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TRAVIS D. SMITH

the weekly

Standard

DECEMBER 31, 2012 / JANUARY 7, 2013

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A VERY SPECIAL OPERATOR

MAX BOOT on the military legacy
of British general Orde Wingate

Wingate leads
the victory parade
into Addis Ababa,
May 5, 1941

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Great Scott

THE SCRAPBOOK did not expect that the *New York Times* would express much joy at the appointment of Rep. Tim Scott of South Carolina to the Senate seat vacated by Jim DeMint. Mr. DeMint is a conservative Republican, Mr. Scott is a conservative Republican, and the governor who anointed Scott, Nikki Haley, is a conservative Republican, too.

And the truth be told, THE SCRAPBOOK would prefer to underplay the “historic” nature of Scott’s ascent to the Senate. Yes, he is the first black Republican in the upper chamber since Edward Brooke (1979) and the only African American in the Senate at all; and he assumes the seat once held by Strom Thurmond, the 1948 Dixiecrat candidate for president. The times they are a-changin’ and all that; but it is nearly a half-century since the passage of the Civil Rights Act, and we just reelected a black president. Time marches on.

No, THE SCRAPBOOK welcomes Tim Scott to the Senate not because of the color of his skin but because he is Tim Scott: a successful businessman-turned-conservative-politician of particular skill and widespread appeal.

We can understand the consternation of the *Times*, under the circumstances. A new Republican star in the Senate is bad news, as far as the *Times* is concerned, and they are welcome to their point of view. Unfortunately, that is not the way they chose to ex-

press their consternation. Last week the *Times* published an op-ed essay on Tim Scott’s appointment entitled “The Puzzle of Black Republicans” by a University of Pennsylvania political scientist named Adolph L. Reed Jr. Reed is an old campus Trotskyite and veteran radical who has plied his



Senator-designate Tim Scott

trade at a series of prestigious institutions—Emory, Northwestern, Yale, now Penn—and, no surprise, sees Tim Scott as a “cynical token” whose appointment is “directed . . . at whites who are inclined to vote Republican but don’t want to have to think of themselves, or be thought of by others, as racist.”

He compares Scott to various prominent black Republicans—“the

archconservative Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas,” among others—as well as white supremacists from South Carolina’s past, and makes what he considers a pertinent point that all black Republican members of Congress in modern times (Scott, Gary Franks, J. C. Watts, Allen West) “were elected from majority-white districts.”

Of course, this tells us considerably more about Adolph L. Reed Jr. and the *New York Times* than it does about the fact that there are African Americans in politics who are not Democrats. That is to say, Scott and his colleagues have successfully appealed to a cross-section of the electorate rather than the sort of racially segregated constituency that Professor Reed appears to prefer. Alas, this is the modern Democratic party in a nutshell: Biology is destiny, and blacks in politics who do not conform to a rigid left-wing ideology are “tokens.”

From THE SCRAPBOOK’s perspective, Tim Scott will not be a black delegate to the black encampment in Congress but the United States senator from South Carolina. And we wish him well. Of course, we’re sorry that the *New York Times* clings to blood rather than brains when pondering the politics of African Americans. But we’re also thankful to the *Times*, and to Prof. Adolph L. Reed Jr., for depicting so vividly the racist dogma of the left. ♦

Sen. Daniel Inouye, 1924-2012

Daniel Inouye, Democrat from the state of Hawaii and president pro tempore of the Senate for the last two years, died last week at age 88. THE SCRAPBOOK rarely found itself in political accord with the late senator, but his military achievement was altogether extraordinary.

Inouye was one of 464 servicemen from World War II to have received the Medal of Honor, and the citation is worth reading in its entirety:

“Second Lieutenant Daniel K. Inouye distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action on 21 April 1945, in the vicinity of San Terenzo, Italy. While attacking a defended ridge guarding an important road junction, Second Lieutenant

Inouye skillfully directed his platoon through a hail of automatic weapon and small arms fire, in a swift enveloping movement that resulted in the capture of an artillery and mortar post and brought his men to within 40 yards of the hostile force. Emplaced in bunkers and rock formations, the enemy halted the advance with crossfire from three machine guns. With complete disregard for his

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personal safety, Second Lieutenant Inouye crawled up the treacherous slope to within five yards of the nearest machine gun and hurled two grenades, destroying the emplacement.

“Before the enemy could retaliate, he stood up and neutralized a second machine gun nest. Although wounded by a sniper’s bullet, he continued to engage other hostile positions at close range until an exploding grenade shattered his right arm. Despite the intense pain, he refused evacuation and continued to direct his platoon until enemy resistance was broken and his men were again deployed in defensive positions. In the attack, 25 enemy soldiers were killed and eight others captured. By his gallant, aggressive tactics and by his indomitable leadership, Second Lieutenant Inouye enabled his platoon to advance through formidable resistance, and was instrumental in the capture of the ridge. Second Lieutenant Inouye’s extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the United States Army.” ♦

Come, Let Us Converse Together

Since the horrific mass shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, the media have been braying about the need for a national conversation on gun control. Putting aside our suspicion that the left’s idea of a “national conversation” is telling people it disagrees with to shut up, *THE SCRAPBOOK* is very much invested in the importance of protecting children. We’re happy to talk about the issue, and even willing to entertain the idea that new laws and regulations might help prevent mass shootings.

Still, if we are to have a national conversation on guns, it would be nice if those itching to lead it didn’t wear their bias on their sleeves. Here’s a bit of *Daily Beast* media critic Howard Kurtz’s latest column, “In Between Mass Shootings, the Media Have Been MIA on Guns,” explaining why the



media have a responsibility to make gun control an issue:

In more subtle fashion, the media have led a national conversation about gay marriage, which as recently as 2004 was deemed politically unthinkable. Now it is legal in nine states, the last three of which adopted new laws in popular referenda last month. Again the press was accused of taking the liberal side, but sometimes that consisted of interviewing newly married gay and lesbian couples, who didn’t seem threatening to anyone. Whether the media changed the culture or lagged it, they were not missing in action.

In short, Kurtz thinks it’s all right for the media to be “taking the liberal side” in the service of unpopular

political causes so long as the liberal media collectively agree their cause is worthy. Establishing this as the baseline for why it’s incumbent on the media to highlight gun control measures is not exactly a good way to begin a productive national conversation on the issue. Nor is displaying your ignorance of the issues at hand. Here’s more Kurtz:

At other times there are classic regulatory questions: Should Jared Loughner have been able to obtain 30 rounds of ammunition to kill six people and wound Gabby Giffords, or should there be limits on high-magazine clips?

What, pray tell, is a “high-magazine clip”? If you know anything about

guns, reading Kurtz here is like hearing a self-professed sports fan discuss “football bats” or “baseball referees.” And the startling failure to grasp the most basic facts surrounding guns is not a problem the media want to rectify, at least not when they’re engaged in the process of demonization.

Last week, the *Washington Post*’s Greg Sargent took to Twitter and accused a conservative blogger—DrewM of the popular website Ace of Spades—of “fighting for maniacs to have easy access to mass child slaughter machines, in the name of ‘liberty.’” Sargent then further demanded to know whether or not DrewM “believe[d] Americans have a constitutional right to assault weapons and high capacity magazines.”

So DrewM asked Sargent a pretty basic question—what’s your definition of an “assault weapon”? Sargent had no idea. “Question is legitimate. Short term answer would be for ban on more military style guns. Needs to

be fleshed out in debate though.” Notice how Sargent elides from “assault weapon” to President Obama’s new poll-tested preferred term of “military style guns” without defining either? Sargent wants to ban something, anything, he’s just not sure what it is.

Again, these are just the knots the media routinely tie themselves in when discussing the basics of guns. We could write volumes, and many honest scholars have, on the media’s abuse of crime statistics as they relate to gun ownership.

So, by all means, let’s have a national conversation on gun violence. But it should not be confined exclusively to gun laws—it should probably extend to discussing whether liberal notions of what is culturally acceptable contribute to violence, as well. And to the extent this conversation does relate directly to guns, the media could get the ball rolling by making a good-faith effort to understand what they’re talking about. ♦

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When Good Trees Go Bad

We bought our house years ago in deepest autumn, when the towering oak in the backyard had scarcely lost a leaf, and the leaves it had yet to lose were daubed by the lengthening year to a shade of red I'd never seen. The sun passing through them gave the browning grass an unearthly shimmer, as light from a rose window will brighten the shadows in a sanctuary. The house was okay and the neighborhood was good but I think the reason we felt compelled to make an offer was this very thing, this overspreading tree with its power to impose moods on an otherwise unremarkable plot of ground in suburban Virginia. You sign a stack of papers and take possession of a house, and pay taxes and insurance premiums that prove, among other things, it's yours. But the categories of ownership are too puny for a tree like this one. You don't buy it or take possession of it, you can only agree to become its caretaker, assume a sacred stewardship.

So some people may view my decision to chop it down, rip its ragged limbs from the earth, and grind its root ball to dust as inappropriate.

I can only guess at its age—can only guess at how thick and deep is the accumulation of nature's genius that I am about to obliterate. Arborists are like pollsters or pundits or professors of social science: Very few of them know what they're talking about. Over the past 20 years our various phony-baloney experts have placed the age of the tree as low as 100 years and as high as 250, with wild guesses dropped at intervals in between. I prefer a higher figure. At the dawn of the Civil War federal troops clearcut the countryside that rose from the banks of the Potomac

and stretched back to what is now our neighborhood, and I like the thought that one of them saved this sapling as the only creature brave enough to lift its head in front of enemy lines.

More touching to me than its link to our nation's history is its place in my own, in our family's. Its shade has cooled us in summer, the uppermost branches swaying like ladies' fans in



the sunlight. It was home plate for games of wiffle ball and a provisioner of pillowy leaf piles for tumbling every fall. It stood stark and lovely against white winter skies. We took one of its burly outstretched arms as the crossbeam to hang a rope swing from, with a smooth arc of 40 feet or more. I remember one morning when, from a distance, I watched my daughter, just turning 3, as she lay alone on the hammock and gazed upward, seeming to lose herself among the lacework of branches far above, and my realizing with a sudden chill that whatever thoughts she was thinking now were no longer within a father's ken.

I see that in rhapsodizing about my tree I haven't explained why I'm going to kill it.

It will be a preemptive move, following the neoconservative doctrine

of Anticipatory Self-Defense—an act undertaken according to Just Arbicide Theory, of which the great Niebuhr himself would surely approve. I will kill the tree, I mean, before the tree kills me. Every year men arrive with their pulleys and guy wires and saws to swing among the branches like macaques, removing only the branches they declare desiccated and leaving untouched those that thrive, they say. And then a storm sweeps through and the yard is littered with large chunks of tree, chunks often big enough to bisect a roof if they were torn from the branches that sway ominously above the house.

Over the last few years two nearby siblings of our oak have been felled in acts of God soon after the tree quacks declared them healthy. One tree punctured our living room ceiling on Thanksgiving Day as turkey was being served. The other, on the Fourth of July, crashed down from our neighbor's yard and thrust a thick limb through our upstairs bathroom, releasing a torrent of glass and splintered wood. When I saw the damage my first response, clowning, was to sing "It Came in Through the Bathroom Window"; my second, chillier, was to reflect that with a bit of bad luck I might have died on the toilet, like Elvis.

From that day forward I eyed my tree differently. Then came the vicious storms of this summer. Two houses in our leafy neighborhood were flattened, destroyed, by the noble oaks that rose beside them like sentries. It was a nice simile, trees like sentries, but it's one I no longer use. Now my oak takes on a menacing aspect when the skies darken and the wind picks up and I look out through our brittle windows, beneath our matchstick roof. The branches that once were ladies' fans now look like Uzis being waved at my house by an angry mob. It's them or me.

ANDREW FERGUSON

The Greatest Conservative Generation

“There were giants in the earth in those days.” The death on December 19 of Robert Bork—superb legal scholar, preeminent constitutional thinker, principled public servant—calls to mind the other giants of American conservatism who have left us in the last decade: Bill Buckley and Irving Kristol, Milton Friedman and James Q. Wilson, Richard John Neuhaus and Jeane Kirkpatrick, Ronald Reagan and Jack Kemp. They were the greatest conservative generation. They rode into the valley of liberal orthodoxies and emerged sometimes triumphant, always unbowed. When can their glory fade? They left our nation stronger and better for their efforts.

Those who knew them do their best to carry on the fight. Inspired by their example and effort, by their boldness and wisdom, remembering the uphill struggles of the early years, they do their best to keep the banner aloft and moving forward. But what of the next generation?

It’s been almost 60 years since Bill Buckley and his colleagues founded *National Review*, standing “athwart history, yelling Stop, at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who so urge it.” Those of us concerned with the perpetuation and success of American conservatism might consider what Abraham Lincoln said a little more than 60 years after the American Revolution, on January 27, 1838, at the Young Men’s Lyceum in Springfield, Illinois.

The whole speech is, needless to say, worth reading—and worth rereading. But for our purposes, consider one aspect of the 28-year-old Lincoln’s treatment of the ques-

tion of “the perpetuation of our political institutions.” Why, he asked, “suppose danger to our political institutions? Have we not preserved them for more than fifty years? And why may we not for fifty times as long?”

One reason, Lincoln explains, is that “the scenes of the revolution . . . must fade upon the memory of the world, and grow more and more dim by the lapse of time. In history, we hope, they will be read of, and recounted, so long as the Bible shall be read;—but even granting that they will, their influence cannot be what it heretofore has been. Even then, they cannot be so universally known, nor so vividly felt, as they were by the generation just gone to rest.”

Lincoln suggests that, even for the generation after the Founders, these scenes were a kind of “living history.” But

for Lincoln’s generation, “those histories are gone.” And “unless we, their descendants, supply their places with other pillars, hewn from the solid quarry of sober reason,” we will lack “the materials for our future support and defense.”

The materials for the future support and defense of conservatism will have to be forged by a generation that remembers not the Founders. In a way, this can be an advantage. Young men and women today, interested in the perpetuation of our political and civic liberty, will understand they can’t coast on the Founders’ efforts. They’ll also be less intimidated by the Founders’ example. They will be open to fresh thinking “hewn from the solid quarry of sober reason.” Such fresh thinking has never been more necessary.



Robert Bork, 1927-2012

But as they think anew, they'll also look back to Bob Bork and his compatriots. Their work is the point of departure, a source of invaluable lessons, both substantive and strategic. Yet the generation that now ascends to center stage shouldn't be intimidated by their daunting example.

The best revenge for Edward Kennedy's slander about "Robert Bork's America" would be to help advance the cause of what is truly Bob Bork's America—a nation of constitutional liberty and self-government. Bob Bork would have enjoyed the well-deserved encomiums he is receiving. He'd be even more pleased by the young men and women coming forth to say how inspired they have been by his example.

—William Kristol

Abandoning Afghanistan



A firefight in Helmand province: Three U.S. soldiers and one Afghan soldier return fire.

When Senator Barack Obama was running for president back in 2008, he accused the Bush administration, his opponent Senator John McCain, and their supporters of taking their eyes off the ball by fighting a war in Iraq and ignoring the "necessary war"—the war in Afghanistan. Well, four short years later, by Obama's lights, Afghanistan is no longer the necessary war but a war to be ignored, a war to be "ended" regardless of the strategic consequences of doing so precipitously.

It's now clear that Barack Obama's only abiding interest in Afghanistan was rhetorical, allowing him political space to pull American troops out of Iraq as soon as

possible and, once done, to begin the same process in Afghanistan. Even the surge of 30,000 more American troops that began in 2010 was, in hindsight, intended to be less a strategic game-changer (as the earlier surge in Iraq had been) than a stopgap measure to stabilize a deteriorating situation. Smaller than what had been requested by the generals on the ground and put fully in place for only one fighting season, the surge allowed the president to appear serious while, in fact, providing him cover for pulling the plug on the war effort altogether.

Make no mistake, pulling the plug he is. Despite internal Pentagon reports that indicate the Afghans will not be ready to take over combat operations in 2014, news accounts have the White House pushing for cutting the remaining 68,000 American troops in Afghanistan this coming year by another 20,000 to 30,000, with the likely goal of leaving fewer than 10,000 noncombat troops in place by the end of 2014. This is not just a race to the exit but a full-out sprint. And once again it's a decision made against the best advice of the commanders in the field, who would like nothing more than to hold the current force levels constant through at least the 2013 fighting season.

None of this should come as a surprise. Since early in his presidency, when deigning to speak at all about Afghanistan, President Obama has said little about why defeating the Taliban is important. When he does make reference to Afghanistan, it's invariably to talk of timelines for bringing the troops home or, as he said at the U.N. in September, ending the war "on schedule in 2014."

Of course, saying the war will end on schedule doesn't make it reality—a fact Afghans know all too well. With the Taliban on their heels but not defeated, Pakistani intelligence releasing incarcerated Taliban back onto the streets, road-

maps being drawn up for "peace talks" that would allow hardcore Taliban officials into Afghan governing posts, and Obama administration plans to eliminate funding for some 100,000 Afghan security forces after we leave, it's no wonder arms sales in Afghanistan are booming—not only for warlords who control local militias but also for ordinary citizens. "Whenever you turn on the TV or radio," said one Afghan, "the discussion is 2014. . . . It's become like doomsday for Afghans."

"By repeatedly discussing withdrawal dates," according to Ronald Neumann, former U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, "the Obama administration has only made matters worse." With virtually all American troops gone

in 2014 and local forces not ready to take over, Afghans rightly fear the potential chaos that might follow. “This fear,” Neumann says, “has encouraged Afghan leaders from Karzai on down to hedge their bets and do whatever they can to assure their survival. Rather than fighting corruption, they are tightening their patronage linkages, preparing for civil war, and trying to make or steal as much money as possible in the event they need to flee.” If this sounds like a state headed toward Hobbes’s “war of all against all,” that’s because it is.

The tragedy is that this needn’t be the case. As limited an effort as the surge in Afghanistan has been, it’s had real success. In Helmand and Kandahar, previously key Taliban strongholds, American, Afghan, and allied forces have cleared insurgent bastions and defeated every attempt by the Taliban over the past year to regain their lost territory. But because the administration was determined to go “light” on the number of surge troops and then draw them down more rapidly than had been recommended by commanders, the original plan to tackle simultaneously the insurgent presence in Afghanistan’s eastern provinces was never executed. Now, with the anticipated drawdown of the remaining troops over the next year, a full-on counterinsurgency effort in that region will never take place. In short, the insurgent cancer was going into remission but the

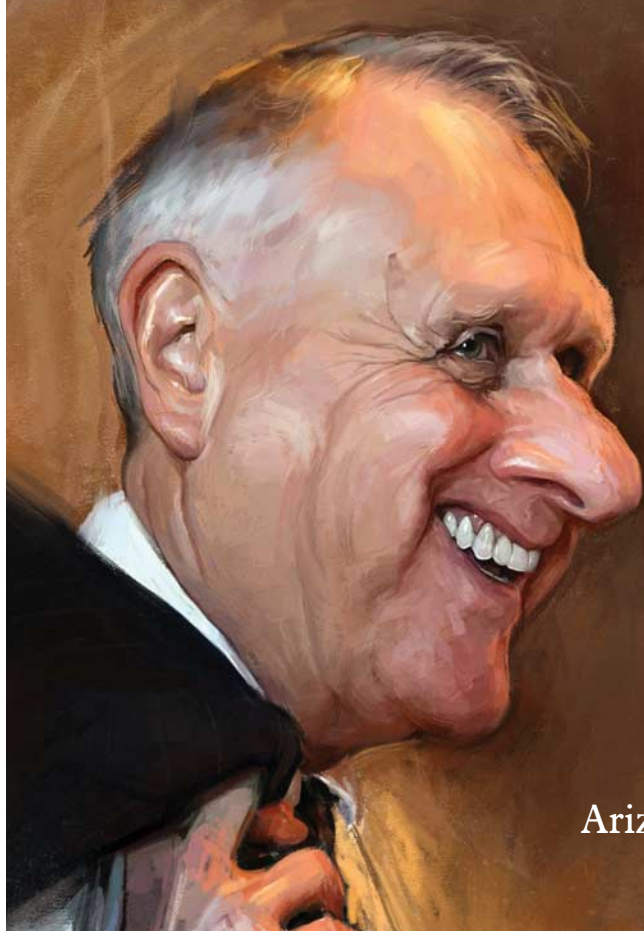
White House, irrationally, wants to stop treatment.

Nor is it the case that Afghan security forces have not stepped up their game. When partnered with American and allied combat forces, Afghan troops have learned their trade and begun to fight well. However, they still lack the logistics, intelligence, and mobility capabilities needed to go it alone. Sustaining our combat and support efforts for just a few more years would ensure that when our combat teams do leave Afghanistan, there is a force in place that can effectively defend its own homeland.

Critics of the war like to point out that the Afghan conflict is the longest overseas war in American history—implying that it’s a hopeless case. Yet, for much of that time, the effort in Afghanistan was a holding action, with the war in Iraq eating up time, resources, and energy until the American surge and change in strategy in 2006-07 turned that conflict around. The nation might well be tired of war, but it’s only been a little over three years since President Obama announced his own surge and new strategy. When it comes to counterinsurgencies, a little patience goes a long way.

But this is not a patient president. The pattern for Iraq, Libya, and now Afghanistan has been basically the same. End American military involvement as soon as possible, and damn the consequences.

—Gary Schmitt



The Indispensable Man

Arizona's Jon Kyl retires from the Senate.

BY FRED BARNES

There's a wise old saying that no one in politics or elected office is indispensable. But Republican senator Jon Kyl of Arizona comes pretty close.

Now that Kyl is retiring after 8 years in the House and 18 in the Senate, his absence will be felt instantly. He knows more about more issues than anyone else in Congress—ranging from missile defense to the estate tax. His influence was magnified less by his position as Senate minority whip since 2007 than by his ability to deal respectfully with both Republican and Democratic senators, even those with the biggest egos.

For conservatives, Kyl was their link to the Republican leadership in Congress. He was trusted like few others. Jim DeMint of South Carolina, who worked as a Senate outsider to foster conservative issues, told me Kyl was his “advocate on the inside.” Kyl’s conservatism was undiminished by the seductions of Washington. He wasn’t part of the Washington social scene.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Kyl never packaged a set of rules for gaining influence on Capitol Hill. But after covering Kyl for years and interviewing him numerous times—twice recently—I’m taking the liberty of formulating five Kyl rules. I doubt he’ll object.

■ Rule one: Know more. “If you know a lot about a subject, people will listen,” he says. After Kyl’s farewell speech on the Senate floor last week, Senator Jeff Sessions of Alabama said, “I serve on the Armed Services Committee, and I’ve found he knows more about those issues than I do.” Kyl has never been on the committee.

Kyl’s insistence on absorbing the details of complex issues was the key to what he regards as his proudest achievement: defeat of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1999. Ratification had been considered a cinch. But senators gradually deferred to his “personal involvement and deep subject matter expertise,” says Frank Gaffney of the Center for Security Policy. The treaty was beaten, 51-48.

Now Democratic senators and the Obama White House are getting ready to seek ratification in

2013—once Kyl has left the Senate.

■ Rule two: Don’t seek credit. Kyl adheres to the sign that President Reagan had on his White House desk: “There’s no limit to what a man can do or where he can go if he doesn’t mind who gets the credit.” As number two in the Republican leadership, Kyl says, “A lot of times it’s better if somebody else takes the lead.”

He was appalled by the “sequester” requiring deep cuts in defense. “I probably wouldn’t have voted for it if I weren’t in the leadership,” he says. When Senator Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire asked to lead the fight to restore the spending, he turned the issue over to her without hesitation.

Well before he became whip, Kyl was adept at handing off issues. In 2006, *Time* wrote, “he has succeeded by mastering a tactic that is crucial in a body in which any one member can bring the place to a halt as a ploy or out of pique: subterfuge.” Kyl told the magazine that “you can accomplish a lot if you’re not necessarily out in front on everything.” And he has.

■ Rule three: Don’t get a big head. Kyl learned this from his father, a

JASON SEILER

GOP House member from Iowa for six terms. (Kyl moved to Arizona for college, then stayed.) When they parked at the county fair in Bloomfield, Iowa, Kyl senior pointed to the man in charge of parking. “He does that better than anyone else,” his father said. “Everybody can do something better than you can.”

This example, Kyl says, “always made me appreciate other people and think I’m not such a big shot. . . [so] just don’t get a big head.” Kyl hasn’t. Quite the contrary. He’s known for his humility.

■ Rule four: Treat everyone decently. Kyl isn’t unique in following this rule. He’s just practiced it more consistently. Like avoiding self-puffery, he learned it from his father. The lesson “was about human nature,” he says. “You’re not going to change human nature.”

From all appearances, treating people decently comes naturally to Kyl. But it also produces results. People respond more favorably. “You can best accomplish [your goals] by being a decent person to those around you,”

he says. If someone disagrees with him, he doesn’t take umbrage. “He treats all people alike,” a colleague says. He’s a listener.

■ Rule five: Keep your principles. Kyl sees himself as Dick Cheney to Mitch McConnell’s George W. Bush. When he was being considered as Bush’s vice presidential running mate, Cheney told Bush he was “really, really conservative.” Kyl is very, very conservative. His mild, reasonable manner can fool people. Heritage Foundation president Ed Feulner saw him as the “bridge” between the conservative movement and Republican congressional leaders.

When Kyl was named in 2010 by *Time* as one of the world’s 100 most influential people, McConnell characterized him as “a principled conservative who knows what is attainable.” His job as whip was to unite Senate Republicans as conservative as DeMint and as moderate as Susan Collins of Maine. He and McConnell, the Senate minority

leader, became quite good at this.

Kyl was ready to retire in 2006. When a wealthy real estate developer emerged as the likely Democratic candidate, Kyl was prevailed upon to seek a third term. The Democrat, Jim Pederson, spent millions, but Kyl won, 53-44 percent.

By early 2007, he had decided not to run in 2012. He didn’t announce his plans, but gave a strong hint by failing to raise money for reelection. Had he begun fundraising, Kyl told me, it would have given a false impression.

Fifteen Republicans and zero Democrats showed up in the Senate chamber for Kyl’s farewell address, though New York’s Chuck Schumer wandered in and out several times without stopping to listen. Kyl didn’t reminisce. Instead, he focused on “some of the biggest public-policy challenges America faces” and recommended “principles to guide the way forward.” The speech was moderate in tone but deeply conservative in substance. Pure Kyl. ♦

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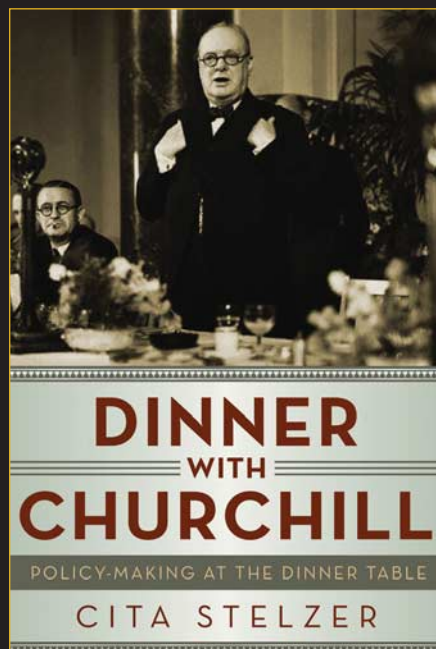
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Spaghetti with Regulation Sauce

Restaurant owners work overtime to figure out Obamacare. **BY KATE HAVARD**

The owner of an Italian restaurant in Baltimore was going to talk to me about how his business was preparing for Obamacare, now that it is going to be the law of the land. But seeing the backlash faced by other businessmen who dared to suggest the law might have a less than salubrious impact on their businesses, he was having second thoughts.

On the day after the election, Papa John's CEO John Schnatter got in trouble after speaking to a group of college students about small businesses. Asked whether he thought Papa John's franchise owners might "cut people's hours back... so they wouldn't have to pay for health insurance," Schnatter responded, "It's common sense. That's what I call lose-lose."

An honest, almost innocuous answer. Yet the media portrayed Schnatter as the Pizza Grinch, scheming to snatch health care from the hands of his struggling employees just before Christmas.

Liberal groups announced boycotts, the company's Facebook page comments were filled with ire, Jon Stewart called Schnatter and other CEOs critical of the health care law "a—holes" on TV.

A survey by YouGov seemed to indicate that Papa John's "brand index" had dropped in the days following the fray. The media liked the idea that a businessman was being punished for saying that an expensive

health care law was going to be expensive. "Restaurant Brands Suffering After Obamacare Rants," read a headline in *Slate*. The *Huffington Post* piled on: "Papa John's Obamacare Stance Costs Company Its Reputation."

Schnatter stepped in to do damage control, writing an op-ed in which he assured readers that he intended to comply with the law and was indeed "cool with" people having health insurance.

Other businessmen who publicly speculated about the effects this law would have on their businesses, like The Cheesecake Factory CEO David Overton and Denny's franchise owner John Metz, also came under fire.

Given all of this, I could understand why the man I wanted to interview was reluctant. "When I see these big powerful CEOs and they can't even speak their mind on this, I think—what's going to happen to me?" he said. Eventually, he agreed to speak anonymously.

This owner isn't looking to flout the law. His restaurant has been offering health care insurance to full-time employees for decades, even as costs have risen. Now, he's just starting to figure out what it will actually take to implement the law. The main issue is whether he's a big business or a small one, and it's not an easy question to answer.

His restaurant has no human resources department or government liaison. Instead, he and his sister have spent hours plugging old payroll

numbers into computer spreadsheets, trying to figure out where they stand. "The first thing we're doing is we're still not sure whether we have 50 full-time equivalents," he says. Over 50, and he'll have to provide "affordable" coverage to all his full-time workers.

One common misconception about the health care law is that employers could avoid the mandate entirely by replacing their full-time employees with a greater number of part-time employees. That's not going to work. They would still face a mandate, although it would only apply to their full-time employees.

There's a reason the law refers not to full-time employees but full-time *equivalents*. Under Obamacare full-time employees are those who work more than 120 hours per month. Two part-time employees who each work 60 hours in a month would be counted as an additional full-time worker in determining whether the business falls over or under the 50-employee divide. So an employer must sum all the hours his part-timers work over the course of a month and divide that total by 120 to determine how many "full-time equivalent" employees he has. The only real way to avoid the mandate, then, is to keep your business small.

A further bind: Key definitions, such as what makes a plan "affordable," have so far only been announced as "guidance," not hard-and-fast rules.

Most businesses will have to scrutinize the hours their employees work, but once they do, they'll at least know where they stand. For restaurants, however, with waiters working unpredictable, flexible hours, it will mean keeping constant track of how much work is being done in a given month, perhaps recalibrating the hours every month to make sure they are in compliance.

If you're a business close to the 50 full-time equivalent mark, a heavy summer season or a holiday rush could put you over the top.

The mandate takes effect in 2014 but will be based on the prior 12 months. So starting in January 2013, owners will need to keep a close watch on their employees' hours. At the end of the



In the bull's-eye: Schnatter

Kate Havard is an editorial assistant at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

year, they'll know their situation better.

"That's not something you want to find out on December 31, 2013, and then have to implement it on January 1, 2014," says Michelle Reinke, a health care expert at the National Restaurant Association.

She says that throughout the regulatory public comment process, the association has requested flexibility with certain regulations, and hopes things will become clearer once the "guidance" hardens into rules. "Restaurant owners need to educate themselves about how the law will impact their business and their employees," she said. "But until all the rules are on the table, it's hard to make decisions about the future."

For businessmen like the Italian restaurant owner, the uncertainty is the crusher. He doesn't know yet whether he'll be in the over-50 or under-50 employees category, so all he can do is hunker down and try to collect his data. He doesn't know if he'll be able to afford the health insurance plan he currently has for his employees once more of his workers qualify (until now, he has counted 34 hours per week, not 30, as full time). Does he need to change plans? If he's not at the 50-employee mark, will he be able to afford covering any of his employees or have to drop health coverage altogether?

All of this remains unclear. There is something, however, that he knows for sure. In the 1990s, he grew the restaurant, tacking on a sprawling complex to the little bar and kitchen where his Italian immigrant parents served spaghetti and meatballs starting in the early 1950s. He doubled its size.

He also laid the groundwork for further expansion. "When we reengineered this building, we left in place the structure to support a 120-seat catering hall on the second level," he says. Now, it's out of the question.

"I'd always thought I'd do what my dad did," he says. "He was working in here till he was 73 and had a massive heart attack and died."

"I always thought I would be happy to be that old and work in here until my last day," he says. "Now, I'm seriously contemplating retiring for the first time in my life." ♦

Smugglers Galore

How Iran arms its allies.

BY LEE SMITH

An explosion in southern Lebanon last week destroyed what is believed to have been a Hezbollah weapons depot. This latest in a series of mysterious "accidents" in Hezbollah-controlled precincts proved, as one Israeli official wryly remarked, that those who "sleep with rockets and



Hamas militant with a Belgian FN F2000

amass large stockpiles of weapons are in a very unsafe place." With the Party of God's overland supply route through Syria choked off by the 22-month-long uprising against Syrian president Bashar al-Assad, and Israel virtually in total control of the maritime route, Hezbollah's stockpile is being systematically degraded.

Yet the arsenal of Iran's other regional proxy force, Hamas, is growing. The Israeli Defense Forces' campaign against Hamas last month in

Gaza targeted Iranian missiles, including the Fajr-5, capable of reaching Tel Aviv and other points north, and destroyed most of them within the first hours of the conflict. But Hamas is already rearming, and it's not clear that Israel or even Muslim Brotherhood-governed Egypt, which is ostensibly capable of controlling the Sinai tunnel networks through which Hamas receives its arms, can do much about it.

Israel's next war with Hamas—a further confrontation is almost inevitable—may well feature not only Iranian missiles smuggled through Sudan, but NATO-quality small arms and shoulder-launched surface-to-air missiles that come by way of Hamas's most recent weapons supplier, post-Qaddafi Libya.

Israel's Operation Pillar of Defense also zeroed in on Hamas commanders, most notably Ahmed al-Jabari, Hamas's chief of staff, responsible for the group's military operations. It was Jabari who replaced Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, assassinated in a Dubai hotel room almost three years ago in an operation usually attributed to Israel. In a sense, then, Pillar of Defense began back in January 2010 in that most profligate of the United Arab Emirates—which is also a veritable weapons bazaar.

"It's the Casablanca of the Middle East, with all sorts of shady characters, money laundering, and arms deals," says Michael Ross, a former Mossad operations officer. "With the Mabhouh assassination, the UAE authorities had all this video feed of what were allegedly Mossad operatives moving in and out of Dubai, but what they didn't show was footage of Mabhouh meeting with a banker, then with his contact from the IRGC [Iranian

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF HAMAS

Revolutionary Guard Corps].” According to Ross, Mabhouh’s briefcase was a treasure trove of information detailing what items Hamas procured from the Iranians and the logistics of getting them to Gaza.

Arms smuggling was a problem in Gaza long before Hamas took control, says Major (Res.) Avig Oreg, formerly in charge of the al Qaeda and global jihad desk in Israel’s military intelligence service and now head of a private consulting firm specializing in terrorism, CeifiT. “In the past, there was a maritime route via Syria or Lebanon, and when the smugglers approached the location they’d put the weapons in large flotation devices with the hope that the current would take it ashore,” says Oreg. “Sometimes it got tangled up in fishermen’s nets.”

When the Israeli Navy interdicted the *Karine A* freighter in 2002 and stopped a large cache of Iranian-made weapons from reaching Gaza, it not only turned George W. Bush against Yasser Arafat for good, it also signaled that Israel had closed Iran’s maritime route to Gaza once and for all. And yet as Israel’s 2005 disengagement from Gaza cleared the way for Hamas’s 2007 takeover, the outfit sought more sophisticated weapons, and Iran’s support. The question for Tehran was how to get arms to their Palestinian clients.

“The ships usually start in the port of Bandar Abbas,” says Oreg. “They come through the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, around the Arabian Peninsula, and crossing through the Bab el-Mandeb strait, docking in Port Sudan.” Occasionally the Iranians will dock in Eritrea, “just to mix things up,” but their preferred point of entry is Sudan.

Sudan is critical, agrees Michael Ross. “This is where the parts for Iranian weapons are assembled. The guys in Gaza aren’t too swift in putting together complicated systems like the Fajr-5. Some assembly may be required when it hits Gaza, but the more complicated, high-tech aspects of the weapons systems are assembled in Sudan by Iranians, who have a large presence in Khartoum, at places like the al-Yarmouk factory.”

In October, an operation widely

credited to Israel destroyed this key Iranian weapons depot. Other attacks on Sudanese soil attributed to Israel, such as the spring 2009 series of strikes on weapons convoys, have left some wondering what the government in Khartoum has to gain from painting a big target on its head for the IDF.

Money is part of it, says Matthew Levitt, director of the Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, who points to extensive



Hamas fighters with another FN F2000, left, and a Russian AK-103, right

economic cooperation between Iran and Sudan. “But there are also ideological reasons. These are radical Islamists, they’ve been angry at the world since their president, Omar al-Bashir, was indicted for war crimes, and they don’t like Israel.”

Even if it were possible to convince Khartoum to sever ties with Tehran, says Oreg, “the Iranians would find a replacement without too much difficulty, Eritrea or Somalia, both places where the central government is incapable of extending control over its territory.” In any case, the real problem is Egypt.

Sudanese smugglers, mostly from the Rashaida tribe, transport the weapons from Port Sudan in trucks across the Nubian Desert to the Egyptian border, all the way through Egypt’s

Eastern Desert along the Red Sea, and through the Suez Canal deep into the Sinai Peninsula. “The easiest way to cut off Hamas’s weapons supply,” says Ross, “would be to shut down the shipments coming out of Sudan, at the source, rather than in Sinai. The routes are limited, and this could easily be accomplished if the Egyptian military made an effort. But the army has always been the problem. While Mubarak was president, it was the intelligence service under Omar Suleiman that stopped shipments, kept radical elements at bay, and cooperated very closely with Israel. The military looks the other way and just doesn’t care.”

In fact, since the August jihadist attack in the Sinai that killed 16 Egyptian border guards, the army has been more vigilant, recognizing that its own security, and not merely Israel’s, is at stake. The proliferation of foreign fighters in the Sinai, some of them aligned with Egypt’s Salafist movement, moreover, poses a big political risk for Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi. Judging by his actions during Pillar of Defense, Morsi believes that keeping the peace with Israel is in the national interest. That still leaves plenty of room for him to be outflanked on his right by the Salafists and armed fighters whose prestige rests precisely on the fact that they are fighting Israel. The problem, then, is that if Morsi closes the tunnels, affecting both Hamas and the Sinai jihadists, the latter will turn on him; if he doesn’t, the jihadists will eventually come for him anyway.

In any case, he has an excuse for the United States and Israel ready at hand: Practically speaking, it’s almost impossible to shut down the entire network of tunnels between Sinai and Gaza—and for that, he can lay some of the blame at Mubarak’s feet.

“The nomadic tribes in the Sinai were neglected by the government for years,” says Oreg. “There are no roads, no employment, and their main source of income became smuggling—not only weapons into Gaza, but routes into Israel also, smuggling drugs and women.” The Tarabin tribe, he explains, is the most dominant—and the wealthiest. “In

Sinai, the biggest and most expensive houses belong to smugglers. For one AK-47, a smuggler gets \$1,000.”

Besides the profit motive for smuggling, there are also geographical issues that make it difficult to close the industry. “With the high mountains in the Sinai,” says Oreg, “it’s easy for the smugglers to move around, and not even the Egyptian Army can do much about it.”

The Gaza side of the border is even more economically dependent on the tunnel networks that, since Hamas took over, have become highly regulated. “After the blockade of Gaza,” says Oreg, “everything went through tunnels. All of Gaza’s international trade is conducted through the tunnels, thousands of them. Hamas has basically institutionalized the tunnel industry, requiring registration for tunnels and imposing taxes on them. You can make up to \$50,000 a month on a tunnel.”

Not surprisingly, Libyan entrepreneurs now want a piece of the action. The supply line, according to Oreg, is the same—via Sudan. “But eventually,” says Oreg, “they will likely build smuggling networks through the Libyan desert into Egypt.” What’s different, says Ross, is the materiel. “For instance, they’ve got FN F2000s, a Belgian-manufactured military assault rifle. The Europeans, in their infinite wisdom, treated Qaddafi like just another client. And so after Qaddafi, people found warehouses full of munitions, and if you’re sitting on a stockpile, it’s not too tough to make contacts with middlemen and facilitators. What a wild west that’s become.”

Israeli officials might be worried about the Sinai turning into an Afghanistan on their border, but with Hamas, they’re looking at a garrison equipped with Iranian missiles and European small arms. “We saw how much Hamas had at its disposal with Operation Pillar of Defense,” notes Ross. “There was no ground incursion this time around, but you’d have seen them breaking out all sorts of stuff, like NATO-quality small arms. We’ve come a long way from the First Intifada and 8-year-olds throwing rocks.” ♦

The ‘Open for Business’ Tax Plan

Let’s eliminate tariffs and corporate taxes.

BY ANDREW MOYLAN & ELI LEHRER

It’s not hard to find people in Washington who say they favor something called “fundamental tax reform.” President Barack Obama, for example, loves talking about the idea. In a major speech at George Washington University and in each budget he has put before Congress, the 44th president has said he wants to “reduce spending in the tax code, so-called tax expenditures” (a good idea, though it

unspecified “loopholes.” These “radical” Republican plans would probably be better for growth but actually share a lot of features with President Obama’s proposals.

While Democrats and Republicans agree that America needs to reform its corporate tax code, both sides have offered plans that essentially nibble around the edges by reducing carve-outs and lowering statutory rates.

This isn’t fundamental reform. Indeed, the best one can hope for in any reform that emerges in 2013 would be something resembling the Ronald Reagan/Dan Rostenkowski/Dick Gephardt/Bill Bradley effort in 1986. The Tax Reform Act of 1986 was a well-thought-out bipartisan simplification of a shaky federal tax structure, yet the code quickly morphed into the 3-million-word mess we have today, loaded with special favors and loopholes of the very sort that Reagan-era leaders fought to remove.

A truly fundamental reform would be outright elimination of tariffs and corporate income taxes, two features of the tax code that nearly all right-of-center economists—and a surprising number of left-of-center economists—believe are damaging to growth and prosperity. Call it an “open for business” tax strategy, welcoming global capital to our shores and thereby stimulating the domestic economy.

Tariffs, which are just import taxes, are an anachronism that hurts consumers and the overall economy. While industrial unions and some of the older smokestack industries love the protection of tariffs, few economists



Time for reform

strains credulity to suggest that letting people keep more of their own money is “spending”). Without offering any specifics, the president also has endorsed efforts to lower statutory corporate tax rates, while keeping corporate income tax revenue stable by eliminating credits, deductions, and exemptions.

GOP plans—even those in the supposedly radical, House-passed, Paul Ryan-authored “Path to Prosperity”—involve similar base-broadening cuts in the corporate rate and promise to do away with some

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of any ideological stripe would endorse them today. The NAFTA and CAFTA trade deals have eliminated most tariffs between the United States, Canada, Mexico, and much of Central America, but duties imposed on products from other countries raise prices for consumers and encourage misallocation of productive capacity.

The burden of tariffs falls most heavily on lower-income consumers, who spend relatively large portions of their income on overseas-produced and heavily tariffed goods like clothing and food. Furthermore, the relatively low-wage jobs that tariffs could theoretically “preserve” frequently come at the expense of new jobs that otherwise would have been created in more dynamic and remunerative sectors of the economy.

Moreover, for all the trouble they cause, tariffs bring in a relatively paltry \$30 billion in revenue, less than 1 percent of the federal government’s total take. Their elimination could easily be financed by closing a handful of loopholes that few would miss, such as tax subsidies for wind energy boondoggles and mortgage interest on multi-millionaires’ mansions. Because tariff rates are reasonably modest, eliminating them might not make a huge difference for the economy as a whole. But the move would send a powerful signal to anyone seeking to do business with Americans while providing a counterweight to protectionism here and abroad.

The elimination of tariffs remains a topic of interest primarily to professional economists. In contrast, lots of people are talking about corporate tax reform. Alas, the reforms under consideration would be fairly minor. Democrats and Republicans alike want to end a variety of deductions and credits to lower the statutory corporate tax rate, but the most commonly proposed changes would fail to lower rates to levels that are competitive by international standards.

By any measure, America’s corporate income tax code is among the most burdensome in the world. The marginal rates are the highest of any industrialized country and effective

rates are higher than all but a handful of First World economies. Even if America is very aggressive in broadening the base and lowering rates, it’s likely that it will only move to the middle of the First World pack. For a country aiming to be a global leader, “average” shouldn’t be enough.

Zeroing out the corporate income tax, on the other hand, would make the United States dramatically more competitive. The benefits of such a policy would also be more broadly distributed than just about any other similarly sized tax reform one could contemplate. Most important, it would likely raise workers’ wages and benefit consumers.

While the literature on who actually “pays” corporate taxes (what economists call “tax incidence”) is complicated, it’s clearly impossible for corporations *themselves* to pay taxes, since they are simply composed of individuals. Taxes assessed on a corporate treasury are inevitably passed on to three groups: shareholders, employees, and customers. While most corporations will pass on some burdens to each of these groups, employees are often the most vulnerable. After all, consumers can usually find competing products and shareholders can sell the stock. Unless their skills are in high demand, however, workers have to go through a long search to find other employment.

One study, from Harvard and the University of Michigan, finds that as much as three dollars out of four in corporate taxes are paid by a company’s workers. The Congressional Budget Office, likewise, finds that ordinary individuals end up paying most of the tax. And as with tariffs, there’s reason to suspect that low- and moderate-skilled workers who are unable easily to switch jobs and who spend a large portion of their income on consumer goods bear a disproportionately larger share than the executives that populist advocates imagine pay the bill.

While the roughly \$240 billion the federal government collected this year in corporate income tax isn’t pocket change even by Washington

standards, it’s not so large that it would be impossible to do without it. Part of the lost revenue would be paid through higher dividends, capital gains, and incomes that would result. (The money has to go somewhere, after all.)

Finding a replacement for the remaining foregone revenue would require some other source. While many on the left likely would suggest simply raising personal income taxes on the well-off, it might also make sense to look at broader sources of revenue, like taxing consumption, energy use, industrial pollution, or a carbon tax that might combine all three.

A zero corporate tax isn’t quite as radical as it sounds. Most of the other 33 countries in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development already have “territorial” tax systems that only tax profits earned within their borders. The “worldwide” tax system of the United States adheres to no such limit, and, as a result, companies try to attribute as much income as possible to lower tax, non-American jurisdictions. Every truly large non-U.S. company already has some never-taxed profits, so long as they never repatriate their earnings (something Ryan and other Republicans favor letting U.S. companies do too). Eliminating America’s corporate income tax would, in part, just level the playing field and bring more business operations under U.S. jurisdiction.

The politics of eliminating the corporate tax, although sure to arouse populist drum-beating, might not be quite as difficult as they seem at first blush. The idea has gained some real currency on the left, where advocates like former Labor secretary Robert Reich have argued convincingly that doing away with the corporate tax would not only raise wages but also reduce corporations’ incentive to play politics in the first instance.

A policy of zero tariffs and no corporate income tax is practical and would do immense economic good. Beyond its obvious benefits for consumers and the economy as a whole, such a policy would send the world a clear message that America is a global competitor with its doors wide open for business. ♦

What Wingate Wrought

*The astonishing raids of a Special Operations pioneer
in Palestine, Abyssinia, and Burma*



Major-General Charles Orde Wingate in Reading, England, September 1943

BY MAX BOOT

Everyone still remembers T.E. Lawrence, if only because of David Lean's magnificent movie *Lawrence of Arabia* and Lawrence's own literary masterpiece, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Yet far fewer remember Lawrence's distant cousin, the British Army officer Orde Wingate, who was in

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many ways his World War II counterpart—not least in his eccentricity, his pungent writing style, his flair for publicity, and his tragic, premature death. A partial exception is to be found in Israel, where he is still remembered as *Hayedid* (the Friend) for his Zionist sympathies. But Wingate remains little known in the United States or even in Burma, the land whose freedom he gave his life for. Last summer while visiting Myanmar, as the country is now known, I asked several well-educated Burmese if they were familiar with Wingate. I drew only blank stares. No doubt his name would draw equally blank looks from well-educated Americans, even those with an interest in military history.

That is a shame because Wingate was one of the most interesting, innovative, and influential, if also most

WILLIAM VANDIVERT / TIME & LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES

aggravating and outrageous, commanders of World War II. He was one of the pioneers in Special Operations. Remember the way that a small number of Green Berets and CIA operatives, with links to indigenous allies and radios to call in airstrikes, helped to overthrow the Taliban in the fall of 2001? Wingate was one of the first to mount such “deep penetration” missions, in his case behind Japanese lines in Burma, Italian lines in Ethiopia, and Arab lines in Palestine. More broadly Wingate was an innovator who helped nascent Special Operations forces win recognition and resources despite skepticism about their utility among conventional soldiers.

Today Special Operations forces are not only an established part of the military; they are, in many ways, more prominent than their conventional brothers in arms. It was not always thus. Although there have always been daredevil soldiers and units sent on hazardous missions, formally organized Special Operations forces date back only to World War II. To come into being they had to overcome the antipathy of regular soldiers such as the British general who reportedly groused that they were “anti-social irresponsible individualists” who contributed “nothing to Allied victory” and “who sought a more personal satisfaction from the war than of standing their chance, like proper soldiers, of being bayoneted in a slit trench or burnt alive in a tank.”

Such skepticism was brushed aside in the dark days of 1940. When Winston Churchill took over as prime minister just as France was falling, he immediately established both the Army Commandos to “develop a reign of terror down the enemy coasts” and an entirely new civilian organization, the Special Operations Executive (SOE), to undertake “subversion and sabotage” in occupied lands—or, in his evocative phrase, to “set Europe ablaze.” So urgent was the situation that the formation of the commandos was approved three days after being proposed, and their first raid on the French coast took place 15 days later. Before long, numerous other British units were set up for operations behind enemy lines. The war in North Africa spawned the Long Range Desert Group, the Special Air Service (SAS), and Popski’s Private Army, all of which used trucks and jeeps to traverse trackless seas of sand, hitting the Germans and Italians where they least expected it. Not to be outdone, the Royal Marines, Royal Air Force, and Royal Navy formed commando-style detachments of their own. When the United States entered the war, it followed suit, forming the Army Rangers, the Marine Raiders, and other such units.

The volunteers—and generally only volunteers were

taken—tended to be, in the words of the British Army captain W.E.D. Allen, either “the young and the keen” or the “stale and the restless”: “The efficient soldier, good at his job, generally ignored the notices.” Brigadier Dudley Clarke, who as a lieutenant colonel founded the British Commandos in 1940, wrote,

We looked for a dash of the Elizabethan pirate, the Chicago gangster, and the Frontier tribesman, allied to a professional efficiency and standard of discipline of the best Regular soldier. The Commando was to need something beyond the mass discipline which held the ranks steady when men stood side by side; his had to be a personal and an independent kind which would carry him through to the objective no matter what might happen to those upon his right and left.

This meant, he concluded, that the “men would have to learn for once to discard the ingrained ‘team-spirit’” of regular military formations.

Few took up this admonition as eagerly or excessively as Clarke’s fellow army officer Orde Charles Wingate. “Popularity,” Wingate believed, “is a sign of weakness.” Considered by his peers to be either a “military genius or a mountebank” (opinions differed), he had been locked in an unceasing war against his superiors from his earliest days.

Even as a young cadet at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, he “had the power,” recalled his best friend, “to create violent antagonisms against himself by his attitude towards authority.” Later, as a junior officer, Wingate was known to begin meetings with generals by placing his alarm clock on the table. After it went off, he would leave, announcing, “Well, gentlemen, you have talked for one hour and achieved absolutely nothing. I can’t spend any more time with you!”

Wingate’s first rebellion was against the stifling religious atmosphere in which he was raised. He was born in 1903 to a father who was a retired Indian Army colonel with a devotion to a fundamentalist Protestant sect called the Plymouth Brethren. He and his wife brought up their seven children, including “Ordey” (his family nickname), in what one of his brothers called a “temple of gloom,” with prayer mandatory, frivolity forbidden, and “fears of eternal damnation” ever present. By the time Orde arrived at Woolwich, to train as an artillery officer, he had left the Plymouth Brethren, but he never lost his religious outlook. For the rest of his life he would be deeply influenced by the Bible, on which he had been

Even as a young cadet, he ‘had the power,’ recalled his best friend, ‘to create violent antagonisms against himself by his attitude towards authority.’

“suckled” and which a friend said “was his guide in all his ways.” Another legacy of his childhood was that he developed a violent aversion to being regimented. At Woolwich he was in constant trouble, and he formed a low opinion of the “military apes” who tried to discipline him.

After graduation he learned Arabic, and in 1928 he joined the British-run Sudan Defense Force as an officer overseeing local enlisted men. He battled elusive gangs of slave traders and poachers within Sudan, learning the hit-and-run tactics he would employ throughout his career. He also developed many of his unconventional habits, such as wearing scruffy clothing (“his socks were very smelly and all in holes,” a subordinate later noticed), subjecting himself to great danger and discomfort, and receiving visitors in the nude. (He would become notorious for briefing reporters in his hotel room while “brushing his lower anatomy with his hairbrush.”) Other Wingate trademarks: a pith helmet, which he wore in the manner of a nineteenth-century explorer; an alarm clock, which he carried (he claimed “wrist watches are no damned good”); raw onions, which he munched like apples because of their supposedly salubrious properties; and a beard, which he grew from time to time in contravention of the King’s Regulations, which permitted only a mustache.

While returning home on a steamship from the Sudan in 1933, he met an Englishwoman, Ivy Paterson, and her 16-year-old daughter, Lorna. Ivy noted Wingate’s “medium height” (he was five feet six inches tall), the “forward thrust” of his head, and his “beautiful hands.” But his most impressive feature was his eyes: “Rather deep set, and of a periwinkle blue, they were the eyes of a prophet and a visionary. . . . [I]n their fire and intensity, one was aware of the unusual force of his personality.” That impression was reinforced when she heard Wingate hold forth in what another listener described as a “sandpaper voice” (“like the grating of stone against stone”) on almost every “subject under the sun”—including his love of Beethoven and his dislike of “the wireless,” as radio was then known. “He spoke brilliantly. But he could also be very quiet and silent for long periods.”

Ivy’s daughter, Lorna, was instantly smitten. Orde was 30 years old and already engaged, but he, too, fell in love with this winsome schoolgirl. They married two years later shortly after her graduation from high school. His former fiancée was devastated but remained so devoted to Orde that she never married, because she felt no other man could match him. This was evidence of the strong

devotion that Wingate could instill to counterbalance the antipathy he so often engendered.

In 1936 Captain Wingate was dispatched to Palestine, then under British rule, to serve as an intelligence officer in the British force striving to put down an Arab rebellion. Notwithstanding his Arabist background, he became enamored of Zionism—so much so that even dedicated Zionists described him as a “fanatic.” Wingate admired the Jews for making the desert “blossom like the rose,” and he felt that they would be more valuable allies for Britain than the Arabs. This was not a view shared by the rest of the colonial administration, which, Wingate found, was “to a man, anti-Jew and pro-Arab.” “Everyone’s against the Jews,” he said, characteristically, “so I’m for them.”

At that moment the Jews were facing what would be the biggest Palestinian uprising until the 1980s. Like the Second Intifada, this revolt was marked by urban terrorism, with bombings and shootings targeting both British authorities and Jewish civilians. By rushing in 20,000 troops and taking punitive measures such as blowing up suspects’ houses, the British managed to regain control of the cities. This forced the rebels to focus on attacks in the countryside against isolated Jewish settlements and police posts as well as against moderate Arabs.

At first the Jews responded with *havlajah* (restraint), but as the violence continued they began fighting back. Wingate was at the forefront of the counterattack. He found that “on the approach of darkness, the virtual control of the country passes to the gangsters.” In 1938 he persuaded British and Zionist leaders to let him organize Special Night Squads to take back the night. They would be made up of British soldiers and Jewish “supernumeraries” who would venture stealthily out of fortified kibbutzim to “bodily assault” Palestinian gangs “with bayonet and bomb” and “thereby put an end to the terrorism.”

Eventually the Night Squads numbered 40 Britons and a 100 Jews who usually operated in squads of 10 men. Their practice was to march at night and attack at dawn. Wearing khaki shorts and rubber-soled boots, veterans recalled, they would spend long hours walking single file over “dry, very stony ground, which was generally hilly, often steeply so,” deliberately avoiding “the beaten path” and taking “a zig-zag or snakelike course.” “Complete silence is the rule in all cases,” Wingate instructed. “Members of Squads should try to cut down their smoking with subsequent coughing.”

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During one battle in British-controlled Palestine in 1938, Wingate was shot five times in a ‘friendly fire’ accident but, although ‘white as a sheet’ and ‘covered in blood,’ he continued ‘giving orders in English and Hebrew quite calmly.’

Their goal was to obtain “complete surprise,” and they often succeeded. Their unexpected appearance induced “panic” among the Palestinian rebels, whom Wingate dismissed as “feeble,” “ignorant, and primitive.”

In these raids Wingate displayed a flair for navigation in the dark, an “iron constitution,” and an utter disregard for danger. During one battle he was shot five times in a “friendly fire” accident but, although “white as a sheet” and “covered in blood,” he continued “giving orders in English and Hebrew quite calmly.”

He instructed the Night Squads to treat Arab civilians, “as opposed to the terrorist, with courtesy and respect,” but on one occasion he himself led a rampage through an Arab village to avenge the murder of a Jewish friend. Wingate later claimed that his squads killed at least 140 rebels and wounded 300 more, compiling a record unmatched by any British unit of similar size.

By the time Wingate left Palestine in 1939, he had earned the first of his three Distinguished Service Orders, Britain’s second-highest decoration, and the lasting gratitude of Palestinian Jews. Veterans of his Night Squads, including Moshe Dayan and Yigael Yadin, would become leading generals in Israel’s army, which they infused with his disregard of protocol, his insistence on fast-moving offensive operations led by officers from the front, and his emphasis on preempting terrorist attacks. “A dominating personality, he infected us all with his fanaticism and faith,” Dayan later wrote.

In his own army Wingate was looked upon as a cantankerous wild man. He was accused of having “forfeited our general reputation for fair fighting” and seen as a potential “security risk” who “puts the interests of the Jews before those of his own country.” (Wingate shared confidential documents with Zionist leaders.) The British commander in Palestine, General Robert Haining, thought he “played for his own ends and likings instead of playing for the side,” and dismissed his service as “nugatory and embarrassing.”

But even his detractors had to admit that he had a gift for unconventional warfare that was reminiscent of his distant kinsman T.E. Lawrence, who was also diminutive in stature. The Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann, who knew both men, said that Wingate’s “intenseness,” “whimsicality,” and “originality” all reminded him of Lawrence: “I thought of Lawrence more than once when Wingate sat opposite me, arguing fiercely, and boring me through with his eyes.” The pro-Zionist Wingate bridled at the comparison with his pro-Arab relative, whose reputation he thought was exaggerated by “a great amount of romantic dust.” But the comparisons only grew stronger after Wingate’s involvement in the reconquest of Abyssinia, as Ethiopia was then called.

In an act of unprovoked aggression that alarmed much of the Western world, Mussolini had invaded Abyssinia in 1935. Britain had given refuge to Emperor Haile Selassie but had provided no real help until Italy declared war on Britain in June 1940. Thereupon the emperor was whisked to Khartoum, capital of the Sudan, and the task of returning him to power was entrusted to the Special Operations Executive. Detailed for this assignment was Orde Wingate. He would have preferred to lead an army of Jewish soldiers to fight with the allies in North Africa. As a consolation he applied his “ruthless energy” to the cause of Haile Selassie, a Coptic Christian who styled himself the Lion of Judah and claimed descent from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. An acting lieutenant colonel on loan to SOE, Wingate was to lead a band of irregulars that he called Gideon Force after the ancient Israelite fighters.

On January 20, 1941, Wingate crossed from western Sudan into Abyssinia with the emperor, 1,600 Sudanese and Abyssinian fighters, 70 Britons, and 20,000 camels. Two conventional British columns with a total of 60,000 troops, mainly Indians and Africans, marched at roughly the same time, one from northern Sudan, the other from Kenya to the south. As Gideon Force advanced, it left a trail of dying camels; the warm-weather dromedaries turned out to be ill-suited for Abyssinia’s chilly highlands. But while the number of camels shrank, the ranks of fighters grew as tribesmen were recruited to the “patriot” cause. These guerrillas, in turn, were directed by SOE “operational centers,” consisting of one British officer and four NCOs. The campaign, Wingate later noted, could not “have succeeded without the patriot support.”

The Italian army of occupation numbered 300,000 men. Thirty-five thousand of them were deployed against Gideon Force, and they had armored vehicles, artillery, and air support—all of which Wingate lacked. He did not even have adequate supplies, having to rely on “captured Italian rations or local produce.” Making maximal use of his puny numbers, Wingate staged numerous assaults on Italian forts, usually at night, telling his men to move fast and “goading everyone to superhuman effort.” By the time the Italians had assembled for a counterattack, the attackers were gone.

Wingate also skillfully employed bluff. He entered one newly liberated Italian fort to find the telephone ringing. An officer at another fort was calling to ask where the British were. Wingate instructed an Italian-speaking American war correspondent to “tell them that a British division ten thousand strong is on its way up the road,” “advising them to clear off.” This the panicked Italians did posthaste.

Addis Ababa, already abandoned by the Italian Army, was taken by South African troops after a slog through what a contemporary magazine described as “misty rain and

quagmires of red mud” on April 5, 1941. Wingate had the privilege of leading Haile Selassie into the capital a month later, on May 5. The emperor eschewed a white horse procured for the occasion, preferring the comfort of a car, so Wingate himself rode at the head of the victory parade. “I hope when we meet my subjects they will know which of us is emperor,” Haile Selassie commented wryly. The unofficial “emperor” had not won the campaign single-handedly, but he had played an important role; his tiny force had captured more than 15,000 enemy troops and killed 1,500 more.

Wingate thought his Abyssinian campaign could be a model for other occupied lands, “wherever there is a patriot population” that could be roused “by men of integrity and personality.” He believed that employing a “corps d’élite” on a long-range “penetration” mission to galvanize local forces, as he had done, would be far more effective than what he wrongly denigrated as Lawrence’s “wasteful and ineffectual” approach of providing “war materiel and cash” to local leaders. He claimed, “Given a population favorable to penetration, a thousand resolute and well-armed men can paralyze, for an indefinite period, the operations of a hundred thousand.”

Despite what the official British military history rightly labeled a “remarkable achievement,” Wingate was peremptorily sent back to Cairo and reduced to his regular rank of major because, as usual, he had offended his superior officers with his “rude and dictatorial and insistent” ways. One senior general was heard to grumble, “The curse of this war is Lawrence in the last,” although in fact Lawrence had shown far more tact in his dealings with General Allenby and his staff than Wingate ever displayed with anyone.

Wingate had long battled depression. “I’m not happy,” he said, with typical modesty, “but I don’t think any great man ever is.” During the Abyssinian campaign he had also contracted cerebral malaria. Despondent at the lack of another assignment, he plunged a rusty knife into his throat while alone in a Cairo hotel room. An alert officer next door heard him fall and rushed him to the hospital, saving his life. Supposedly one of his colleagues from Abyssinia, exasperated by Wingate’s incessant abuse, visited him at the hospital to demand, “You bloody fool, why didn’t you use a revolver?”

Attempted suicide might have ended Wingate’s career, but he was fortunate that General Sir Archibald Wavell, who had previously made use of his services in Palestine and Abyssinia, still had faith in him. Wavell had been appointed commander in India, and he summoned Wingate to see what he could do to make life uncomfortable for the Japanese armies sweeping through Burma.

Wingate arrived in India in March 1942, a few weeks

after the fall of Rangoon. The Japanese were firmly in control, and there was no hope of a conventional counter-offensive in the short term. Nor was there a serious prospect of using indigenous forces as he had done in Palestine and Abyssinia. Some hill tribes remained loyal to the British (Wingate would employ them as guides and guerrillas), but the majority of Burmese had no desire to fight for their former colonial masters. Wingate nevertheless believed the Japanese would be vulnerable to attack by “long-range penetration” troops such as Gideon Force. “In the back area are his unprotected kidneys, his midriff, his throat, and other vulnerable points,” he wrote. “The targets for troops of deep penetration may be regarded therefore as the more vital and tender points of the enemy’s anatomy.” The key to such action was “to maintain forces by air and direct them by wireless,” both common practices today but novel ideas at the time.

To implement his ideas, Wingate was elevated to brigadier and given command of the Seventy-Seventh Indian Infantry Brigade, the foundation of what later became known as the Chindits (a corruption of “chinthe,” a lion-like creature that guards Burmese temples). Although they would be sent on a mission far more arduous than an ordinary military operation, the Chindits were hardly picked troops. The largest elements were a British battalion made up mostly of married men in their thirties who had been performing garrison duty and a Gurkha battalion of peach-fuzzed young recruits. As Wingate noted, they “never dreamt they would serve as shock troops.” After subjecting these “ordinary” men to a tough training regimen designed to teach them “to imitate Tarzan,” Wingate divided them into seven columns of roughly 400 men each, with 15 horses and 100 mules for transport. Each column was accompanied by a two-man Royal Air Force team equipped with powerful radios to coordinate air support, thus anticipating the military practices of later decades.

On February 13, 1943, “Wingate’s Circus,” as the 3,000 Chindits called themselves, began crossing the Chindwin, the “strangely beautiful” river separating Burma from India, using inflatable boats and rafts. Two of the columns ran into heavy resistance and turned back, but the rest kept advancing, blowing up bridges and railroads and ambushing Japanese patrols. The air drops worked well aside from the occasional “death by flying fruit,” as some of the men referred to “injuries caused by dropped supplies.” The RAF even dropped spare kilts, false teeth, and monocles as needed. More than 2,000 Chindits then crossed the “swiftly flowing,” mile-wide Irrawaddy River. They were now at least 200 miles inside Burma, and enemy attacks, the intense heat, and various tropical diseases were taking their toll. As one of Wingate’s aides noted, “malaria, scrub typhus, dysentery, and even cholera are endemic.”



Chindits crossing a river as they enter Burma, 1943

Wingate decided to turn back on March 26, 1943. The Chindits were now nearly surrounded by three crack Japanese divisions, so he told his men to break up into smaller parties and find their own way home. This was when the expedition turned truly “horrid.” Small groups of Chindits, generally 20 to 40 strong, had to traverse hundreds of miles of “incredibly thick” jungle and “fiendishly steep and rocky” hills and then cross two major rivers with the enemy on their heels. Rations had been “grossly inadequate” to begin with; they were designed to sustain paratroopers for only a few days in the field. Now, as supply drops grew less frequent, the “food problem” became “acute.” “Everyone was weak from lack of food,” wrote Major Bernard Fergusson, a column commander who was tormented by “visions of chocolate éclairs and birthday cakes,” “and morale depends more on food than on anything else.”

Of the 3,000 Chindits, only 2,182 “emaciated” survivors returned, the last on June 6, 1943, their “stomachs caved inward,” ribs sticking out, muscles transformed into “stringy tendons.” Most would be judged unfit for future service. Some had marched 1,500 miles carrying, initially at least, more than 70 pounds of equipment.

Fergusson later conceded that the first Chindit expedition had few “tangible” achievements: “We blew up bits of a railway, which did not take long to repair; we gathered some useful intelligence; we distracted the Japanese from some minor operations, and possibly from some bigger ones; we killed a few hundred of an enemy which

numbers eighty millions; we proved that it was feasible to maintain a force by supply dropping alone.”

The biggest impact of Operation Longcloth, as the expedition was known, was not apparent until Japanese generals were interrogated after the war: They said that the difficulty of defending against Wingate’s raid led them to mount an offensive against India in 1944 in order to prevent future incursions. That attack failed and left them too weak to prevent the British recapture of Burma the following year. Against this indirect impact must be weighed the expedition’s staggering cost.

General William Slim, commander of the Fourteenth Army, which ultimately retook Burma, judged the raid an “expensive failure” on purely military grounds but a public-relations triumph: “Skillfully handled, the press of the Allied world took up the tale, and everywhere the story ran that we had beaten the Japanese at their own game.” This psychological fillip was important to soldiers and civilians alike at a time when Japan still reigned supreme in Asia.

Among those impressed by the Chindits’ achievement was Winston Churchill, who began to wonder whether Wingate “was another Lawrence of Arabia.” He took Wingate, by then a national hero, to his meeting in August 1943 with President Roosevelt and the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Quebec. Though only a junior general, Wingate so impressed the senior brass that they agreed to vastly expand his long-range penetration force

and to provide him with his own air force. Thus was born No. 1 Air Commando, which would consist of almost 400 transport aircraft, gliders, light aircraft, fighters, and bombers, all provided by the U.S. Army Air Forces—the forerunner of the U.S. Air Force’s Special Operations wings and of the U.S. Army’s 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (“The Night Stalkers”). Their motto was “anyplace, anytime, anywhere,” and they would prove as good as their word, not only dropping supplies and providing fire support as “flying artillery” but also evacuating casualties.

Armed with high-level authorization, Wingate returned to India, only to run into unremitting hostility from the British headquarters in New Delhi. Part of this was due to the natural skepticism of conventional officers who resisted “a new approach to war.” But Wingate did not help his own cause. One staff officer recalled that when challenged he “replied with a long-winded diatribe accusing almost everyone of stupidity, ignorance, obstruction, and much else besides.” This officer concluded that Wingate was “a thoroughly nasty bit of work.” Wingate was typically unrepentant. “It is because I am what I am, objectionable though it appears to my critics, that I win battles,” he shot back.

Wingate was too weak to fight back effectively at first because on the way to India he had contracted typhus after foolishly drinking the water from a flower vase during a refueling stop. (He was thirsty and the canteen was closed.) But as he recovered his strength he got the upper hand against the “marsupial minds” at headquarters. He was promoted to major general and given command of some 20,000 men, or two divisions’ worth of Special Forces. The first expedition had been mounted with one brigade. Now he had six.

A new feature of the second Chindit expedition would be the establishment of fortified strongholds in enemy territory. Wingate defined the stronghold as “an orbit round which columns of the Brigade circulate,” “a defended airstrip,” “a magazine for stores,” and, more colorfully, “a machan overlooking a kid tied up to entice the Japanese tiger.” In other words, the strongholds were designed to goad the Japanese into costly and futile attacks. (The French would borrow this innovation in 1953 when they decided to establish a redoubt in a remote valley of Indochina known as Dien Bien Phu.) In the process, however, the Chindits would sacrifice the guerrilla’s advantages of speed and mobility.

Operation Thursday, the second Chindit expedition,

began with one brigade marching overland at the end of February 1944. The bulk of the force was to begin its fly-in on Sunday, March 5. At 4:30 P.M. that day, just half an hour before the first C-47 cargo aircraft was to lift off from an airstrip in India, an American reconnaissance flight revealed teak logs blocking one of the landing sites in the jungle, code-named Piccadilly. Had the landing been blown? Or had the trees been placed there in the course of normal logging operations? It was later revealed to be the latter, but there were more than a few anxious moments for the cluster of senior commanders huddled on the airstrip. Finally the decision was made to proceed, diverting the flights that

would have gone to Piccadilly to another landing zone, Broadway, located 150 miles inside Burma.

The first C-47 roared off at 6:12 P.M. on March 5, followed by more aircraft at 30-second intervals. Each airplane towed two gliders full of men jammed in with their supplies. Not all of the gliders made it over the 7,000-foot mountains. Ten of them crashed in India; six others got lost and came down in the wrong part of occupied Burma. For the 37 gliders that reached Broadway, the trouble was only beginning.

Near the landing zone, the tow ropes were released and there was a “sudden tremendous silence” as the gliders headed for the dark ground. The men had no seat belts as they braced for impact. Reconnaissance flights had not revealed the presence of two deep ditches

that were used by elephants to drag timber to the river. Some of the first gliders had their undercarriages ripped off and lay blocking the makeshift airstrip. The gliders just behind them had to maneuver sharply to avoid the wreckage. Many did not make it and created more obstructions. Attempts to clear the wreckage and help the wounded were complicated by the arrival of more gliders, which emerged from the darkness with the force of bombs. “At times the rending, tearing, crunching sound of wings and fuselages being torn apart was quite deafening,” recalled “Mad Mike” Calvert, commander of the first brigade to be inserted, “then all would be quiet for a moment until the cries of the wounded men arose up from the wrecks. Their pitiful calls for help pierced into my shocked mind as I worked with the others to clear up the mess.”

Calvert had been given a choice of signals to send: “Pork Sausage” if the landings were successful; “Soya Link” (a widely hated pork substitute) if not. At 2:30 A.M. on Monday, March 6, he sent out “Soya Link,” thereby



Wingate in Burma

WILLIAM VANDIVERT / TIME & LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES

stopping all further flights. In India the faraway commanders figured the “Japs” had ambushed the leading parties. But in fact the Japanese were nowhere to be seen; they were befuddled by the errant gliders landing for hundreds of miles around. At Broadway, 30 Chindits had been killed and 20 wounded but more than 350 had landed unharmed. With the aid of a bulldozer that somehow emerged unscathed from the wreckage of a glider, they worked to clear and improve the airstrip. At 6:30 A.M. Calvert was able to send out “Pork Sausage.” That night C-47s began landing at Broadway, bringing in reinforcements. Another stronghold, Chowringhee, named after Calcutta’s main street, was established not far away.

By March 13, 1944, eight days after the first landing, more than 9,000 men and 1,350 animals, mostly mules whose vocal cords had been cut to prevent them from braying, had arrived in Burma, along with 250 tons of stores and batteries of field guns and antiaircraft guns. Wingate announced, “All our columns are inside the enemy’s guts. . . . This is a moment to live in history.”

He would not live to see the rest of the history unfold. On March 24, while shuttling between bases in India, his B-25 bomber plunged into a hillside for reasons that remain mysterious. The man who had pioneered the concept of “long-range penetration operations” was just 41 years old—even younger than T.E. Lawrence when he died.

One of his brigade commanders, Joe Lentaigne, took over the Chindits, but he was no “wayward genius,” as one of his men described Wingate; no one was. The Chindits were soon subordinated to the acerbic American general “Vinegar Joe” Stilwell, who made no secret of his disdain for “Limeys.” He proceeded to decimate the Chindits in a lengthy campaign during the monsoon season, which turned roads into knee-deep mud and made it difficult to provide air support, by throwing them repeatedly against well-entrenched Japanese troops.

By the end of June 1944, while on the other side of the planet fresh Allied troops were beginning the liberation of France, the Seventy-Seventh Brigade, 3,000 strong initially, had only 300 fit men left, and they were, one of them noted, “yellow, bedraggled, bearded scarecrows.” In the 111th Brigade even fewer were still able to fight—only 119 men. The brigade commanders demanded to be pulled out, noting that Wingate had not envisioned leaving them behind enemy lines for more than three months. Stilwell, stubborn to the end, resisted. Not until August 27, 1944, were the last Chindits flown out—almost six months after the initial landings.

The Chindits had lost 3,628 killed, wounded, and missing, or 18 percent of the force, and 90 percent of those

casualties had occurred under Stilwell’s command. They would fight no more. In 1945 they were disbanded. A similar fate was suffered by Merrill’s Marauders, an American long-range penetration brigade trained by Wingate that was also “destroyed” in Burma under Stilwell’s brutal directives. Survivors of both units would curse Vinegar Joe for decades to come.

Controversy still shrouds the Chindits’ operations. Did they substantially weaken the Japanese hold on Burma, as some experts argue, or only shave a “few months,” as the official history has it, from the time when northern Burma would have been liberated anyway by regular Indian Army troops? Contemporaries could not agree, and neither can historians. The only certainty is the courage and resilience the Chindits displayed while being pushed to the edge of human endurance and beyond.

Wingate’s ability to inspire strong feelings, for and against, did not end with his death. Churchill paid glowing tribute to him as “a man of genius who might well have become also a man of destiny.” This was an opinion shared by most of his men. One Chindit wrote, “When you first met him you thought he was a maniac—after a week you would have died for him.” Yet not all of his subordinates were in “awe of him.” A Gurkha officer said, “We did not like him. . . . We were terrified of him.” Another officer recalled debating with his colleagues, “Is he mad?” The strain of antipathy was much stronger among the staff officers over whom Wingate rode roughshod. One of them penned an acidulous assessment of him in the official British war history; it suggested that “the moment of his death” may have been “propitious for him.” This was the first and probably last time that any official history celebrated the death of a senior officer.

Jack Masters, a Chindit officer who became a well-known novelist, rendered perhaps the most evenhanded verdict when he wrote 16 years after his commander’s death:

Wingate was sometimes right and sometimes wrong. It really does not matter. What does matter is that he possessed one of the most unusual personalities of recent history. He had a driving will of tremendous power. His character was a blend of mysticism, anger, love, passion, and dark hatred, of overpowering confidence and deepest depression. He could make all kinds of men believe in him, and he could make all kinds of men distrust him.

The same might be said about many other successful military leaders, from Alexander the Great to George S. Patton; winning wars is not a business that rewards those who are too amiable and agreeable. Wingate’s achievements were not on par with other great commanders throughout history, but he still deserves to be remembered for his restless, innovative spirit—and his devotion to the cause of liberty in foreign lands, whether Israel, Ethiopia, or Burma. ♦

Batman v. Spider-Man

Which is the greater hero?

BY TRAVIS D. SMITH

Jonathan V. Last penned a paean to the Batman earlier this year in *THE WEEKLY STANDARD*, making the case for understanding the Caped Crusader as the hero of the modern liberal order against illiberal threats, including and especially those that emerge from within modernity itself (“A One-Man Department of Justice,” August 13, 2012). Last is right to argue that modernity needs restraining. He is mistaken in thinking that this is a job for Batman.

Batman seems rather to incarnate the willful modern project to end suffering by using reason to gain mastery over all things. Batman wages war against disorder in the cosmos as represented by the microcosm of Gotham City, a chaotic polis just this side of the state of nature. In Christopher Nolan’s film trilogy, Batman’s monomaniacal impulse is best captured in *The Dark Knight*, when we learn that Bruce Wayne has turned every cell phone in the city into a sonar device so as to spy on everyone everywhere. Acutely sensitive to man’s vulnerability and insecurity after seeing, as a boy, his parents brutally murdered, Batman believes innocent people need protectors because they can’t—or won’t—protect themselves. He uses his mastery of human psychology to solve crimes and apprehend criminals in a fashion that exemplifies the twin maxims that fear is the passion to be reckoned upon and it is better to be feared than loved.

With all due respect to Batman, there is another four-color character who represents an ideal that is nobler and yet more accessible: Spider-Man, who turned 50 this year, having debuted in August 1962’s *Amazing Fantasy* #15. Spider-Man, I would argue, represents a reflection on the shortcomings of modernity, suggesting that it must be supplemented and supported by premodern wisdom and virtues—such as those articulated in the classical philosophical and biblical traditions—lest modern principles race to ruinous extremes. Whereas the rational order that the modern

technological project aims to bring into being would absolve individuals of personal and interpersonal obligations, responsibility is the central theme of Peter Parker’s story. His costumed career is guided by the lesson learned from his Uncle Ben: that “with great power there must also come great responsibility.” Still, however great the responsibility that Spider-Man assumes, he does not make the mistake of seeking to impress a rational, moral order upon the universe. Spider-Man’s motto as it is translated into practice is more moderate and less meddlesome. The Webslinger comes to the rescue of people in dire distress, but he does not save them the trouble of taking responsibility for themselves. (Granted, Batman is not a bossy busybody in practice either, but only because crime-fighting keeps him occupied enough on a nightly basis. He would be more proactive in the prevention of all evil if only he could work it into his schedule.)

Like Spider-Man, Batman does not kill his adversaries. But whereas Spider-Man simply webs his baddies, leaving them hanging upside-down from streetlamps until the cops can cart them off, Batman sends his villains to Arkham Asylum, an institution meant to heal the mind and transform character and so is premised on the possibility that even the most dangerous people can be made well and whole through science. Since he has to keep resending them there, however, Batman’s belief that every problem and every person might be fixed through human effort is not fact-based but faith-based.

The essential difference between Spider-Man and Batman can be detected in their styles: Spidey’s banter is full of quips and gags, while Batman is always grim and gritty. That Batman’s archnemesis is the Joker is fitting. One who believes that suffering can be abolished through determined human effort has little patience for jokes. To him, humor is an affront. Comedy mocks the vanity of visions of rational control. The person who can joke amidst a confrontation with evil, like the quick-witted Spider-Man, must be reconciled to the permanent imperfections of a corrupted world populated by fallen creatures.

Batman’s nature as an avatar of modern rational control tends toward an unbounded extreme. He possesses one

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of the most powerful computers in the world, kept hidden in his cave for his exclusive personal use. He invents and always has ready at hand gadgets and concoctions for every possible purpose. The most famous of these remains “shark repellent Bat-spray,” although it’s often forgotten that he stores it alongside barracuda, manta-ray, and whale repellents, inside the Batcopter, of all places—you know, just in case. (I trust that jellyfish, moray-eel, and giant-seahorse repellents sit on an unseen shelf.) Batman retains samples of Kryptonite in anticipation of the day he must destroy Superman, his best friend. Just as the Pentagon prepares plans for invading and occupying allies like Canada, Batman devises secret strategies for decisively defeating his fellow Justice League members. To call them his “Super Friends,” as the Saturday morning cartoon did, is rather imprecise. The self-appointed Guardians of the Universe created the intergalactic Green Lantern Corps to bring peace and order to the cosmos, making them Batman’s rivals in principle. Unlike Batman, they proceed in bright daylight; like Batman’s, their job is never done. One major storyline recently delved into Batman’s control-freak inclinations by having him launch satellite technology into orbit that would allow him to monitor and potentially combat all superhuman activity worldwide, good and bad alike. In the current series *Batman Incorporated*, he looks to overcome the problem of being just one man by franchising an international team of Batmen. This obsessive behavior is completely unlike Spider-Man’s habit of going out on patrol whenever he finds the time.

Reservations about technology are at the heart of Spider-Man’s story. Peter Parker gains the proportional strength and agility of a spider when a high-tech experiment goes awry. His webshooters and spider-tracers are products of his own ingenuity. His rogue’s gallery, by contrast, comprises a testament to the dangers inherent in modern technological science given the myriad ways it can be misused and lead to unintended consequences. With few exceptions, Spidey’s foes can be categorized as either (i) good guys who were transformed into villains (or ordinary thugs who were made much worse)

by technological mishaps or unexpected side-effects (e.g., Doctor Octopus, Electro, Green Goblin, Lizard, Morbius, and Sandman; Venom, too, indirectly), or (ii) crooks who specifically invented, obtained, or otherwise employ technology for the sake of doing wrong or becoming worse (e.g., Beetle, Chameleon, Hobgoblin, Jackal, Mysterio, Rhino, Scorpion, Shocker, and Vulture; Kraven is the noteworthy exception). The young Peter Parker is corrupted by the culture around him no less than any other young man. His first instinct is to use his newfound powers in a selfish, though harmless, manner: He plans to make it big in showbiz for the sake of supporting his family. But after he internalizes Uncle Ben’s message, Spider-Man stands out as a marvel precisely because he is both the victim of science gone wrong and a manufacturer of technological wonders, yet neither makes a monster of him—if we set aside that brief period he had six arms.



Modern society, marked, if not defined, by our devotion to technological science and premised principally on theories of rights, explicitly rejects classical ideas that emphasize virtuous character and duties that transcend individual will. Assessing all relationships in terms of power, defending subjective rights as absolutes, and replacing interpersonal

duties with collective responsibilities, preferring the indirect benefactions of impersonal institutionalized mechanisms, modernity is a breeding ground for tyrannical souls and a recipe for tyrannical regimes. It is in this light that Spider-Man can help us to see that modernity’s capacity to turn out relatively well depends on habits and ideas that precede it.

When I teach introductory classes in political theory, I am grateful for the example that Spider-Man provides of Glaucon’s model of “the man of perfect justice” from Book II of *The Republic*, one who always does the right thing (in terms of complying with conventional morality) even though he always earns a reputation for doing the wrong thing. Nobody who would wield great power intending to work on behalf of justice can avoid earning a bad reputation. Spider-Man is sure to be accused of being an accomplice in any bank robbery he thwarts. The headlines of the *Daily Bugle* regularly prompt readers to ask themselves whether he is a “Threat or Menace?” Nevertheless, Peter chooses

to keep up the good fight. The language of “choice,” however, falls short here. Whereas Bruce decides to become a costumed agent of vengeance, acting on an internal compulsion, Peter regards what he does not so much as a choice but as a responsibility, a duty he must meet irrespective of his preferences and desires. This accords with the classical notion that virtue is demanded of us by our very nature; it is not something that anyone can opt in or out of indifferently.

It is often said that unlike Superman, Wonder Woman, and other superheroes, Batman has no superhuman powers. But when you consider the life he leads in and out of costume—the monetary and technological means at his disposal, his training in umpteen martial arts disciplines to the highest degree of proficiency, his mindboggling skills as The World’s Greatest Detective, plus his uncanny ability to disappear like a ninja and his apparent lack of a need to sleep—Bruce Wayne is so extraordinary as to be beyond emulation by any actual human being. (That said, as a society, we might contrive to construct a regime that resembles him.) Peter Parker is, on the other hand, written as someone so familiar and ordinary that despite his sensational abilities he remains believably human. “Use the gifts you’re given to the best of your ability to do good in the world” may be a tall order, but Spider-Man’s example remains universally comprehensible and inspirational.

Unlike Bruce, Peter is so short on funds that he has to sell photographs of himself in action to the *Bugle*, knowing that the tabloid will invariably use them to portray him negatively—a sort of self-flagellation—yet his relative poverty does not interfere with his capacity to act rightly. In seeing something of themselves in the humble Peter Parker, readers are supposed to realize that all human beings have great power. I am reminded of Montaigne’s observation in *On Physiognomy*, “We are richer than we think, each one of us. Yet we are schooled for borrowing and begging!” It might be less difficult to see just how powerful we all are by considering how easily any of us can do great harm. The point is that we all have more power than we care to recognize to be a positive force in the lives of those around us, even if only in ordinary ways in everyday affairs. Modern society obscures this from us, because in learning to live and let live we have become isolated, weak, and fearful, desperate for a savior in this world. The state steps in to fill that void, growing into a pervasive agent of benevolence. Add to that the contemporary insistence on thinking globally, a crippling perspective from which to sense what good any one of us might accomplish. Batman has his attention trained on the city as a whole—a metaphor for the whole world. That world is, by his lights, populated predominantly by fragile, interchangeable victims in need of an awe-inspiring protector.

Spider-Man understands that it is not abstract conceptions of the world that matter most, but individual lives.

His ethics point toward excellence of character, which is an extreme of sorts, but it does not require a rebellion against nature that aims to establish dominion over it. However great Spider-Man’s responsibility is, it remains recognizably human, whereas Batman’s undertaking is utopian in scope and inhuman in its implementation. Conscientious people can imagine imitating Peter Parker, though the material and reputational costs quickly dissuade them, but only a masochist would want to live like Bruce Wayne. Sure, he is admired by the ladies, mainly disreputable types like Catwoman, vacuous debutantes, and sundry glitterati, but he can’t love any of them back—not simply because they aren’t as lovable as Gwen and Mary Jane, but because the pursuit of perfect justice, understood as systemic rational order, leaves no room for love. Indeed, it is at odds with it.

Given that Spider-Man’s ethical ideal is of an upright, stalwart, long-suffering man who faces his travails with dignity and integrity, I cannot help but wonder if the premodern roots of his character are not better located in Jerusalem than Athens. Uncle Ben’s ethic of responsibility certainly calls to mind Luke 12:48, where it is declared, “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.” Spider-Man’s origin story brings to mind a Gospel passage just a few verses before that one: “And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through” (Luke 12:39). There’s something Christian-sounding about Spider-Man’s “friendly neighborhood” sobriquet. He comes to the rescue of any and all people indiscriminately, implying that he treats every person in the world as his neighbor. He will even rescue his enemies from mortal danger.

Any student of Publius or Tocqueville who believes that America is the pinnacle of modernity thanks to its responsible citizenry, formed by a founding that included an endeavor to preserve and restore some of our premodern inheritances, tempering modernity’s impulses and imperatives, should agree that Spider-Man, not Batman, is the greater hero. The ethical reflections of the ancients emphasized the fundamental importance of good character as noble in itself and essential to human flourishing. The moral theories of the moderns recommend virtues redefined instrumentally, as useful to peaceable coexistence and the acquisition of power and plenty, for the maximization of pleasure and the minimization of pain. Spider-Man’s ethics make sense only in light of the former view; Batman’s can be explained in terms of the latter. Spider-Man struggles to live the life of a decent person, day in, day out, in a permanently screwed-up world. It’s an effort worthy of greater esteem and imitation than the mad resolution to force the world into a rational shape through good intentions, the manipulation of fear, and technological might. ♦



Inside the offices of Faber & Gwyer, London, 1926

Sincerely, Young Possum

T.S. Eliot on the threshold of eminence. BY WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

‘I don’t like reading other people’s private correspondence in print, and I do not want other people to read mine,’ wrote T.S. Eliot to his mother in April 1927.

Sounds definitive enough, yet six years later, he would confess in a lecture that there was an “ineradicable” desire to hope one’s correspondence might be preserved for complete strangers to read: “We want to confess ourselves in writing to a few friends, and we do not always want to feel that no one but those friends will ever read what we have written”—put with a circumspection native to the man his friend Ezra Pound called Old Possum.

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The Letters of T.S. Eliot
Volume 3: 1926-1927
 edited by Valerie Eliot
 and John Haffenden
 Yale, 992 pp., \$50

Still, I think Eliot might have been slightly astonished that, with the publication of the third volume of his letters, their total page count reaches 2,700. Since that only brings us up to the end of 1927 (Eliot died in 1965), there’s a long way to go.

The new volume covers just two years of the poet’s life, which has not only to do with the fact that he wrote a lot of letters, but that they have been edited in the fullest, most scrupulous, and imaginative way by the project’s general editor, the remarkable John

Haffenden. (Eliot’s widow Valerie, who died last month, was coeditor, but I suspect she did little of the heavy lifting.) Haffenden’s procedure is, whenever possible, to annotate any letter Eliot has written by providing pertinent sections, at the bottom of the page, of the letter or other communication he was responding to. In other words, none of these letters ever comes from out of the blue.

It would, however, be disingenuous to pretend that the bulk of the letters can be of interest to anyone but a fairly devoted student of Eliot, and not so much a student of his poetry but someone interested in his “prose” capacity as editor of his periodical, the *Criterion*, an organ that, beginning with its inception in 1922, Eliot hoped to make a forceful commentator on the art,

politics, and religion of England and Europe. As with the previous volumes of letters, many of the correspondences concern *Criterion* business, and, although they are exemplary of the subtleties and complications of running a literary magazine, there is more than some sameness about them. There is also a good deal of business worries concerning the magazine's future as it moves from a quarterly, to (in 1927) a monthly, then back again to quarterly status. At that point, Eliot had a position on the board of the publisher Faber & Gwyer (later Faber and Faber), so he had the added responsibilities of considering various books for possible publication and of informing their authors that (often) the book was not quite "right" for Faber—it would not be a salable item, but please consider us, and so on. He is masterly at this.

Earlier volumes prominently displayed Eliot's wife Vivienne (sometimes spelled Vivien), whose sufferings were the stuff of melodrama, if not tragedy. For most of the two years covered in this volume she is a patient in a sanatorium on the outskirts of Paris, where her husband visits her periodically. We get a sad glimpse of her as she writes to John Middleton Murry, Eliot's friend and intellectual antagonist, "I am quite alone & have nothing at all inside." In a more sportive mood, she confides to Eliot's brother Henry that, "Of all the 'roles' a woman enjoys & delights in, that of the browbeaten wife is the most delicious."

Eliot's own laments, less frequent than in earlier volumes, occasionally burst out as he writes (also to Murry), "I am oppressed by a sense of doom, against which I struggle." But mainly he soldiers on, not without sometimes showing the effects. Aldous Huxley, if he can be trusted, notes that at a lunch, "Tom looked terribly grey-green, drank no less than five gins with his meal, and announced that he was going to join Vivien in the nursing home, to break himself of his addictions to tobacco and alcohol." This did not come to pass.

Writing to his brother Henry, Eliot discusses the difficulty of getting

Vivien into an asylum and says no doctor will commit anyone unless she has "either tried to commit suicide or committed a criminal assault. We must therefore wait until she either annoys people in the public street (which I am always expecting) or tries to take her own life." It took six more years for him to eventually remove himself from the marriage.



... and outside, 1926

The most notable event in Eliot's private life during these two years was his acceptance into the Church of England in the summer of 1927. This took place with some secrecy: He concealed it from his mother and later wrote his brother that he kept it from Vivien since it "might provide a fresh reason for domestic persecution." Later that summer he wrote an extraordinary letter to his mother, who was now ill and living in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and who feared she would never see her son again. Eliot said that he hoped

to come to America soon, but that he had "a much more positive conviction than you have that I shall see you in a future life," even though that life would be like nothing imaginable. He assures her that whatever he has done that the world thought good, "It was something that you and I did together or even something that you had dreamt of and projected before I was born." He hopes to make "a deeper mark on English and European civilization," but, at any rate, salutes her as "the finest and greatest woman that I have ever known."

His recent conversion may have strengthened his assurance in an afterlife, but the testament is as movingly heartfelt as anything to be encountered in the letters.

Among his literary remarks and judgments, a few on American writers stand out. He calls Whitman "a great master of versification" and compares him in this regard to Tennyson. While disliking George Santayana, with whom he took courses at Harvard, he likes Santayana's fine essay "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy," and notes shrewdly that Santayana is best when he is "slightly mischievous" and when his essays fall "on the borderline of literary criticism." His admiration for Hawthorne grew ever stronger, not for his "preoccupation with American problems but in his preoccupation with general spiritual problems." Hawthorne's successor, Henry James, shared in this concern; but Hawthorne, Eliot says, is a much more "universal" writer, a "very much greater writer than James." At first glance, this judgment seems a shocking one, especially when we remember Eliot's praise of James for that writer's mastery over and escape from "ideas" ("he had a mind so fine that no idea could violate it"). But Eliot's main attraction was to the early Europeanizing James of *Daisy Miller* and *The Europeans*, and perhaps the later James interested him less; while, as Eliot's own "spirituality" deepened, Hawthorne assumed more prominence.

The years 1926-27 show little new poetry. His *Poems 1909-1925* (a book he told Leonard Woolf he was unhappy about) concluded with the

desperate fragmentation of “The Hollow Men,” and the parts of *Sweeney Agonistes*, his unfinished verse drama, he published in the *Criterion* in 1926 and 1927 failed to bring things together. The only finished poem was “Journey of the Magi,” composed, he wrote Conrad Aiken, one Sunday morning in a 45-minute interval between church and dinner “with the assistance of half a bottle of Booth’s Gin.” Although he continued to review, and published an important essay, “Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca,” “The Waste Land” proved a difficult act to follow. His turn toward religion, which would culminate in “Ash Wednesday” in 1930, was just beginning to make itself felt in his verse. As for stirring formulations about poetry, they are absent from the letters. He remarked to his spiritual counselor, William Force Stead, that he failed to see why so many people wanted to write about poetry: “God knows why; it seems to me the dullest subject going.”

No other great poet has made such a statement.

But it is only one example among many of the original wit on display in all three volumes of letters, and that has kept this reader going as it lights up the correspondence with timely sparks. He writes F. Scott Fitzgerald (whose *Great Gatsby* Eliot had admired) that his letter had pleased him “in spite of the fact that you persist in misspelling my name.” When, during a discussion, a religious topic is brought up, he declares, “The only things I care for are dancing and brandy,” and he offers to introduce Virginia Woolf (who better?) to new forms of dance steps like the Grizzly Bear and the Chicken Strut. “I have a frightful attack of rheumatism,” he writes the day after a *Criterion* dinner party. “I’m afraid I sang too much.”

Many of the letters are written to Bonamy Dobrée, a member of the *Criterion* phalanx who had accepted a teaching position in Cairo. There is some rather heavy joking in the slightly obscene mode of Eliot’s “King Bolo” poems, but also a couple of pertinent questions about life in Dobrée’s

new setting: “The only thing I want to know about the camel is whether, as American authorities assert, it is always necessary to walk a mile for one.” Dobrée took that one more or less in stride, but it was followed by

another query about the camel: “Do they fold their tents, and if so in how many folds, and if so is it always in the same folds like a napkin or serviette (as called in seaside hotels)?”

Dobrée couldn’t answer that one. ♦

BCA

Growing Older

The best is yet to be, with adjustments.

BY ELISABETH EAVES

The word “epicurean” has come to describe those who are fond of luxury, sensual pleasure, and gourmet food.

At some point, its definition evolved away from that of capital-E “Epicurean,” which refers to a follower of the ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus. Members of both groups advocate the pursuit of pleasure, but today’s hedonists define that very differently than the old philosopher did. To him, pleasure was attained by living simply and keeping one’s desires in check. One of his aphorisms was that “nothing is enough for the man to whom enough is too little.”

He preferred plain boiled lentils to slow-roasted resin-infused pheasant, an ancient Greek delicacy prepared for noblemen by slaves. Today, countless foodies evoke Epicurus in the names of their blogs, magazines, and imported-cheese stores, but their tastes tend toward slaved-over pheasant.

The difference in these two understandings of how to maximize pleasure is at the heart of *Travels with Epicurus*, a charming meditation on aging. To live well in old age—or at any age—should we chase newer and better sensations, or learn to savor what we have? Daniel Klein takes us on a thought-provoking journey to find out.

Elisabeth Eaves is the author, most recently, of Wanderlust: A Love Affair with Five Continents.

Travels with Epicurus

A Journey to a Greek Island in Search of a Fulfilled Life

by Daniel Klein
Penguin, 176 pp., \$20

A visit to his dentist sets him on his path. In his early seventies, he is told that, due to atrophy of his jawbone typical for his age, he will need to have a row of teeth replaced with implants. The only alternative is a denture, which can pop out embarrassingly and will make him look, well, old. He signs up for the implants. But when he gets home, he learns more about what they will entail: at least seven visits to an oral surgeon, each one followed by days of pain and mushy food.

I then realized just how much those potential denture pops and that old-mannish smile had figured in my instant decision to get the implants. . . . I had been swept up in the current trend of trying to extend the prime of life well into the years that used to be called “old age.”

Looking around at frenetic contemporaries who are charging ahead in their careers, taking up jogging and French, and undergoing hormone treatments and cosmetic surgery, he decides that there’s got to be a better way to age. So the onetime college philosophy major and coauthor of the bestselling *Plato and a Platypus Walk Into a Bar . . .* says no to the implants,

packs up his favorite philosophical works, and decamps from his home in Massachusetts to the village of Kamini on the Greek island of Hydra. It was on Hydra that, as a young man in the 1960s, he had once peered into the window of a taverna and seen five old men dancing side by side, hands raised and connected by handkerchiefs, “their craggy faces . . . tilted upward with what struck me as pride, defiance, and, above all, exultation.”

What follows isn’t a travelogue so much as a log of things he mulls over while staying in a whitewashed 19th-century house with a lemon tree and a view of the sea.

While his tone is bemused, his underlying take on aging is radical. In a society that spends billions on face cream and baldness cures—not to mention life-prolonging (but not necessarily life-improving) medical advances—floating the notion that there are upsides to aging is practically taboo. If you’re in your twenties, you’re assumed to regard your thirties with horror; in your thirties, you must feel the same way about your forties; and so on. All this despite the fact that many things get better—at least for a good long while—as we become more practiced at living.

We become more adept at things that improve quality of life, like picking friends, or cooking, or playing chess, or doing whatever it is we’ve chosen to do for work. We know ourselves well enough to know which movies to avoid and that we’ll look terrible in orange, no matter how fashionable it is right now. These are upsides worth celebrating, but we seldom do.

Klein is not a Pollyanna. He’s the first to admit terror at the prospect of what he calls “old old age,” those extended years of decrepitude made possible by medical science, when we live on even as our bodies and brains fall apart. “I can all too easily get into raging against the dying of the light,” he writes. But does he really want to spend his last healthy years in a state of fury and frustration? Taking a page from the Stoics, who believed that “dwelling on what is out of our control invites pain without any con-

ceivable gain,” he decides he does not.

His travel ethos, too, is refreshingly contrarian in a world of bucket lists and “must-sees.” He observes fellow septuagenarians “setting off on expeditions to exotic destinations, copies of *1,000 Places to See Before You Die* tucked in their backpacks.” But, as he writes, “at the twelfth place to see before dying, viewing exotic terrain can get to be old hat—you’ve already done ‘exotic’ eleven times.”



Daniel Klein on Hydra

His message isn’t just that newness can get old, but that there’s nothing wrong with you if it does. After pondering an acquaintance who wears a testosterone patch to make himself feel sexual desire, and takes Cialis to be able to fulfill it, Klein concludes: “Wanting to want something that he doesn’t really want that much, and in his eighth decade, no less, just seems counterfeit, untrue to himself.”

Rather than ticking destinations off an arbitrary list, Klein settles into his home away from home. He frequents his favorite taverna, hangs out with his 72-year-old friend Tasso, hitches a ride on a donkey when he doesn’t feel like walking, and meanders over to the next village, Vlihos, pausing to relish a cigarette on the way. Most of the wandering he does is through his books. He takes the reader with him as he tries to work out how to be “authentically and contentedly old”—sharing not only what

Aristotle, Plato, and Epicurus himself had to say on the matter, but also checking in with Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Shakespeare, and Sinatra, among others.

Fortunately, Klein resists easy answers. While he appreciates the slow pace of life on Hydra, he doesn’t suggest that getting off the beaten track and consuming more olive oil will make every member of the AARP feel fulfilled. But lessons do surface

that sound like good advice: Hang on to your friends whose companionship you can enjoy “without wanting anything from them.” Hang on to your spouse, because a long marriage, with its shared memories, is “one of old age’s greatest consolations.” Live modestly and moderately, like an Epicurean rather than an epicurean, and you might have a shot at enjoying the phase of life that Epicurus believed was its pinnacle: “It is not the young man who should be considered fortunate, but the old man who has lived well,” he is recorded as having said. “Because the young man in his prime wanders much by chance, vacillating in his beliefs, while the old man has docked in the harbor, having safeguarded his true happiness.”

Klein never reports back on the state of his teeth, but he makes a satisfying case that the road to old-age happiness doesn’t pass through the oral surgeon’s office. ♦

Aftermyth of War

The Lost Cause is among the casualties in this definitive history. BY MACKUBIN THOMAS OWENS

As we mark the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, the publication of Allen Guelzo's magisterial new account of that conflict is most timely. But given the fact that, by even the most conservative estimates, some 60,000 books and pamphlets have been written about what was once called the War of the Rebellion, the question naturally arises: Why do we need another one?

A very compelling reason is that Guelzo is one of our most accomplished Civil War historians, and one of the country's foremost Lincoln scholars. He is the first two-time winner of the Lincoln Prize—in 2000 for *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President* and in 2005 for *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America*, the definitive treatment of that document. In addition, Guelzo's prose is graceful and erudite—indeed, almost poetic. He is as comfortable with military topics as he is with the political, social, and economic aspects of the war and its aftermath.

But the most important reason for embracing *Fateful Lightning* is that it continues an important trend regarding how we understand the Civil War, by overturning the “Lost Cause” school of historiography. As Edward A. Pollard wrote in the 1867 book that gave this interpretation its name, “all that is left in the South is the war of ideas.” The Lost Cause thesis is neatly summarized in an 1893 speech by the former Confederate officer Col. Richard Henry Lee:

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Fateful Lightning

A New History of the Civil War and Reconstruction
by Allen C. Guelzo
Oxford, 592 pp., \$19.95



Allen C. Guelzo

As a Confederate soldier and as a Virginian, I deny the charge [that the Confederates were rebels] and denounce it as a calumny. We were not rebels, we did not fight to perpetuate human slavery, but for our rights and privileges under a government established over us by our fathers and in defense of our homes.

As David Blight has observed in *Race and Reunion*, the Lost Cause interpretation of the war was the South's response to the physical destruction and psychological trauma of defeat. In this view, the Old South was a racial utopia, an organic society composed of loyal slaves and benevolent masters. The war pitted this “slave democracy” against the “free mobocracy” of the North, and the noble side lost. The matchless bravery of the Confederate soldier succumbed to the “juggernaut of superior numbers

and merciless power.” As Robert Penn Warren once wrote, “In the moment of its death, the Confederacy entered upon its immortality.”

Almost immediately after the conflict ended, the Lost Cause school towered like a colossus over Civil War historiography. Former Confederate general Jubal Early and other Lost Cause authors were instrumental in shaping perceptions of the war, in the North as well as in the South. The works of Douglas Southall Freeman, Virginian and biographer of Robert E. Lee, represent the epitome of the Lost Cause school; but even writers like Bruce Catton, who interpreted the war primarily from a Northern perspective, accepted many of the Lost Cause assumptions.

There are two parts to the Lost Cause interpretation. The first is political, and holds that the cause of the war was not slavery, but the oppressive power of the central government which wished to tyrannize the Southern states. The South only wished to exercise its constitutional right to secede, but was thwarted by a power-hungry Lincoln. This assessment was advanced by, most prominently, Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederacy, and Alexander Stephens, his vice president. The second part of the interpretation is military-based, and concludes that the noblest soldier of the war was Robert E. Lee. For three years, he and his army provided the backbone of the Confederate cause, fighting in Virginia, the most important theater of the war. But though his adversaries were far less skillful than he, they were able to bring to bear superior resources, which ultimately overwhelmed the Confederacy.

Guelzo demonstrates that the first part of the Lost Cause argument is false. Slavery was both the proximate and deep cause of the war; there was no constitutional right to dissolve the Union. Southerners could have invoked the natural right of revolution, but they didn't do so because of its implications for a slaveholding society—so they were hardly the heirs of the revolutionary generation.

But Guelzo validates the truth of the second part of the argument. The South did fight at a material disadvantage, and

Lee was a remarkably skillful soldier who overcame immense odds on battlefield after battlefield. Unlike many historians who have taken the rejection of the Lost Cause argument to the extreme by dismissing the military competence of Lee, Guelzo gives the Confederate general his due.

Fateful Lightning will inevitably be compared with James McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom*. I once called the latter the best single volume on the Civil War, but *Fateful Lightning* is every bit its equal. There are many similarities between the two books: Both skillfully interweave political, military, economic, social, and religious factors to create a masterful tapestry of the war. Both are elegantly written. Both discuss the social trends at work, in the North and South, that led to war.

But there are significant differences as well. While *Battle Cry of Freedom* begins with the Mexican War and ends with the termination of Civil War military operations, *Fateful Lightning* begins with the Founding and carries the story through the end of Reconstruction. *Battle Cry of Freedom* is essentially a straightforward chronological narrative. *Fateful Lightning*, while also exhibiting a narrative structure, features chapters on particular topics: the war from the soldier's perspective; manufacturing and logistics; the social upheaval that the war generated, especially in class relations, the relations between the races, and those between the sexes.

Like *Battle Cry of Freedom*, *Fateful Lightning* is a general history. Those expecting a detailed description of campaigns and battles will be disappointed. But there are many fine books on these topics by the many excellent military historians who tend to put battles and campaigns in strategic context to an extent that the older generation did not. *Fateful Lightning*, instead, provides a general understanding of civil-military relations, the interaction of policy

and partisan politics, diplomacy, legal issues, and the like.

Also like *Battle Cry of Freedom*, *Fateful Lightning* is a work of synthesis. There are many excellent recent books about all aspects of the Civil War, and Guelzo demonstrates his familiarity with such work, applying it skillfully in developing his own narrative. While even casual students of the Civil War will be familiar with many of the events that Guelzo describes, the true strength of this book lies in the author's ability

Taylor's at Buena Vista. This preference was reinforced at West Point by the teachings of Dennis Hart Mahan.

"The American regular officer in 1861," writes Guelzo, "was thus presented with a series of contradictions: tactics books that encouraged officers to take the offensive and make the enemy's army their objective, and a professional military culture that looked to occupy enemy territory and fight a defensive war from behind fortifications." At least one general, Robert E.



Stonewall Jackson reviews his troops in the Shenandoah Valley. Mural by Charles Hoffbauer (1921).

to illuminate the links among them. This is particularly the case when it comes to dealing with the interplay of strategy, operations, and the "sinews of war"—finance and logistics.

Guelzo's discussion of the competing American military schools of thought is a case in point. At the midpoint of the 19th century, Napoleon was the exemplar of military excellence, and his offensive mindset (especially as interpreted by the Swiss military writer Baron Antoine-Henri Jomini) provided one approach. But the American reliance on militia and volunteers rather than a professional army made this a risky alternative. The second school favored the defensive. With the exception of Winfield Scott's campaign against Mexico City in the Mexican War, most American victories up to the time of the Civil War had been gained on the defensive, including Andrew Jackson's victory at New Orleans and Zachary

Lee, embraced the cult of the offensive.

Another issue that Guelzo illuminates is the relationship between the nature of the war and its conduct, especially from the Union perspective. Lincoln consistently argued that the "seceded" states were never truly out of the Union, and that the war was a rebellion "too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, or by the powers vested in the Marshals by law." But in international law, his proclamation of a blockade had the legal effect of granting the Confederacy belligerent status.

Such considerations also affected the steps the Union took with regard to slavery. Their first approach to drawing slave manpower away from the Confederacy was to treat slaves as "contrabands of war." Radicals in Congress favored confiscation. But to apply confiscation and contraband as they were understood in international law,



A Christmas Quiz

Yes, we concede, the Internet has essentially nullified this old journalistic tradition. But you still have to take the time to track down the answers, and sometimes there are questions that defy even Google (see Question IV). So here is our challenge: The first reader to send all the right answers to us at editor@weeklystandard.com will be rewarded with a mint copy of *THE WEEKLY STANDARD: A Reader* signed by Bill Kristol and Fred Barnes. (Answers will appear in the January 14 issue.)

I. Match the name with the occupation:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1) Ray Stannard Baker | A) Geographer |
| 2) Ray Lyman Wilbur | B) Biographer of Woodrow Wilson |
| 3) Ray Allen Billington | C) Soldier-diplomat |
| 4) Halford Mackinder | D) University president |
| 5) Hanford MacNider | E) Historian |

II. What literary distinction do Caspar Weinberger, Charlton Heston, and Richard Nixon have in common?

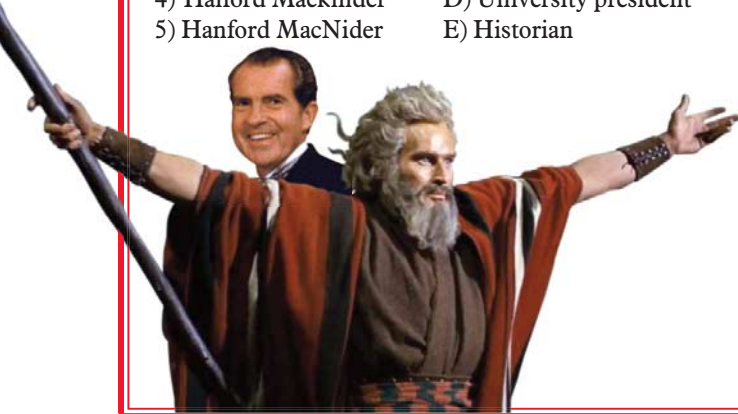
III. Match the obscure victim with the celebrity assailant:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1) Vladimir Sabich | A) Phil Spector |
| 2) Sam Garrett | B) Norman Mailer |
| 3) Lana Clarkson | C) Robert Blake |
| 4) Neil Smith | D) Don King |
| 5) Bonny Lee Bakley | E) Claudine Longet |
| 6) Adele Morales | F) Carl Rowan |

IV. Two American novelists died within 24 hours and 240 miles of one another. Who were they, and on what dates did they die?

V. Match the president with the alma mater:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1) Rutherford B. Hayes | A) North Carolina |
| 2) Gerald Ford | B) Yale |
| 3) James A. Garfield | C) Amherst |
| 4) William Howard Taft | D) Kenyon |
| 5) Thomas Jefferson | E) Hampden-Sydney |
| 6) Calvin Coolidge | F) Bowdoin |
| 7) Franklin Pierce | G) Princeton |
| 8) James Knox Polk | H) William & Mary |
| 9) William Henry Harrison | I) Williams |
| 10) James Madison | J) Michigan |



again, gave the Confederacy belligerent status. This was at odds with Lincoln's insistence that the states of the Confederacy could never legally leave the Union. On the other hand, if the war was only a domestic rebellion (as Lincoln held), then confiscation of slave contraband violated the constitutional prohibition against attainder.

Lincoln's preferred approach to ending slavery called for a policy of legislated, gradual, compensated emancipation, which he proposed early in his administration. Lincoln believed that he could convince Congress to appropriate funds to compensate slave-owners for gradually freeing their slaves. His plan was to begin where slavery was weakest: in the northern-

most slave states, especially Delaware. Lincoln reasoned that the combination of military success against the Confederacy and compensated emancipation in loyal slave states would lead to the collapse of the Confederacy, which had staked its hopes on eventually incorporating the border states.

But neither condition came to pass. Lincoln's proposals for compensated emancipation were rejected by the border states. Meanwhile, the Confederacy was just then exerting maximum effort to mobilize its population for war. In April 1862, the Confederate Congress passed a conscription act. Then, abandoning the "cordon" defense that had permitted Union armies to penetrate into Confederate territory as far

as northern Mississippi in early 1862, the Confederacy organized its mobilized manpower into field armies. One of these forces, the Army of Tennessee, struck Ulysses S. Grant at Shiloh. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia drove George McClellan back from the gates of Richmond. Then, in the fall of 1862, rebel armies invaded Kentucky and Maryland. To a great extent, the South was able to do this only because slave labor freed white men to fight.

The Emancipation Proclamation was Lincoln's response to the failure of Union arms and compensated emancipation. Thus, after Lee's invasion of Maryland was turned back at Antietam, Lincoln issued a preliminary proclamation, on September 22, giving

HESTON: PARAMOUNT PICTURES

the Confederates 100 days to submit to the Union or face the prospect of immediate emancipation.

The great strength of *Fateful Lightning* is its demonstration that slavery lay at the heart of the conflict. Guelzo accepts Lincoln's argument that the institution was an affront to the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and that the Founders had compromised only because of their belief that it was on the road to extinction. Until the passage of the 13th Amendment in 1865, the federal government had no authority over slavery in states where it existed. It was only the Union victory in 1865 that gave the federal government the authority to end slavery.

Guelzo's discussion of Reconstruction is brief but elegant. The Lost Cause thesis has also influenced the way Americans have thought about Reconstruction, and, until recently, the dominant narrative regarding Reconstruction has been to portray it as the imposition of a tyrannical, unjust peace on the South. Ironically, this narrative took root in academia because of the work of Northern progressive historians, including James Ford Rhodes, William Dunning, Claude Bowers, and James Randall.

But, according to the story, the old Confederacy refused to bend, which eventually enabled a Democratic counterrevolution against radical Reconstruction, finally "redeeming" the South. The South may have lost the war, according to this view, but it triumphed over Reconstruction and the radical Republican legacy of corrupt, carpetbagger governments and the anarchy of black rule.

Guelzo rejects this. Along with other revisionists, he contends that, despite its apparent failure to change the socioeconomic basis of the South in the short run, Reconstruction did provide the basis for the eventual application of civil rights for all, laying the groundwork for the legislation of the 20th century. It is impossible to imagine the passage of the 14th and 15th Amendments under circumstances other than those that prevailed during Radical Reconstruction.

The human cost of the Civil War was immense. As Guelzo recounts,

The butcher's bill for the preservation of the Union amounted to at least 640,000 dead and wounded. In practical terms, six out of every hundred men of military age in the North died during the war, and one out of every sixty-five who served perished.

The cost to the Confederacy was even greater, not only in terms of dead and wounded, but also in terms of the economic devastation visited upon the South. There were other costs as well: Guelzo shows that religious faith suffered as a result of the war, as well as faith in liberal democracy. Progressives, who "loathed the ramshackle inefficiencies of democracy," judged that the war had created an "industrial and commercial nation" (in the words of Charles Beard) where "the power of capital, both absolute and as compared to land" had dwarfed self-government.

Such an outcome, in their eyes, was not worth the cost. For the Progressive interpreters of the conflict,

The Civil War approaches the nadir of total loss precisely because at some point they concluded that since liberal democracy was a dead end, an illusion, and never worth fighting for, intentionally or otherwise, the Civil War could never amount to more than a tragic failure.

Guelzo demurs. The Civil War maintained the Union, and it ended slavery. To paraphrase the words of Abraham Lincoln at Peoria in 1864, the Civil War not only saved the Union but also made it worthy of saving by removing the stain of slavery. It repurified America's republican robe, washing it in both the spirit and blood of the American Revolution. ♦

BCA

Art of the Possible

Surprising lessons to be learned in popular culture.

BY BRUCE EDWARD WALKER

Instead of disparaging all popular culture as a "vast wasteland" of cultural and moral decay, conservative critics should tease out those elements that reinforce conservative values in the arts. Russell Kirk used to lament the falling-off in depictions of normative behavior; but whereas Kirk focused his derision on literary and other public figures (the Beatles, Ayn Rand, etc.), he avoided most popular culture by refusing to watch television altogether. Kirk was not entirely wrong in his conclusions, but he died before he could catch a glimpse of light at the end of the tube.

Television, radio, and film, however, continue their encroachment into the public consciousness. The firebrand Ben Shapiro recently published a book

Bruce Edward Walker is a regular contributor to the American Culture blog.

**The Invisible Hand
in Popular Culture**
*Liberty vs. Authority
in American Film and TV*
by Paul A. Cantor
Kentucky, 488 pp., \$35

entitled *Primetime Propaganda*, with the ominous subtitle, "The True Hollywood Story of How the Left Took Over Your TV." Shapiro cites programs such as *All in the Family* as evidence of liberal indoctrination—and indeed, Norman Lear is an unabashed Hollywood liberal. But Shapiro also ignores the fact that Archie Bunker might have done more to promote civil rights by his personification of the absurdities of bigotry than any amount of public service announcements, or legislation. What could be more conservative, after all, than the concept that all men

are created equal, regardless of race, creed, or color?

Cultural scolds increasingly run the risk of audiences tuning them out, with their mantra that the culture has plummeted to hell in a handcart. Not long ago, this writer had the opportunity to explain the uplifting elements of such Judd Apatow comedies as *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* and *Knocked Up* to another conservative writer: Whereas, on their surfaces, these films run rampant with

But whereas that work delved into high art by way of essays on Cervantes, Willa Cather, H.G. Wells, and others, *The Invisible Hand* is solely Cantor's work, following along the path he began carving in *Gilligan Unbound* (2001) in its celebration of the free market. He is able to find small-government victories in even the most seemingly shallow entertainments, including the HBO series *Deadwood*, Comedy Central's *South Park*, the Martin Scorsese film *The*

impossible. This, writes Cantor, is what separates the critics from artists. "Where the critic sees only imprisonment," he writes, "the artist struggles creatively to find a path to freedom." In many instances, this creativity finds an outlet in appealing to both studios and financiers, to whom the artist is beholden, and to the artist's personal integrity.

Cantor identifies Friedrich Hayek's concept of spontaneous order as a unifying theme. Spontaneous order in popular culture, he writes, "often celebrates its power in American society and is itself an example of that power."

For a variety of reasons, the greatest artistic energy can sometimes be found in the commercial media, which continually offer artists new opportunities for original and even groundbreaking work as well as the potential for substantial and sometimes spectacular financial rewards.



Visiting Martian, President Jack Nicholson, 'Mars Attacks!' (1996)

promiscuous hookups, drug consumption, and potty talk, they also display the advantages of normative behavior—such as chastity before marriage (*The 40-Year-Old Virgin*) and the importance of two committed, mature adults for the parenting of children (*Knocked Up*).

Yes, it sometimes requires a bit of digging through the detritus to find the redeeming qualities in popular culture, but it is works such as Paul Cantor's *The Invisible Hand in Popular Culture* that offer ready, rewarding, and invaluable assistance. This is an exceptional romp through television and film from the past several decades, and serves to entertain as much as to instruct us that the world of entertainment contains many valuable lessons in economics, liberty, and morality.

As coeditor (with Stephen Cox) of and contributor to *Literature and the Economics of Liberty: Spontaneous Order in Culture* (2010), Paul Cantor revealed his predilection for Austrian economics.

Aviator, and Tim Burton's *Mars Attacks!*

Cantor establishes his aims in the preface by dispelling the myth that the commercial intentions of movies and television programs require artists to cater to capitalist ideology. He notes that the Frankfurt School of cultural criticism inaugurated the misperception that Hollywood reflects only mass culture, which perpetuates "debased entertainment" for the purposes of the almighty dollar. Cantor acknowledges that Hollywood's committee-based decisions often result in mediocre art, but he argues that artistic freedom shines through in the finished product more often than the Frankfurt Marxists would concede: "Hollywood's track record demonstrates that there is nothing inherent in pop culture that precludes creative freedom in film and television."

While it may be difficult for creative people in Hollywood to express radical conservative themes, it's not

He identifies directors Burton, Scorsese, John Ford, and Edgar G. Ulmer, as well as television auteurs Chris Carter (*The X-Files*) and David Milch (*Deadwood*), as artists who have left an indelible mark on popular culture after successfully bucking the Hollywood system. "If, as the Marxists claim, Hollywood directors are subject to the demands of the American bourgeoisie," he notes, "Rembrandt was no less dependent on the whims of Dutch burghers for the commissions that kept him in business."

What follows is a morale-booster for those who think pop culture has reached its nadir of late. Nothing could be further from the truth, as Cantor explains. For every Gene Roddenberry (creator of *Star Trek*), who promoted centralized solutions provided by an intellectual elite, there exist innumerable artists who champion creative freedom, and promote spontaneous order in our culture. ♦

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Happier Ending

In the ranks of show-biz memoirs, an unexpected gem.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Memoirs by performers are the cotton candy of autobiography—insubstantial, undemanding, and alluring, but when you're done you can't remember why you wasted the calories getting yourself nothing but sticky.

We read such books mostly because we're eager for gossip, but we usually find we've gone looking in the wrong place. Most actors are narcissists by definition, and narcissists are uniquely bad at telling stories that involve their own peccadillos or focus on other people. And they are usually distressingly generic, the obvious end result of having probably been written by someone other than the celebrity whose name is on the jacket.

And then, shocker of all shockers, there is Rob Lowe.

For reasons I cannot quite fathom, I found myself downloading Lowe's 2011 memoir *Stories I Only Tell My Friends* onto my Kindle for subway reading—maybe because it's the first such book to be published by a relative contemporary of mine. Lowe is best known as a pretty boy who came to fame as one of the hot young Brat Packers of the 1980s, before making a notorious sex tape at the end of the decade which trashed his reputation. Lately he has become a reliable go-to guy for television, in series self-serious (*The West Wing*), soapy (*Brothers & Sisters*), and comedic (*Parks and Recreation*).

At 48, Lowe is neither a legend nor a has-been, but a working actor of mid-level celebrity—a near-star who never quite made it to the top and was saved from self-destruction by an iron-willed drive for self-preservation. He set himself apart from Hollywood before it

killed him, and part of the wonder of *Stories I Only Tell My Friends* is Lowe's realization that California hedonism was trying to kill him long before he even stepped before a camera.



Rob Lowe, Sheryl Berkoff

The truly stunning achievement in *Stories I Only Tell My Friends* is Lowe's portrait of moving from suburban Dayton, Ohio, to down-at-the-heels Malibu with his fragile mother and younger brother after his parents divorced in the late 1960s. The evocation of this beach community, not yet the exclusive province of the rich, is so crisp you can smell the salt air.

Malibu kids are isolated, solitary by nature, and when among their peers they form small, extremely tight cliques. The surfers. The burn-outs. The brains. The nerds. There are also those who seem like ghosts, not belonging to anyone or any clique. The Lost Boys of Malibu. And indeed, their tragic narrative of freak accidents and death will play itself out throughout my teen years.

Kids perished at an alarming rate from surfing mishaps and guns misfiring and snorting cocaine that turned out to be rat poison. They had been left entirely to their own devices at a time when their parents were busying them-

selves with the 1970s obsession with trying on new personas and behavioral affects like clothing in a changing room.

In short order, Rob gets a job on a failed sitcom. He keeps stumbling into Hollywood old and new—he is invited by his friend Jennifer to watch TV with her dad, who turns out to be Cary Grant. Someone takes him to a special-effects warehouse, and he watches a key scene filmed for *Star Wars* a year before anyone heard of it. When he becomes a matinee idol, he also becomes the consort of Princess Stephanie of Monaco, who is royalty at least as much because her mother was Grace Kelly as because her father was the titular head of a casino with a town attached to it.

The best story in Lowe's book is about his big break, when he is cast in a lead role in Francis Ford Coppola's movie version of the classic teen-angst novel, *The Outsiders*—along with, as it would turn out, most of the notable actors of his generation. They all decamp to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where Coppola spends months playing mind games with them—the actors who are playing the working-class kids stay in dumps while those playing the rich kids stay in fancy hotels. He makes them do tai chi. He makes them play tackle football against each other on a cement surface. He films and films and films, and when Lowe finally sees the end result, he finds that most of his part has been cut. Coppola didn't bother to tell him.

He becomes a box-office draw and he parties hard. He finds the love of his life, a makeup artist named Sheryl Berkoff, cheats on her, loses her. Then: "I make the call. It's May 10, 1990." He goes into rehab. He does not become a Lost Boy of Malibu as did his childhood friend Charlie Sheen and so many others. Lowe, who has been sober for 22 years now, marries Sheryl; they have two sons and are together two decades later. As it is without much drama, the last few chapters are the least interesting parts of *Stories I Only Tell My Friends*. Still, Rob Lowe's extraordinarily surprising book is not only a showbiz autobiography of real distinction, but a powerful cautionary tale about the dangers of the unfettered life—for the world-famous and utterly obscure alike. ♦

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, is THE WEEKLY STANDARD's movie critic.

"Hillary Clinton to miss Benghazi hearings after fainting, concussion, officials say"

—Newsday, Dec. 15, 2012

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Hillary Clinton out again this week with concussion

'Game time decision' to come before hearing next week

BY MARK MASKE

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will again be forced to sit out of a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing this week as she continues to feel the effects of a concussion suffered over two weeks ago. Clinton, who sustained the concussion after fainting earlier in December, was expected to be cleared for action this week by executive branch trainers. But a State Department spokesman announced today that she failed to meet the baseline required by the executive branch IMPACT test, a new testing standard implemented this year to protect the health and mental well-being of government appointees who for years have suffered latent negative effects of returning to government service too soon after serious head trauma.

"Administration physicians ran a battery of tests and decided it was best for her to sit out this week, that the mental strain of a Senate hearing might aggravate the injury," said State Department spokesman Phillippe Bourbon von de Reines-Habsburg. "Perhaps we are being overly cautious, but we are all familiar with the consequences of coming back too soon: Madeleine



AF PHOTO / JOHN RAOUX

The White House released this photo of Secretary Clinton waving as she was wheeled to an ambulance following her fall.

Albright forgetting she was Jewish; Steven Chu's energy 'plan'; Joe Biden," Reines continued, referring to government officials widely believed to have suffered lasting effects from concussions.

Some Republicans have grown tired of the excuse and believe Secretary Clinton's injury has been exaggerated so she won't have to answer their questions about the attack on the American consulate in Benghazi, Libya. But State Department medical staff insisted that Clinton is just not well enough to participate. "She thought we were in Little Rock," said State Department head trainer Gerald Pettigrew. "She kept calling me 'Webb.'"

Secretary Clinton's concussion

has once again brought to the fore the issue of the effects of government service on the brain. President Obama implemented the new executive branch IMPACT standards after a difficult first term, but some believe the new testing does not go far enough. The judicial branch still has no testing program to speak of, a fact whose importance is now greatly magnified since Chief Justice John Roberts is widely believed to have suffered a blow to the head shortly before voting to uphold the Affordable Care Act. And few question the effects such injuries have had on Congress, as

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Standard