of conscience, of economic growth, or of Medicare's running out of money? Since the answer is "all three," the speaker ought to say so up front: "Our demented spending binge has caused many problems, and here are three."

Ryan also said, "Each year that policymakers kick this can down the road means trillions of dollars in empty promises are being made to future generations." And, the president's budget proposal would "raise taxes by $1.5 trillion."

But "trillions" is meaningless without something to measure by. It's simpler to say: The president's February budget projected a national debt bigger than the whole U.S. economy ($15 trillion). Or pick some other measuring stick. However tiresome it might be, you must pick a comparison and repeat it every time you write or speak: Very few people keep figures of this magnitude in mind. Can you blame them? They are way outside normal experience.

And I promise every politician and commentator in the country: If I hear "kick the can down the road" one more time, I tune out forever and move to Tahiti. ♦

Making the Most of the Border

By Thomas J. Donohue
President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

The nearly 2,000-mile-long border separating the United States and Mexico is one of the most frequently crossed and perhaps most economically significant international borders in the world. Every day, more than $1 billion worth of goods—much of it produced by U.S. small businesses and farmers—cross the U.S.-Mexico border. Increased trade resulting from NAFTA has added 1.7 million jobs to the U.S. economy.

However, the tremendous trade-related economic gains achieved by both countries over the past two decades are slowly eroding due to violence, delays, and other inefficiencies at the border. Congestion and delays at border crossings between San Diego County and Baja California alone cost the U.S. and Mexican economies an estimated $7.2 billion in foregone gross output and more than 62,000 jobs.

What can be done to create a modern 21st century border that will increase productivity, drive economic growth, and create more jobs? It starts with securing the border. No factor is more fundamental to investment, economic growth, and job creation than security and the rule of law. It is encouraging to see the U.S. and Mexican governments working together to combat criminal organizations that subvert public safety and threaten our collective security. It won't happen overnight, but with a continued commitment from the presidents of both countries, we can take back control of our border.

Strong border security need not come at the expense of free-flowing trade. Goods can be transported with the highest levels of security by allowing shippers who can ensure the integrity of their loads and the use of effective security practices—and those of their supply chain partners—to participate in trusted shipper programs.

To further facilitate trade, technology to better manage border bottlenecks should be widely deployed. And U.S. agencies with authority to delay or deny crossings must be better coordinated and held accountable for unnecessary wait times.

In addition, we must add capacity at ports and increase the number of lanes at land crossings, including lanes dedicated for commercial traffic. The opening of three new ports of entry last year represents progress, but we still have a ways to go.

Comprehensive immigration and visa reform could help substantially alleviate the strain on our border, while adding to the economic vitality of our countries.

Finally, we need to think hard about how well we are laying out the welcome mat to immigrants and visitors. Clearly, a visitor's experience coming into our country can be improved, from the visa process to security protocols to customs clearance. For more information, go to www.uschamber.com/usmex.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Comment at www.chamberpost.com.

Here Comes the Judge

What happens when 'Palestine' has access to the International Criminal Court? BY JEREMY RABKIN

Amidst his other pronouncements on Mideast peace in late May, President Obama warned Palestinians they couldn't get their state by a show of hands at the United Nations. Soon after, Israeli officials predicted that the Palestinian Authority would pursue its case at the U.N. in September. It's a safe bet that the Israeli government has a better understanding of Palestinian intentions than the Obama administration.

It's true that the U.N. General Assembly doesn't have the authority to settle border disputes or settle much of anything. Its resolutions are not, in themselves, binding formulations of international law. But a General Assembly resolution on Palestine will open some doors. Perhaps the most important is the door to the Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court. What happens after that door swings open won't be a problem just for Israel.

Palestinians tried hard to convince the International Criminal Court (ICC) to indict Israeli military officials after the Gaza intervention last year. But the Rome Statute (as the treaty defining the court's authority is called) limits its jurisdiction to cases involving "states," but it does not limit itself to U.N. member states. Even if a U.S. veto on the Security Council keeps "Palestine" out of the U.N., a General Assembly resolution might encourage a substantial majority of the world's governments to recognize "Palestine." That would make it rather easy for the ICC prosecutor to treat "Palestine" as a "state."

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Still, it doesn't follow that the court will be ready to prosecute Israeli military tactics. The court has jurisdiction only where the home state of the offenders is "unwilling or unable genuinely to carry out the investigation and prosecution" of alleged crimes. Even Judge Goldstone—of the notorious, eponymous U.N. report on abuses in Gaza—has acknowledged that Israeli authorities have been quite conscientious in investigating every allegation of abuse by the Israel Defense Forces. An ICC that intervenes against Israeli military tactics would be an ICC ready to question any army in the world—making nonsense of the original claim by ICC boosters that rule-of-law states would not likely be challenged by the Hague prosecutor.

There is, however, a particular provision in the Rome Statute that is—literally—tailor-made for indictments against Israelis. Article 8, Par. 2b, Clause viii extends the definition of "war crimes" to include "the transfer, directly or indirectly, by the Occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory that it occupies." The language was borrowed from the 1949 Geneva Convention on occupied territories, which included a condemnation of mass deportations of the sort conducted by Nazi Germany. The 1977 Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions—negotiated as the U.N. was denouncing Zionism "as a form of racism"—tweaked the language to cover voluntary movement of civilians ("indirect transfer"), thus reaching Israeli settlement policies. The Rome Statute, negotiated in 1998, then elevated this prohibition to the status of a "war crime."

Palestinian authorities may not be able to restrain themselves from goading the ICC to assert this jurisdiction. The State of Palestine does not even have to submit itself to the ICC's jurisdiction over crimes that might be charged to Palestinians. Under Art. 12, Par. 3, a "State which is not a Party" to the ICC treaty "may, by declaration lodged with the Registrar, accept the exercise of jurisdiction by the Court with respect to the crime in question"—a route that can be limited to specific crimes, such as "indirect transfer" of population into "occupied territories." The court has no jurisdiction over "crimes" committed before 2002 (when the Rome Statute took effect), but the prosecutor is required to investigate subsequent offenses, if the initiating "state" so requests.

There would still be serious complications for the court—politically, if not legally. One is that the court would have great difficulty deciding such a case without taking responsibility for determining the actual borders of the State of Palestine. Taken literally, the "transfer" provision would cover even the Old City of Jerusalem, where Jews lived for centuries before they were expelled by Jordanian troops in 1948. It would be hard for the court to say Israeli settlement was acceptable in Jerusalem but not elsewhere—unless it wanted to declare some settlements in "occupied territory" and others within the lawful territory of Greater Israel. If it's not going to make itself the ultimate arbiter of boundaries, including block-by-block demarcations in a redivided Jerusalem, the court may have to ratify the maximal claims of the Palestinians.

It's true that a number of U.N. General Assembly resolutions in the past 30 years have called for an end to "Israeli occupation" and explicitly included "East Jerusalem" within the category of "occupied territory." In response to a request from the General Assembly, the International Court of Justice (a different institution from the International Criminal Court) offered an "advisory opinion" in 2004, denouncing the Israeli security fence (which it called "the Wall in Palestine") for running through "occupied territory," which it identified as everything outside Israel

before 1967. But these were not formal determinations after a full trial. Israel declined even to participate in the ICJ proceedings. And these pronouncements were not formally binding.

Which brings up a second difficulty with ICC proceedings on this issue. The ICC is not a mere forum for advocates. It is empowered to sentence convicted offenders to prison. It is not supposed to be doing that for mere technical infractions. The Rome Statute itself says the court's jurisdiction "shall be limited to the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole." For such crimes, it makes sense that the statute requires all signatory states to assist in apprehending anyone indicted by the court. If the ICC prosecutor decides to act here, the named Israeli defendants will be subject to immediate arrest in any member state of the EU.

Courtroom 1 at the ICC

And then there is the ultimate difficulty. A prosecution for wrongful issuance of housing permits will be hard to portray as anything other than ganging up on Israel. No one, of course, has ever before been prosecuted for such an offense in the whole history of international law. That's not because the issue of "transfer of population" has never before arisen.

A recent paper by Dana Brusca details prominent examples. For decades, since its 1974 military seizure of northern Cyprus, Turkey has encouraged Turkish nationals to resettle there, to beef up the Turkish population of the separatist state it has sponsored on the northern part of the island—which is not recognized by the international community. Over the last 30 years, well over a hundred thousand Moroccans were encouraged by their government to move into Western Sahara to bolster Moroccan claims in a post-colonial land dispute, first with neighboring Mauritania, then with a Saharan independence movement. Until it finally accepted the independence of East Timor in 2001, Indonesia tried to strengthen its own claims to this former Portuguese colony by encouraging Indonesian nationals to migrate there. Not only did the U.N. never suggest prosecutions in such cases, it allowed outside "settlers" to participate in referenda on subsequent status, acknowledging their claims to remain.

It is common practice at the United Nations to denounce Israel for "offenses" that pass without comment elsewhere. In 2005, Secretary General Kofi Annan cited the preoccupation of the U.N.'s Human Rights Commission with one country—Israel—as a principal rationale for reforming that body. In its first two years, the successor institution, the Human Rights Council, then devoted nearly 60 percent of its country-specific resolutions to condemning Israel. It was the council which demanded the Goldstone inquiry into Israeli abuses in Gaza, while turning a blind eye to ferocious tactics employed by the Sri Lankan military, where civilian casualties were at least 20 times greater than in Gaza (an estimated 20,000 in the last stages of the Sri Lankan conflict versus 300-900 civilian casualties in Gaza). After the Obama administration brought the United States back onto the Human Rights Council (which the Bush administration had shunned as hopeless), American diplomats tried to resist this obsessive focus on Israel. But in the past two years, the council has still devoted some 40 percent of its resolutions to denouncing one particular country. (Hint: not Libya—which was scheduled to be commended by the council for its human rights improvements as recently as February.)

The ICC was supposed to be different. It was supposed to be an institution that could be trusted to exercise the formidable power of prosecution. Governments were not to have direct say in its actions. What that means is that it is on autopilot. If the prosecutor decides to label Israeli officials as international outlaws, there is no mechanism for overturning the indictment. The U.N. Security Council is only empowered (under the ICC statute) to "defer" prosecutions for a year at a time—and even that requires the acquiescence of all five permanent members of the Security Council.

European governments have shown much more tolerance for the U.N. sport of Israel-bashing. The United States walked out of the Durban conference on racism in 2001 because of its obsessive focus on the "racism" perpetrated by Zionists. Both the United States and Canada refused to participate in the 2009 Durban review conference at which Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was one of the featured speakers (and proceeded to deliver exactly the tirade against Zionist racism that his hosts must have expected). European governments still agreed to participate in bargaining over the official resolutions of these grotesque gatherings.

European governments seem to have thought the "indirect transfer" provision in the ICC statute was another accommodation to the priorities of the Islamic Conference. They may have supposed the provision was harmless, since Israel's refusal to ratify the treaty would deprive the court of jurisdiction until an ultimate peace settlement, and the issue would then disappear with the ensuing peace. Now that the Palestinians have chosen a different sequence, that provision looks less like a harmless rhetorical indulgence and more like an improvised explosive device that may go off at any time. The European governments, which thought it worth having the ICC at almost any cost, now have to live with the risks.

It's worth emphasizing that recognizing a Palestinian state does not, in itself, require European governments to support prosecution of Israeli officials at the ICC. The world is full of territorial disputes—think Russia and Japan regarding Sakhalin Island or India and Pakistan regarding Kashmir—which continue to be disputed while the parties maintain diplomatic relations with the rest of the world and even with each other. A new State of Palestine would depend on Israel to buy (as it now does) some 80 percent of Palestinian exports

and to provide (as it now does) some 80 percent of Palestinian electricity. Israelis and Palestinians will have a lot of other things to talk about while they talk about ultimate borders.

The question is whether Europeans support an international prosecutor wading into this tense situation, handing down one-sided indictments for the "crime" of allowing civilians to live in disputed locations. Europeans insisted on pushing forward with the ICC, despite strenuous American warnings, even in the 1990s. If the ICC proves its potential for mischief, more than Israelis will be at risk.

The United States, after all, continues to worry about the ICC's open-ended jurisdiction. Even the Obama administration, while emphasizing its desire to "engage" the ICC, has not expressed any interest in joining the ICC treaty. In the U.N. resolution authorizing the ICC to take jurisdiction over Libya, the United States insisted on language exempting nonparties (like the United States)—even while authorizing action against nonparty Libya. Europeans, as full members of the ICC, agreed to entrust their own forces to the prosecutor's scrutiny. That may help to explain why NATO's Libya strikes have been so restrained and the conflict so protracted.

If the court goes after Israel, it will be lowering itself to the demagoguery of other U.N. forums, playing to the Al Jazeera audience. If Europeans go along, that is sure to exacerbate strains in NATO. How could we engage in joint military operations with countries committed to satisfying ICC standards—when the ICC prosecutor shows himself eager to placate the suspicious, resentful majority in the General Assembly?

The aim of the Palestinian Authority, it seems, is to use the ICC to continue to undermine Israel's international legitimacy. What may be more at risk is the legitimacy of the ICC itself—and ultimately of a NATO alliance, now awkwardly straddling the divide between ICC adherents and ICC skeptics. On this issue, the Obama administration really can't try to lead from behind. ♦

Heck of a Book, Brownie

Bush's FEMA director makes his case.

BY MICHAEL WARREN

Michael Brown briefing Bush and Chertoff in Mobile, Alabama, September 2, 2005

JIM WATSON / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

Michael D. Brown says he got a bad rap. With the statement, "Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job," on September 2, 2005, George W. Bush made Brown, then director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the name and face of governmental incompetence after Hurricane Katrina tore through the Gulf Coast. Ten days later, Brown resigned.

The media were brutal. Newspaper editorials after Katrina excoriated a "self-serving" Brown for his "failures." The *New York Times*'s Maureen Dowd called him a "blithering idiot." A team of eight reporters from *Time* magazine asked the question, "How reliable is Brown's résumé?" (*Time*'s answer: Not that reliable.)

Now, nearly six years after Katrina, Brown is attempting to save his name. In a new memoir, *Deadly Indifference*, Brown struggles to tell his side of the story. Clearly, he sees himself playing a major role in the Katrina drama. Here's how his second chapter opens:

> In August 2005 I became the third most powerful person in the country confronting the impending disaster of Hurricane Katrina, a storm that would take hundreds of lives and destroy most of one of the great cities in the nation.

It's an odd assertion, considering Brown spends a lot of time talking about how powerless he was to put things right. For Brown, the source of many of his problems was Homeland Security secretary Michael Chertoff,

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the former federal judge who replaced Tom Ridge in the job.

Ridge, a former governor of Pennsylvania, understood emergency management, Brown said in a phone interview. But under Chertoff, he continued, the whole response to Katrina was micromanaged. "I would tell a parish president, for example, 'We can do this or we can't do this,' and that would get overruled back in D.C. by Chertoff," he said. "And so, everybody in the field's going, 'Well, who's calling the shots?'"

It's a valid point about the unwieldiness of the modern federal bureaucracy, and it's perhaps Brown's strongest argument in his effort at self-rehabilitation. The federal government's emergency management apparatus was a mess. FEMA, for decades an independent agency, had been moved into the Department of Homeland Security, shackled to that sprawling department's chain of command. The complicated web of agencies with conflicting priorities was a recipe for paralysis in an emergency.

Brown recalls an effort to evacuate large groups of people as quickly as possible on commercial flights out of New Orleans International Airport. But the Transportation Security Administration was holding things up, trying to figure out how to screen each evacuee, as if these were routine flights and not an emergency rescue. Brown's account of such bureaucratic struggles makes him out to be almost an object of sympathy.

Almost. I asked Brown what he thought he did wrong during Katrina. "I think one of the big mistakes was adhering to the talking points," Brown told me. "I should have said, 'You know, we're doing everything we can, but here's why it's not working as well as we want it to.'"

Brown also argues that internal politics worked against him. He was an ally of Joe Allbaugh, Bush's chief of staff in Texas and a member of the so-called Iron Triangle with Karen Hughes and Karl Rove. According to Brown, once Rove had muscled out Allbaugh, he was next on the chopping block.

"Karl had gone to the Oval and basically said, look, boss, we shouldn't put Brown in there [as FEMA director]," Brown said. "And it became, because Joe was now gone, let's get rid of Mike, too."

Rove admits in his own book that he resisted Brown's nomination to the job in 2003, but he says it was because he "didn't think [Brown] had the background for the job." And Bush, in his memoir, writes that Brown's resignation came after Chertoff told the president that he had "lost confidence" in Brown. "[Chertoff] felt the FEMA director had frozen under the pressure and become insubordinate," Bush writes.

Brown's account corroborates the standard Bush administration defense on Katrina: Many state and local officials were negligent before the hurricane hit and unhelpful afterward. This incompetence at the local level was long an underreported part of the Katrina story.

"You're damn right I'd become insubordinate," Brown told me. "Decisions were being questioned, overturned, and the whole issue of who was in charge was now filtering throughout the region."

Brown's account corroborates the standard Bush administration defense on Katrina: Many state and local officials were negligent before the hurricane hit and unhelpful once the flooding and rioting began in New Orleans. This incompetence at the local level, which severely compromised the federal response, was long an underreported part of the Katrina story.

Two days before Katrina made landfall, for instance, on August 27, the National Hurricane Center asked Mayor Ray Nagin to evacuate New Orleans as the hurricane picked up speed in the Gulf. Instead, Nagin suggested a voluntary evacuation.

And on September 3, days after the levees in New Orleans had been breached, President Bush advised Governor Kathleen Blanco to request federalization of the disaster. Brown writes that he "was certain this would be a turning point in our efforts to respond and start the recovery process." But Blanco requested 24 hours to "think about it," and Bush acquiesced. Brown writes, "I knew it would be the death knell for that option."

Be that as it may, the narrative was quickly established: The federal government failed New Orleans, and Brown was a big part of why. *Dangerous Indifference* offers, as if it were a unique insight, that politicians sometimes go into "cover your ass" (CYA) mode during and after a crisis. Brown says the Bush administration played CYA by making him a scapegoat. But Brown apparently never stops to wonder whether he's just covering his own. ♦

Semper Fly

With wounded warriors in quiet waters

Marine Josh Kelly, left, and volunteer guide Dennis Kavanagh wading the Madison

By Matt Labash

Close after dawn and armed with a local map I take a stroll in empty fields, canyons, woods, but preferably near a creek or river because since childhood I've loved the sound they make. Moving water is forever in the present tense, a condition we rather achingly avoid.

—Jim Harrison, Off to the Side

Bozeman, Montana

Nearly every fly fisherman I know is a celebrator of the absurd. You have to be to spend years of your life standing in cold water, flogging it endlessly with a plastic stick, hoping to outsmart a fish with a chickpea-sized brain by duping it with feather and fur. If you're successful and conscientious, you will punch a hole through its mouth with sharp steel, play it to hand, admire its beauty or power, then gently return it to the water to swim away freely, as if this senseless blood pageant had never occurred. It's a pastime that rewards those who don't examine it too closely.

When people ask for justification of such folly, I usually skip the purple stuff about communing with nature, or the genetic imperative to scratch the predatory itch, or the satisfaction that comes from holding a wild creature in a world that tames just about everything. Like most fellow zealots, I'm not interested in justification. I just need to fish. And as I've written before, if you spend enough time on the water, you will meet all kinds of fishermen who are dropouts and ne'er-do-wells, men bent on cheating time and ducking out of the world. But you will meet very few hopeless fishermen. For fishing forces optimism even into the soul-sick and the beaten. As the Scottish novelist John Buchan said, "The charm of fishing is that it is the pursuit of what is elusive but attainable, a perpetual series of occasions for hope."

And so last month, I came here to meet an outfit of hope merchants, led by a retired Marine colonel, Eric Hastings, cofounder and head of Warriors and Quiet Waters. Since 2007, Hastings and his merry band of 276 guides, drivers, cooks, board members, and volunteers—nobody is paid, including him—carry out a mission that is simply stated:

MIKE CLINE

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"to employ the therapeutic and rehabilitative qualities of fly fishing for trout on Montana's rivers and streams to help heal traumatically wounded U.S. servicemen and women." Hastings elaborates: "I know what it's like to be in combat, and I also know that *semper fi*—always faithful—is more than just a slick motto. You can't just walk off into the sunset. This is an honor contract between Americans and the people who were sent to war in their name. It's about serving your fellow warriors."

And serve they do. Relying on mostly modest donations from individuals, seven times a year Warriors and Quiet Waters (WQW) fly out a group of a half dozen wounded soldiers, sailors, or Marines from their hospital wards and rehabilitation programs for a weeklong stay (sometimes they hold couples retreats, too, since wives often suffer as much after the injury). These are warriors fresh off the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq. They've been shot up, blown up, and every other up that man has designed to obliterate his enemy. Some arrive missing limbs and eyes and chunks of skull. All arrive missing other things they can't quite articulate—the result of either Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI), or often both.

They are housed at the 356 Ranch, a donated spacious log home on 20 private acres, with every amenity from a sauna to a stocked trout pond to a postcard view of the Bridger Mountains. They are looked after by "house moms." My cycle's mom, Celia O'Connor (along with her husband, Tom, a retired Navy officer), stays on the grounds in a pickup camper, where she wakes before dawn for days of cooking meals for these visitors. The warriors are kitted up with thousands of dollars worth of 5-weight fly rods and top-of-the-line Simms waders and fishing gear (which—unusual in similar programs—they get for keeps). They are taken fishing everywhere from farm ponds to spring creeks to Montana's blue-ribbon big boys, like the Yellowstone and Madison rivers. Mostly learning by doing, they are instructed on everything from casting to mending line to fly tying on pricey Regal vises, which they also take home.

They are given choice fly-tying materials hand-selected for them by the local legendary fly tier, Willy Self, a grizzled Marine veteran who mans the counter at one of the nation's great fly shops, Bozeman's Montana Troutfitters, which doubles as WQW's staging area for fishing outings. Famous for flies like his Wiggle Damsel and his Fruit Roll-up, Willy tells new recruits not to pick squirrel fur off the asphalt to make road-kill flies or you'll end up with carpet beetles eating through your stock. They listen. As Willy convincingly tells it, "I do three things in my life—I fly fish, I row a boat, and I tie bugs. If it's anything else, I'm not interested."

Southwest Montana is fly fishing's Mecca, and the passion ran deep here long before *A River Runs Through It* sparked a fly-fishing boom and yuppification. (Many locations around Bozeman doubled for the Big Blackfoot River/Missoula of the Norman Maclean novella when it was made into a film in 1992. Now some old-timers moan about "Bozeangeles.")

Here, even the lowliest gas station carries fishing guidebooks. My room at a nondescript chain hotel contains a framed hatch chart of the nearby Gallatin River. When I walk into the C'Mon Inn lobby in my waders to ask driving directions, the fishing-bum hotel clerk, unable to help himself, has to know, "Where you fishing?" Then he draws me a map to his favorite spot, promising to behead me if I publish it or stay past the weekend when he's due for his return engagement.

'I know what it's like to be in combat, and I also know that *semper fi*—always faithful—is more than just a slick motto. You can't just walk off into the sunset. This is an honor contract between Americans and the people who were sent to war in their name.'

I arrive a day before the wounded warriors to spend an afternoon of solitude on the majestic freestoner, the Gallatin. The river runs out of the Gallatin Range in Yellowstone Park, tumbles through a boulder-strewn alpine canyon, then pushes briskly through the Gallatin Valley or what local Indians used to call "The Valley of the Flowers." There're no flowers now, however, as frigid Montana still hasn't gotten word that spring is two months old. The mountain snowfall, finally about to melt, will soon blow out the rivers, turning them into unfishable milk.

At Troutfitters, Willy Self gives urgent instructions while showing me a map: "Park here and hit the trail. You'll want to fish. Don't. I want you to walk. When you're absolutely tired of walking, walk some more. Then I want you to start fishing." I do as I'm told, and pull three fat brown trout on the rubber-legged stone fly that Willy prescribed. I might have had time to catch a few more if the colonel hadn't ordered me to attend a one-on-one briefing.

If anybody rivals Willy in believing in the sacrosanctity of fishing, it is this retired Marine fighter pilot. The 68-year-old Hastings is basically the Great Santini, Big Sky edition. He snaps out commands in a barkish rasp. Ever the organized officer, he hands me my own thick three-ring binder full of contact numbers,

hour-by-hour schedules for the coming week, and aerial maps of the "F/X's"—what he calls the "fishing experience." Then he warns, "The plan always changes when I have contact with the enemy."

Hastings is a man of surprises. Retiring after three decades in the Marine Corps, he decided to study classical piano, getting his master's degree from Mannes at the age of 56, among the oldest graduates in the conservatory's history. He still wakes up around 5 A.M. to play for several hours, though he adds, "Being a good Marine, I don't play the piano, I assault it."

But Hastings is also uniquely qualified to run this wounded warriors operation. An A-4 pilot, he flew 168 missions in Vietnam under the call sign "Sinus," an unfortunate nickname he earned for his legendary sinus blockages. "I was renowned for passing out at 30,000 feet," he says, still wincing at the label. "Sometimes for seconds, sometimes minutes. One time I woke up at 6,000 feet. It was kind of dangerous. I was hoping for anything else—Tiger, Shark, Evil One. So what do I get tagged with? Sinus."

Eric Hastings

In all his sorties, he never lost a plane. Though he did lose other things, he makes clear, pointing to a photo in the memorabilia room of his basement of two swaggering fighter jocks standing beside each other in G-suits. One of them is a much younger Hastings. The other, he says, "was killed—he was my best friend."

Hastings didn't have much say in becoming a fly fisherman. Not only is he a native Montanan, but his dad was the state entomologist and a deadly dry-fly assassin. "He tied his own flies, he knew his bugs backwards and forwards," says Hastings. "I can categorically assert that my father was the best fly fisherman in Montana. Even when there was no hatch, he would coax fish to rise from the depths."

As a young boy in the days before felt soles, Hastings and his father stuck carpet swatches to the bottom of their boots with Barge Cement to grip the eel-slick rocks of the Gallatin, where a misstep in a fast run can send you on a very long swim. He started fishing at eight years old, but put it away as a teenager after discovering beer and girls. Upon going active duty in the Marines, he returned to fly fishing in earnest. Even while on deployments, "I had to get back to Montana to fish." In some ways, fishing saved him. Hastings is a professed "alcoholic—haven't had a drink since 1975." After Vietnam, he says, taking a pregnant pause, "Some aspects of this story I don't really want to talk about. . . . Let's just say that I knew that I needed to get away to a peaceful place. I got out on the river, and that brought the peace almost immediately."

Having moved 28 times in a 30-year Marine career, the Hastings family is still about as committed to the military as one can be. Both adult sons are Marine officers—having pulled deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq, leaving no rest for Eric's war-weary wife, Jean, who says, "If you send your husband, you can always get another husband. If you send your son, you don't get another son." But several years back, when the couple went on a fishing trip together in Canada for "prairie sharks" (northern pike), Hastings's wheels started turning as to how he could bring wounded warriors to Montana to find the peace he found through fishing.

Hastings joined forces with a local retired doctor named Volney Steele, who was having similar thoughts. Their organization was born along the lines of the well-established Project Healing Waters, which was started in 2005 at Walter Reed and now has about 80 chapters throughout the country. But Warriors and Quiet Waters tends to be more intensive, plus they outfit the servicemen, presumably affording a better chance to keep them fishing for life. In no way does the organization play politics. After spending a week amongst its staff, I couldn't tell you how they feel about our wars. It's beside the point. Warriors don't get to choose which wars they fight. They just have to fight them.

"They're not up here to discuss why they got injured," Hastings says. "They're up here to heal. You can ask the question 'why' for the rest of your life, and you'll never get a good answer. Not one that's going to make you comfortable with your circumstances. It's like Job in the Bible—'Why me, Lord?'"

WQW is nonreligious, but the name came to Hastings at his Methodist church, where he noticed water motifs everywhere—such as on the banner containing a New American Standard translation of the 23rd Psalm: "He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul." Hastings recites the opening line of Norman Maclean's book, one every fly fisherman knows: "In our family, there was no clear line between religion and fly fishing."

"Well, I believe that," says Hastings. "That's true for me. Always has been. The two interweave and cross over." So when his pastor preached a sermon on water, the name "Warriors and Quiet Waters" was clinched. He can still recall his pastor's words: "The thing about a river is, it is never the same. It is constantly changing. It's changing as we speak. The water is passage. It's like time. Those

molecules are downstream, they're gone—they can't be regained in any way." It struck a chord in him, Hastings says, "that you can't regain what is lost, and that you can't expect to . . ."

He trails off, and I ask him to finish his thought, but he turns back into the salty Marine.

"Well I don't know . . . that's bulls—t," he growls. "So the point is, there's all these quotes about water."

In Hastings's truck on our way to meet the wounded warriors at the airport, we are joined by the group's fly fishing director, Collin Brown, a rangy, dark-humored high school teacher/fishing guide and a fourth generation Montanan, owner of Montana's Last Best Outfitters. "I was born with a shotgun in one hand and a fly rod in the other," Collin explains. This comes in handy for the "cast-and-blast" floats he does with clients, in which they carefully catch-and-release beautiful trout, before turning around and pegging ducks out of the sky from his drift boat.

Recalling past fishing operations, Hastings and Brown say the rhythm rarely varies. Servicemen arrive on the first day tight and tepid and often distrustful. Some don't talk or smile. Most have never fished at all, let alone fly fished. By the third day or so, they've been bombarded by loving instruction (even though Collin, who has a special touch with the most introverted warriors, playfully mocks them as nancies after suspect casts). They've been overwhelmed by Montana's storybook scenery and by kindness from the volunteers. They begin understanding that they're receiving a gift, in being taught to fish, that they can keep reopening for the rest of their lives. So their shoulders start relaxing and their countenances lift. Many who are plagued by insomnia and night terrors start sleeping again.

Overwhelmed by the storybook scenery and by kindness from the volunteers, the servicemen begin understanding that they're receiving a gift, in being taught to fish, that they can keep reopening for the rest of their lives.

While some are initially gung-ho about racking up big numbers on the water, often they learn as the week goes on that the best part of fishing is sometimes only tangentially related to actually catching fish. Floating a river like the Yellowstone, says Collin, "I've watched more warriors by that third day catch one fish, then reel up, sit in the boat, and just watch."

There is more than anecdotal evidence behind such claims of rehabilitative benefits. PTSD is notoriously hard to treat. As Charles W. Hoge reported in his book *Once a Warrior Always a Warrior*, it's common for no more than 50 percent of treated individuals to show greater improvements than those who remain untreated. In fact, he and his researchers found in a 2007 study that soldiers referred for PTSD from the Department of Defense post-deployment health assessment who failed to show up for their mental health appointments actually did better than those who attended them, with many of the soldiers who improved doing so on their own.

But Rivers of Recovery, a Wyoming-based organization founded in 2008 with a mission similar to WQW's, has gone further than anyone in actually quantifying the rehabilitative benefits of fishing. They've conducted scientific studies, in conjunction with researchers from several universities, on the psychological effects. What they found in a one-month follow up after they'd taken PTSD-diagnosed veterans on a two-day, three-night fly fishing retreat on Utah's Green River: improvements, often significant ones, in everything from perceptual stress, sleep quality, anxiety, depression, guilt, hostility, and fear. Additionally, they reported a 67 percent increase in perceptions of serenity, a 33 percent increase in self-assuredness, and a 67 percent increase in joviality. Not too shabby for a few days of water-flogging that took place a month prior.

Many volunteers with WQW tell me that doctors and physical therapists have told them they saw more improvement in patients after one of these six-day trips than they had in six months of conventional therapy and rehab. And WQW hosts some very hard cases, as is evident from Hastings's and Brown's war stories.

There was Elliot Miller, a Navy SEAL, a leg amputee who'd lost so much blood he had nerve injury and brain damage, could barely move his hands, and had to grunt to communicate. When he arrived, he couldn't put sugar in a cup of coffee. But during a fly-tying lesson from which he felt excluded, he bumped Hastings in the back of the knees in his wheelchair to gain access to the table. Then, under the patient tutelage of their fly-tying instructor, he tied a Woolly Bugger. It took him 45 minutes to complete one, but his doctors back home were dumbfounded.

There was Erin Schaefer, an Army sergeant, a double below-knee amputee. Schaefer, after a satisfying day of fishing, walked up 13 log steps to his room in his prosthetics, removed them, then hobbled back down on his butt and hands. Though dabbing his still-weeping stumps with cloth, says Hastings, he arrived at the "dinner table with a happy smile on his sun-reddened face." And there was Blake Smith, a Marine captain, a leg amputee with significant nerve damage and wheelchair-confined. Despite his

demeaning personal care issues in close quarters, Hastings recalls watching "him blossom after days of instruction and fishing, and holding and crying with him in my own anger and sadness, yet buoyed by his strength in the face of unfairness and PTSD."

On a lighter note, Collin fished with Adam Kisielewski, a Marine who'd lost an arm and leg after an IED blast. Adam established an all-time record for the program, while learning to strip line with his teeth and wrap it around his stump. He caught 100 fish in three days. So frantic were he and Collin to hit 100 (Adam caught 60-plus trout on hoppers on Sixteen Mile Creek) that it got to the point, says Collin, "that he would jump on my back and I'd carry him to the next run. It was hilarious. A hundred fish! What the hell? Did we just do that? As we were driving home, he told me he had sand in his foot. Usually you pull off a boot. He pulled off his foot. I have a picture of us going 70 down a dirt road to get back for the farewell dinner. We're hauling ass, and he's emptying his actual foot of sand."

'As we were driving home, he told me he had sand in his foot.'

Perhaps most impressive was Marine corporal Matt Bradford, a double amputee, one leg above the knee, the other below, with a shrapnel-injured right hand, TBI, and PTSD. Additionally, he's blind. That didn't stop him from learning how to catch fish on a dry fly. Being a good Marine, like so many of these new fishing recruits, he was a fast learner and knew how to follow orders. A spotter guide would use the clock code, and Bradford learned how to throw 20 meters of line at the 2 o'clock position. The guide would tell him to mend line, let it drift, standby, and then when the fish would rise, he'd yell "strike." The first time, Bradford set the fish so hard he yanked it out of the water, clean over his shoulder. But he settled down, and caught fish after fish. "How perfect is that?" asks Hastings. "The next thing you know, there's a blind guy with a rainbow or brown ripping all over the river."

We get to the airfield, and a group of volunteers turn out to receive the wounded warriors—this time six Marines who've flown in on a C-12 turboprop from Air Station Miramar in California. As they deplane, creaky from their neck and back issues, I notice they all have their limbs, eyes, and other essential parts. They've all been shot or blown up or both. Everyone has Purple Hearts. But they seem healthy enough. Except for one who periodically uses a cane, they all walk on their own steam and carry their own bags.

The proud American in me is relieved for them, grateful for their sacrifice, but glad they're seemingly in one piece. The selfish journalist in me reflects on the harrowing stories of physical ailments that I just heard in the truck, coming to one inevitable conclusion: From a writing standpoint, I got hosed.

I mention this, as tactfully as possible, to Hastings. Doesn't he think he could've managed to bring me out when a few amputees, at least, were coming, just for illustration's sake? They had one in the lineup, he says, but he dropped out and was replaced by a nonamputee at the last second. Hastings suggests diving deeper, however. Just wait, he says. These Marines, suffering from PTSD, aren't as in the clear as they look.

Sometimes, the worst injuries are the ones you can't see.

The warriors are immediately caravanned to Simms HQ. There, they get suited up by the outfitter, which gives WQW all their normally pricey gear at cost (plus some freebie extras): boots, waders, wading staffs, chest-pouches, the works. "You guys got better s—t than me," grouses Collin, "and I do this for a living." While waiting for pizzas to arrive for lunch, I make the acquaintance of Joshua Kelly, the Marine I saw tottering with a cane. His commitment to the Corps is second only to his commitment to unfiltered Camels, so he goes outside for a smoke.

Boyish, with a Wisconsin accent, Josh looks fresh out of a Norman Rockwell painting where the girls are pigtailed and the boys are freckled and everyone flirts harmlessly at the soda fountain. Hastings repeatedly razzes the 23-year-old, calling him "The Teenager." "If it makes you feel younger," Josh retaliates. Looks, however, can be deceiving.

Josh has packed a full life into his time on earth, and almost saw that time expire. The fix was in early on his becoming a Marine. His dad, whom he just recently met for the first time after getting injured, was a Marine. And his mother was a Marine drill instructor. While some kids grew

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up watching *Sesame Street* or *Barney*, Josh was raised watching *Sands of Iwo Jima.* A lance corporal with the 2/3 Weapons Company, Josh was an infantry assaultman and part-time tunnel rat because of his size. "My specialty is explosives and breaching and clearing stuff," he says. Josh pulled tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan, only seven months apart.

In Iraq, he didn't see much contact by the time things were trailing off in 2008. He was shot at twice, and his convoy hit three IEDs. "That's a joke," he says. But when he went to Afghanistan in 2009, it was a "whole 'nother world." His squad alone got hit by 35 IEDs. He once saw 15 IEDs detonated in a single day. The law of averages finally caught up with him. When the blast exploded his Humvee, it came through the floorboard and broke Josh's right foot, as a chunk of the engine landed on his left ankle. His feet were in the vehicle, his body thrown outside of it. His Oakley glasses were pushed into his face from the dashboard impact. When he took off his Kevlar, the Oakleys came with it, ripping his face into a gusher of blood and dirt. He was blind for the next 24 hours.

The pizza comes, and Josh takes a piece to make the organizers feel good, but won't eat any. Even after the long trip, he's not hungry.

The docs told Josh he'd need both feet amputated. For a whole month, he thought he'd be a double amputee. "It doesn't hit you too hard until you get home and see your family and have to tell them," he says. Though he hastens to add he knows a lot of amputees from time logged in the Wounded Warrior Battalion. "They're the greatest people," he says. "They tend to be in a good mood. You've been there, and see that your life can end, so you take advantage of it from that point on."

But after 15 surgeries, a doctor changed his mind, telling Josh he'd keep his feet, though he'd never walk again. He did just that eight months after he got hit. Then they said he'd need assisted walking for the rest of his life. Now, despite arthritis in his feet, Josh can mostly manage without a cane. So they're telling him he'll never run. But why start betting against himself? If he can't run, he can't get back into the fight. And he wants back into the fight, especially with the recent news of Osama's death, which he furtively admits, not wishing to offend the house moms, "gave me wood."

He thinks he did good over there, and knows that Afghanistan might be hopeless. "But even if somebody's in the bank holding it up," he says, "You can save a lot of people if you take care of it then and there. I kind of wanna be that guy." I ask how much of his wanting to go back is proving to himself that he can. "About 50 percent," Josh says. He used to think firefights were fun. He still loves hunting, "because the closest thing to shooting at a person is shooting at an animal." But now he doesn't know how he'd react to the pandemonium.

"That's the test, y'know?" says Josh. "I've been in that situation before. I don't know what's going to happen when I get in that situation again. I like to think my training will take over. But you never know. I've seen the biggest, toughest guys hiding behind a Humvee when the first shot goes off. If you want to find out what happens, you do it. You go over there. And that's what I intend on doing."

After pizza at Simms, the caravan moves on to Cold Stone Creamery, and there's dinner at the ranch still to come. The warriors joke that they'll all need to go to a fat farm after their fishing trip. I fall into conversation with Lawrence Salcido. He's the grand ol' man of the group at 37, and holding senior rank, as a gunnery sergeant. The others lapse into calling him "Gunny," though he blanches, insisting that they call him "Sal," as nobody wears rank around here. (Hastings himself says, "I want them to focus on recovery, not on being nice to some old f—in' colonel.")

Guide Al Gadoury and Josh Kelly

Unlike Josh, Sal's had it with the fight. He never considered himself a warmonger, "but if something needed to get done, it needed to get done." Things changed for him "when I saw this girl I knew get blown up." Or maybe it was picking up Marine remains off the side of the road. Or maybe the burned kids at Brook Army Medical. "I call them kids," he says, reproaching himself. "It's hard for me not to —they're so young, 19, 20 years old. It's like man, time to move on, I think."

When his vehicle was hit by an IED in Afghanistan, Sal only had two weeks to go before coming home from his fifth combat deployment. His turret gunner got blown out of the vehicle. The 50 cal. sailed 100 meters off. Both axles were gone. Sal broke his thoracic vertebrae #4 thru

#8, and caught shrapnel in his thigh and the inside of his mouth. He fought for breath, and had an out of body experience, trying to get a message to his wife to tell his three daughters he loved them, to no avail. (An old combat buddy living stateside, he found out later, bolted upright in bed the moment he got hit, saying, "Something is wrong with Sal.")

Before he was hit, Sal used to tell people that PTSD was a sham, something that afflicted a "weak-minded person." Now he knows better, and has had to apologize to a lot of people. "I was wrong, because it's there." He tells of trying to assume the combat fighting stance in bed, even when his back was broken. "A boom goes off in your head in the middle of the night, you can't get to sleep," he says. "Or you have dreams where you're riding in a Humvee, screaming, 'Get me out. I'd rather walk.' Cause people get killed in Humvees. You can just take a soda can and crumple it up, cause that's what Humvees look like when they get hit by an IED."

Lawrence 'Sal' Salcido on the Yellowstone

He used to train for marathons, working out like a fiend, running in place in the Afghan dirt. But he hasn't been able to do anything since getting blown up. At night, he says, "you still feel like you ran a 26-mile marathon and can't do nothing about it." After returning home from his last four deployments, he could leave the war behind. But those days are over. His wife says he's changed. His nights are no longer his own.

He recently had a dream where he sees a man on the street pushing a woman, then beating her up. "Normally," he says, "I'd go get the guy. But I was like, hey, it's none of my business." Then he saw the woman running off, the man pursuing her, and he heard her getting stabbed. And Sal, the man who once asked his Army Ranger father what service he should join that would push him the hardest (his father told him the Marines), the man who is not afraid of much, admits, "I'm afraid. I'm huddled down. I'm not doing anything. I woke up and am pissed off beyond belief for not having the courage to get up and go get that guy. I'm pacing back and forth. My wife says, 'It was just a dream. You wouldn't do that in real life. You would smack him around.'"

"It's weird," Sal says, over the happy clatter of customers getting served Cookie Mintsters and Mud Pie Mojos. "I don't know what's broken in me. I don't know. I can only tell you my dreams."

The next morning brings the first fishing day. Before hitting the water, the warriors get a casting lesson at Montana State University's field house. Collin takes the reins, dryly informing them that this is his first time fly fishing, too. He asks how many have seen *A River Runs Through It.* Everyone has. "Good," he says, "Forget everything you saw." This is fly fishing, not rhythmic gymnastics. A shadow-casting Brad Pitt standing on a rock, looping 80 feet of line side to side without his fly ever touching the water, might look really cool. But it has nothing to do with catching fish.

Hastings decides even reporters can be useful on occasion, so I'm assigned to various warriors throughout the week as one of the "volunteer companions," assisting with gear, taking pictures, giving occasional tips when the actual experts are out of earshot. My first draw is Michael Grimmius, a 22-year-old who looks like a physical trainer. It's what he intends to be when he gets out of the Marines, which can't come soon enough for him, having not been able to live near his wife, who is stuck in medical school, for four years.

He'll be one of the few physical trainers in the business missing part of his triceps, which he lost after someone threw a bag of grenades into an alley in Afghanistan (he also caught shrapnel in the throat). After hearing the bang, Mike took a knee, and thought he'd gotten away clean. Then he felt wet and cold. "Looked down at my arm, and it was dripping blood," Mike says. "That can't be good."

Mike is a natural athlete, so he picks up fly casting quickly. Nearly all of the Marines do. Some pick it up so quickly that their guides move on to teaching them how to play fish by letting a volunteer companion pull on the line

and run. Mike's guide, Steve McGrath, spares me the indignity. "With us as your guides, you won't have to worry about hooking any fish," he tells Mike.

WQW likes to ensure success on the first outing as a confidence builder, so they take warriors to promiscuity ponds, places where the fish are dumb and slutty, which this morning happens to be at a spring-fed farm pond called "Ducky's." At Ducky's, everyone puts on their waders, and McGrath gets in his vest, which looks to be covered in fish slime like it might never have been washed. It happens. Fishermen tend to lose track of time. His vest bears a rainbow trout pin his son put there when he was four. "He's 34 now," says McGrath.

The three of us aren't in the water ten minutes before Mike hooks up, and lands his first-ever rainbow trout, a glistening, wriggling 14-incher. I immortalize the moment on film. Mike looks like a kid who just got a pony for Christmas.

I wade back to shore and walk around the pond to check others' progress. I see Saul Martinez, a double amputee, joyously hobbling around in shorts, chasing his young toddler Ezekiel, his prosthetic metal legs catching glints of sunlight. Saul cycled through the program a few years back and liked it so much that after getting out of the Army, he moved to Bozeman and is now a student at MSU, as well as being WQW's "wounded warrior adviser."

Michael Grimmius and guide Kevin Guettler on the Yellowstone

He left his legs in Iraq in 2007. His thick forearms are tattooed testaments to the other things he left behind—memorials to all his buddies who didn't make it out of the smoldering wreckage after the IED attack on their Hummer. He still remembers the smell—that of charred steak—every time he sprays PAM on the barbecue. He stayed in Montana, he says, partly because just look around, partly because of his time spent with the good folks of WQW. "The way they treated me here, it was almost like I was a normal guy," says Saul. And he looks pretty normal too, except that his prosthetics can't take the steep bank, which shifts him off-balance. So he sits on the ground, throwing high back casts up into the sky, so as not to get hooked on the grass.

I don't know who this Ducky is, but his pond is a honey hole. Everywhere, warriors are pulling rainbows and browns and even the occasional brookie. No fish seems to be under 14 inches, and most are plenty bigger. Volunteers aren't allowed to fish—organizers don't want them to compete with the warriors. But I'm itching to fetch my 6-weight out of the trunk. Watching all these beautiful trout landed, I'm starting to feel like I was invited to a supermodel orgy, then told to sit in the corner and do a crossword puzzle.

At the far end of the pond, I spy Josh, who has more spinning rod experience than anyone here, catching bass and pike back home. And so he calmly plays fish after fish without ever putting out his Camel. I ask him if his first fly rod-caught fish was better than sex. "Better than sex with a fish, yeah," he says, beaming.

Standing nearby is Zachary Gillilan, a 21-year-old blond Californian, the wild man of the bunch. His forearm ink says it all: "Insane Infidel," inscribed in Pashto, so the message wasn't lost on the Afghans. "It was gonna say 'F—k Allah,'" Zach says. "But that'll be my next one—figure I'll get that on my left butt cheek."

Zach, who's diagnosed with TBI and PTSD, practices what I can only describe as combat fishing. Though the fish presumably can't hear him, he taunts them the entire time: *Put it in your mouth you dirty whore. . . . We'll get these Taliban. . . . Trying to hide on the bottom and s—t, okay, where you at?* It doesn't stop him from tying into fish after fish. I want to warn the Marines that fly fishing isn't often such an easy bounty. But they're enjoying themselves so much that I don' t have the heart.

Zach has a fish on—his umpteenth rainbow. His guide, Jack Weiss, moves to net it, but the mulish fish won't come in. Zach pulls up hard, and then harder still, until the fly slingshots from the trout's lip and sticks solidly up Jack's right nostril. Zach looks at Jack for a beat, then without expression, cups his hand around his mouth, yelling to the rest of the pond, "I gotta big one!"

Zach apologizes, offering, "When you're out with Zach, things go whack," by way of explanation. Jack looks peeved for a second, but then starts laughing maniacally, as Zach

and his catch pose for pictures, with the nymph still up Jack's nose and blood still dripping down his waders.

After the violence subsides, Zach and I take a seat at the pond's edge, where he tells me his life story. He too knew he was destined to be a Marine. When he was a toddler, his mother tells him, he used to crowd the television screen, gape-mouthed and mesmerized, telling everyone to shut up whenever "The Few, The Proud, The Marines" commercial came on.

A troubled kid from a broken home, he spent his childhood in a mad swirl of fistfights, run-ins with the law, car accidents, and the like. Most of these Marines are daredevils and adrenaline junkies—rock-climbers, ultimate fighters.

'I gotta big one!': Nose-hooked guide Jack Weiss and Zach Gillilan

Even the quiet one, Mike, enjoys spearfishing in shark-infested waters at night near his base in Hawaii.

But Zach is in another league, preferring illegal street racing—sometimes against highway patrolmen who don't understand it's a game. He once rolled his grandmother's car 23 times and walked away. Another time, he and his buddy decided to jump his truck off a ramp, which would've flipped and crushed them were it not for the tow-rings catching the ground and righting the vehicle. They just laughed, drank some more tequila and Jäger, and drove off into the night. Zach failed to add yet another concussion to the 14 he's had, only a fraction of which are combat-related. "I've lost a lot of brain cells," Zach confesses. "Sometimes, I feel like a test-bunny for the Lord." Zach's currently in the Marines' Wounded Warrior Battalion, but says he's being processed out because, as he characterizes the doctor's opinion, "I've been hit in the head too much and have gone retarded."

Despite his early fascination, Zach almost went to jail instead of the Marines when he took the rap for a group of friends who were accused of breaking into someone's house. He didn't do it, he says. But he was a suspect. Once a promising football player who looked destined for a college scholarship, he had become by then a high-school dropout. He figured they had something to lose, he didn't.

A Marine recruiter acquaintance of his knew he was innocent and went to bat with the judge, earning Zach a reprieve. "When he stood up for me like that," Zach says, "I saw that sense of brotherhood come from nothing, and I wasn't even a Marine yet. I could feel the brotherhood. I knew I was going to be a Marine no matter what. Nothing was going to change that."

He ended up going to Helmand Province in Afghanistan. One day, at the end of a foot patrol, Zach and his best friend, Lance Corporal Richard Penny, were walking near each other. The men were a hundred yards from their base's entry control point. They could see the flags. Zach looked at his buddy one last time, before the latter stepped on a pressure plate. Zach remembers the blast, but was knocked unconscious and thrown down a hill. "When I came to," he says, "I looked up the hill to see what was going on. I saw my buddy in many pieces."

Zach was flown to Germany, where he punched his doctor out, after phasing in and out of consciousness, then coming to and thinking he was still in Afghanistan. Aside from TBI, he has short-term memory loss and lost partial vision in his left eye. He fractured his L-5 disc, has nerve damage in his neck and lower back, and his ankle won't turn correctly—the docs can't even say what's wrong with it. He was on bed rest for months, his equilibrium messed up. Every time he stood, he collapsed to the floor. He no longer has patience for little things, like standing in lines, or civilian complacency. They say Zach has severe PTSD, but he doesn't think so.

I mean sure, Zach says, "I have flashbacks and nightmares. And almost every night I go to bed, I see his face. And I see him in pieces. I see the blood running down the hill. But to me, that's not PTSD. It's just my form of healing and punishment for what I did. It's the Lord healing me in a very cruel and tough-loving way." Zach insists it's his fault that Penny, whom he commemorates in ink down one whole side of his arm, is dead.

Zach says he slacked off at the end of the patrol, that he was fiddling with his drop pouch, and drifted left. Penny,

he says, being the Marine that he was, just covered his lane. When Zach talks about this episode over meals or on the water, Hastings and the fishing guides assure him that he cannot and should not blame himself for Penny's death. But Zach won't have it.

"Nothing's gonna take him out of my head," says Zach, matter of factly. "That's okay. 'Cause I don't want to forget. I always wanna remember that day, and the pain I felt. The remorse I felt. And the guilt I have inside of me. I learn from my mistakes. That's what my mother taught me. It's my fault that my best friend is dead. I got complacent. He corrected my movement and stepped on the bomb I was supposed to step on."

I ask Zach if he wishes he had stepped on that bomb instead. "Yeah," he says. "Every day. I wish every day that Penny was here and I wasn't. Yes sir. He deserves to be in this life more than me. Not the other way around."

One morning, guide Collin Brown and I pack into his Xterra with the "TRTBUM" license plates along with one of the wounded warriors, Staff Sergeant Richard Gonzalez. Josh and his guide, Al Gadoury, are in another vehicle, and we're off to secret water—a spring-creek-fed pond that overspills into the Gallatin up near Big Sky. It's a place that's lousy with so many torpedoes—18-25 inch fish—that even Al, who is friends with the owner, is only allowed to fish it one day per year.

Collin's truck looks like the Fly-Fishing-Mobile. Not only are the dashboard and ceiling stuck with favorite retired flies such as the Sex Dungeon and Butt Monkey. But you have to crook your head to the side on account of all the fly rods he's racked straight through the cabin. He used to break them down for his girlfriend's sake, but finally figured she'd better get used to it. When clients ask him if he wants to marry someone who fishes, he tells them, "F—k no! I want a girl who rows!"

In black wraparound shades, with all his tats, from "USMC" on his knuckles to "No Sacrifice" and "No Victory" on successive forearms, 29-year-old Richard Gonzalez looks like he could be a gang-banger. He fought professionally as a Mixed Martial Arts fighter ("I shadow cast," injects Collin, "talk about tough"). And in Fallujah, where he was a corporal with the 3rd Battalion 1st Marines, he participated in Operation Phantom Fury in November 2004, the heaviest urban campaign U.S. Marines have been in since the Battle of Hue in Vietnam. There, he was known as the "Mad Bomber," the kind of guy who'd put a satchel charge on an insurgent cadaver and blow a house into history. "I was pretty lethal," says Richard, without braggadocio. "They'd get me a foothold, and I'd end the whole day for everybody."

"Here, you're the Mad Caster," says Collin.

"I was hoping for Master Baiter," says Richard.

"I'm going to open a fly shop called Master Bait and Tackle," shoots back Collin.

"Tackle Master Baiters," Richard improves.

And so they go on. Collin and Richard's rapport is deep and immediate. But it doesn't usually go that way for Richard. He has problems. Serious ones. Books—such as Bing West's *No True Glory*—have been written about the battles Richard fought in. Securing Fallujah after it had been turned into an insurgent funhouse was the bloodiest work of the Iraq war—confusing and ferocious house-to-house combat. In one month alone—the month Richard was injured—70 Americans were killed and 609 wounded. "We were in the middle of a platoon-sized element firefight," says Richard. "I've never been in a scarier situation in my life."

Richard Gonzalez and tattoos

COLLIN BROWN

It started out a calm enough morning. Richard remembers eating blackberry jam on a cracker. But when word came that another unit was pinned down, his guys joined the fight. When they arrived, Richard says, "It felt like that street was a mile long. Not only were you fighting insurgents, but they had every street hooked up. They weren't even hiding IEDs. Wired up right in the open. Bullets flying through the sides of Humvees. S—t's hitting me in my

face. I normally run around with 50 lbs. of C-4, a rocket, and all my gear too. I dropped it all, picked up magazines, loaded up, and me and my gunner, we just continued to fight. Run and gun."

Richard was shot multiple times, catching a round in the Kevlar, one in his arm, and three in his back. He kept fighting. "We didn't have a choice. There was nowhere to go," he says. "There was no getting medevacked. They were throwing grenades at their own guys trying to kill them so we couldn't get intel." Even after his injuries, he never left until his deployment ended, two months later. I express awe. "My buddy got four Purple Hearts and a Navy Cross, and he never got sent home," says Richard. "What's a guy gotta do to go home these days?" I ask. "Die," Richard says.

Plenty did. Thirty-three of Richard's friends, as a matter of fact. Since then, it's been a rough ride. As a result of head injuries, Richard has memory loss to the point where he sometimes confuses the names of his four children. He gets disoriented. He held a lot of his PTSD in at work, before getting flagged, but "I was destroying s—t at the house. I would throw computers through windows. Put my foot through a big screen TV." He and his wife, who stuck it out for a good while, he later tells me, got separated shortly before he came to Montana.

All week long, it seems, the warriors seesaw. They get ruddy tans. They catch lots of trout. They find the peace that fishing affords—an absorption that transcends mere relaxation. And then, in off-moments, combat comes back to bite them.

He tries to educate his children about triggers. When they open the door and startle him, or see him crying for no apparent reason, he tells them this is about what happened in combat, it's not their fault. "But PTSD is the disease that keeps on giving, you know?" he says. "I'm not going to say my whole family doesn't have PTSD just from me."

This isn't who he remembers being. "I knew intricate formulas for demolitions," he says. "And yet I can't add 2 + 2. This is bulls—t." He was the guy who stepped up. Who volunteered for everything, much to the chagrin of his men. He used to think he was invincible. "I walked the battlefield like nothing would ever touch me," he says. "I would conquer everything. And in a split second, I found out that I wasn't invincible." Now he needs a "battle-buddy" retriever to turn on the lights during his night terrors, or just to help him leave the house and go to the store sometimes—"my new combat," he calls it.

To remind himself, because of the memory loss, that he had a passable day, he takes pictures constantly. "My camera became my journal. When I was down, I'd look at my pictures, and see me smiling." He now does it for other wounded warriors at outings similar to this one. While the guys like to joke there are so many of these programs for injured service members that soon they'll have "Hoes for Heroes" and "Strippers for Soldiers," Richard shows up at golf or surf events to take pictures of warriors smiling. Then he'll give a guy a photo, saying, "Here, use this when you're sad. You forget that life is valuable."

Today, at the secret spot, turns out to be a picture-perfect day, the kind Richard will want to revisit often. When he and Josh arrive at the water's edge, there are speckled submarines everywhere, waiting to feast on their flies. They go to town in a fight-to-the-death fishing derby, at least until Richard gets distracted, grabs a net, and stands in the water trying to catch them the old fashioned way when the action slows.

Collin starts a pellet hatch by throwing a handful of trout pellets directly in the water in front of Richard to get the fish going again. When they kerplunk, Richard jumps and is not amused. "I have hyperstartle reflexes!" he shouts. But Collin busts his chops some more, telling the Mad Bomber, "I don't think you can catch one on a fly rod. You're a little nancy." Richard's face immediately relaxes, and he goes back to his fun, while Collin mocks him some more for being a big bad Marine that's afraid to kiss fish. "Everything I've kissed in my life, I've gotten pregnant," Richard says.

There are laughs aplenty over lunch. Josh and Richard compare notes on explosives. Imagining how a civilian job interview will look, Josh intones the voice of a prospective boss: "Seems like you like to be around explosives a lot." Then reverting back to his own voice: "Uhhh, I'm good at blowing things up, and getting blown up." By day's end, both Josh and Richard have caught big 20-plus-inch rainbows on a black woolly bugger they learned to tie the night before. Richard retires his fly, which he calls "My Ninja," to Collin's dashboard next to the Butt Monkey as a token of his affection, with a promise to visit it often.

At the ranch that night, I arrive for dinner, and Richard is standing alone on the porch, hunched over the railing contemplatively. I expect him to be sailing after his fishing bounty. But he seems to be at the bottom of a hole again. We talk for a long time. He shocks me by telling me that despite all his problems, he wants to get back to the fight. He's seen what tyranny looks like and enjoys being part of the less than 1 percent of the world who can do something about it. But more important, he misses

his brothers, and wants to fulfill his obligations to them.

Combat is hard, he says. It's no joke, and no matter what you do, you can't ever really prepare for it. "When it's real, and your buddy slumps to the ground and you're fighting next to your dead buddy, life really hits you in the face," says Richard. "There's no take-backs. There's no reset buttons." He assumes he made it out of the kill zone last time only because he was in a state of shock after being shot. He could feel two angels carry him to relative safety. He's now afraid of a lot of things, but says he's not afraid of death. "My obligation," he says, "is to be there to risk my life, so that sometimes they don't have to. And we're all doing it for each other, where there's so much sacrifice going on it doesn't matter what you're doing. Those are the kind of people I live my life with."

There's another reason he wants to go back. Here, he had to get rid of his two-story house, because over there he had a lot of firefights on stairs. So his mind could never rest. He heard a noise on the steps, he had to clear the house. "I'm normal over there," he says. "I fight combat over here, and there is no combat. But every day I live in a threat. I'm looking for that next threat. That next ambush site. But if I go over there, I'm normal, that's what I'm supposed to do."

This is the curse of PTSD, he says. You can fix an amputee by giving him a prosthetic leg. It's trying and tough. He has to learn to walk again. But "how do you get 33 Marine deaths out of your mind, the way they died, and your wounds, and combat, and seeing things you don't see every day? We try to do our best to hide that. With the loss of a limb, you don't. You get help. But what about the guy who is hanging by a thread all day long? He feels ashamed to bring it up. People are going to say, that's a wound? Like, is that really a wound? . . . I live combat almost every day, because the same instincts that protected me are still more alive than ever. I can be in a grocery store and feel like I'm walking down the street in Fallujah. . . . You fight yourself, with mind distortions, paranoia, hypervigilance, depression, guilt. It's so complex. And it's your mind, so you can't ever escape it. I can't ever put a prosthetic on that."

All week long, it seems, the warriors seesaw. They get ruddy tans. They catch lots of trout. They find the peace that fishing affords—an absorption that transcends mere relaxation. And then, in off-moments, combat comes back to bite them, and the past seems to bleed into the present. On a non-fishing day bus tour of Yellowstone Park, many seem to pay only passing notice to sightings of "elk!" or "bison!" Instead, they call you over to look at war porn photos on their smart phones, such as of the huge craters left by the IEDs that nearly killed them. They swap stories of near misses—Josh telling of tunnel rat misadventures and being forced to crawl over IEDs that didn't explode. They clock significant anniversaries. Zach is particularly affected, as today marks exactly one year since his best friend stepped on a bomb.

Often, the memories seem triggered by nothing. After we watch Old Faithful blow, then turn around to head to the gift shop for trinkets, Mike Grimmius says to no one in particular, "Kids are playing soccer with my triceps in Afghanistan right now, sick little bastards."

In the most cavalier manner, they'll fall into hair-raising tales. Josh tells of the time in Afghanistan that he convoyed past a man and his 11-year-old son. Shortly after they'd driven by, his unit heard a loud boom. They drove back to see what happened. The boy was standing over his dead father, bawling. "There wasn't much of him left," says Josh. "When we walked up, we just started laughing. I shouldn't have. The kid was crying hysterically, but his father was trying to plant an IED for our return. His father had just been killed in front of him, and he was in pieces. Of all the things that affected me in Afghanistan, this one affects me most. But we were the ones he was trying to kill. Him, or us."

Eric Holkeboer on the Yellowstone with guide Jesse LeNeve

RYAN OLSEN

On the last day, I fish the Madison River on a drift boat with 28-year-old Eric Holkeboer. Our trout-bum guide, Jesse LeNeve, apologizes for his wreck of a truck, the hood of which is bungeed shut as the result of a deer that caved his headlight in. He eats the breakfast of champions—Fritos and Fig Newtons—generously asking if we want any.

The weather's spotty, with occasional light drizzle, and water temps are cold. The riverside Buffaloberry has yet to even bloom. But it's good to be out anyway, unsheathing my fly rod, violating the volunteer's fishing ban with clearance from Hastings. "This is a wounded warriors program, not a wounded writers program," protested one board member. Obviously, he's seen me fish.

Eric, my warrior-o'-the-day, seems less like a Marine, more like the kind of fleece-covered Zen-master you'd meet at a climbing wall at REI. He loves the outdoors, bouldering whenever he can. Even as a kid, he'd squirrel hunt and run around the woods in Michigan, fashioning zip-lines with his brother as they'd miscalculate tree-branch weights and angles, pancaking in the yard. He has a subtle, self-deprecating sense of humor, often punctuated by a tepid chuckle, one that's not quite convinced of itself, as though he's trying to laugh himself out of the unpleasant reality he's just related. When I ask him what he's doing since getting out of the Marines in January, he says, "Just growing a beard."

Like the others, he has his Purple Heart story—a mortar attack on a roof in Iraq. He tried to pick up his fallen buddy, but his hand wouldn't work, his tibia shattered, and he caught shrapnel throughout his arms and legs. They're now healed—at least enough to fish. But like the others, he sometimes misses the very thing that injured him.

'I was destroying s—t at the house. I would throw computers through windows. Put my foot through a big screen TV. . . . But PTSD is the disease that keeps on giving, you know? I'm not going to say my whole family doesn't have PTSD just from me.'

"Most people in combat kind of want to find that rush again," Eric says. "Because when you come back, after the initial shock of a safe civilian life where you don't have to worry about stuff on the road, everything just seems pretty boring. Waking up. Brushing your teeth. Eating breakfast. There's no pandemonium. It's harder to get excited about things."

But Eric's not interested in sharing war stories. He pretty much just wants to fly fish. Which he does rather well for having only tried it a few times in his life. Jesse shoves off and rows us downriver. Within several minutes, Eric ties into a rainbow, a spunky 12-incher that causes him to chuckle. When we beach the drift boat on a gravel bar, floating deep nymphs through a bucket that Jesse swears by, Eric scores another rainbow like an old pro. This is no Ducky's turkey-shoot here—it's the real deal.

By the time he picks up a whitefish, which most anglers have no use for, Eric chuckles, "Oh, I like whitefish—they fight harder than most trout." I now realize that the board is showing 3-0 in Eric's favor. Though I like Eric a lot, I'm starting to hate him. Just then, I notice the boat filling up with water, which I mention to Jesse. "The plug's out!" Jesse yells, hurriedly locating it in a swelling puddle, then screwing it in. "The reporter kicked the plug! He's trying to drown the boat!"

I'm not above such tactics, of course, especially when I'm getting outfished by a rookie—and one that's been shot up at that. But the plug would be impossible to kick out if it had been pushed in all the way. I could argue the point with Jesse, but as our rower, he might not set me up on any fish, thus compounding my humiliation. Thirty minutes later, I finally tie into a fat rainbow—a 15-incher, though since there's no ruler on board, we'll call him 17. He leaps four times before I get him to Jesse's net.

"Oooh!" says Eric, "Big fish of the day!" I appreciate his graciousness, until he adds, "Does this mean you're going to start trying now?" Little do we know, that's the last fish either of us will see this afternoon. The fishing gods aren't smiling on anyone, by the looks of it, the river turning into a mostly abandoned graveyard by around 3 P.M. It's still pretty, though I can't detail specific rock formations or flora or fauna because I tend not to look at scenery when I fish, ever intent on the next hook-up even on fruitless days.

But with plenty of float left, I notice Eric takes a seat, puts up his rod, and, as Collin predicted, just sits back and watches. He drinks in Montana and the Madison, looking something like content. He'll probably try to re-up with the Marines, this time in some counterintelligence function. His test scores are pretty high. But for now he just wants to grab a bivy sack and camp out in places like this one. People ask him what he wants to be when he grows up. Eric chuckles, then tells them, "I just want to be older, I guess."

The farewell dinner that evening has a last-day-of-summer-camp feel. Everybody has the bronzed hue of time spent on the water. Stories from just three days ago are told as if they were ancient history. Nobody wants to leave, with Josh going so far as to suggest surrounding the airport with anti-aircraft guns to keep the plane from picking them up.

Colonel Hastings asks if anyone wants to say a few words. One by one, the grateful Marines get up to thank Warriors and Quiet Waters and say their piece. Zach Gillilan, who has horrified his dinner table all night with talk of rolling cars and other nine-lives experiences, is muted and humble, saying, "I'll try to keep it short, I'm not much

of a speaker, and I forget a lot of stuff." Zach says that for the past year he hasn't been able to sleep at all—"maybe 30, 40 minutes a night, off and on. . . . And being here was the best time of my life. The first time I got into that bed, I slept like four hours. . . . No mental health doctor, no doctor in the hospital, has helped me as much as you guys have helped me. I just want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Josh Kelly, leaning on his cane, his damaged feet aching from that afternoon's wading, gets up and thunders, "I may look like I'm 12 years old. But I've been a lot of places in the world. . . . I've been places where people have called me a baby killer. And I've been places where people have put me down. . . . And there's not many places in America where you'll see the support that you guys are giving us. . . . Excuse my language, but it just makes you f—g proud to be an American. And I absolutely love it. As soon as I get back, I'm looking for f—g land here. . . . We've been through the darkest times of our lives in the recent past. There's no sugar coatin' it. We all went through s—t, and seen s—t, and that's the way it goes. That's our sacrifice to you. I love it. I love the fact that while you guys are sitting here at home, I was on the walls, guarding America. That makes me proud. And I can't say enough, how much it affects my heart, that there's actually still places in America where people truly do care."

Michael, Eric, Richard, Sal, Josh, and Zach at Yellowstone Falls

When Richard Gonzalez gets up, he warns that this "might be like a nosedive when I'm talking, because of my anxiety." He says he could never call himself a fisherman, "because I don't catch fish, and the ones I catch are illegal." He admits he didn't know what half of his gear was for, and "didn't understand why we had to get such expensive gear to stand in water when I could just do that with what I'm wearing right now."

But under Collin Brown's care, he caught six fish his first day and nabbed 17 at the secret pond. Then he picked up 10 more that very afternoon at DePuy Spring Creek. He counted his fish up before dinner and realized they came to 33. Richard begins choking up: "The last time I ever experienced that number was my last deployment, where I lost 33 Marines. Ever since then, the number 33 has been ingrained in me. But today, I can say that that number, for the first time, is a positive."

Having made a nuisance of myself all week, I am asked by Hastings if I'd like to say anything. I would not. Not after Zach and Richard and Josh and the rest of the warriors. Even if I knew what to say, I probably couldn't get it out. Instead, when the party breaks up, we fishermen do what all committed fishermen do when they've been fishing for a week: make more plans to fish.

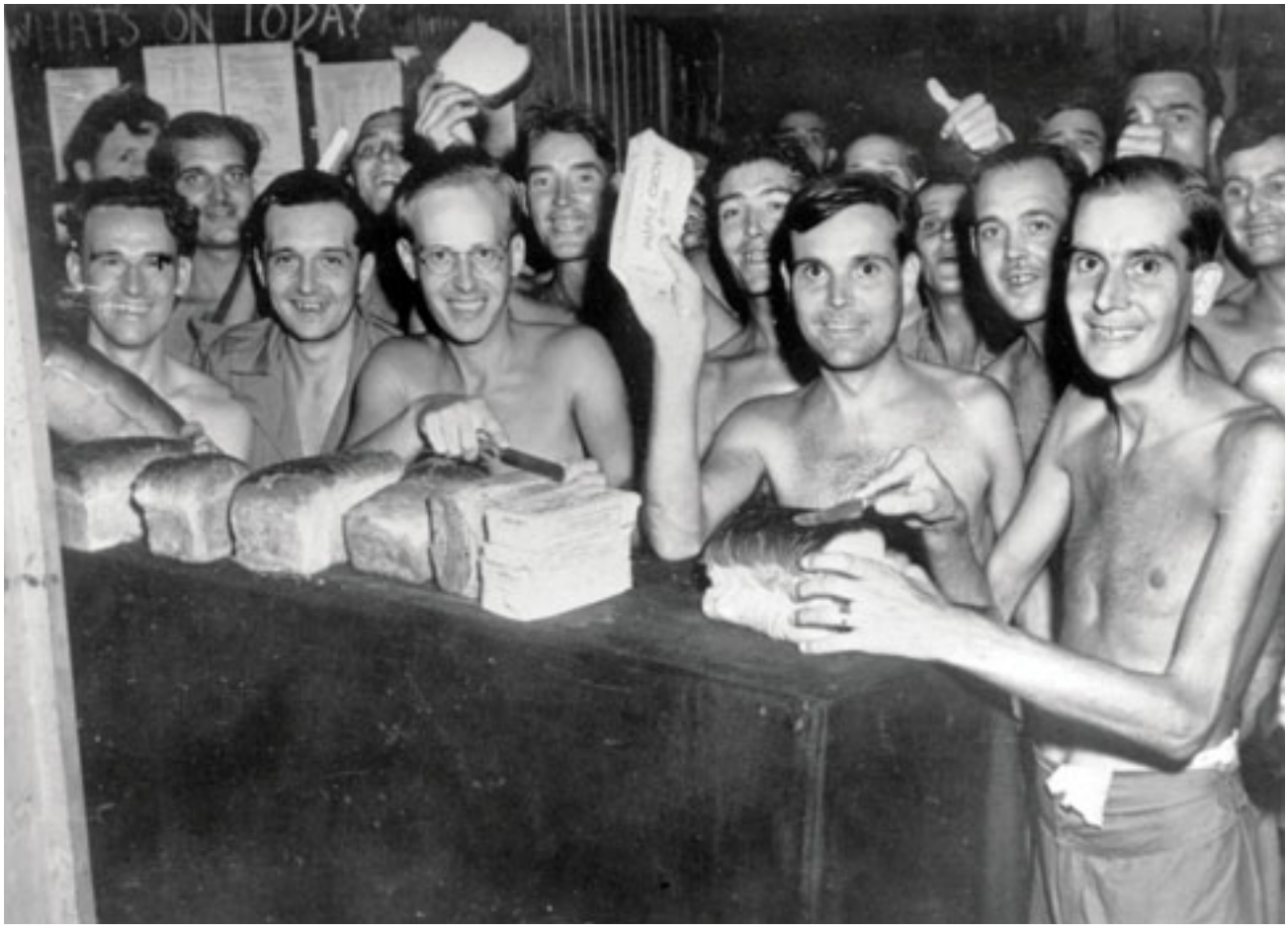
Josh Kelly went to high school in Aberdeen, Maryland, a place he still visits. It's not far from where I fish the hickory shad run each spring. I tell him about Deer Creek, off the Susquehanna River. He knows it, but has never fished for shad there. Screw trout, I tell him, and their fussiness and selective taste and delicate requirements for the size #22 midge presented with a drag-free drift on the fine china.

Let's go swing some gaudy day-glo streamers at these silvery, muscular saltwater bullets who visit for only a short time. They will smack our flies hard, running and leaping and otherwise earning their stripes as the poor man's tarpon. Josh's eyes light up with the fish lust of the new fly rod convert. "I would like that," he says. And we make loose plans.

Who knows if he will make it to my home waters, or in the right season. By then he might be able to run again, and maybe he'll get his wish and go back into the fight. For selfish reasons, I hope he doesn't. I hope he'll come fishing with me. I'll take him to my favorite run, where the spawners come in so thick you can see them swimming between your legs. The place where, when fishermen walking by on the high trail yell down and ask if I'm catching anything, I lie and say, "Nahhh. Just a few perch." It's a place where he is always welcome, one where if his feet act up, and he needs it, no one will even notice the difference between a cane and a wading staff. And depending on how competitive I feel, I might let him stand in my money spot, so he can nail hickory after hickory, playing them in until his arms hurt.

We'll see about that last part. But I probably will. It's the least he is due. A very small favor, in return for his impossibly large one. ♦

THE WEEKLY STANDARD / MATT LABASH



Liberated Allied prisoners at a Japanese camp, Taiwan, 1944

HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES

Staying Alive

The limits of endurance in enemy hands.

BY NOEMIE EMERY

Unbroken
A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption
by Laura Hillenbrand
Random House, 496 pp., $27

Around two in the afternoon of May 27, 1943, an American bomber, a B-24 Liberator Green Hornet, went down in the Pacific between Hawaii and Palmyra Atoll on a search mission for a pilot feared lost. Three of the six-man crew would die upon impact. The three who survived—Phil (Allen Phillips), the pilot; Louie Zamperini, an American runner who had been one of the stars of the 1936 Berlin Olympics; and the tail-gunner, Mac (Francis McNamara)—found themselves dazed, traumatized, and adrift in the ocean miles from any kind of island, with two rafts, no water, no form of shelter, and almost no food.

Thus began for Phillips and Zamperini two years and 10 months of inhuman torture, at the hands of both nature and man. For 47 days the two men would drift for thousands of miles, driven nearly insane by thirst and starvation, burned by the sun, chilled by the night, eaten by insects, poured on by storms, and forced to fight off, with sticks and fists, the schools of sharks that surrounded them, circled them, and sometimes launched themselves into their raft. Now and then Japanese planes would pass overhead and strafe them with bullets. (When American search planes had failed to locate them, the Army Air Corps assumed they were dead.)

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In the course of this journey, they lived on rain water collected in canvas pump covers (that Louie sucked up and would spit into bottles), small fish that they managed to snare from the ocean, and birds, who now and then would touch down on the raft near them, whose necks they would wring and eat raw. Once, they pulled a small shark out of the ocean, clubbed it to death, ripped it open, tore out the liver, and ate. Under this regimen, flesh melted from them, and they turned into skeletons, their muscles wasted, their skin baked and parched.

"The men's bodies were pocked with salt sores, and their lips were so swollen that they pressed into their nostrils and chins," writes Laura Hillenbrand. "They spent their days with their eyes fixed on the sky, singing 'White Christmas,' and muttering about food." On the 33rd day, Mac died, and his body, wrapped in canvas, was slipped into the ocean as the other two prayed. For another 14 days they continued to drift on the ocean, moving closer to death. Along with their bodies, their grip on reality started to falter: To ward off dementia, they retold their life stories, recalling details from the past with astonishing clarity. At other times, the lines between real and imagined grew dim. On the 40th day Louie was dozing in a state of half-consciousness when he thought he heard singing. "He abruptly sat up" and, floating in a bright cloud above him, saw 21 human figures singing exquisitely beautiful songs. (Later, in a Japanese prison camp, he would repeatedly hear the same music.)

Seven days later, they were spotted and picked up by Japanese sailors. And then their real torment began.

The horrors of the prison camps in Asia would be subsumed by those that came out of the death camps in Europe, but the sufferings endured in them were just as intense. "Japan murdered thousands of POWs on death marches, and worked thousands of others to death in slavery," Hillenbrand tells us. "Thousands of other POWs were beaten, burned, stabbed, or clubbed to death, shot, beheaded, killed during medical experiments, or eaten alive." Thousands more died of disease or starvation. All lived in the constant fear of being beheaded or shot on the whim (or plan) of their keepers: "Kill all" orders were known to be in place in case of liberation by Allied armed forces. Of the nearly 35,000 American prisoners held in these places, nearly one in three died.

Louie Zamperini astride a B-18 bomber, 1943

BETTMANN / CORBIS

The Japanese specialized in mental, as well as in physical, torture, and as an officer, athlete, and celebrity of sorts, Louie came in for special abuse. Horribly ill, he asked for a physician—who came, looked at him, laughed at him softly, and then walked away. He begged for water and a guard threw a cup of it, scalding hot, in his face. He was forced "to stand up and dance . . . whistle and sing," pelted as he ate with fistfuls of gravel, and made to crawl on the floor after tiny rice fragments while guards outside poked him with sticks. When they fell under the sway of The Bird (Mutsuhiro Watanabe), described correctly as "monstrous," the torments increased. A psychotic even by prison camp standards, The Bird would beat POWs daily, breaking their windpipes and teeth, making one officer sit in a shack wearing only his underwear for four days in winter. The Bird brought men to his office to show them letters from home, and then burned the letters; he made men guess how he wanted them to address him, and then beat those who gave the wrong answer; he "ordered men to violate camp policies, then attacked them for breaking the rules." Now and then he would woo prisoners with gestures of friendship, then beat them ferociously. Many felt he took a sensual pleasure in the infliction of pain upon others: "When gripped in the ecstasy of an assault, he wailed and howled . . . sometimes sobbing, tears running down his cheeks."

Singly and together, the prisoners made ferocious attempts to hang on to their dignity, sabotaging whatever they could: "At the railyards and docks, they switched mailing labels, rewrote delivery addresses, and changed the labeling on boxcars, sending tons of goods to the wrong destinations," Hillenbrand tells us. "They threw fistfuls of dirt into gas tanks, and broke anything mechanical that passed through their hands," and built things designed to not work or break easily. They "accidentally" dropped fragile items; shredded clothes; drenched them in mud; packed them again into boxes with notes signed "Winston Churchill," drank gallons of tea and then "peed profusely" into the bags of rice they loaded; found ingenious ways to steal foodstuffs; and blocked a canal by sinking a barge they were loading by hurling heavy objects into

its hold. In the camps, they communicated in code, addressed guards (in English) in cooing tones while delivering insults couched in obscenities.

Stunts kept their spirits alive in the torment and in their captivity, allowing them to believe they were still free agents and soldiers and not merely victims of fate. Reserved, quiet Phil, "so recessive that he could be in a room for a long time" before anyone noticed him, survived "with a calm, adaptive acceptance" that allowed him to absorb and endure any indignity. The more flamboyant and outgoing Louie could not: A born rebel, a near-delinquent before he found his real outlet in running, he found powerlessness and degradation unendurable, which was both his weakness and strength. His pride (and celebrity) aroused further rage in The Bird, which increased Louie's will to defy him still further.

> From earliest childhood, Louie had regarded every limitation placed on him as a challenge to his wits, his resourcefulness, and his determination to rebel. The result had been a mutinous youth. . . . Now, as he was cast into extremity, despair and death became the focus of his defiance. The same attributes that had made him the boy terror of Torrance were sustaining him in the greatest struggle of his life.

They were close to the end of their tethers in August 1945, when word began to leak through of a strange new bomb that had destroyed a whole city. Soon after that, they were free.

For many, however, the war was not done: "The average army or army air forces Pacific POW had lost sixty-one pounds in captivity. [Diseases] were rampant. Men had been crippled and disfigured by unset broken bones, and their teeth had been ruined by beatings. . . . Others had gone blind." Equally bad were the psychic disorders: "Flashbacks . . . were common. Intense nightmares were almost ubiquitous. Men walked in their sleep . . . and woke screaming, sobbing, or lashing out. Some slept on their floors . . . ducked in terror when airliners flew over, or hoarded food." One "was dogged by urges to scavenge in garbage cans." Others went "feral with rage."

Quiet Phil went home to Indiana and his childhood sweetheart, where he constructed a life as uneventful as possible. But Louie had entered a new form of darkness: If, under the worst forms of stress he had held things together, in sunny California, surrounded by loved ones, he was now coming apart. He had flashbacks where he was back on the raft, or in prison, feeling the rage, pain, and terror, smelling the stench and the squalor, feeling lice crawl on his skin. He had dreams in which The Bird beat

Louie Zamperini, 2010

him relentlessly, and dreams in which he tried to kill him. Killing The Bird became an obsession, and he began to plan trips to Japan where he could track down and dispatch his tormentor. Frightened of sleep, he began to drink, leading to blackouts and outbursts of violence.

"He was drinking heavily, slipping in and out of flashbacks, screaming and clawing through nightmares," Hillenbrand writes. "In his fantasy, he killed the Bird slowly," making him feel all the pain he once had experienced. One night he awoke trying to strangle his wife, who was pregnant. Distraught, she began making plans to divorce him. But first she begged him to go with her to hear Billy Graham, then a young and much-talked-about preacher, embarked on his first Western swing. Tense and angry, Louie followed his wife into the tent in Los Angeles, and everything he heard there served to make him more anxious still: Billy Graham talked of people adrift in the ocean, "a drowning man, drowning boy . . . out lost in the sea of life" —and Louie felt a "lurking nameless uneasiness . . . a memory he must not see."

"God is interested in me . . . God spoke in creation," Graham said, and Louie recalled a day when he and Phil had drifted into a scene of rare stillness and beauty, that looked like the first day on earth. "God works miracles one after the other," said Graham: "God says, 'If you suffer, I'll give you the grace to go forward.'" Louie found himself remembering miracles: He had been trapped in the hull of the Green Hornet, and the wires that held him had vanished. His raft floated out of his reach, and he grasped by mere inches the cord to retrieve it. Japanese bombers had strafed them repeatedly, and not a bullet had hit them. They had gone six days without water, and he prayed for salvation: "The next day, by divine intervention, or the fickle humor of tropics, the sky broke open and rain poured down."

Then he had the last flashback he would ever experience: "He was a body on a raft, dying of thirst. He felt words whisper from his swollen lips . . . a promise thrown at heaven . . . a promise he had allowed himself to forget until just this instant: If you will save me, I will serve you forever." He felt the rain fall, and the rage and the furies were over forever. His last war was over. He had, finally, won.

Laura Hillenbrand's master theme is the battle of will and adversity, and here she rachets the idea of adversity up to its most extreme heights. In *Seabiscuit* (2001), everyone (including the horse) suffered bad luck and depression, but bad luck was all that it was. Charles Howard, Seabiscuit's owner, lost one of his sons in an accident—but it was an accident. Trainer Tom Smith was driven from the way

TL1 / ZUMA PRESS / NEWSCOM

of life he loved—but by the impersonal forces of progress. Red Pollard, the jockey, lost his original family and his sight in one eye, and suffered terribly in two dire accidents—but no one was trying to kill him.

The sufferings of Phil, Louie, and Mac on the raft came at the hand of an indifferent Nature, but with the transfer of Louie and Phil to the Japanese prison camps, we are moved into a realm of pure evil, which makes the story not (as in *Seabiscuit*) the struggle of will and misfortune but the battle of malice and good. This gives it a grandeur as stark as a Greek myth or biblical epic, and a stature few modern stories achieve. If the First World War gave us trench warfare and the decimation of a whole generation of leaders, World War II involved atrocities visited upon those not in (or no longer in) combat: The men, women, and children sent off to perish in death camps; the civilians forced to dig their own graves, and then fill them; the Allied POWs under Japanese jurisdiction, who suffered the torments of Auschwitz, minus only the gas. In "normal" wars, the pain of noncombatants is the unintentional byproduct of military advances; in this, it was the point, and the end in itself.

Louie and Phil and the thousands of others who fought did so not just to survive but to endure as intact human beings, as people who came from and stood for a humane tradition, resisting the evil in man. They fought back with sabotage and with deftly hidden defiance; they fought with humor and cleverly hidden obscenities; and they fought by maintaining their standards of justice and decency. On the raft, Phil and Louie shared their water with Mac, though they needed it and they knew he was dying; when the first American plane to fly over at war's end dropped cigarettes and a chocolate bar, these treasures were carefully portioned so that each prisoner had one puff and one barely visible chocolate sliver apiece. With such acts are civilizations maintained under pressure, and in the end, Louie prevailed over the three forms of danger considered most lethal to humans: the rigors of nature, the malice of others, and the darkness within one's own soul.

As he had promised, Louie Zamperini has been spending the rest of his life serving God. Now 94, he is active and vigorous. In 1954, he opened the Victory Boys Camp for boys as ungovernable as he had once been himself, channeling their defiance and energy into acceptable outlets, as the sport of running had once channeled his. Otherwise, he was "happily walking the world," telling his story to schoolchildren and to crowds in packed stadiums, and in more exotic locations: "Improbably, he was particularly fond of speaking on cruise ships, sorting through invitations to find a plum voyage, kicking back on a first class deck with a cool drink in hand." He kept his honoraria low, so that schools and small groups could afford to invite him, and he worked at a senior center in a neighborhood church. He carried the Olympic torch in five different Olympics, the last time in 1998 at the winter games in Nagano when he was four days short of his 81st birthday, in which he ran past Naoetsu, where he had once been a prisoner.

> All he could see, in every direction, were smiling Japanese faces. . . . Louie ran through the place where cages had once held him. . . . But the cages were long gone, and so was The Bird. ♦

B&A

Head Cases

The who, what, when, and why of Easter Island.

BY ROBERT WHITCOMB

When I was a boy in the late 1950s, Thor Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki*, a great bestseller, was fascinating to me—certainly far more intriguing than Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking* or even Grace Metalious's steamy *Peyton Place*. In Heyerdahl's "nonfiction" book, the late Norwegian anthropologist/adventurer/entertainer asserted that a highly civilized race of people from South America and points north and east had sailed across the Pacific to Polynesia on balsa-wood rafts. (Incan ingenuity!)

The Statues That Walked
Unraveling the Mystery of Easter Island
by Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo
Free Press, 256 pp., $26

To the most southeastern island in that group, Easter Island, his argument ran, the South Americans (who included an admixture of Caucasians) brought the skill of carving huge statues representing deified ancestors; for raw material, they used the island's highly malleable soft volcanic rock. These creations were then very laboriously moved to, and installed on, stone platforms. The immigrants also imported sweet potatoes and some other benefits of high, or at least medium, culture.

Heyerdahl was one hell of a showman, but in recent years, much of what he asserted has proven to be nonsense. Probably most important, there is no plausible indication that South Americans sailed to Polynesia. And Easter Island (officially called Rapa Nui) was first settled not in 300 or 400 A.D., which is what he said, but much later and entirely by Polynesians (the Easter Island subset called themselves the Rapanui). Contrary to his book *Aku-Aku* (1958), the "long-

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ears" (of Caucasoid appearance) and "short ears" didn't duke it out for supremacy on the island in a suicidal civil war. The movie-star handsome Heyerdahl's conclusions were highly cinematic—a step or two from space-alien tales—but even at the height of his popularity, plenty of anthropologists challenged them.

Recently, far more people have taken seriously the theme of Jared Diamond in his bestseller *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (2005), in which he used Easter Island as an example of "ecocide." Diamond essentially argued that the islanders destroyed the island's physical and cultural wealth through overpopulation, irresponsible use of the land, and the maniacal diversion of resources (including much of what was left of Rapa Nui's wood) to put up the huge statues. He fit the place into many eco-activists' idea that humans, when given the chance, will devastate their environments for short-term benefits, and presented Easter Island (and some other places) as a warning to all of us wasteful, greedy consumers. Easter Island is "the Earth writ small," he wrote.

The seven moais of Ahu Akivi

But Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo, who are, respectively, professors of anthropology and archaeology at the University of Hawaii and California State University, demolish Diamond's argument that the decline and fall of Easter Island's native culture was due to environmental fecklessness. Rather, they demonstrate, in sometimes chatty, sometimes scholarly, sometimes almost lyrical prose, that the Rapanui were remarkably good stewards of their little island. They only indirectly can be blamed for the deforestation of the island soon after they arrived, from the west, in about 1200 A.D. (not in 400 A.D., as misreported by Diamond). The main culprits were rats, probably showing up by way of the Polynesians' big canoes; the rodents feasted on palm-tree seeds.

Indeed, the islanders seem to have maintained a stable population of about 3,000 people for hundreds of years through skillful use of stone enclosures, and "lithic mulching" (spreading rock fragments on land to be cultivated, thus moderating the temperature of the soil and providing a source of minerals) to grow crops sufficient to keep the population generally healthy. The island, despite dirt that was already quite leached-out when the Polynesians arrived, became a giant and quite productive rock garden.

Hunt and Lipo argue that there was no "prehistoric [i.e., pre-European] environmental catastrophe that turned a once-productive island into a barren landscape." Thousands of sheep, introduced by foreign businessmen, helped complete that devastation in the late 19th century. Indeed, the islanders "transformed Rapa Nui from an island covered in palm forest with few resources for humans into an island that could reliably, though marginally, sustain them over the long run." And as for the much-denounced statue-building, Hunt and Lipo prove (to me, anyway) that this activity not only did not require nearly as many people as has been argued but also, by encouraging island-wide cooperation and planning (and by distracting the natives from sex!), encouraged island-wide peace and helped prevent overpopulation.

They write that "some kind of centralized and shared activity is a key feature of dispersed communities" like those of pre-European Easter Island, which had no real central town: "This activity [like the statue cult] brings communities together to share resources, redistribute materials, or exchange information." And there was great prestige associated with sculpting, moving, and installing the statues; to be involved in the projects put you in the island's elite. (The writers conclude, by the way, that the multi-ton figures were transported from the quarry upright, head-up with ropes and jerking movements that recall moving a refrigerator. Very little wood was used.)

There is remarkably scant evidence of pre-European intra-Rapanui conflict on the island, and the very spread-out crop cultivation on it (and no big estates to fight over), and the unifying and calming qualities of the statue activity, were probably the main reasons. What *really* virtually destroyed the island's culture was foreigners. It began with the first Europeans to arrive, the Dutch, in 1722. These visitors, and, later in the 18th century Spanish and English sailors, exposed the islanders to lethal diseases from which they had no immunity.

MANFRED GOTTSCHALK / LONELY PLANET IMAGES / NEWSCOM

That they enthusiastically encouraged women and girls to offer easy sex to the visitors worsened what would have been, in any event, catastrophic epidemics. Imported diseases soon killed most Easter Islanders. And the "consumer goods" displayed by the Europeans also helped to swiftly undermine native culture, whose statues and ancestor worship could not compete with the charms of European clothing, knives, mirrors, and so on; the Rapanui particularly craved hats, which they snatched off Dutch, Spanish, and English sailors' heads.

"With the arrival of the Europeans the rationale for participating in moai [statue] construction and movement had been undermined . . . the acquisition of European goods became the new form of obtaining prestige." Indeed, the natives began to develop "cargo cults"—rituals used in the hope that foreigners would return with their exciting goods. And later, many islanders were "blackbirded" into slavery in South America and elsewhere—bondage that killed many of them.

Easter Island, of course, has recently been reenergized as an affluent-tourist destination, albeit with some major environmental problems associated with that. Thor Heyerdahl's vivid storytelling, and those stunning photos of the giant enigmatic heads, have ensured that the speck in the western Pacific will continue to fascinate millions around the world. Romantics like to reflect on the idea that the Rapanui, without the arrival of Europeans, might to this day still be subsisting contentedly in a stable (if "primitive") society. But would they have really wanted to if they had known any alternatives? I doubt it. For all its flaws, modern Western-created consumer culture is immensely attractive. The trick is to figure out its global environmental limits, just as the very low-tech but ingenious Easter Islanders learned in their centuries alone to make do with the austerity of their remote home—albeit within an ultimately lethal ignorance about the rest of the world. ♦

B&A

The Hazard of Nukes

The perils of proliferation in the post-Cold War world.

BY MICHAEL ANTON

This is, at once, a very bad good book, and a very good bad book. Its conversational writing style—full of fragments, run-ons, pop-culture references, and silly asides—is unworthy of its serious subject matter. There are typos everywhere, suggesting a rush job. Several long passages are given over to word-for-word transcripts of interviews that could have benefited from editing.

How the End Begins
The Road to a Nuclear World War III
by Ron Rosenbaum
Simon & Schuster, 320 pp., $28

Ron Rosenbaum also makes some elementary errors. For instance, he asserts that North Korea is capable of producing nuclear weapons with yields of one megaton or more. In fact, both North Korean nuclear devices tested so far were in the low kiloton range and probably "fizzled"—that is, failed to produce their anticipated yields, which were unquestionably far lower than a megaton. Reaching the latter requires mastery of thermonuclear fusion, and we have no reason to believe the North Koreans can manage it. He also repeats the common misconception that Israel can be destroyed by "one" nuclear bomb. Not to minimize the horror of such an event, but even if one assumes megaton-scale weapons in the hands of, say, Iran (an unlikely prospect), it would take several to destroy all of the main Israeli population centers in the "T" from Haifa to Ashkelon, Tel Aviv to Jerusalem—still not quite the whole country.

Michael Anton is policy director at Keep America Safe.

Rosenbaum approaches the topic from the left side of the aisle, and sometimes his biases get the better of him. He is completely dismissive of missile defense. He takes at face value the Russian insistence that proposed American intercept and radar sites in Eastern Europe (which the Obama administration cancelled) threatened Russia's ability to strike the United States. The truth, which the Russians well know, is that their vast arsenal could easily overwhelm any American system contemplated, much less deployed.

Rosenbaum claims to have read a vast number of articles and policy papers on nuclear strategy—and doubtless he is telling the truth—but he seems to have missed that, President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative notwithstanding, the United States gave up on pursuing all but the most limited defensive systems in the 1960s. And not because missile defense is technically unfeasible (which Rosenbaum takes for granted) but because nuclear theorists convinced policymakers that such systems destabilize the strategic balance by creating an incentive for nuclear peers to strike first. Bush administration officials were not being disingenuous when they said that Czech and Polish sites were intended to safeguard the United States and Europe against Iran. Moscow, having spent a great deal of money and political capital arming Iran, was just protecting its investment.

Rosenbaum also occasionally lapses into caricature. He finds a villain in Keith Payne, a prolific writer on nuclear strategy whose views no doubt contrast sharply with Rosenbaum's own. Yet ironically, Payne's magnum opus, *The Great American Gamble* (2008), is a modern masterpiece of Thomistic *Quaestiones Disputatae*: Payne states the differing schools of nuclear strategy so clearly and fairly that the reader who picks up the book with an open mind will have a hard time deciding which approach to prefer.

Nonetheless, the virtues of *How the End Begins* are numerous and impressive. Beneath its surface superficiality, this is a deep meditation on the role, meaning, and possible consequences of nuclear weapons in our time. Rosenbaum is willing to discuss terrible things that nearly everyone else would prefer to ignore. An accomplished journalist, he manages to get access to an impressive list of sources. His longstanding liberal credentials open doors to fascinating discussions with disarmament icons such as Daniel Ellsberg and Bruce Blair. His journalistic chops gain him entrée into the highest levels of the Israeli defense establishment. Rosenbaum does not waste his chances.

The core of *How the End Begins* is an assertion, followed by moral argument, culminating in a plea. The assertion is that the world is closer today to nuclear Armageddon than it was during the Cold War. But not from nuclear terrorism. Rosenbaum does not exactly dismiss that prospect out of hand, but he does treat it as a sideshow. The real threat, he contends, is Russia and America's "hair trigger" alert posture that keeps thousands of warheads ready to fly on a moment's notice. Though he would be the first to admit that his discussion is highly derivative of others' work, Rosenbaum sheds real light here. Few nonexperts have any idea how the command and control apparatus for America's nuclear arsenal works. Even those favoring a robust nuclear deterrent (a position Rosenbaum does not share) should be disturbed by what he reports. There is a use-it-or-lose-it imperative built into the system that encourages button-pushers (of whom there are more, and at lower levels down the chain of command, than you think) to push their buttons at the first ambiguous sign of danger.

West German demonstrators against NATO Pershing missiles, 1983

ALAIN NOGUES / SYGMA / CORBIS

Yet it's hard to see how the easing of Cold War tensions has made nuclear attack based on a false warning or rogue officer *more* likely rather than less. Rosenbaum refers a few times to the fall of 1983, probably the closest the United States and the Soviet Union came to nuclear war after the Cuban Missile Crisis. Three hair-raising events in rapid succession—the shooting down of KAL Flight 007, a false positive in the Soviet early warning system, and the Russian misinterpretation of NATO training exercise as preparation for a surprise attack—at a time when East-West tensions were at a quarter-century high did not produce a cataclysm. Poor as U.S.-Russian relations are today, experience shows that they could be a lot worse. Rosenbaum believes we simply were lucky in 1983 (and before, and after) and that our luck will soon run out.

Perhaps. The deeper reason why our time probably is more dangerous than the Cold War is that more—and more unstable—nations than ever possess nuclear weapons. The complex web of alliances, overt and otherwise, that link nuclear powers great and small is not sufficiently understood. If, say, Iran gets the bomb and decides to use it as a shield behind which to become more belligerent—or worse, decides to explode one in anger—the fight won't necessarily be solely between Iran and its intended victim. Others may step in. Once a conflict goes nuclear, or threatens to do so, suddenly each of the world's nuclear powers might consider itself a central player. Rather than a classic cinematic Mexican standoff with only two shooters, the situation will look more like the final scene in *Reservoir Dogs* with three or four or more. This is a point that *How the End Begins* raises but does not adequately explore.

Rosenbaum's moral argument is that nuclear retaliation is never justified. Threats may be useful to deter nuclear attacks, but once the damage is done, following through is always immoral. His case is strong. To his credit, it is also not sugarcoated. He dwells at length on the situation facing Israel and is forthright about what it entails. Yet his realism does

not overcome his essential pacifism. Neither is his pacifism, however, nor his liberalism nor his evident sympathy for the nuclear zero movement enough to get him to sign on to that cause. He recognizes the usefulness, or at least the inevitability, of our nation retaining at least a small arsenal for the foreseeable future.

Rosenbaum is also unflinching about the central paradox of his morally acceptable deterrence: Introducing any doubt about the certainty of retaliation can raise the chances of having one's bluff called. He nonetheless concludes with a plea to button-pushers everywhere: If you receive a launch order, don't follow it. Rosenbaum absolves himself from any moral culpability on the grounds that he has no ability to influence policy and no enemy could possibly take his words as expressions of the will of the American government.

He may sell himself short. Deterrence depends on credibility, which in turn depends on an adversary's assessment of a nation's character, which can be divined in part by considering its internal debates. When spokesmen from the commanding heights of our intellectual culture make impassioned, erudite pleas against retaliation, it doesn't reinforce the credibility of our deterrent.

What may save us—and what may have saved us up to now—is simple uncertainty. Thomas Schelling, a founder of American nuclear strategy, argued more than a half-century ago that our mere possession of nuclear weapons induces a fear that, once a conflict got out of control, anything might happen next. Uncertainty—not only in the minds of our enemies but even amongst ourselves—about what we might do if pushed to the wall stays adventurous and maleficent hands.

Twice Rosenbaum mentions the "Samson Option," an alleged Israeli plan for widespread retaliation should that nation's survival seem mortally threatened. It's uncertain why Rosenbaum brings it up, but perhaps that very uncertainty will itself help induce a little uncertainly in the right chanceries—and caves. ♦

HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES

B&A

Forgotten Victorian

Why the best of Gissing is worth rereading.

BY JONATHAN LEAF

George Gissing, 1890

Not so long ago, Charles Dickens was *the* 19th-century British novelist. The others—Austen, the Brontë sisters, Eliot, Thackeray, Trollope, Hardy—were *his* contemporaries and predecessors and successors and rivals. They were judged against him and considered in his light. In the view of Edmund Wilson, Dickens was "the greatest writer of his time."

Then something happened. The population of critics ceased being so exclusively composed of sensitive, liberal men who'd survived difficult childhoods. Feminist critics emerged, along with Marxists. Warm-hearted depictions of the family were judged to be dated and passé, and sentimental humor was written off as the province of television. Female critics, it turned out, were vexed by the absence of sympathetic adult women in Dickens's novels, while female readers balked at his lack of romance and glamor, qualities more often encountered in Austen, Thackeray, and Trollope.

What this ongoing shift in taste and sensibility has not done is increase the degree of attention given to a Victorian author who, at his best, wrote with as much understanding and insight about women as Jane Austen, and as much knowledge of politics and commerce as Anthony Trollope: George Gissing (1857-1903).

Indeed, even those who praise Gissing present him as an important writer for *his time*, a significant contemporary to his friendly rivals Thomas Hardy and George Meredith, or a useful source of information about

Jonathan Leaf is a playwright living in New York.

everyday life in late Victorian London.

Gissing is much more. This is not to say that the bulk of his vast output remains worth reading. All but a few of Gissing's 23 novels are marred by his misanthropy, bile that caused him to present people so unflatteringly as to prompt us to wonder why we should care about them. An instance of the trouble may be found in this passage from his intermittently excellent 1894 novel *In the Year of Jubilee*, describing the breakfast greeting of three sisters:

> Her [Ada, the eldest's] features resembled Fanny's [the youngest's], but . . . betokened, if the thing were possible, an inferior intellect. . . . They spoke a peculiar tongue, the product of sham education and mock refinement grafted upon a stock of robust vulgarity. . . . All could "play the piano"; all declared—and believed—that they "knew French"; Beatrice had "done" Political Economy; Fanny had "been through" Inorganic Chemistry and Botany. The truth was, of course, that their minds, characters, propensities had remained absolutely proof against such educational influence as had been brought to bear upon them. That they used a finer accent than their servants, signified only that they had grown up amid falsities, and were enabled, by the help of money, to dwell above-stairs, instead of with their spiritual kindred below.

Gissing had a hard life, and most of his books show his consequent bitterness and scorn. Raised in northern England without a father, he had scored twelfth in the country on a national exam and received a scholarship to the then-recently opened Owens College, what would later become Manchester University. This Gissing managed to lose when caught stealing from another student. The thefts had been meant to support a prostitute with whom he had become involved; just 18, he was sent to do hard labor. Once released, he soon compounded the error by marrying the slattern, who, needless to say, proved less than adequate as a wife. They were estranged and after her death, Gissing married a woman he had picked up on a London street. His second wife eventually had to be institutionalized.

In light of this, it may not be surprising that Gissing's derisiveness extended, at times, to himself. Regrettably, it irreparably harms his 1892 novel *Born in Exile*. The main character, a closet atheist who pursues a career as a minister for both economic and romantic reasons, is plainly a projection of the author—but such an unromantic projection that it nearly kills a highly imagined and often suspenseful novel.

A further problem with some of Gissing's work is that he was forced by money worries to compose his "triple-decker" novels at high speed. Thus, since he was determined to adhere to strict realism and not rely on the use of melodrama, he was left with little time to conceive dramatic opening scenes or introductions, and too often he winds up telling us rather than showing us. It is this that puts most readers off from his fascinating and compassionate depiction of the difficulties of unmarried women of his day, *The Odd Women*.

These weaknesses do not, however, affect his best book, *New Grub Street*, which is among the finest novels not only of the Victorian age but in all literature. Skillfully plotted, it does not rely on cheap villains, and its tragedy arises organically. The subject is the world of struggling journalists and writers, and for once Gissing writes with a sympathy as large as his objectivity and frankness. Every detail of the parlors and garrets of the book's characters is realized, and they have the tragic complexity—the alternating mix of hope, longing, and despair—of the figures of Turgenev and Chekhov. The hero Edwin Reardon, an impoverished author of literary fiction, is not entirely autobiographical; but we cannot but sense that his struggles must parallel the author's. Although its style is always graceful and sometimes beautiful, its elegance notwithstanding, it is a novel written in blood. The only criticism to be made is that the dialogue is consciously literary—a choice Gissing obviously made in the aim of producing a faster, easier-to-read story.

Gissing's penultimate novel, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, is the one that he believed would be most likely to be remembered; and it was, in fact, a significant success upon its publication in 1903, the same year of his premature death from emphysema. Though *The Private Papers* affects to deal with a fictional character, what it is really offering is Gissing's own opinions and nature-loving observations. Composed of four parts, it provides lyrical responses to each season of the year, writing as lovely as can be found in English prose. This, for example, is his description of a warm February:

> The early coming of Spring in this happy Devon gladdens my heart. I think with chill discomfort of those parts of England where the primrose shivers beneath a sky of threat rather than of solace. Honest winter, snow-clad and with the frosted beard, I can welcome not uncordially; but that long deferment of the calendar's promise, that weeping gloom of March and April, that bitter blast outraging the honour of May—how often has it robbed me of heart and hope. . . . I have been thinking of those early years of mine in London, when the seasons passed over me unobserved, when I seldom turned a glance towards the heavens, and felt no hardship in the imprisonment of boundless streets. It is strange now to remember that for some six or seven years I never looked upon a meadow, never travelled even so far as to the tree-bordered suburbs.

Academics have tended to ignore Gissing because he was politically conservative, and in books like his 1886 novel *Demos: A Story of English Socialism*, he openly mocks and satirizes leftists.

The scandal is not that George Gissing is totally forgotten; he is not, and his books remain in print. The scandal is that a writer who could produce at least one novel filled with moments as acute as the finest scenes of Eliot, and as affecting as the greatest passages in Dickens, is only occasionally mentioned and rarely read. At a time when a general reassessment of the Victorian novel is upon us, might he be a man to whom we ought to look? ♦

B&A

Movie Horror

Genocide and supernatural powers don't mix.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

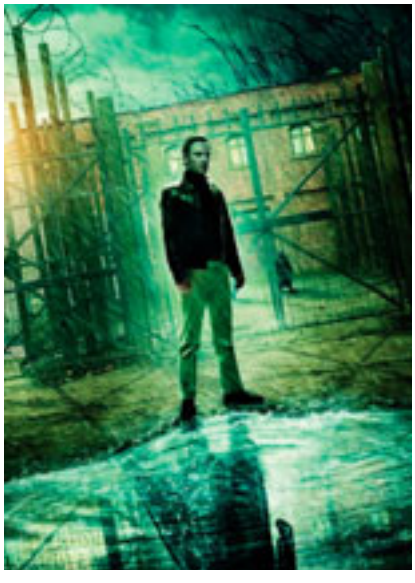
Look, I don't want to seem like a humorless fogey, someone unable to have fun at a popcorn movie, someone who takes a superhero epic far too seriously when it's simply intended to be a rousing adventure with a few pompous bits of thumb-sucking philosophizing intended to make 12-year-old boys think there's something more profound going on than how cool it would be to have supernatural powers and wear things made of Lycra.

But as I sat in the theater and watched the opening moments of the new and highly touted *X-Men: First Class* unfold before me, I actually considered rising from my seat and demanding that the audience follow me into the lobby in protest of what may be the most sickening misuse of Holocaust imagery ever—and that is saying something. The movie begins, basically, at the gates of Auschwitz, as a Jewish mother is torn screaming from her teenage son. In his agony, he screams, and the fence in front of him begins magically to pull toward him. In this manner, the boy and a character modeled after Josef Mengele learn of the existence of mutant superpowers.

Are you kidding me? I mean, are you (expletive in gerund form) *kidding me*? Auschwitz? You begin a superhero movie at Auschwitz? Has the world gone mad? We are a mere three generations removed from the slaughter of the six million and it's all right to turn imprisonment and torture and murder at Auschwitz into a motivating plot point for a character who is also, literally, a human magnet?

It is at this point that enraged readers will doubtless begin to compose condescending emails informing me that the Auschwitz angle was in *The Uncanny X-Men* issue 12 in the Pleistocene Era of the Comic Book, and that it was an enormous leap forward for the comic-book industry that it was willing to tackle such serious subjects, and that the whole business is only intended to provide a more complete picture of the character who becomes the great adversary of the "men" of the title. They will also, doubtless, point out that the original *X-Men* film began at the gates of Auschwitz, too, back in 2000, and I didn't complain about it then, so why am I complaining now? I did see that movie—although, truth to tell, the only thing I remember of it is the British actor Patrick Stewart saying of another character, "He beCAME MagNEEto" and thinking, yet again, that Stewart was some kind of genius to be able to speak that line convincingly enough to prevent audiences across the world from dissolving into hysterical giggling.

X-Men: First Class
Directed by Matthew Vaughn



I might have been in the bathroom when that opening scene unspooled, or maybe I'm just getting older and my patience is wearing thin and my sense of where the boundaries lie between appropriate and repugnant has become more exacting. But all I could think of, watching what I was watching, was the craft table: That's the area you can't see on a movie set where they pile up tons of food and beverages and coffee and snacks for the cast and crew to nosh on between takes and at lunchtime. So when they decide they need more sinister lighting, extras clothed in grey rags with yellow Jewish stars sewn into them and numbers written on their arms in pen can grab a snack and stand around shooting the breeze.

Now, there's no reason those extras shouldn't be hanging around the craft tables: They need not starve themselves because they are playing Jews in concentration camps. And after all, there were craft service tables on the set of *Schindler's List*, too, and *The Pianist*, and *Sophie's Choice*, and other Holocaust films. The point here is that cinematic depictions of the most monstrous crime in all of human history are problematic by their very nature, and so they need to have at least a modicum of gravity. And modesty—the kind of modesty that recognizes it is impossible for us really to come to any kind of understanding of the evil done, and so whatever it is we are seeing must seek to evoke it in a manner that is respectful to the enormity of the horror.

X-Men: First Class is an act of monumental disrespect—something that turns the Holocaust into the opening "environment" of a cultural experience more akin to the thrills and chills of a roller coaster than a work of art. Later on, near the climax, the boy at the camp gates utters the words "Never again"—the phrase used following the Holocaust as a promise and guarantee that efforts to wipe the Jews off the earth another time cannot be allowed to stand. And it is at this point that he concludes his transformation into the villain of the piece.

Never again? *Never again?* How—how—how *dare* you. ♦

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, *is* The Weekly Standard*'s movie critic.*

"Steve Jobs announced plans for Apple's new headquarters, a 'spaceship'-type design that could accommodate 12,000 employees. The circular, four-story building with glass walls … is expected to be completed by 2015." ***—Financial Times, June 8, 2011***

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Gates Belittles Apple 'Spaceship'

Announces Completion of Orbiting 'Battle Station'

By April Dembosky in Seattle

Despite the attention surrounding Steve Jobs's announcement of a new campus for his Apple, Inc., employees, Bill Gates said he remains unimpressed. In an interview with FT, the creator of Microsoft and co-chairman with his wife Melinda of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation called the future headquarters of Apple "something out of Epcot" in Orlando, Florida. "People are calling it a spaceship, but I seriously doubt it can fly," said Gates. On the other hand, Gates was pleased to announce the new offices for his foundation have just been completed and will be located above Seattle—three miles above the city, to be precise.

"When I said we're having a launch party, I meant it," Gates joked. "Folks are going to do a double-take, thinking we're the moon. But that's no moon. It's a space station." Melinda Gates emphasized that the station will orbit the Earth, addressing crises around the globe: "We can take our ship directly to Africa in order to eradicate malaria." "With a giant laser!" her husband added.

The new Apple campus in Cupertino may be in need of a force field.

FT was granted access to the floating foundation and met with several of the ship's officers. On the bridge monitoring day-to-day operations is the Gateses' close friend Warren Buffett. "They gave me the title of Moff Warren Buffett!" the billionaire investor excitedly announced. Asked what he was working on, Buffett said he was investigating a case of corporate espionage: "Someone seems to have stolen the blueprints of this battle station, and I think I know where they are—hiding in Cupertino."

And while Steve Jobs has touted the environmental benefits of his new campus in Cupertino, California (such as the planting of new trees), Gates said that by orbiting the Earth, his foundation will be even more environmentally friendly. "We make full use of solar power, and we've got very efficient trash compactors." Asked for comment, Jobs said, "From what I've heard, the station does have one weakness in the form of a tiny porthole

Continued on A12

With Heatwave, 'Global Warming' In, 'Climate Change' Out Until Fall

the weekly Standard

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