

**NO MORE MORSI:  
THE EGYPTIAN COUP**  
LEE SMITH

the weekly

# Standard

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## THE LAST REDOUBT

FRED BARNES on the Republican  
attorneys general



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COVER BY GARY LOCKE

# When Discretion Reigned

A historian, burrowing in the National Archives, recently found a short reel of film which seems not only to have remained hidden since it was shot nearly 70 years ago, but has proved to be one of a kind. It shows President Franklin D. Roosevelt on board the USS *Baltimore* at Pearl Harbor in July 1944, meeting his Pacific war commanders, Adm. Chester Nimitz and Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

There are plenty of newsreels and still photographs of this event—where Roosevelt chose a strategy for the balance of the campaign against Japan—but none shows what was found in the archives: eight seconds of FDR being pushed along the ship’s deck in his wheelchair. So far as anyone is aware, there is no other footage extant of our nation’s only four-term president in his wheelchair, and only two still photographs—both snapshots taken, in private, by a relative.

From our era’s perspective, of course, this very nearly defies belief. Franklin Roosevelt was a paraplegic, unable to walk and largely unable to move from one point to another without assistance. Stricken with infantile paralysis at 39, he perfected a means of appearing to walk at certain public events by relying on a cane and somebody’s strong arm bearing his weight. But footage of

this (deliberately deceptive) form of locomotion is also rare.

It was well known, during his presidency, that FDR had suffered from polio—he initiated the March of Dimes campaign to find a cure, and his “summer White House” was a spa he founded at Warm Springs—and he was generally understood to be lame, or crippled, or whatever politically incorrect term might then have applied. But the reality of his condition was a closely held secret, protected by writers and photographers alike.

It is interesting to read, say, the wartime letters and diaries of British generals and diplomats who are invariably shocked to discover that the president of the United States is confined to a wheelchair, and often carried from room to room by the Secret Service. More astonishing still, Roosevelt’s bitterest enemies, in the press and politics, never mentioned his condition in public—not once. Editorial cartoons invariably showed him running, boxing, climbing, engaging in swordplay.

As any viewer of MSNBC, or reader of Paul Krugman in the *New York Times*, can attest, we have come a long way since July 1944. Personal abuse and schoolyard taunts are now a routine feature of political journalism, and as Dick Cheney can vouch, serious medical conditions are oc-

casions for invective, not sympathy. Moreover, the press and public are now entitled to the most intimate details of the physical condition of figures in public life: not just height and eye color but weight, blood pressure, allergies, surgical history, and chronic conditions. It is probably fair to say that, since Thomas Eagleton in 1972, anyone who has ever sought treatment for, say, mild depression or anxiety is effectively disqualified from seeking national office.

The secrecy surrounding Franklin Roosevelt’s health—intended, of course, to protect what Bill Clinton later called his “political viability”—was probably excessive, and in any case, is clearly impossible today. But have full disclosure and the public’s “right to know” served us so well? THE SCRAPBOOK concedes that the public is entitled to know if presidents are physically capable of discharging their duties; but very few things in life, especially health, can be guaranteed. And as a consequence, our choice in candidates is now limited to people who are sufficiently ambitious to forgo all expectation of any privacy whatsoever.

Or put another way: We’ll take a wheelchair-bound FDR in the White House any day over a slim, trim Barack Obama. ♦

## Where Have All the Flowers Gone?

While not exactly a national monument, the north entrance to the Dupont Circle Metro stop in downtown Washington, D.C., is a pretty impressive edifice. A large circular granite wall is inscribed with a portion of Walt Whitman’s poem “The Wound-Dresser,” which you can ponder as you slowly descend the 188-foot escalator that takes you to the train underground. The escalators are encased on both sides by sloping concrete blocks with planters

interspersed. Until recently, those 176 planters were just boxes filled with dirt. But then a local resident took it upon himself to utilize the flower boxes as had been intended, and surreptitiously filled them with more than 1,000 morning glories, cardinal flowers, and cypress vines. “The plants would have bloomed from August to October in a patriotic display of red, white and blue,” according to the *Washington Post*. Local residents were delighted by what had happened and the anonymous citizen responsible was dubbed the “Phantom Planter.”

Eventually the Phantom Planter

was unmasked as professional gardener Henry Docter. Rather than being grateful for Docter’s thoughtful efforts at civic beautification, the notoriously corrupt and inefficient Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority immediately threatened Docter with “arrest, fines and imprisonment” for his reckless act of gardening without a permit. However, the public outcry in support of Docter was so strong that Metro authorities promised to meet with community leaders and “move forward with their wishes, as long as they are reasonable, sustainable and safe.”

Anyone familiar with unaccountable mass transit bureaucracies can guess where this is heading. In fact, Metro scheduled no meetings with community leaders and last week sent workmen to rip the flowers out of all 176 boxes without notifying anyone. (The constant breakdown of Metro's escalators, by the way, is one of D.C.'s most infuriating local quirks, and it took *THE SCRAPBOOK* an hour and a half to get home from work after a Metro train broke down one day last week, so it's not as if Metro doesn't have more important things to work on.) There has been considerable outrage and negative local press since Metro undid the work of the Phantom Planter, but it's not like Washington's local authorities have ever shied away from being openly scornful of their constituents. ♦

## So Sorry

When it comes to the recent Asiana Airlines crash at San Francisco International Airport, there's good news and bad news, according to South Korean news anchor Yoon Kyung-min. The bad news: Two people died and scores were injured when a Boeing 777 arriving from Seoul slammed into a runway and caught fire. The good news: The dead weren't Korean! Last week, while anchoring a live broadcast, Yoon said, "We just received an update that the two dead are assumed to be Chinese. . . . We can say it is a relief, at least for us."

Yoon's expression of "relief" spurred predictable outrage in China. But—semi-surprising, in a nation as nationalistic as Korea—many South Koreans were appalled as well. Thousands took to the web to blast Yoon, labeling him "ignorant" and "inhuman" and demanding he be fired. While *THE SCRAPBOOK* is ambivalent on Mr. Yoon's future employment prospects . . . well, hey, at least this particular Twitter mob seemingly had its heart in the right place.

Yoon's employer, South Korea's Channel A, stood by Yoon, though it apologized . . . sort of. In a statement, the network said, "The com-



ment was made to emphasize the fact that there is no Korean dead in the accident, which is a relief for us. We apologize for not running the live show smoothly." Maybe that's the Korean version of that classic American non-apology apology, "I'm sorry if I offended anyone." ♦

## It's Just Contradiction

In just a few years, *Washington Post* wunderkind Ezra Klein has made himself the go-to journalist whenever the NPR-totebag set wants to understand a complicated policy issue. In particular, he's established himself as arguably the leading health care pundit, thanks to his tireless efforts

blogging and reporting. Far too many reporters, young and old, are lazy, and to Klein's credit he works hard. Of course, if your job were to come up with explanations for why Obamacare is working, you too would end up busier than a beaver in a lake of espresso.

When we say Klein is "arguably the leading health care pundit," that's because at this point he's constantly arguing with himself. He unconditionally supported every iteration of a terrible and unduly complicated piece of legislation, so with each of Obamacare's numerous and ongoing failures, Klein is now renouncing positions he once held. Case in point: The Obama administration recently announced

they were delaying the implementation of the “employer mandate”—that is, the part of the legislation that requires businesses with 50 or more full-time employees to offer health insurance that meets the Obamacare standard. Anyone with a lick of sense knew that this was a terrible idea, among other things because it would impede hiring. If a business has 49 employees, and hiring 1 more would mean a massive overnight increase in operating costs, small businesses aren’t exactly going to be eager to expand their workforces.

After the Obama administration acknowledged the obvious (or at least tried not to kneecap Democrats in the midterm election next year), Klein reliably rushed in with a piece headlined, “Obamacare’s employer mandate shouldn’t be delayed. It should be repealed.” Lest you be tempted to congratulate Klein on his bout of sanity, bear in mind that this is the zeal of a convert. Back in 2009, when Obamacare was still being written, Klein wrote that “CBO [Congressional Budget Office] Gives Us the Key to Health-Care Reform: The Employer Mandate.” Klein was convinced the employer mandate would help insure millions, and he was writing about an early version of the Obamacare bill, in which the employer mandate was even more draconian:

But oh, what a difference a mandate makes: The new version of the

HELP [Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions] bill includes an employer mandate for firms with more than 25 workers. . . . The June 15 [CBO] report estimated that 15 million Americans would lose their employer-based coverage under HELP’s bill. Today’s report estimates that a mere 150,000 will lose their coverage. That’s nothing. And it means that a lot more Americans end up insured and the government spends a lot less in subsidies.

I’ll have much more on other provisions of the bill later. But the overarching lesson of these CBO reports is simple: You can’t do health-care reform—at least not this kind of health-care reform—without an employer mandate.

Of course, the employer mandate was included in Obamacare in part because the penalties imposed on businesses who couldn’t comply with the mandate were considerable. This was a key part of the kabuki accounting Democrats were using to pretend that Obamacare was cost-effective, which they needed to do in order to gain enough support for it to pass. Once passed, the president could then just unilaterally ignore the law as written and strike the impractical and insincere sections of the law on a whim, even if it made the law much more expensive than promised. And best of all, media turnspits like Klein would applaud this disingenuous legislating coming and going. ♦

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## Pretensions à la Carte

**F**ifty or so yards from the apartment building in which I live a new restaurant has recently opened called Found Kitchen and Social House. It's doing land-office business: Lines of people awaiting tables gather in the foyer, its bar stools are perpetually filled, hustling valet car-parkers are kept on the run. The food, I'm told, is quite good. I have no plans for going there—ever.

All I remember of its menu, placed in the window during its opening days, is an appetizer of arugula and white beans and a main course of chicken-liver mousse with bacon marmalade and toast. Looking in from outside, I could see a number of tables, chairs, and couches set up among large plants and globes, giving the impression of a vast living room. (The furnishings were all found, hence the name of the restaurant.) "This space is really a personal expression of my full evolution," declares the owner, Amy Morton, a woman of 50, long in the restaurant business. A friend who recently dined there told me that the waiters, arriving at one's table, ask, "May we feed you?"

Pretension has become an inescapable part of contemporary dining. Some of this pretension entails phony familiarity. Increasingly young waiters and waitresses—now known as "servers"—address customers as "guys." The reason they fall back on "guys" is that they are unsure how to address female customers. "Ladies" these days, in the rigid etiquette of political correctness, could be taken as an insult, and the neutral "guys" is a way around that.

After reciting the day's specials, these waiters and waitresses frequently tell you their first names.

"I'm Kimmie [or I'm Tyler], and I'll be your server." Hope I don't seem sniffy, but I should prefer not to know their first names. I wonder if Kimmie and Tyler know that the origin of filling customers in on their first names comes from the sexist-to-the-highest-power Playboy Clubs, where bunnily dressed girls, before taking drink orders, announced: "Hi. I'm Carol, and I'll be your bunny this evening."



The pretension to democracy—that is, the notion that we are all equal—follows naturally from the phony familiarity. Someone orders the veal limone, and Kimmie says, "Oh, that's my favorite." Another person orders the mushroom-barley soup and a Caesar salad, and Tyler replies, "You ordered very intelligently." I am glad that my mother, who was something of a grande dame, is not around today, for she would have been utterly mystified by Kimmie and Tyler. Why, she would have asked, should we possibly be interested in knowing Kimmie's favorite dish? And how, she might have inquired, one eyebrow raised, is Tyler in a position to judge the intelligence of my order? And just who are these guys to whom they refer?

Young men and women have for

a long while now taken up waiting as a stopgap until they find work in their chosen fields. Many of them are would-be artists, lots of them actors. In New York the joke used to be that when one wanted more coffee or one's water glass refilled, one called out not "Waiter" but "Actor." In Los Angeles, a friend tells me, when someone announces he or she is an actor, the response is, "Really? At what restaurant?"

The job of professional waiter is all but gone. Often it was filled by immigrants who had no other training, or middle-aged women who could find no other work. I sometimes have lunch at a nearby Greek restaurant where the same middle-aged women have been working for decades. They do not tell me their names or their favorite dishes or that I have ordered very intelligently. Nor do they come to my table seven or eight times to ask if everything is okay. Friendly though they are, they know that I have come to the restaurant to eat, and not to establish a relationship. I make it a habit to over-tip them.

Kimmie and Tyler could learn a thing or two from these women.

They would, in fact, do well to spend a few weeks at Jewish delicatessen waiters' school, if only such an institution existed. There they might meet up with the waiter who, when asked by two genteel women to see the sommelier, replied, "Ladies, if it's not on the menu, we ain't got it." Or the waiter who told a customer that, if he wanted the cabbage soup, he should've ordered the borscht. Or the waiter who, in response to a question about how the restaurant prepares its chicken, answered, "First thing is, we tell it it's going to die."

A shame that Found Kitchen and Social House can't avail itself of one of these crusty old Jewish waiters as its maitre d'. He'd give the joint the tone it much needs.

JOSEPH EPSTEIN

# Government Isn't Us

Last week, in remarks about further increasing efficiency in government after having “made huge swaths of your government more efficient and more transparent, and more accountable than ever before,” President Barack Obama said:

[In] this democracy, we the people recognize that this government belongs to us, and it's up to each of us and every one of us to make it work better. We can't just stand on the sidelines. We can't take comfort in just being cynical. We all have a stake in government success—because the government is us.

That last sentence might sound familiar to seasoned observers of the president. Back in 2010, at the University of Michigan's commencement (and as Tea Party opposition to the president and his health care bill reached its peak), Obama said, “When our government is spoken of as some menacing, threatening foreign entity, it ignores the fact that in our democracy, government is us.”

In early May, at Ohio State's commencement, he did not use the phrase “government is us,” but he made essentially the same point:

Unfortunately, you've grown up hearing voices that incessantly warn of government as nothing more than some separate, sinister entity that's at the root of all our problems; some of these same voices also doing their best to gum up the works. They'll warn that tyranny is always lurking just around the corner. You should reject these voices. Because what they suggest is that our brave and creative and unique experiment in self-rule is somehow just a sham with which we can't be trusted.

With trust in government near an all-time low, the president's agenda stalled in the House because of skeptical Republicans, and a host of scandals that raise questions about governmental integrity and competence, we should expect to hear a lot more of this from President Obama over the next few weeks and months. Cynicism about government is bad because, in the end, it is just “us.” Why worry?

This is pernicious nonsense. It is, of course, typical for presidents of both parties to trot out poll-tested phrases that lack internal logic or external validity. Even so, for

somebody who fancies himself a scholar-president in the mold of Woodrow Wilson, it is not asking too much for him to evince a little more understanding of the constitutional foundations of the republic.

For starters, this is not a “democracy” in the sense that Obama suggests. Government is not “us” inasmuch as we elect representatives whose job it is to represent our interests as they formulate policy. This should immediately induce some measure of skepticism about the government, for it points directly at the principal-agent problem. That is, how can principals (i.e., the voters) make sure that their agents (i.e., their elected representatives) are actually working on behalf of the public, rather than for their own personal gain? As questions of public policy become more complex, and the agents become more entrenched, it becomes harder and harder for citizens to ensure that the people they elect are doing the job they were sent to do.

Moreover, there is an inherent difficulty in aggregating the interests of individual citizens into something that rightly can be called “the public good.” Many times, for instance, the policy demands of one faction will result in harm to another. What to do then? At the very least, one cannot merely assume that a “democracy” will ensure that the public good is promoted after all the votes are counted, as Obama seems to suggest. If an aggressive faction holds a numerical majority, should the minority then expect to be plundered? How does that serve the public good?

The Framers of the Constitution were acutely aware of such dilemmas. James Madison summarized the “republican problem” thus:

The great desideratum in Government is such a modification of the Sovereignty as will render it sufficiently neutral between the different interests and factions, to controul one part of the Society from invading the rights of another, and at the same time sufficiently controuled itself, from setting up an interest adverse to that of the whole Society.

This sentence is the Rosetta Stone for understanding the unique construction of our Constitution, which tries simultaneously to empower the government to rule the



people and restrain it from oppressing them. This is why the Framers spread power across three branches, with an intricate system of checks and balances between them; why they limited the power of the national government; and why they even added a Bill of Rights to state unequivocally what the government cannot do.

Barack Obama might consider all of this to be a touch “paranoid,” but the Framers had lived through a generation of decidedly un-republican government. They had seen the American people occupy a second-class role in the British system, which no less an eminence than Montesquieu praised as a model of republican probity. Then, having thrown off the British yoke, they were appalled to find that their *democratically elected* state governments acted in equally villainous ways. In other words, the lesson of the 1770s and 1780s was clear: Getting the government to do “our” business is much easier said than done.

This is a lesson that history has taught again and again, for those who care to study it. Worrying about what the government is up to is not “paranoia.” It is healthy skepticism grounded in an understanding of the self-interested nature of man as evidenced by centuries of experience. Such skepticism is necessary to the maintenance of *any* republic, including our own. Even within the Framers’ rigorous system of checks and balances, it would be practically impossible to recount the number of instances in which the government has not behaved as if it were “us” over the years. Our government has violated the republican principle *on a regular basis* since it was established. That is the only way to explain every reformist movement from the Jeffersonian Republicans of the 1790s to the “hope and change” Obamaites of 2008. If the government was not establishing and servicing interests adverse to the public good, then there would never be a need for such reformers.

This points to why Obama is making the specious case that “government is us.” In 2008, he claimed to be the reformer; today, he is the chief executive of a government in desperate need of reform. He surely knows better than to believe this happy talk; his course syllabi at the University of Chicago, for instance, were full of critical race theorists who promulgated radical, leftist versions of the very same critique. The difference for Obama between then and now is that cynicism about government threatens *his* political power, something he simply cannot abide.

Since he arrived on the national stage, Obama has tried to recast every criticism of himself as some sort of paranoid, fringe plot cooked up by knaves or fools. Perhaps in a sign of his declining power, he is now trying to dump American luminaries like Madison and Jefferson, who dared wonder if government was really looking out for the people, into the crazy bin with the rest of us.

Conservatives may want to take it as a compliment

that the president lumps them along with America’s Founders into the ranks of the “loonies,” but they still need to explain why wariness of government is actually a civic virtue. Obama cannot be left unrebuted in his attempts to equate healthy, republican skepticism with paranoia and nihilism.

—Jay Cost

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# Judicial Supremacy

Arguably the most important case the Supreme Court handed down this past term was *United States v. Windsor*, in which Justice Kennedy, writing for a five-justice majority, declared unconstitutional the Defense of Marriage Act’s definition of marriage for federal purposes. Largely neglected in commentary on the case is the question the Court had to decide in order to take up the constitutional question—that of whether it had jurisdiction over the appeal. In dissent, Justice Scalia argued that it lacked jurisdiction and thus should not have decided the constitutionality of DOMA (though, assuming jurisdiction, he would have sustained the law). Scalia offered a compelling argument about what may seem a merely technical matter but which is always important in a government of separated powers—and in *Windsor* enormously so.

Edith Windsor and Thea Spyer were residents of New York state who were married in Canada in 2007. Having returned to their home in New York City, Spyer died in 2009, leaving her estate to Windsor, who sought to claim the federal estate tax exemption for surviving spouses. DOMA, however, stood in her way, since it defined “marriage” for federal purposes (such as the estate tax exemption) as “the union between one man and one woman as husband and wife” and “spouse” as “a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife.” Windsor paid \$363,053 in estate tax and sought a refund, which the Internal Revenue Service denied. Whereupon she brought suit claiming DOMA violated the Constitution.

With her suit pending, the Justice Department decided that it would continue to enforce DOMA but no longer defend in court the statute’s definition of marriage because the president believed it was unconstitutional. The district court ruled against the United States, holding that DOMA was unconstitutional and ordering the government to

refund the tax. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit agreed with the district court. And on appeal to the Supreme Court, Scalia pressed the jurisdictional issue.

As he explained, the Constitution vests only the “judicial power” in judges, and that power is not “to decide abstract questions but real, concrete ‘Cases’ and ‘Controversies.’” It is

the power to adjudicate, with conclusive effect, disputed government claims . . . against private persons and disputed claims by private persons against the government or other private persons. Sometimes . . . the parties before the court disagree not with regard to the facts of their case (or not only with regard to the facts) but with regard to the applicable law—in which event (and only in which event) it becomes [quoting Chief Justice Marshall’s famous statement on judicial review in *Marbury v. Madison*] the “province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is.”

Indeed, “we are quite forbidden to say what the law is” whenever an act of Congress is said to conflict with the Constitution. “We can do so only when that allegation will determine the outcome of a lawsuit, and is contradicted by the other party.”

Scalia summarized the jurisdictional problem in *Windsor* this way: “[T]he plaintiff and the Government agree entirely on what should happen in this lawsuit. They agree that the court below got it right; and they agreed in the court below that the court below that got it right as well.” And because both parties agreed with that court—and thus there was no controversy between them—“the suit should have ended there.”

And why didn’t it? Scalia wrote that the further proceedings were a “contrivance,” and he is right about that. The contrivers, he makes clear, were in the executive branch: Obama could have chosen neither to enforce nor to defend a law he believed unconstitutional. But then *Windsor* would not have been injured, and she would have had no case. Or Obama could have declined to appeal the judgment of the district court, or that of the appeals court, both of which he agreed with. But then the case could not have risen to the Supreme Court. Only a decision to enforce the law could have given the president a chance at what he wanted—a Supreme Court decision voiding DOMA on constitutional grounds. As a supporter of the president’s position anonymously told the *New York Times* early this year, “Without enforcement, there’s no means to challenge

the law in court.” Scalia stated the matter succinctly: “This suit saw the light of day only because the President enforced the Act (and thus gave *Windsor* standing to sue) even though he believed it unconstitutional.”

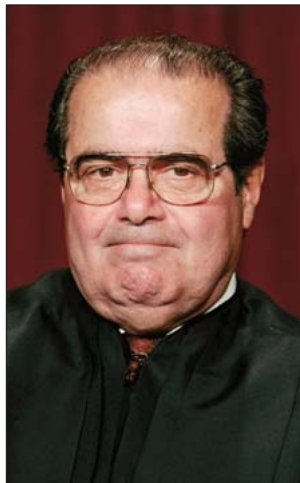
Scalia said the errors in the Court’s decision in *Windsor* “spring forth from the same diseased root: an exalted conception of the role of this institution in America.” He seized on Kennedy’s description of the Court’s role in determining the constitutionality of a law as “primary,” and also on Kennedy’s worry that if the Court lacked the power to decide *Windsor*, then the Court’s role would “become only secondary to the President’s.” Scalia was right to call those sentiments “jaw-dropping,” for indeed they constitute an assertion, as he put it, of “judicial supremacy over the people’s Representatives in Congress and the Executive.”

The Obama Justice Department seemingly began playing to Kennedy in anticipation of a case like *Windsor* when it announced its enforce-and-don’t-defend position in early 2011. Justice said the position recognized “the judiciary as the final arbiter of the constitutional claims raised.” Strikingly, Kennedy criticized the president for his “failure to defend the constitutionality of an act of Congress based on a constitutional theory not yet established in judicial decisions,” even as he gave the president the decision he and his lawyers had contrived.

*Windsor* has significance for various reasons, but not least for achieving a dubious first. “In the more than two centuries that this Court has existed as an institution,” wrote Scalia, “we have never suggested that we have the power to decide a question when every party agrees with both its nominal opponent and the court below on that question’s answer” (emphasis Scalia’s). But now the Court has decided such a question, having been asked to do so by an administration willing to go to unprecedented lengths to achieve its political goals.

*Windsor* is at odds with the Framers’ conception of the exercise of judicial power. It is not a power to be used when there is no real controversy before the Court, no real adversaries fighting it out. One can only hope for no more *Windsors*. But if majorities with loosey-goosey jurisdictional views now begin to emerge as a result of *Windsor*, we may be in for more jaw-dropping moments, as real damage is done to constitutional self-government.

—Terry Eastland



Justice Antonin Scalia



Justice Anthony Kennedy

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# A Hollow Reform Agenda

In 2012, the Department of Defense spent a total of \$651 billion, including the costs of fighting in Afghanistan. According to the budget plan submitted by the White House a few months ago, projected 2014 spending will be \$547 billion. If, as seems nearly inevitable, the “sequestration” provision of the Budget Control Act is triggered, that figure will fall below \$500 billion, a loss of more than 20 percent in just two years.

The catastrophic collapse of Pentagon buying power has sparked renewed interest in defense “reform,” a notion that most often boils down to “efficiencies” and savings rather than improvements in combat effectiveness. Alas, no conceivable amount of reform can possibly make up for the deep cuts in recent years—or even the losses that would result from sequestration. The numbers simply don’t add up.

Take, for example, the “consensus” reforms recently touted—including by one of us—in a bipartisan letter from several dozen senior defense analysts. It began with the observation that the “growing imbalances in the defense budget” imperil “the health and long-term viability of America’s volunteer military,” and agreed on three important elements of reform: the need to close excess bases, reduce the size of the civilian workforce, and limit the growth in cost of military compensation, particularly health care.

Since the end of the Cold War, the Defense Department has been ridding itself of unneeded bases and infrastructure almost as fast as possible. A lot of those reductions have been in Europe, but there have been several rounds of domestic closures and “realignments,” most recently in 2005. The stateside closures have required Congress to adopt an all-or-nothing set of procedures lest individual members seek exceptions for local installations.

Overall and in the long haul, these closures do save money. But the payback period is long and the process of closure imposes huge upfront costs. Back in 2005, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission estimated that the “implementation costs” of its recommendations—that is, the expense of moving people and agencies from old bases to new ones, environmental restoration, and the like—would require an additional \$21 billion outlay. Last year, the Government Accountability Office reported that the cost had risen to \$35.1 billion, thus reducing the anticipated savings by 72 percent. In other

words, the real expense of the U.S. military comes from its size, not its location.

Which brings up the question of the defense civilian workforce. Reformers note that the workforce has grown during the post-9/11 wars, by 17 percent, while the active-duty military grew by just 3.4 percent. That’s really a measure of Bush administration policy—believing that they would not need to do large, post-invasion “nation-building” or counterinsurgency missions—to avoid adequate active-duty increases and rely heavily on National Guard and reserve forces. It’s the minuscule military increase that’s the relevant number.

And reformers don’t know much about whether these civilians are doing useful work or not. A paper by Christopher Preble and Benjamin Friedman of the libertarian Cato Institute, for example, simply advocates a 30 percent manpower cut to achieve a 10-year savings of \$105 billion. In other words, a \$10 billion-per-year cut, just one-fifth of the amount lost through sequestration. Real money, to be sure, but not nearly enough to solve the Pentagon’s problem.

But the shiniest beer-can top in the defense reform pond is the idea of limiting military personnel benefits. As Arnold Punaro, a retired Marine general, former adviser to Sen. Sam Nunn, and driving force behind the compensation reform proposals of the Defense Business Board, likes to say, the military is becoming “a benefits company that occasionally kills a terrorist.” And it’s true that the Pentagon has a real “entitlements” problem, in which health care costs, now about 10 percent of the defense budget, inexorably eat away funds for training and procurement.

As with civilian entitlement reforms, the best one can hope for is to restrain the rate of growth for the future; as Punaro also knows, and Congress has repeatedly reinforced in its annual authorization bills, taking away benefits from those now serving is a non-starter. Even the left-leaning Center for American Progress estimates that aggressive reform proposals in this area would net only \$12 billion in savings over five years.

In sum, when the budgetary puts and takes of the “consensus” reform proposals are calculated, the net savings over the next decade—the period covered by the budget act and sequestration—vanish. The small savings to be had from even the most optimistic workforce reductions and compensation cuts probably will be offset by the expense of base closures.

This is not to suggest that these reform proposals should be ignored. The metastasizing costs of health benefits, in particular, will eventually have the effect Punaro predicts—and sooner rather than later, as the overall defense budget falls. But no budgetary efficiencies can make up for the cuts now already in law and the resulting hollowing-out of the American military.

—Gary Schmitt & Thomas Donnelly

# Getting to Sí

For some Republicans, the Hispanic vote is less elusive than for others.

BY MICHAEL WARREN



Rick Perry at a Hispanic pro-life event

How do you succeed in wooing Hispanics without really trying? Rick Perry may have the answer. In 2010, running for his third full term, the Republican governor won the support of more than 400,000 Hispanic voters in Texas, his best performance to date. Perry didn't need to win that many—Texas is still deep red, and he had won his last two elections pretty easily. But even had he needed the votes, it isn't Perry's style to make an explicitly ethnic pitch to a minority group. In fact, Rob Johnson, Perry's campaign manager, says the team didn't develop a separate Hispanic outreach strategy at all.

"Did we have Spanish-language ads? Sure," Johnson says. "But they mirrored the same message as the English ones."

That message was part economic, part populist: The Perry regime of

lower taxes and smaller, less intrusive government had kept the economy booming through the Great Recession and kept more money in the average Texan's pocket. That convinced the majority of Texas voters, who reelected Perry over his Democratic challenger by double digits. More remarkable, though, was how the Anglo Republican also managed to convince about 40 percent of Hispanic voters, who are traditionally and overwhelmingly Democratic. That was a major improvement for Perry, who in 2006 received closer to 31 percent of the Hispanic vote.

Texas's economy is still going strong after more than a dozen years with Perry at the helm. His announcement last week that he won't seek a fourth term may mean we won't get to see if he can persuade even more Hispanics. But whether or not he decides to run for president again, the soon-to-be-former governor is one of several Republicans offering the rest of the party a model for winning more Hispanic voters.

"You've got to go to the events," says Blake Farenthold, the sophomore Republican congressman from Corpus Christi. "You've got to do the same sort of outreach to Hispanics that you do to any other group. They want to see their congressman."

Farenthold was first elected to the House in 2010, defeating a 14-term Democratic incumbent in a district that was 70 percent Hispanic and bordered Mexico. The race was close—within about 800 votes—but Farenthold appealed to white and Hispanic Democrats alike by arguing that their party had moved too far to the left on issues like abortion and health care. After redistricting, he's in a much safer Republican district, but 49 percent of his constituents are Hispanic. Farenthold, echoing a common Republican talking point, says Hispanics in his district are naturally conservative, particularly on social and cultural issues. The GOP could do better, he says, if they made that argument to Hispanics directly.

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NEWS.COM

“You just show up and be part of their community,” he tells me, but immediately shakes the idea away. “It’s not even ‘their’ community, it’s *the* community.”

As far as goals go, Perry’s 40 percent seems attainable for Republicans running in Hispanic-heavy states or nationwide. President George W. Bush, who preceded Perry in Austin, won 40 percent of the Hispanic vote in his successful 2004 reelection campaign. The nation’s first Latina governor, New Mexico Republican Susana Martinez, also won 40 percent of Hispanics when she was elected in 2010.

Despite her own profile, advisers say Martinez had the toughest time courting her fellow Hispanic women, particularly in the Democratic strongholds around Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Since her election, Martinez has made reforming the state’s dismal education system a top priority. One adviser says her education agenda is resonating with these women. Today, Martinez has a 68 percent approval rating among Hispanic voters overall. She’s unlikely to do that well when she runs for reelection next year, but she’s nonetheless raised her potential ceiling.

“The way you bring in Hispanics or any other group is being honest with them, letting them know that they believe in the same thing you do, despite the fact that they are registered in a different party,” Martinez told me in an interview last year. “Find the common thread.”

Another New Mexican, congressman Steve Pearce, also has a good track record with Hispanic voters. Pearce is the only House Republican with a district that currently borders Mexico, and 47 percent of his constituents are Hispanic. A staunch conservative, he’s represented the rural southern half of New Mexico since 2003, minus a two-year interlude when he made an ill-fated run for Senate and a Democrat took his place in the House. Pearce won the seat back in 2010, and he says that in 2012 he had his best-ever showing with Hispanic voters—up to 42 percent, his consultants tell him. His secret isn’t much of one.

“I just show up. It’s that simple,” Pearce says. “We go into the parts of the community that typically Republicans don’t go. We engage. And we’re not just there for the photo-ops.”

Pearce hasn’t renounced his firmly conservative views on the national debt and federal spending, but he doesn’t dismiss the concerns of his Hispanic constituents, many of whom live in impoverished, crime-ridden border towns and tend to favor government programs. The typical resident there wants cleaner streets and safe neighborhoods, like any other American, but Pearce tries to encourage these communities to take responsibility where the federal government can’t or won’t help. “Clean up your own town,” he’ll tell them.

“People trust that kind of talk,” Pearce says. “There’s a lot about my directness. Personal accountability and responsibility is huge in the Hispanic community. I live that.”

The challenge, he says, is getting Hispanics to see that Republicans, not just Democrats, share their values, too. “I grew up dirt poor, so I know what most of them are experiencing,” Pearce says. “I’m a Republican but not the enemy. They’ve gotten to know me and they trust me.”

“You start with the issues, but politics is also very personal,” Farenthold agrees. “It’s much easier to vote for somebody you’ve met and somebody you like. You’re more likely to vote for somebody you like even if you don’t agree with them on the issues.”

Even if that issue is immigration? Conventional wisdom holds that Republicans can’t win Hispanic voters until they sign on to some kind, any kind, of immigration reform, especially one that includes a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants. Polling shows Hispanic voters are particularly tuned in to immigration politics, but there are some surprises. A 2012 poll, for instance, found that 46 percent of Hispanics in Texas favor a plan that would give illegal immigrants work permits but bar them from a path to citizenship.

Many Hispanics arrived in this country legally, Pearce notes. “They have a sense of fair play and following the rules that doesn’t really appreciate people who’ve broken the law. They want them to be treated right, but they also don’t want them to get in line ahead of their family members who waited like they did, 18 years or whatever it takes.”

Nevertheless, Republican candidates who are too insensitive to the nuances of the immigration debate will continue to push away Hispanics. Mitt Romney’s rightward move on immigration in the 2012 GOP primary began as a way to outflank the field’s relative liberal on the issue—none other than Texas governor Rick Perry. It ended with Romney’s much-mocked suggestion that illegal immigrants “self-deport.”

“The issue is, can we deal with the problems we have in this country—it’s not just immigration—can we deal with them compassionately, without being haters, and stay consistent to our conservative principles?” asks Farenthold. “And I think we can do it with immigration. I think a pathway to legalization is a good compromise. It would get a lot of Republicans on board.”

Hispanics are also far from single-issue voters. A June Latino Decisions poll found that while 55 percent of Hispanics surveyed said immigration reform was the most or second-most important issue facing the Hispanic community, 35 percent responded with job creation and fixing the economy, 15 percent with education reform, and 14 percent with health care.

In all likelihood, it wouldn’t hurt the GOP to adopt a kinder, gentler approach to immigration. At the same time, the party could develop conservative policies that more directly address domestic, pocketbook issues like health care, education, and taxes, an effort that would reinvigorate white middle-class support for Republicans. Along the way, they may pick up Hispanic middle-class voters, too. But they should probably start by showing up. ♦

# The Light of Francis

The new pope's first encyclical.

BY JOSEPH BOTTUM

There's something in the new papal encyclical *Lumen Fidei* to disappoint everyone who longs for direct political action from the Vatican.

Those who were hoping, for instance, that a radically leftist Pope Francis would repudiate what they saw as the radically rightist work of his predecessor are bound to be saddened by *Lumen Fidei*, issued on July 5. A draft was prepared under Benedict XVI before his retirement on February 28, and Francis himself has described the completed document as written with "four hands," Benedict's and his own.

There's a venerable tradition of a new papacy adopting a new set of priorities. Benedict XVI did include in his first encyclical, the 2005 *Deus Caritas Est*, material from a draft of John Paul II's. But more typical may be Pius XII, who set aside Pius XI's unpublished encyclical *Humanis Generis Unitas* in 1939, despite the fact he had worked on it for Pius XI while serving as cardinal secretary of state.

Francis, though, has used the opportunity of his first encyclical to endorse Benedict's thought and, by implication, his papacy. The Christian faith, *Lumen Fidei* insists, "must be professed in all its purity and integrity." Indeed, "because all the articles of faith are interconnected, to

deny one of them, even of those that seem least important, is tantamount to distorting the whole." This will be no papacy in which the elements of orthodoxy are abandoned in the name of the present political agitations of the world.



Copies of 'Lumen Fidei' presented at the Vatican, July 5

At the same time, disappointment is bound to haunt those who hoped that a radically traditional Francis—a lifelong churchman instead of an academic theologian like his predecessor—would step back from the soft socialism of Benedict's economics and confront the world with the hardest edges of the institutional church. Faith is at "the service of justice, law and peace," Francis insists. We need it "to devise models of development which are based not simply on utility and profit, but consider creation as a gift for which we are all indebted." Yes, he notes, all "authority comes from God," but it is meant for "the service of the common good." If the

84-page text contains any elements of Joseph Ratzinger, the bulldog he had been as cardinal for John Paul II before he became Pope Benedict, then it is Ratzinger with a smiley face.

Except, of course, that the picture of Ratzinger as inquisitor general in rigid repression was always wrong, and it became even more absurd after he assumed the papal throne. Francis has affirmed Benedict by assuming the central worries of his papacy: the "massive amnesia in our contemporary world" that leads to relativism, the importance of tradition in knowledge, the role of the magisterium, and "a special means" by which faith is transmitted in the sacraments, communicating an "incarnate memory." We must, Francis demands, live faith in the context of the church.

Not since John Paul II's great crusade to "live in truth" by opposing communism has the Vatican been easily classifiable by the world's political categories, despite the incessant effort of the world, left and right alike, to pin the church with those categories. An encyclical on faith was probably inevitable in 2013, designated the "Year of Faith," following the work on charity and hope, the other two elements of the Pauline triptych of virtues on which Benedict had written. But, even without knowing which parts of the encyclical are new and which survive from Benedict's draft, Francis is revealed by the 84-page text as a radical Christian—so radical that traditionalism and reformism are equally incapable of describing him.

Francis clearly intends the title *Lumen Fidei*, *The Light of Faith*, to be taken seriously. "Our culture has lost its sense of God's tangible presence and activity in our world," he notes, and thereby grown not wiser but more blind. Narrowness belongs not to faith but to those whose view of the world is so slender that they cannot

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AP / RICCARDO DE LUCA

see all that truly exists. “Far from divorcing us from reality,” he argues, faith illuminates a richer, thicker universe containing everything that pure reason sees and much more besides. Faith “does not draw us away from the world or prove irrelevant to the concrete concerns of the men and women of our times.” He comes closest to a direct assertion on a political problem when he affirms the “stable union of man and woman in marriage,” but he does so in the context of marriage as the limit and the base of proper governmental power, not by entering into contemporary debates about same-sex marriage.

Along the way, *Lumen Fidei* mentions medieval architecture, Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Dostoyevsky’s novels, the role of the French Revolution, T.S. Eliot’s poetry, and the mystical theology of the saints—a rather amazing collection for a document intended to speak to believers in the Year of Faith, on the fiftieth anniversary of Vatican II, which Francis calls a “council on faith.”

But that points to the second purpose of *Lumen Fidei*. Many of the first commentators have claimed that Francis is aiming the encyclical at nonbelievers, urging them to see how the light of faith reveals a larger, less circumscribed world. That’s not wrong, exactly, but a careful reading suggests something a little more delicate. The encyclical is addressed specifically to members of the church, though Francis is speaking in a way that reveals he knows he will be overheard. And what he’s telling the church, in the secondary theme of *Lumen Fidei*, is how to understand and speak to nonbelievers in the most positive and persuasive way.

“Because faith is a way, it also has to do with the lives of those men and women who, though not believers, nonetheless desire to believe and continue to seek,” Francis writes. “To the extent that they are sincerely open to love and set out with whatever light they can find, they are already, even without knowing it, on the path leading to faith.” ♦

# Internet Access for Prisoners?

Don’t scoff; it would be a good idea.

BY ELI LEHRER

It will draw howls of protest from politicians and the punditocracy, but the time has come to allow Internet access in jails and prisons. It would open a world of new opportunities for prisoners and improve the fraught process of reintegrating them into society, all at nearly no cost to taxpayers.

Current rules permit all federal inmates and most state prisoners to send and receive emails through special, monitored systems. Starting late last year, some federal prisons began allowing inmates to buy MP3 music players and download songs to fill them. These systems—financed entirely by charging inmates per message and per song—work better than what they replaced. Unlike physical mail, email can’t be used to smuggle contraband. It also can be monitored automatically and doesn’t require staff time to distribute. The electronic alternatives also appear to be more secure. There are dozens of cases of inmates running criminal operations by phone or mail, but thus far, no documented cases involving email since the U.S. Bureau of Prisons began its pilot program eight years ago.

These technologies may soften life a tad for inmates, but they won’t make life in prison anything close to pleasant. Even at supposed “club feds” with attractive college-like campuses, inmate life remains tedious, isolated, and degrading, at best. At worst, violence is a constant threat, even in apparently placid institutions. In far too many places, sexual violence is endemic. And the problem isn’t getting smaller.

*Eli Lehrer is president of the R Street Institute.*

As part of the same “get tough” federal and state policies that have increased the number of people behind bars in the United States from about 300,000 in the late 1970s to more than 2 million today, legislative bodies have systematically eliminated perks prisoners once enjoyed. Weightrooms have vanished from all federal facilities and most state prisons; tennis courts have been closed; inmates in nearly all facilities must purchase headsets even to hear the audio on television programs; and the food is truly awful.

While prisoners certainly aren’t entitled to weights, good food, and television—much less Internet access—all these can serve important roles in helping run facilities safely and effectively. Idle inmates are much more likely to become violent, and taking away perks as punishment for misbehavior can be a useful stick to maintain control. The alternative, which many corrections officials embrace for lack of other options, is to implicitly outsource a fair amount of order-keeping to gangs.

Web access can help change the balance of power behind bars. Relatively simple Internet controls could allow prison administrators the ability to make distinctions between the access different prisoners may be permitted, unlike such privileges as television and athletic facilities, which can either be made available or unavailable. An ill-behaved inmate might only be allowed to receive emails from prison administrators, while a model inmate on the verge of release might be able to access a wide range of education, employment, news, and perhaps even entertainment sites.

The benefits of Internet access wouldn’t accrue just to inmates (who

would have more opportunities for recreation and rehabilitation) or to prison administrators (who would find facilities easier to manage) but could also reduce recidivism. Employed prisoners tend to stay out of trouble (on average, 6 out of 10 inmates get rearrested within three years), and huge numbers of jobs are now advertised *only* on the Internet. Denying access to online job listings makes reintegration harder. With more and more news content available only online, there's a strong case that simply keeping in touch with current events now requires access to the Internet.

Educational programs inside prisons would benefit the most. Right now, federal and state laws require prisons to offer GED courses, and most larger facilities provide a few vocational programs, as well. But for inmates who want to go further and complete college-level work or learn a trade not available in their prison, options have actually declined in recent years, as correspondence schools have moved to the Internet.

Internet-based courses also would be better suited to serving the broad range of educational levels—from sub-literate to ready-for-graduate-school—that characterizes prisoners in any sufficiently large institution. A good Internet-based course is also generally going to be of better quality than the poor or indifferent instruction common in correctional facilities, while the cost taxpayers bear for GED and some vocational programs would likely decline with electronic delivery.

But even less scholarly uses of the Internet would be useful. Electronic books and informational websites would open up new opportunities to prisoners at no cost to taxpayers. At worst, this would simply prevent idleness, the main cause of violence behind bars.

To be sure, there are real barriers to allowing Internet access behind bars. Monitoring use and designing properly controlled and limited web-based systems present challenges. Most federal prisoners earn modest wages that would allow them to pay for Internet time, but getting to that

point where effective monitoring is possible would still require someone to make an upfront investment. Then there is the risk of scandal that would erupt the first time inmates pulled an Internet scam.

All that said, allowing Internet access in prison makes sense: It would open up new worlds for offenders and offer them a better path towards rehabilitation—all at no cost to taxpayers. ♦

## Where Is the Law of War Manual?

Some questions for State and DoD legal adviser nominees. BY HAYS PARKS & EDWIN WILLIAMSON

Since 1914, the United States Army has published and periodically updated a Law of War Manual. Its purpose is to provide authoritative guidance to military personnel on the customary and treaty law of war.

Having our armed forces conduct warfare in accordance with accepted law of war obligations reflects a desire to diminish the evils of war, by protecting noncombatants and civilians from the effects of combat, while providing humanitarian protection to captured military personnel and detained civilians. An up-to-date manual that accurately reflects existing treaty law, accepted customs, and practices and principles that provide guidance, even when the written rules do not fit unique circumstances, is essential to the well-being of those serving in our armed forces. The law of war also acknowledges the rights of military forces, in particular to capture or

kill enemy forces, whether uniformed military forces of a belligerent government or armed nonstate actors such as al Qaeda and the Taliban.

In 1996, following several new law of war treaties and the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act, with its emphasis on joint operations, the Army judge advocate general proposed that a single Law of War Manual be produced for the Department of Defense and the four military services. His suggestion was accepted enthusiastically by DoD leadership and its senior military lawyers.

The manual was to be all new—carefully researched and prepared from the ground up by experienced military and civilian law of war experts, working in concert with similarly qualified State Department lawyers. Over a 14-year period, the DoD law of war working group diligently produced, through close coordination, a 19-chapter, 1,100 page, single-spaced draft manual.

In May 2009, the DoD general counsel hosted an international peer review consisting of senior military law of war experts from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, a leading academician, Oxford professor emeritus Sir Adam Roberts, and four highly experienced international law professors from leading U.S. law schools. Slightly more than a year later, after editing

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to address suggestions from the peer review, the “final” draft emerged.

The draft manual is the most comprehensive law of war manual produced by any nation. It enjoyed the consensus of the four military services. As a senior DoD lawyer acknowledged, the manual was “on the one yard line,” ready for publication once a final editing was completed.

State Department attorneys participated as full partners in the working group. Justice Department officials in the Bush and Obama administrations were advised of preparation of the manual, but showed no interest in participating in the drafting process.

Hence it came as a surprise when State Department lawyers and their counterparts seconded to the National Security Council—at least one of whom had been a participant in the working group meetings and the international peer review—requested a publication delay while they engaged in a “final review” along with their Justice Department counterparts. In December 2010, it was decided that State and Justice would be given two months in which to conduct their reviews for substantive comments only.

From the outset it was agreed that the manual would be apolitical—it would be based on the law rather than political arguments inconsistent with the law of war. For example, the working group rejected arguments by some Bush administration officials that the law of war did not protect captured al Qaeda and that “enhanced interrogation procedures,” including waterboarding, should not be banned.

Obama administration political appointees, though, have aggressively sought changes in the manual to conform to their political philosophies or legal arguments in detainee litigation, pushing for rules and principles that vary from longstanding law of war treaty-based terminology and norms previously accepted by Republican and Democratic administrations.

One of the more egregious changes proposed by State Department

political appointees and human rights activists on the National Security Council was the removal of a paragraph acknowledging that the law of war is *lex specialis*—the controlling law in armed conflict. Denying the *lex specialis* status of the law of war would enable activists to inject human rights law into the manual and onto the battlefield. Deletion of the *lex specialis* text was apparently not sought on the basis that it was legally incorrect, but, we suspect, because it was inconsistent with their political agenda.

Such a change would impose restrictions on U.S. forces in combat so that



Okay, after you offer a surrender opportunity, count to ten.

deadly force could be used only against an enemy who had refused a surrender opportunity or who posed an “imminent threat.” These requirements would place our fighters on a footing comparable to a police officer in the United States in a peacetime environment and at an extreme and unprecedented risk of being killed by the enemy or facing “war crimes” allegations by human rights activists.

Justice Department efforts toward the draft manual echo its continued post-9/11 view of the battle with al Qaeda entirely (and incorrectly) from a law enforcement perspective. It seeks to bring the manual text into conformity with terms and arguments it uses in court (many of which are inconsistent with the law of war).

A change Justice Department lawyers sought involved civilians on the battlefield. Under the law of war, a civilian loses immunity from direct attack if he or she “takes a direct part in hostilities.” The working group

agreed that this participation does not, however, necessarily constitute criminal activity. Without consulting with working group experts or senior DoD or State policymakers, Justice Department attorneys have asserted that it does. This extreme (and incorrect) position would place at risk of enemy prosecution the substantial number of U.S. and foreign civilians who accompany our armed forces in the field in time of war and whose support is a major basis for the way in which the United States—with congressional approval—determines its military force structure. Justice Department lawyers created new law to enable the department to win its cases against al Qaeda, disregarding battlefield consequences for civilians lawfully accompanying our own forces.

We do not know whether the proposed changes are the cause of the 30-month delay in publishing the manual. The interagency transparency that existed during the 14 years of manual preparation has ceased without explanation.

We are concerned about the delay, the lack of transparency, and the changes being made to the manual by political appointees without law of war experience, which could endanger the lives of our fighting men and women. The silence of the judge advocates general of the four services, whose predecessors stood up against measures used by the Bush administration that they thought were inconsistent with traditional U.S. law of war positions and practice, is disturbing.

As one law of war authority said in expressing his disappointment that “this project has truly collapsed,” the law of war “is in the midst of a potentially transformative period, and it is remarkable and risky for the U.S. government in general and the Pentagon in particular to sit quietly on the sidelines.”

We believe the confirmations of the new State Department legal adviser and DoD general counsel offer the Senate the opportunity to get answers to these troubling issues. ♦

# The Last Redoubt

*Republican attorneys general: the unsung heroes in challenging the Obama agenda*

BY FRED BARNES

**C**an you name the attorney general of your state? I'm betting most folks can't. There's a reason. Campaigns for attorney general get scant media attention, causing voters to ignore down-ballot races. This is unfortunate, especially if you reside in a red state. Because in the past few years Republican attorneys general have become a growing force in national affairs. They're not quite a conservative juggernaut, but they're headed that way.

Practically no one has noticed the emergence of the Republican AGs. Yet they're a scourge of President Obama. They drive the Environmental Protection Agency crazy. They've beaten the best lawyers at the Justice Department numerous times. "What I really do for fun is I go into the office [and] I sue the Obama administration," Texas attorney general Greg Abbott said last year. He's filed 30 lawsuits against the administration, 17 against EPA alone—with considerable success.

The AGs, who often attack the administration in packs, have done more than Republicans in Congress, statehouses, or anywhere else to block, cripple, undermine, or weaken Obama's initiatives. They failed to stop Obamacare in the Supreme Court, but won limits on Medicaid and neutralized the use of the commerce clause to expand the reach of the federal government. And there's one case left. AG Scott Pruitt of Oklahoma has sued to prevent Obama-run health insurance exchanges from handing out subsidies. If he wins—and he has a credible case—the implementation of Obamacare will come to a halt, at least temporarily.

In effect, the administration has been put on notice: If you adopt policies inconsistent with constitutional limits and the rule of law, Republican attorneys general will come after you. "We have a network and we're always on

alert," says Alabama AG Luther Strange. In Oklahoma, Pruitt has created a special federalism unit to track federal policies that may infringe on the authority of states. Obama "should know we're not going to back down," says Florida AG Pam Bondi.

The Obamacare suits are the best-known challenge to the president's agenda, but not the only important one. The

attorneys general—that's the awkward but proper plural—blocked EPA from overreaching on water and air pollution enforcement. They forced federal mining authorities to abandon an effort to seize control of mining permits from state authorities. They intervened on behalf of Boeing to halt the National Labor Relations Board from barring the airline manufacturer from assembling 787s in South Carolina, a right-to-work state.

In all these cases, their target was the same, the Obama administration. The AGs are committed—"ruthlessly committed" is how Pruitt puts it—to obstructing the expansion of the federal government at the expense of the states. They are champions of federalism, the Tenth Amendment, states' rights, and a defanged federal government.

Alan Wilson, South Carolina's attorney general, draws on the 1958 movie *The Blob* to describe the enemy:

It comes from outer space, lands in the woods, and it's the size of an orange or cantaloupe. By the end of the movie, what happens is it's enveloping diners and houses. As the blob rolls along eating folks, it got bigger and bigger and bigger. And it never got smaller. It consumed more and more. And that's how I kind of see the federal government. Instead of eating people and diners, it's eating our liberty. I'm not against the government. I'm

against this ever-expanding government that doesn't know its limits. And that's how I see the role of the attorney general, as someone in an office that can protect you and defend the Constitution and defend state sovereignty and our individual liberty.

Republican AGs regard themselves as "the last line of defense" against Washington and its blob-like tendency to grow. It's a conceit, but a defensible one. Thus the new book



Pam Bondi



Greg Abbott



Ken Cuccinelli

Fred Barnes is an executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

by Virginia's hyperactive AG, Ken Cuccinelli, is titled *The Last Line of Defense: The New Fight for American Liberty*. Cuccinelli says the levels of resistance to a power-hungry federal government work this way: first Congress, then the president, next the "regulatory arena," and "then it's up to the states." What if the state AGs fail? "Then we're stuck," Cuccinelli told me. In the end, says AG Sam Olens of Georgia, "it's us or no one."

There are currently 25 state Republican AGs, all but 3 of them (Wyoming, Alaska, New Jersey) elected. They're independent in the sense that they don't take orders from a governor. On Obamacare, they were united by the time the case reached the Supreme Court. With the addition of three GOP governors, "it was the first time in history you had the majority of the states in a lawsuit against the federal government," says Hans von Spakovsky, a former Justice Department official now at the Heritage Foundation. "I don't think there's ever been this much cohesiveness with the Republican AGs."

What's striking about today's AGs is how different they are from their Republican predecessors of less than a decade ago. They're bolder, more conservative (or libertarian), and focused on national issues. They're activists. They go where Republican AGs haven't gone before. "The biggest thing in the last five years is there's been a willingness of the states to fight the federal government," says von Spakovsky.

Some AGs reject the activist label, one Republicans have frequently used against Democratic AGs and liberal judges. Wilson insists he's a "reactivist." It's the federal government that's activist, he says. "Everything we've done has been in response to the federal government." Wilson has a point.

Activist or not, the GOP attorneys general are miles apart from Democratic AGs. For years, Democrats have specialized in consumer cases in which they extract millions from corporations and spread the money among individuals and lawyers. The most lucrative example: the hundreds of billions reaped from tobacco companies.

In 2010, Republican AGs plunged into the case against big banks that had mishandled foreclosures. When six Democratic AGs and five bank officers met in Washington with Justice Department officials, Virginia's Cuccinelli showed up uninvited. He was the lone Republican at the meeting. He lives nearby in the Virginia suburbs.

As Cuccinelli tells it, Democrats led by Iowa AG Tom

Miller were bent on squeezing as many billions out of the banks as possible. "Then I rolled a grenade onto the floor." He declared his opposition to dunning banks for punitive damages "without any connection to the wrongdoing." A strong letter to Miller followed, signed by Cuccinelli, Abbott, Bondi, and Wilson. The banks ultimately were fined \$25 billion. That, Cuccinelli says, was "the reined in" penalty, far less than Democrats and Justice officials had sought.

For all their differences, Republican AGs have learned two valuable lessons from Democrats. The first is to have a strategic vision, a mission, a purpose, a clear sense of their role in the legal and constitutional system. Democratic AGs have had one for decades. They seek to punish corporate miscreants.

Now Republicans have a vision with a reinvented federalism at its center. They're committed to limiting Washington to powers prescribed in the Constitution. They oppose overreaching by Congress, regulatory agencies, federal bureaucrats, and the executive branch. They support states' rights and are eager to rejuvenate the Tenth Amendment as a check on the scope of federal power. They believe judicial restraint has gone too far, leaving many excesses of government in place.

Given these principles, the AGs have a lot of work to do to corral the federal government. Not every GOP attorney general may agree fully with all these principles, but most seem to. And while all 25 aren't poised to challenge every act of federal encroachment, many are.

That leads to the second lesson. There is strength in numbers. "If you have a good issue, you should try to build a coalition," says Leonard Leo, executive vice president of the Federalist Society. Judges take coalitions seriously. The challenge to Obamacare was a perfect coalition, with every Republican AG on board.

I divide the AGs into two clusters, the core and the inner core. Both are dedicated to the mission. When the NLRB was bearing down on Boeing, Abbott and Cuccinelli organized a coalition of 15 AGs to support Wilson, in whose state the new Boeing facility had been built. The group included Tom Horne of Arizona, John Suthers of Colorado, Lawrence Wasden of Idaho, Derek Schmidt of Kansas, Bill Schuette of Michigan, Jon Bruning of Nebraska, Marty Jackley of South Dakota, Mark Shurtleff of Utah, and Gregory Phillips of Wyoming. They belong to the core.

The inner core is distinguished by camaraderie and



Alan Wilson



Scott Pruitt



John Suthers



Lawrence Wasden

FROM TOP: AP / MARY ANN CHASTAIN; AP / SUE OGRICK; AP / EDANDRIESKI; AP / THE IDAHO STATESMAN / JOE JASZEWSKI

teamwork. They're relative newcomers. Five of them—Wilson, Strange, Bondi, Olens, Pruitt—were elected in 2010, Cuccinelli in 2009. They have a leader and mentor, Abbott. They talk constantly. They strategize. Pointing to his cell phone, Wilson told me, "I have all their numbers in here." They're intensely committed to their cause. They enjoy thwarting Obama. Except for Bondi, they come from politics. She was a prosecutor.

Let's look at the inner core, starting with Abbott. He's easy to pick out in a crowd of AGs. He's in a wheelchair, the victim of a freak accident at 26. While jogging, Abbott was struck by a falling oak tree and paralyzed. A year later, he passed the bar exam. He excelled as a Houston lawyer, was elected a judge, and won the AG job in 2002 in a landslide. After arguing a case before the Supreme Court, Abbott was singled out by Justice John Paul Stevens. "You don't have to stand at the podium to make a good argument," the justice said. Abbott had spoken from the counsel's table. Despite the kind words, Stevens voted against Abbott's side of the case. Abbott is revered by less experienced AGs. But he'll soon switch to politics. With Gov. Rick Perry stepping down, Abbott, 55, is set to run for governor of Texas next year.

Abbott is blunt about his readiness for legal combat with Obama. "We're looking to see if he exceeds his authority in ways that compromise the Constitution," he says. As for EPA, "whenever they come up with a rule, they know there's a lawsuit going to be filed against them." He says the Obama administration "continues to overreach, overreach, overreach."

His political views sound libertarian, though he doesn't call himself one. In an interview with *Texas Monthly*, he said "the beast known as federal bureaucracy . . . is consuming this country and diminishing both the rights of states and individuals in a way that must be stopped." There's an inverse relationship between government and liberty, he told Evan Smith of *Texas Tribune*. "The more powerful the federal government, the less liberty individuals have," he said. "It's almost like a mathematical equation."

Cuccinelli, 44, says he admires Abbott for his lack of "a club mentality," which requires Republican AGs to maintain cordial relations with their Democratic counterparts. Cuccinelli isn't clubby either. "I took the Abbott model and put it on steroids," he says. In 2010, he campaigned in Iowa for AG Tom Miller's Republican opponent and was chastised by several GOP colleagues for his breach of AG etiquette. Cuccinelli served two terms in the Virginia state

senate before his election as AG. This year, he's the GOP candidate for governor of Virginia.

He rushed to be first to challenge Obamacare in court. His solo suit beat Florida's by 11 minutes. At the time, the consensus in the political community and among legal scholars was that suits against Obamacare were frivolous. But in his riveting new book *Unprecedented: The Constitutional Challenge to Obamacare*, Josh Blackman has a different take.

"Cuccinelli's suit played a pivotal role in advancing the challenge" when federal judge Henry Hudson ruled Obamacare exceeded the commerce power of Congress, Blackman writes. "That ruling . . . changed the entire discourse surrounding the case." Challenges to Obamacare were no longer frivolous, and, Blackman writes, "Obamacare supporters started to worry."

Scott Pruitt, 45, was a state senator and co-owner of the Oklahoma RedHawks Triple-A baseball team before his election as AG. He took the lead in suing the federal government over the Dodd-Frank financial reform bill on the ground that it jeopardizes state pension funds. Ten AGs have joined the suit. He and Abbott succeeded in voiding a dubious EPA rule that claimed air pollution from Texas and Oklahoma was harming Granite City, Illinois.

Pruitt never refers to the Affordable Care Act as Obamacare because he doesn't want to "politicize" an issue that, for him, is about the rule of law and the federal government's exceeding its authority. But he takes a sharply critical view of Obama. "He's kept his promise that Washington knows best," Pruitt says. "He's kept his promise that if Congress doesn't [act], he can't wait. The only thing wrong with that is it's not consistent with our Constitution and our rule of law. He

can't do that. Who else but a state attorney general is in a position to respond? Who else is there but a state AG to stand up and say no?" Pruitt likes his job. He is the chairman of the Republican Attorneys General Association.

Unlike his AG peers, Luther Strange, 60, has had firsthand experience in Washington, where he spent eight years as a lobbyist for a natural gas company. He is six nine and won a scholarship to play basketball at Tulane University, where he also earned a law degree.

Running for AG in 2010, he invited Cuccinelli to campaign for him. Cuccinelli got an enthusiastic reception. After he won, Strange flew to Austin to consult Abbott on "how he set up his office." When he heard about the Boeing case, Strange quickly contacted other AGs. "We need to weigh in on this," he told them. "We're right-to-work



Bill Schuette



Jon Bruning



Marty Jackley

FROM TOP: AP / CARLOS OSORIO; AP / BILL WOLF; AP / AMBER HUNT

states. You don't want the federal government telling private industry where they can locate, based on whether it's union or non-union work." On Obamacare, he says, "If it's a good idea that can't be implemented, it's not a good idea." Strange is the coordinating counsel for the states in the BP oil spill case.

"Don't let the blond hair, button nose, and good looks deceive you. Pam Bondi is a dynamo, and you don't want to be in her way with nefarious intents." The sexist angle in the piece on Bondi in *YourObserver.com* covering Longboat Key, Florida, is crude, but she is a dynamo. Cuccinelli calls Bondi, 47, an "energizer bunny."

One of her first actions as Florida AG was to replace the lawyer chosen by her predecessor, Bill McCollum, to argue the Obamacare case in the Supreme Court. She hired Paul Clement, renowned as the best advocate before the court. Before Florida governor Rick Scott had decided on expanding Medicaid, she declared he should reject the federal money to increase the program. Scott decided to take the money, only to be overruled by the legislature. Bondi felt vindicated.

Her race for attorney general was her first bid for office, and she ran into trouble in the GOP primary. Twice divorced and now engaged, she came under attack for her lifestyle. Sarah Palin came to her rescue. They'd never met, but "she reached out to me," Bondi says. Palin's intervention was crucial. She did robocalls in the closing days of the campaign. Bondi won narrowly. On July 1, she filed for reelection in 2014.

Sam Olens took a leave of absence as AG to chair Mitt Romney's campaign in Georgia last year. (Romney beat Obama, 53-45 percent, in the state.) His Democratic foe in 2010, a former prosecutor, called Olens's emphasis on national and constitutional issues "frivolous." Olens, 56, won handily.

For 12 years, he was chairman of the Cobb County Board of Commissioners in suburban Atlanta. For a politician, he is low-key and cerebral. Of AGs he says, "Clearly our most important role is combating federal overreach." With waves of new regulations from the Obama administration, "I don't see where our work is getting any lesser."

Alan Wilson, 40, is the son of Joe Wilson, the Republican congressman from South Carolina who interrupted an Obama speech to Congress in 2009 by yelling, "You lie." As AG, Wilson succeeded Henry McMaster, an early proponent along with Bill McCollum of taking legal action against Obamacare. Both he and McCollum lost races for governor in 2010—evidence AG isn't a reliable springboard to governor.

Wilson defeated the Obama administration on a voter ID case. In 2012, Justice Department lawyers refused to approve a law requiring ID to vote. Wilson appealed the decision, and a three-judge panel ruled the ID requirement did not discriminate against racial minorities—exactly the opposite of what Justice had claimed. "Being silent and doing nothing is never the right answer," Wilson says. "What happens in one state can happen in another."

He's a firm believer in collective action by Republican AGs. "Who else can bring a lawsuit on behalf of a state?" he says. "That's a powerful thing, especially when you have a dozen states. . . . I stand ready to help my fellow AGs if I can. I've never felt alone on national issues." And the good thing about collaborating with Republican AGs, he says, is "there are no ball hogs."



Tom Horne



Luther Strange



Mark Shurtleff

Beyond the lawsuits they've brought, these AGs have a special significance. They're the future. The legal culture has changed, and smart, young, conservative lawyers can now see a career path that involves years, perhaps decades, as a state attorney general or an assistant AG. Abbott's staff, for example, is loaded with high-octane young lawyers. From 2003 to 2008, Abbott's solicitor general was Ted Cruz, the Texas senator elected last year.

Randy Barnett, a Georgetown University law professor, says a law school student in the 1970s would rarely encounter conservative legal philosophy or ideas. The student would have to find them on his own. Barnett, an architect of legal strategy against Obama, was one of the students who did.

Now there are organizations that bring conservative lawyers together. The Federalist Society, founded in 1982, has more than 53,000 members and chapters at over 200 law schools. Conservative public interest law firms and foundations were created. The Institute for Justice began its lively defense of civil liberties in 1991. Three years later the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty opened its doors. In 1999, the Republican Attorneys General Association was started by Alabama AG Bill Pryor and a few others. Pryor is now a judge on the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

And by the mid-1990s, a conservative legal movement was rising. "Most of the Republican AGs," Barnett says, have come out of the new legal culture. "I don't think you are going to see any decline in the importance of state AGs in our constitutional system," Leonard Leo says.

More Abbotts are in the legal pipeline. And if all goes well, voters will soon know their names. ♦

FROM TOP: AP / ROSS D. FRANKLIN; AP / ROB CARR; AP / CHARLES DHARAPAK

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# No More Morsi

*A coup in ungovernable Egypt*

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BY LEE SMITH

In assessing Egyptian defense minister Abdul-Fattah el-Sisi's decision to remove President Mohamed Morsi from office July 3, there are two key points to keep in mind. The first concerns the army, and the second concerns what is now, given the escalation of violence over the last two weeks, its rival in the field, the Muslim Brotherhood.

The army is famously corrupt, holding a number of lucrative business interests that keep the senior leadership comfortable. And yet this institution, by all accounts revered by almost every Egyptian, nonetheless has a reputation for professionalism, competence, and impartiality. It is now time to review that assessment. Having failed at governing in the wake of Hosni Mubarak's fall, the army has again taken Egypt's political destiny into its hands and will almost surely prove as inept this time around in stabilizing the country. What may well make it worse is that in staging its coup against Morsi, the army sided with one half of the population against the other, and thereby created the conditions for civil war.

The second key issue is that the coup comports perfectly with the Muslim Brotherhood's historical narrative: The West and its Muslim lackeys are determined to oppress real Muslims. From the Brotherhood's viewpoint, it looks like this: Even when we play by Western rules—submitting our platforms and policies to popular vote, abiding by international agreements like the peace treaty with Israel—our enemies will not allow us to rule ourselves. Our long years of attempting to mimic Western ways amount to a chronicle of failure. There can be no accommodation with the West and its local agents, only war.

The White House, in defending neither Morsi nor the coup, has been neutral in its public language, suggesting only that Egypt return to democratic norms as quickly as possible. Behind the scenes, administration officials have been encouraging the country's new ruling coalition to bring the Brotherhood back into the political process as soon as possible. But all that is beside the

point, for already the Brotherhood and its supporters are blaming the United States for the coup. From the perspective of a paranoid political movement whose worldview was shaped during nearly a century underground and in jail, the case is clear: Morsi was overthrown by an American-trained and funded army. Moreover, it seems that it was the American ambassador to Egypt, Anne Patterson, who broke the news to Morsi aides that the army was kicking them out.

With these two points in mind—the army's incompetence and share of culpability for the current crisis; and the Brotherhood's view of the coup, shared by many millions of Egyptians—it may be easier to understand why the situation is unlikely to improve any time soon. The country is being returned to the same parties that proved incapable of managing Egypt after Mubarak's exit—primarily the military, along with other so-called secular forces, including the young revolutionaries, or Tamarrod movement. All of them were outmaneuvered by the Muslim Brotherhood and shown to have little talent for politics and less for compromise. It is they who are now charged with righting the ship of state, rescuing Egypt from an economic disaster, and stabilizing a country where violence—both political violence and the erosion of law and order—has become part of everyday life for millions. The coup is unlikely to solve any of these problems.

To understand Egypt's economic misery, it is useful to understand how it got this way. Leading up to Mubarak's downfall, the Egyptian economy won high marks from the IMF and World Bank for more than half a decade for reforms implemented by a group of financiers and businessmen surrounding Mubarak's youngest son, Gamal. It is likely that Gamal's gang was corrupt (a relative term in Arab politics), but their reforms were able to win the confidence of the international community and attract foreign direct investment. When Mubarak was toppled, those policies were, too, because they were associated with the old regime. No one was going to step forward with promises of reform and liberalization when the people previously mouthing those terms had been rewarded for their efforts with arrest or exile.

Morsi found himself in a similar situation with the

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*Lee Smith is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.*

\$4.8 billion loan that the IMF arranged for Egypt last year. The package was important less for the money itself—a drop in the bucket for an economy hemorrhaging foreign currency reserves—than for the signal to donors, lenders, and investors that Cairo was taking steps to get its house in order. But Morsi did not dare implement the austerity measures required by the IMF because this would have caused more civic unrest. Note that none of the protesters interviewed by U.S. reporters are clamoring for economic liberalization or, for that matter, faulting Morsi for raising public sector wages and other big-government spending policies that burden the economy and crush the entrepreneurial spirit of ordinary Egyptians.

The liberals, as the press typically characterizes the Tamarrod activists, do not believe in liberal, free-market economic policies. Many middle-class Egyptians expect the government to provide subsidies for virtually every staple, from bread and rice to fuel, which they would not be able to easily afford on the low salaries from the lifetime jobs in the public sector that they expect the government to provide them with after they've graduated from college.

Even had Morsi tried, it is hard to see how he could have gotten other parties to buy into belt-tightening measures. Many had no interest in cooperating with Morsi in the first place. Any who might have been more pliable knew that backing an initiative to slash subsidies would have been tantamount to political, or actual, suicide. As strange as it may sound, political figures and military officials across the political spectrum have been terrified of the Tamarrod group for more than two years. After all, when they brought down president for life Hosni Mubarak, they toppled a pharaoh. Who knew who they might target next? Advocating economic reform would have exposed political figures to the populist demagogues in Tahrir Square who, more than the army and more than the Islamists, have set the political dialogue the last two and a half years. The single most important reason that the Egyptian economy has tanked is the revolution. The people who filled the streets to topple Mubarak and later Morsi have engineered their own prospective famine, and no Egyptian leader dares save them from starvation.

Tourism was long Egypt's big cash earner, but with

Cairo in flames, foreigners robbed, raped, and murdered, and a political situation showing little sign of stabilizing, it will be years before Western tourists, the industry's big spenders, return en masse. Even the Russian and Eastern European budget tour groups who fill second- and third-rate Sinai resorts will soon come to rethink their travel plans as the Sinai becomes more dangerous with the proliferation of jihadist groups.

The one upside to date is that Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia are stepping up to help stop the bleeding. Billions of dollars of post-coup pledges of assistance from the Gulf states, led by Riyadh's \$5 billion, will augment Qatar's continued contributions totaling to date some \$8 billion. The cash will ensure a relatively happy Ramadan season, and likely delay any confrontation between the newly named prime minister, Hazem el-Beblawi, and the Tamarrod activists.

Beblawi has correctly identified the core problem: "We must create a clear understanding for the public that the level of subsidies in Egypt is unsustainable, and the situation is critical,"

he said in an interview before he was tapped for the position. In office, he's going to find it much more difficult to practice what he preaches. What's music to the IMF will sound to many Egyptians, especially the 40 percent who live on less than \$2 a day, like the gates of hell opening.

Even assuming the Gulf states honor their pledges—and they have frequently reneged on similar promises to the Palestinians—Egypt is too big and too hungry for its resource-rich cousins to carry it indefinitely. It is difficult to see anything that would brighten Egypt's bleak economic picture except a long period of stability.

The defense minister named as interim president Adli Mansour, a former chief justice who is leading negotiations to form a caretaker government and set out a road map for new elections. The problem is that much of the population will consider such elections a farce. The party that won the last presidential election, and with its Islamist allies 70 percent of the seats in parliament, has been humiliated.

After the coup, Morsi was put under house arrest, along with several top Muslim Brotherhood leaders, including



*Give us this day our subsidized bread: shoppers in Alexandria*

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Supreme Guide Mohamed Badie. There is talk of trying to bring the Brotherhood and other Islamist groups back into the political process—Mansour says that all parties are welcome to run in the next elections, including the Brotherhood—but this is unlikely to happen, especially when the Tamarrod movement wants the Brotherhood banned from political life forever.

More important, even if the Brothers were allowed to return to the political arena, party discipline and esprit de corps would almost certainly forbid it, especially now that dozens of Brotherhood supporters have been killed by the army. From the Brotherhood's point of view, prospective candidates would merely be lending legitimacy to an illegal process and a corrupt system. There is no Brotherhood member so credulous as to believe that even if by some chance he happened to win at the polls he, unlike Morsi, would be allowed to enjoy his presidential term in its entirety.

The participation of other Islamist groups hinges on a number of factors. It's true that the Salafists hate the Brotherhood, and the country's second-largest Islamist party after the Brotherhood, Al Nour, agreed at first to participate in the ruling coalition. However, after the army killed Brotherhood supporters, Al Nour withdrew from consultations. Perhaps Al Nour is looking to leverage its position as legitimate Islamist cover for the ruling coalition, and will get a deal they want from the army and its civilian frontmen. However, they are also likely to find themselves in a precarious spot. They are not going to win any support from the so-called liberal or secular part of the electorate, which has made its dislike of all Islamists clear. They are also unlikely to pick up much of the support previously tendered to the Brotherhood, because most of those sympathetic to the Brotherhood are seething. Further, if the confrontation between the army and the Brotherhood continues to draw blood, it will be difficult to justify participating in a political process that, as the Brotherhood will make sure to clarify, is overseen by an American-funded army that is spilling the blood of authentic Muslims. The Salafists may wind up sidelined, if not compelled to side with the Brotherhood.

And yet the biggest problem is not the derailed Islamist parties but the many millions of Egyptians whose views and aspirations they represent. Some observers have noted that Morsi won by a very slim margin, suggesting that the Brotherhood is not really that popular with the Egyptian public. However, it's worth recalling that Morsi was the Brotherhood's second-choice candidate after master strategist Khairat el-Shater was disqualified. The fact that an uncharismatic novice who by all accounts is not a terrifically bright man nonetheless carried the majority suggests the Brotherhood is popular indeed.

While some have cast doubt on the integrity of the electoral process that landed Morsi in the presidential palace, the reality is that most Egyptians, as well as the rest of the world, remain convinced that Morsi won Egypt's first free presidential election. For example, in contrast to the Green movement that arose after the results of Iran's contested and likely fraudulent 2009 presidential elections were announced, very few Egyptian protesters complained that Morsi stole the elections. They were simply unhappy with how he performed at the job that 51.7 percent of the voters, perhaps including themselves, had elected him to do.

With the coup, the millions of Egyptians who voted for Morsi were told that their first free votes were worthless. Their political will was nullified by the army on behalf of a vocal but not necessarily representative protest movement. Some estimates have claimed that at the height of the recent protests, 14 million people took to Egypt's streets. It is an impressive number, but it is worth noting that there are several Cairo neighborhoods that are more than twice the size of the largest demonstrations that took place in the capital. Brotherhood supporters, or the losers in the army-refereed referendum, are likely to be just as numerous and every bit as angry as those who took to the streets and saw their demands fulfilled. As two and a half years of incessant protests have shown, no Egyptian needs to swallow his grievance silently. Going to the street and employing violence has been proven to work—after all, it toppled two presidents.

Both coups of course were army affairs, the first one by proxy. Because the military did not want to see Mubarak raise his son Gamal to the presidency, it made no move to clear the streets when protesters went out in January 2011 to bring down the aging autocrat. It was in the army's own interests to let the revolutionaries topple Mubarak. Lacking a civilian frontman, the military was then forced to rule directly, a role it played reluctantly and performed poorly, not least by failing to keep the streets free of violent actors, like those who killed 24 Coptic Christians in October 2011, or those who laid siege to the Israeli embassy in September of that year, or soccer supporters who slaughtered 73 rival fans in Port Said in February 2012.

To be fair to the army and police, there is another reason, in addition to incompetence, that they did not bring peace to the streets of Egypt. In the aftermath of the February 2011 revolution, security forces were charged for attacking and killing protesters. Many, if not all, were subsequently acquitted, and in announcing that they would be retried, Morsi found common cause with the Tamarrod activists. However, what that meant was that the police and the army would remain wary of enforcing Egypt's laws, lest they find themselves brought up on charges.

Thus, the anti-Mubarak protests and the carnivalesque

violence that followed it for more than two years—including the storming of the U.S. embassy (conducted when Morsi rather than the army held executive power)—paved the way for July 3. In forcing Morsi from power at the behest of protesters, the Egyptian army effectively institutionalized street demonstrations, and the violence that issues from them, as a legitimate form of political expression. The army is largely responsible for the mayhem now on the streets. It took sides against roughly half the nation. If the violence continues and a full-scale civil war ensues, the question for the army will be whether to try to adjudicate the war that it started, or choose to finish the job itself and take up arms against half of the country.

Since there is little chance of the Brotherhood returning to the political arena anytime soon, or of Morsi being reinstated, the immediate question for the organization's leadership is how best to take revenge on the army. Direct confrontation, like that which has already left dozens dead, is possible. There are lots of small arms at hand, via smuggling routes between the western desert and Libya. Indeed the Brotherhood has called for a war against the army, but it will likely avoid a war in

which it would be outgunned. Similarly, if the Brotherhood waged terrorist operations that harmed the general population, it would risk losing the sympathy the coup has earned it. It seems that the Brotherhood has already made its decision: to mobilize forces in the Sinai. Already Hamas and Sinai-based jihadists have been active in what has become the Wild West of the eastern Mediterranean, killing at least three Egyptian soldiers, reportedly in coordination with the Brotherhood.

Perhaps the key strategic concern is that the Brotherhood may go after the Egyptian army's Achilles' heel—the unpopular peace treaty with Israel that ensures the military continued flow of American money and arms. Therefore, it may try to embroil the military in a conflict with Israel, or at the very least embarrass it for not fighting Israel. In such efforts, the Brotherhood would find themselves with many allies, including the Salafists, Hamas, and Sinai jihadists, cheered on by millions of ordinary Egyptians.

Many believe that the coup spells bad news for Hamas, but this would appear to be wishful thinking. Rather, what is bad for Hamas is an Egyptian government that, while obviously sympathetic to the goals of Gaza's Islamic resistance, must nonetheless for reasons of its own self-interest

## An Active Role for Business in Education

By **Thomas J. Donohue**

President and CEO  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Cracks in the U.S. workforce suggest that our legacy of ever-expanding opportunity and advancement is under threat. Even as unemployment remains high, some 3 million U.S. jobs sit vacant because businesses can't find qualified workers to fill them. And the current generation of students could be the first in our history to be less educated than their parents.

Fewer Americans are emerging from our public education system with sufficient skills in math, science, reading, communications, and critical thinking. Without that foundation, it's harder for them to advance their education or careers in our modern economy. Consequently, the United States has fallen to 10th in the world in the percentage of young adults with a college degree—we used to be 1st.

Complicating matters, the jobs of the 21st century are becoming more specialized

and technical, requiring more education, advanced training, and sophisticated skills. Approximately 90% of the jobs in the fastest-growing occupations require some postsecondary education and training. By 2020, there will be 120 million "high-skilled" and "high-wage" jobs.

To ensure a steady flow of American workers to fill those jobs, we must strengthen U.S. education and job training, aligning those systems with the needs of our economy.

U.S. businesses can and must play a role. The business community continues to advocate for policies that better prepare students to be college and career ready—such as Common Core State Standards—and supports an overhaul of current job training systems. Companies also invest heavily in education, contributing more than \$4 billion a year. But we've largely left the job of educating our workforce to the educators. Business needs to take a more hands-on approach.

We've got to clearly articulate what we need: competitive workers who can

write, reason, solve problems, and *apply* their learning and *use* their diplomas or degrees to contribute to our economy. We must help students see a clear connection between their programs of study and tangible opportunities in the labor market. And we need to bring more American students into our businesses through internships and apprenticeships. "Work-linked" learning can enrich their education and help decide career paths.

The bottom line is that the education and competitiveness of our workers affect all of us. It determines the economic strength and global competitiveness of our country. So we've got to work together to make sure that we're improving and investing in one of America's greatest assets—the U.S. workforce. And if we do that, we'll be able to protect the great American legacy of opportunity and advancement too.



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contain it. This was the situation prior to the coup, when the Brotherhood was compelled to come down on the side of Washington and Jerusalem during Israel's campaign in Gaza last fall, Operation Pillar of Defense. The Obama administration overstated Morsi's role, letting it be known that he sponsored the peace deal. (There was no deal, only a return to the status quo ante with lots of dead Hamas commanders and a depleted arsenal, and the arrangement was brokered through military and intelligence channels, not by Morsi.) And yet because Morsi could not afford war with Israel, or afford to be made to look like a quisling for avoiding a war with Israel, the Brotherhood was furious with Hamas. Moreover, because the army enjoyed the cover of an Islamist government, it was more aggressive in closing Hamas's smuggling tunnels than it ever had been under Mubarak. The coup changes all this. It will likely push the Brotherhood and Hamas back into each other's arms because, in the end, a few small tactical differences are nothing compared to the larger war against an American-Israeli project to subjugate Muslims.

The same is likely the case with jihadist groups in the Sinai, who dislike the Brotherhood as much as the Salafists do, but are itching for any excuse to take up arms against an Egyptian army that they see as acting on behalf of the Americans and Zionists. In short, the coup may well unify those whom the Morsi presidency divided—the Islamists. Undoubtedly, the Islamic Republic of Iran will be looking at these configurations in order to exploit the various opportunities that the coup has made available to advance Iranian interests in the eastern Mediterranean.

**I**n spite of the coup and the Freedom and Justice party's likely removal from official Egyptian politics, the Muslim Brotherhood isn't going anywhere. It embodies the fullest expression of Arab political modernity. Founded in 1928, the Brotherhood has roots going all the way back to Napoleon's 1798 invasion of Egypt, when the first modern contact between the West and the lands of Islam touched off the Muslim reform movement. As the Muslim reformers saw it, the reason the Westerners had so easily overrun Egypt, and the reason their science and technology were superior, was that Muslims no longer practiced authentic Islam. Because the faith had become corrupted by innovations and polluted with extraneous influences, Muslims were weak and subject to the power of the West. From where the Brotherhood is standing, the coup only validates a 200-year-old worldview.

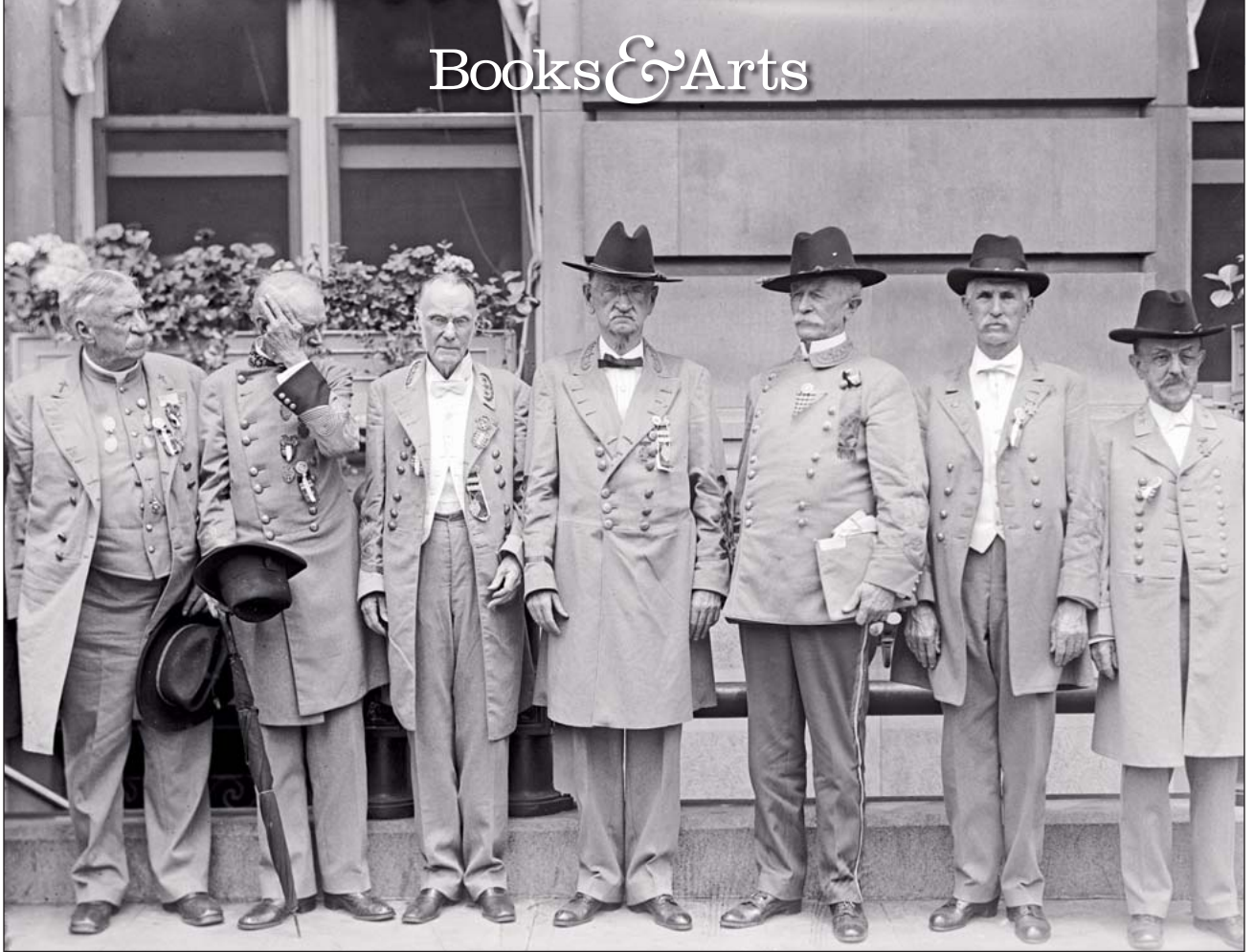
Morsi was an autocrat, which is hardly surprising given that Egypt has been ruled for many thousands of years by autocrats. There is no template for an elected commander in chief to build consensus and promote compromise. But

neither do the various parties that opposed Morsi have any homespun experience of the democratic process. Even with the Islamists exiled from the political arena, willingly or not, it is unlikely the opposition will prove any less divided among themselves.

The fact that Morsi failed to govern well is immaterial, and not just because under the present conditions Egypt is virtually ungovernable. The Brotherhood was never interested in governance, but only in raw power. It promises adherents not just a better standard of living or a better Egypt, but triumph and transcendence in this realm and the next. It was never a political party interested in the details of leadership, as evidenced by its quasi-totalitarian slogan: Islam is the solution. Rather, the Brotherhood is a social movement whose success rests on having turned an existential issue into a political problem. The Brotherhood uses the term "social justice," a locution derived from third-world nationalist movements, to describe what others think of as the tragic nature of life: Fate is cruel, and often so are other human beings. Islamism appeals to so many Egyptians, as well as millions of others across the Middle East, because it is a utopian project with a ready-made scapegoat. If the promise of a better world like the one that gave birth to the prophet of Islam cannot be fulfilled, if social justice cannot be achieved, it is because someone out there is to blame.

It is a rich irony that Morsi was cast in the role that the Brotherhood has typically reserved for Egyptian leaders—Nasser, Sadat, and of course Mubarak: to be blamed for everything that was wrong with Egypt. Other players featured in Egypt's paranoid political drama include Israel and the United States. The fact that so many anti-Morsi protesters complained of American support for Morsi does not augur well. There is much to criticize in the Obama administration's Egypt policy. However, the fact that the opposition blames the White House for conducting bilateral relations with an American ally of four decades led by a president that its population chose freely is yet more evidence of Egypt's political immaturity. It suggests that the opposition is feeding from the same trough of paranoia that nourishes the Brotherhood's political program. Sadly for Egypt, this would seem to be the one thing that virtually all parties agree on at this point—the Americans are at fault.

It will be years before the consequences of the coup are fully understood. If by some chance the toppling of an elected president leads to political maturity, the careful creation of an inclusive system in which politicians and voters accept compromise as a necessary virtue, then this subversion of Egypt's experiment in democracy will come to be seen as a useful step. In the meantime, as the coup made plain, Islam is not the solution—and the Muslim Brotherhood is hardly Egypt's only problem. ♦



Confederate reunion, Washington, D.C., 1917

# Why They Fought

*For more reasons than you might think.* BY WINSTON GROOM

It is no news that the age of political correctness and revisionist history is upon us, and nowhere is it more apparent than in the subject of slavery and the American Civil War. In the past half-dozen years, literature has appeared condemning the Southern general Robert E. Lee as a traitor, slaver, and racist. In Memphis, the city council has voted to remove the names of Confederate

*Winston Groom is the author of Forrest Gump and, most recently, Shiloh, 1862. His forthcoming book, The Aviators: Eddie Rickenbacker, Jimmy Doolittle, Charles Lindbergh, and the Epic Age of Flight, will be published in November.*

## A Disease in the Public Mind

*A New Understanding of Why We Fought the Civil War*

by Thomas Fleming  
Da Capo, 386 pp., \$26.99

leaders from its city parks, and similar efforts calling for the removal of statues and other symbols commemorating the old Confederacy are in progress across the South.

Recently, an op-ed column appeared in the *New York Times* insisting that Southern Army posts such as Fort Bragg in North Carolina, Fort Benning in Georgia, Fort Lee in Virginia, Fort

Hood in Texas, Fort Polk in Louisiana, and five others—all named for Confederate generals—should be renamed, since their provenance might be offensive to black soldiers. Having served, in 1965-66, at the Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg, and the Airborne School at Fort Benning, with both white and black soldiers, I believe I can say that there is a certain pride in having participated in those tough military programs. The very names of these bases inspires awe and reverence in Army circles.

Clearly a move is afoot among a certain school of activists, including some historians, to expunge all vestiges of legitimacy, or pride, in the Southern

Confederacy of the 1860s. In 2011, for example, when the city of Charleston organized a reenactment of the sesquicentennial of South Carolina's secession from the Union, one activist told reporters that it was "almost like celebrating the Holocaust." The movement has even developed a name for those who disagree with it: "Lost Causers," whom they mock in the same manner as they do "birthers," "truthers," and the like. "Confederate apologists" is another frequent appellation for this race-baiting, for that's ultimately what it is. By this movement's lights, anyone who takes pride in his Southern ancestors is, by their definition, a condoner of slavery and de facto racist.

It comes, therefore, as a welcome relief when a historian of the stature of Thomas Fleming takes it upon himself to set the record straight about the complex, irresistible causes of the Civil War—as opposed to the present mantra among those historians (and others) who lay the responsibility wholly at the feet of a rabid mob of lash-wielding, daughter-raping, family-separating Southern slavers who attacked the North because they feared Abraham Lincoln would end slavery.

Early on, Fleming points out that only 6 percent of the Southern population owned slaves, and that fewer than that percentage of Confederate soldiers owned them, calling into question the assertion that Southern soldiers were fighting to preserve slavery. Instead, he postulates that over time the South had developed an almost paranoid fear ("disease in the public mind") of slave insurrections—such as the savage uprising that had occurred in Haiti and in Nat Turner's bloody revolt in Virginia—or a race war, if slaves were emancipated.

There had also, more recently, been the murderous attempt by the fanatical John Brown—using the rallying cry, "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin"—to arm and free slaves for a killing spree against whites. This stood out to Southerners as an example of the dangers of abolitionism: They were especially incensed when it was revealed that Brown had been backed by a number of wealthy New

England abolitionists, and they were outraged when many in the North began to hail Brown as a hero and martyr.

The most interesting aspect of Fleming's approach is his development of the longstanding antagonisms between North and South that are not a part of schoolchildren's education or the usual dialogue on the subject. By 1861, Fleming suggests, it had become Southerners' worst dread that, in slavery, they had the tiger by the tail; and with both houses of Congress and the White House controlled by the anti-slavery Republican party, they were not disposed to let go of the tail and see what the tiger would do.

A similar disease, Fleming asserts, had fixated itself in the public mind of the North, which became known as abolitionism. African slavery had existed in America for nearly 250 years before the Civil War, was enshrined in the Constitution, and was retained after the colonies became the United States. Indiana and Illinois, for example, abolished it in their constitutions when they became states in 1816 and 1818, respectively; but New York maintained some forms of slavery until 1841, New Jersey until 1846, the District of Columbia until 1862, and Delaware until the end of the Civil War.

But New England, which had presented the South since the initial flurry of Virginia presidents—George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, John Tyler—abolished slavery soon after the Revolution and expected everyone else to do so as well. It was in New England—which itself had attempted to secede from the Union in 1814 over dissatisfactions with Madison's War of 1812—that the abolition movement began. By 1820, it had been well established on the premise that slavery was a social evil, and abolitionists agitated on that basis until the early 1840s, when leaders decided that slavery was a "moral wrong."

This, for the next two decades, precipitated a frenzy of accusations and name-calling between the two sections of the country, even prompting religious schisms. The Baptists and

Methodists separated into Northern and Southern branches, and church-going Southerners found themselves shocked and distressed at being called "evil barbarians," among other scandalous names, by Northerners they did not even know. In 1828, against the furious opposition of its Southern members, Congress (led by a New England president, John Quincy Adams) passed what came to be called the "Tariff of Abominations," a protectionist measure that not only cost the South cotton sales, but caused the price of most of the goods it bought to rise as much as 50 percent.

Hatred infected every walk of life, even the sedate United States Senate. In 1856, a South Carolina congressman named Preston Brooks became so incensed at an antislavery speech made by the Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner—which included a reference to Brooks's relative, Senator Andrew Butler, as choosing "the harlot, Slavery" to be his "mistress"—that he accosted Sumner at his desk in the Senate chamber and caned him nearly to death with a gold-handled gutta-percha walking stick. Northern condemnation of this outburst was universal while delighted Southerners showered Brooks with replacement canes.

Then there was Harriet Beecher Stowe's bestselling (in the North) novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which outraged Southerners charged was overblown, exaggerated nonsense, and a slur on their way of life. Newspapers on both sides contributed immensely to the furor, with Northern papers making up stories depicting slaves' lives as relentless nightmares of cruelty and sorrow, and Southern journals manufacturing tales of abolitionists fomenting slave insurrections.

For their part, a good many Southerners had subscribed to the theory, advanced by such luminaries as Jefferson Davis and Raphael Semmes, that Yankees constituted an entirely *different race* of people, and a lower one at that, thus ratcheting up the unpleasantness to a new level. This novel theory held that the North was populated by descendants of the Puritan Roundheads of Oliver Cromwell,

who, in 1649, had overthrown and executed Charles I before being themselves forced to flee to Holland, and finally settling in New England. Once there, they had become a dour, money-grubbing tribe who persecuted Roman Catholics and instigated the Salem witch trials, stirring up trouble wherever they went.

Southerners, on the other hand (or so this notion held), were the cohort of Cromwell's enemies, the "gay cavaliers" of Charles II and his glorious Restoration, who settled at Jamestown and spread across the South with their easygoing, chivalrous, and honest ways—omitting, perhaps on purpose, that settlers of other Southern states, such as Georgia, had been convicts.

In any case, by the eve of the Civil War, antipathy between the two regions was such that it prompted one elderly Tennessean to declare:

I wish there was a river of fire a mile wide between the North and South that would burn with unquenchable fury forevermore, and that it could never be passable to the endless ages of eternity by any living creature.

With talk like that, it's a wonder the war didn't start earlier. A Southern woman was heard to lament around that time that "because of incompatibility of temper . . . we have hated each other so. If we could only separate, a *'séparation à l'agréable,'* as the French say it, and not have a horrid fight for divorce." But that was not to be, and the divorce was hotly contested.

Fleming never claims that slavery wasn't the underlying cause of the Civil War, nor that slavery was anything but wrong. But he lays out a number of the ancillary issues as well, which, over the years, combined to cause the South to want to leave the Union. This well-researched and well-documented treatise also does not suggest that the typical Rebel soldier was fighting to keep slaves, or that Union soldiers were fighting to make them free. (He points out that it was said of Union general William Tecumseh Sherman's Army of the Tennessee that its soldiers would "rather shoot an abolitionist than a Rebel.")

Fleming's splendid story is one of connecting dots reaching back to Revolutionary days, when the two sections of the country began to drift apart. For 80 years, the antagonisms built up insult by insult, outrage by outrage, bone by bone, and the anger swelled, until, at last, it exploded into war.

In the process of putting these matters in perspective, Fleming also puts the lie to adherents of the "new normal" school, who insist that the South of that era was an illegitimate hog-

wallow of evil and cruelty whose institutions—its government, its armies—were illegal and had no right to exist. They would be correct on that last point: The Confederacy's right to exist was settled on the battlefield, once and for all, in 1865. But while it existed, its institutions were part of the fabric of America—and the Americans who manned them and ran them, and died for them, North and South, deserve a respectable place in its history. ♦

BCA

# The Beauty Part

*Searching for Helen in a thicket of prose.*

BY AMY HENDERSON

Who was Helen of Troy? Why do we even recognize her name in 2013?

She had an extraordinary start: Her mother was a mortal who was seduced by Zeus when he came to her in the form of a swan; Leda gave birth to two eggs—one hatched the twins Castor and Pollux, the other brought forth Helen. Known as the most beautiful woman in Greece, Helen married the king of Sparta, Menelaus, but ran off with Paris, the prince of Troy. The resulting Trojan War lasted 10 years, ending only when the Greeks secreted themselves in a large wooden horse and conquered Troy.

Helen and Menelaus ultimately reconciled, but Helen's role as the war's precipitant, and her willingness to use her extraordinary beauty to get what she wanted, have made her a complicated figure in life and myth. For over 2,500 years, she has been characterized as the embodiment of desire and danger—an ambivalent and amoral personality who represents both the full potential of female beauty and the destructive power that beauty can unleash.

Amy Henderson is a cultural historian and museum curator in Washington.

**Helen of Troy**  
*Beauty, Myth, Devastation*  
by Ruby Blondell  
Oxford, 320 pp., \$29.95



'Helen of Troy' (1863)  
by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

In her new study, Ruby Blondell explains the contemporary relevance of this ancient charmer as someone who has not only become the focus of increased scholarly attention but who

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has also attracted more “prominence in the popular culture.” Blondell, a classics professor at the University of Washington who has written extensively about Sophocles and Plato, suggests that Helen has touched a contemporary nerve because “‘Third-wave’ feminism has prompted us to revisit the problematic power of female beauty” and its impact “on women’s victimization” and “patriarchal constraints.”

While the reader is pondering this, Blondell explains that her book is “not about the ‘real’ Helen. Or rather, it is about the real Helen, whom I take to be in her essence unreal. . . . She is in her very essence a creature of myth.” Here, Helen is the showpiece for “an ancient Greek obsession: the control of female sexuality and of women’s sexual power over men.” Blondell’s mission is to extrapolate the various interpretations of this “iconic errant woman who must be reincorporated into patriarchal social structures.” From the first chapter, on “The Problem of Female Beauty,” Helen is viewed through “epic, lyric poetry, tragedy, historiography, rhetoric, comedy, even philosophy,” by chroniclers that range from Homer, Herodotus, Aeschylus, and Euripides to Isocrates, a rival of Plato.

Blondell envisions her work as appealing not only to scholars but to “a wider audience.” Alas, the odd placement of pop music epigraphs as chapter headings fails to disguise the ideological “third-wave feminist” thrum. (As a non-academic of the boomer generation, I think I can figure out the first wave—late-19th- and early-20th-century suffragettes—and the second wave is a sixties phenomenon; but what is the third wave? Does it have something to do with *Mad Men*?) Stylistically, it is jarring to read an epigraph quoting the Eagles’ lyrics from “Lyn’ Eyes” (*My, oh my, you sure know how to arrange things / You set it up so well, so carefully / Ain’t it funny how your new life didn’t change things / You’re still the same old girl you used to be*) and then be thrust into a description of Helen in *The Iliad* (that “essentially masculine epic”) thusly: “Yet masculinity is predicated on the feminine, and Achilles’ counterpart,

Helen, is the most substantial, nuanced, and compelling female character in the epic. . . . [She is] less a source of erotic passion than an exceptionally precious object.”

Blondell’s convoluted style makes it difficult to appreciate Helen’s continuing fascination as a cultural icon—except as a feminist hobgoblin. On the other hand, Bettany Hughes’s *Helen of Troy: Goddess, Princess, Whore* (2005) conveyed a more comprehensible understanding of Helen’s continuing popularity—as a matriarch from the Age of Heroes, a cult figure who conflated Helen-the-heroine with a pre-Greek fertility goddess, the homewrecker of *The Iliad*, and a pin-up favored by Roman artists. Hughes actually focuses on “the real Helen” and writes with flair: “Homer’s poetry

roars and whispers. He talks of passion and revenge and duty and disloyalty, of loss and love.” A British popular historian and broadcaster, Hughes has contributed to numerous television documentaries for the BBC, National Geographic, History, Discovery Channel, and PBS; she narrated a Lion Television production of *Helen of Troy* that was broadcast in America on PBS.

Ruby Blondell’s concluding sentence is one of the clearest in the entire volume, as she argues that Helen’s persistence “as a powerful but elusive force” can be credited to ever-changing cultural projections about beauty, women, sex, and power: “Demonized, idolized, allegorized, or humanized, Helen is still here.” I wish she were more readily apparent in the rest of this work. ♦



## Will Percy’s Secret

*The inner life, and outer bounds,  
of a Southern aristocrat.* BY MARK TOOLEY

**W**illiam Alexander Percy (1885-1942), of Greenville, Mississippi, was the cousin and adoptive father of the Southern Catholic novelist Walker Percy. He was himself a lawyer and man of letters, a poet, literary mentor, scion of a great family, friend of William Faulkner, and author of a bestselling memoir. His *Lanterns on the Levee* (1941) recounted his role as chief relief administrator during the Mississippi Delta’s Great Flood of 1927; as an army officer on the front lines in France during World War I; and as aide to his father, Senator LeRoy Percy, during the notorious 1911 campaign against the race-baiting demagogue James Vardaman.

Mark Tooley, president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, is the author of *Methodism and Politics in the Twentieth Century*.

### William Alexander Percy

*The Curious Life of a Mississippi Planter  
and Sexual Freethinker*

by Benjamin E. Wise  
North Carolina, 368 pp., \$35

Will Percy, as revealed unapologetically in *Lanterns on the Levee*, was an unabashed elitist who scorned the South’s poor whites and presided paternalistically over his hundreds of sharecroppers, believing them to be largely incapable of caring for themselves. He was also an active homosexual who trysted with countless men while on his global travels, according to this new biography. The evidence is somewhat speculative; Walker Percy and his brother—who were both enormously grateful for Will Percy’s rescue of them after the apparent suicides of both parents—always denied

that their adoptive father was gay. And author Benjamin Wise admits that the direct documentation is slim.

Still, the evidence is persuasive, if spotty. Percy, who never married, shared a summer house for many years with his Sewanee professor, mentor, and lifelong companion of sorts. That professor, and other influences from late-19th-century literature, romanticized classical homoeroticism. So Percy, while at Sewanee, abandoned his once-ardent Catholicism to become a “freethinker,” both sexually and religiously. (There is also a surviving diary from his young manhood recording an encounter with a male traveler in Greenville.)

Percy’s sexuality is this book’s most provocative angle, but not its most interesting. The best chapters cover his political, military, and humanitarian exploits—not significantly adding to what Percy himself recalled in *Lanterns*, but giving informative context. Preeminent within that context are his relations with his family, chiefly his parents, from whom he was emotionally detached and yet with whom he lived nearly all their lives in their Greenville mansion. His father was a formidable businessman and wealthy planter—a statesman, hunter, devoted family man, nominal Episcopalian, and friend of Theodore Roosevelt, whose sophisticated ruggedness he unselfconsciously replicated. The elder Percy was also a leading member of the Delta’s small but powerful white elite who lorded over the region’s considerable black majority, for whom they felt a paternalistic regard in contrast with the poor whites in the hills to the east, for whom there was mutual loathing. Percy’s mother was Roman Catholic and a descendant of New Orleans planter gentry.

Presumably, Percy inherited his literary refinements and emotive sensibility from his maternal, French-influenced ancestors; his stalwart noblesse oblige and commitment to the Delta’s white aristocracy was obviously inherited from his paternal side. Percy’s paternal grandfather

had led the struggle in Greenville to suppress the postwar Reconstructionists and their newly freed black allies. They restored white rule through intimidation and ballot stuffing: Mississippi’s blacks were largely disenfranchised, and their carpetbagger patrons were sent northward home. But elite Delta whites like the Percys, whose livelihoods depended on cheap black labor, shunned the harsher racial



Will Percy, 1938

rhetoric and policies heard elsewhere in Mississippi: The Percys and like-minded families fancied themselves the guardians of vulnerable black laborers, and they feared that blacks, if pushed too far, would leave for higher wages in Chicago.

The 1911 senatorial campaign between LeRoy Percy, the appointed incumbent, and former governor James Vardaman was a classic confrontation between elitists and populists. Upon his 1903 inauguration as governor, Vardaman had called for the repeal of the 14th and 15th Amendments, whose citizenship and franchise for freed blacks exemplified “stupid ugliness.” In 1909, the Mississippi legislature had deadlocked for two months over filling an empty Senate seat, finally narrowly choosing Percy over the more

popular but much-feared Vardaman.

The *New York Times* celebrated the election of a proper gentleman like Percy, but Vardaman’s own newspaper, the *Issue*, promised that “the fight between the classes and the masses, between the corporate influences and the people is on, and it will be a fight to the finish.” A young legislator named Theodore Bilbo, who, in later decades, would himself become one of the Senate’s most infamous race-baiters, claimed he had been bribed to support Percy. The state senate denounced him, but this only energized Vardaman and Bilbo supporters against the “secret caucus” of big business and Delta “Bourbons” who had “stolen” a Senate seat for LeRoy Percy.

Young Will Percy campaigned enthusiastically for his father. Having attended Harvard Law School, he was practicing in Greenville, while reserving his interest for travel and literature. Late at night, alone, he routinely walked the levee that held back the waters of the Mississippi River from the rich Delta lowlands, pondering life’s ironies. Neither of his parents understood their surviving son, whose brother had died in a hunting accident. His father thought him “queer,” and his mother wept over his differentness. Yet Percy not only continued to live with his parents, but served in his father’s law office, walking with him every day to work.

Senator Percy was a proud, rather pompous, man who was not especially interested in ordinary people, whom he once publicly described as “cattle.” His son hailed his “appealing to the mind not the emotions.” Once, while orating on cotton futures, he was heckled: The younger Percy was contemptuous of the “ill-dressed, surly audience, unintelligent, and slinking. . . . They were the sort of people that lynch Negroes, that mistake hoodlumism for wit, and cunning for intelligence, that attend revivals and fornicate in the bushes afterwards.” They were “undiluted Anglo-Saxons,” the “sovereign voter”; and “it was so horrible it seemed unreal.” Some in the

TIME & LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES

crowds carried signs boasting of their status as “cattle.”

Percy lost to Vardaman in a landslide, a historic statewide shift away from the Delta elite of planters and businessmen in politics. Bilbo was elected lieutenant governor. Percy’s father never sought elective office again, but 10 years later, in the early 1920s, the younger Percy stood by his father when he led the fight against Ku Klux Klan influence in Greenville. Responding to a Klan speaker in the courthouse square, Senator Percy gained an ovation by defending a more benign vision of white supremacy that didn’t need masks, secrecy, or violence. As the husband of a French Catholic who employed Italian immigrants, he defended the “religion of our community,” which included Catholics and Jews. When Klan candidates were decisively defeated in local elections, the Percys hosted a massive celebration at their home featuring four kegs of bootleg whiskey: “The little town had come through, righteousness had prevailed, and we had fought the good fight and for once had won,” Will Percy recalled.

Although his parents thought him odd, the Percys deeply admired their son’s service in World War I. Percy had been a relief worker serving under Herbert Hoover in German-occupied Belgium when, in 1917, the United States entered the war and he joined the Army. His letters from France to his parents magisterially describe the horrors of the battlefield, and, at the war’s conclusion, the elder Percys traveled to New York to welcome their son safely home.

But father and son would clash in 1927, when Mississippi floodwaters broke the Greenville levee, deluging the Delta and forcing 100,000 to flee. Known for his work in Belgium, Will Percy was tasked with presiding over flood relief. He quickly evacuated white women, children, and elderly, and planned to evacuate the blacks, many of whom were encamped on the levee. (“They had no capacity to plan for their own welfare,” he wrote. “Planning for them was another of our burdens.”) Steamers were standing by to relocate them, but the elder

Percy, distressed at the possibility of the Delta losing its black laborers forever, quietly persuaded the relief oversight committee to countermand his son. Will recalled that his father was the “strong rock on which we leaned and in whose shade we renewed our strength”; but he must have been humiliated as Greenville’s blacks seethed for months amid the floodwaters, often forced into labor.

with one son barely escaping the car. Will consoled the orphaned Percys, one of whom remembered being read Greek myths when unable to sleep. He adopted all three boys and would eventually leave his considerable estate to them.

Will Percy’s health throughout the 1930s was not good; but as a patron to writers and artists, he introduced his adopted sons to a young Shelby Foote



Wooden sidewalk in flooded Greenville, Mississippi, 1927

When his parents died in 1929, Will Percy was left alone in his family’s large house—but not for long. His cousin committed suicide that same year, leaving a widow and three young sons, including Walker Percy, who would later remember Will as a “personage, a presence . . . [who] radiated that mysterious quality we call charm.” The widow and children were invited to live with their older cousin in Greenville, where they discovered a home full of artistic treasures, books, servants, and constant visitors, white and black—including the poet Langston Hughes, who recalled Percy treating him equally as a “fellow poet.” William Faulkner came to play tennis.

Walker Percy described his cousin as “shadowed by sadness,” often secluded in the library or overheard late at night vomiting into the toilet. The children’s mother died in a 1932 automobile accident, possibly a suicide,

and invited Hodding Carter to start a progressive newspaper in Greenville.

When not bedridden, he continued his global travels, which took months by transoceanic steamers. In 1936, he visited Samoa, and, having thoroughly absorbed Margaret Mead’s claims that Samoans were sexually uninhibited, echoed her assertion that the island people saw sex as only “corporeal.” Their laissez-faire stance on sex, he believed, in contrast to repressed Westerners, left Samoans “superbly healthy, handsome and happy.”

The publisher of *Lanterns on the Levee* removed most of these wanderings from the manuscript, preferring to focus on Percy as archaic Southern aristocrat, including his paternalistic racial views. *Lanterns* sold tens of thousands of copies, got admiring reviews, and generated hundreds of fan letters, although black publications saw it as racially condescending.

Prematurely aged and bedridden, Percy relished its success and was also gladdened by America's entry into World War II. He died a few weeks after Pearl Harbor, aged 56. No Greenville clergyman would conduct his funeral except, eventually, a Catholic priest, who delivered a 45-second homily without removing his overcoat. Wise blames this on Percy's lack of Christian belief, including, perhaps, his sexual "freethinking." Will Percy thought that the church, and especially St. Paul, about whom he wrote a chastising sonnet, had corrupted the real message of Jesus. Christians didn't love their bodies as the ancient Greeks did, he complained.

One adopted son recalled that he was "more like Christ than anybody I've ever known," and Walker Percy called him the "most extraordinary man I have ever known."

As a very young man, Percy had dabbled in the occult, writing off Christianity as "outworn rubbish." But he also wrote a hymn that was later included in the Episcopal hymnal. A book of his irreverent poetry provoked a Kentucky reader to complain to the editor that the "men's Bible class of the Methodist church here wish to enter a protest against this." William Alexander Percy responded with amusement: "To the Orthodox I can only say, if this be treason, make the most of it." ♦

showstoppers like *Nighthawks* (1942), *New York Movie* (1939), and *Soir Bleu* (1914), "Hopper Drawing" contains a selection of rarely seen sketchbooks, drawings, and chalk-works, many of which are being publicly displayed for the first time.

One such chalk-sketch is the intriguing *Three Men in an Interior Space* (1925), a charcoal-like sketch with a sense of depth, texture, and mystery that evokes the brooding chiaroscuro background of Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*. Many other small works simultaneously function as thematic echoes of his previous paintings and prolepses of his future works.

As much as this is a show of Hopper's drawings, it is about his paintings as well. The Whitney's curators understand that it is through the study of his process that one arrives at the requisite appreciation of his finished product; in this sense, "Hopper Working" may be a more apt title for the exhibit. Through the display of Hopper's process, we see how his paintings were the result of his internal interplay of reality (his observations) and imagination (his improvisations).

Like any good art student, Hopper drew nudes, but his innovation was to draw them in context. Thus, we see nudes situated in the original *mise en scène* in which they were posed, such as studios and other unglamorous settings. The general motif of solitary individuals ensconced in wide interior spaces, with the concomitant subsidiary motif of the single nude situated in interior space, informs many of his works, some of which, such as the lovely *A Woman in the Sun* (1961) and the meditative *Sun in Empty Room* (1963), can be seen in the last section of the installation. While the former work reflects Hopper's interest in depicting lone figures in sprawling interior landscapes, the latter painting—his last major work before his death—is eerily devoid of human beings, and thus may have been Hopper's unconscious premonition of his imminent departure from life.

Furthermore, Hopper made a pilgrimage to Paris; but unlike many of the artists of his milieu, he did not become enmeshed in the ambient

BCA

# Smooth Draft

*The work-in-progress of an American master.*

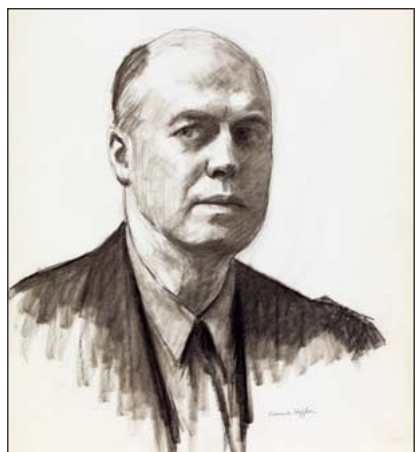
BY DANIEL ROSS GOODMAN

In some locales, wrote Albert Camus in *The Plague*, beautiful days are only experienced in the winter. But this is easily belied by the magnificent Edward Hopper exhibition on display at the Whitney Museum this summer. Beyond a showcase of artistic beauty, it is a much-deserved homage to an American master who is occasionally overshadowed by New York museums' infatuation with European painters. That Hopper was born and bred in New York merely compounds this ironic injustice. For art lovers, Hopper devotees, and connoisseurs of American culture, it is heartening to see that this significant American painter is still earning plaudits.

While Hopper exhibitions are not uncommon at the Whitney, which houses the world's largest Hopper collection (its most recent Hopper show was held in 2011, and its influential 1980 show helped solidify his place

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**Hopper Drawing**  
Whitney Museum of American Art  
Through October 6



*Self-portrait, 1945*

in the pantheon), this particular exhibition is unique in its focus on Hopper's drawings, studies, and working process. In addition to the box-office

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

avant-garde culture. During his Paris interlude, his interest in open interior spaces bloomed, and the first flickering of this motif is seen in the mesmerizing *Soir Bleu*—a pastiche of Ashcan School sensibilities, Degas-esque characterizations, Post-Impressionistic inflections, and sundry Toulouse-Lautrec influences. Its several substantial figures (of whom the most prominent is a clown) seem diminutive in comparison with the wider expanses of their interior surroundings. But in spite of his focus on interiors, Hopper still strove to depict the essence of the human figure; he was fascinated by the variety of social types and street characters that could be observed through any decent bout of people-watching. *Soir Bleu* also exemplifies Hopper’s artistic synthesis of realism and fantasy, with the clown symbolizing the imaginative capacity that lurks in the substratum of reality.

Of course, the exhibition’s centerpiece is the luminous *Nighthawks*, on loan from the Art Institute of Chicago. The Whitney’s staging is superb; in contrast to the Art Institute’s crowding of the painting into a small section of its American wing, the Whitney is able to showcase a work of such magnitude as it should be seen: occupying a wall unto itself, in the center of the exhibition’s most expansive section. And because this particular show focuses on Hopper’s work process, the two walls flanking Hopper’s masterpiece of urban anomie contain the numerous preliminary sketches that informed the work. These drawings allow us to observe the evolution of *Nighthawks* from its place in Hopper’s imagination to its tactile reality upon the canvas and in our minds’ eye.

Another significant Hopper motif is voyeurism: the tantalizing possibility of seeing things that we’re really not supposed to be seeing. Hopper, we learn, was an avid cinephile who sought to replicate, through the imperfect medium of pigment, the cinematic “mood of melancholic reverie” that he believed was a constitutive quality of film. He was also fascinated by the way in which the inherent capabilities of film seemed to allow for dialectical voyeurism—that

is, how an isolated individual could be the object of others’ gazes while voyeuristically regarding them at the same time. That a cinematic “shot” could more accurately depict reality than could a painterly “shot” did not dissuade Hopper from attempting to capture candid occurrences. On the contrary, it catalyzed him to further hone his painterly praxis, the fruits of which are seen in the melancholic, atmospheric *New York Movie* (1939).

with the ascription of “*bedikat chametz*” (the pre-Passover search for crumbs with the purpose of eradicating any traces of leavened bread). Painters eternalize the ephemeral through art: A late-night cup of coffee in a quiet diner is transfigured into a timeless work when endowed with the beauty of colors on a canvas.

The uniqueness of “Hopper Drawing” is to see that Hopper succeeded in eternalizing the ephemeral through



‘New York Movie’ (1939)

Hopper’s abiding interest in capturing evanescent moments from everyday life—a transient instant, a fleeting gaze—is as much about the accurate depiction of phenomena as it is about bestowing sacred permanence on the mundane. With the simple implements of paintbrush, pigments, and canvas, an office at night becomes *Office at Night* (1940) and a gas station along a bucolic country road becomes *Gas* (1940). And while sacralizing the quotidian is ostensibly a religious concern, it is an artistic one as well. In fact, when it comes to the mundane and the holy, religion and art are not so far apart. Religion eternalizes the ephemeral through ritual: Spring cleaning is transformed into a precious act unto God when endowed

with assiduous effort and unstinting devotion to craft. The 20 studies flanking his *Nighthawks* are testament to Hopper’s unremitting work ethic. The individual components comprising *Nighthawks* were each sketched separately before Hopper applied color to the main canvas, and viewers can glimpse Hopper’s keen eye for detail: In one sketch, the salt shaker is carefully rendered and given a color. The studies and sketches that accompany nearly every major painting here further illuminate Hopper’s meticulous preparatory work.

“Hopper Drawing” is a paean to the beauty and holiness of any season’s days, whether in summer or winter, and it is a fitting testament to the artistic triumphs of Edward Hopper. ♦

# The First Mrs. R

*And the first First Lady in the modern manner.*

BY CLAUDE R. MARX

**W**hen most people think of a first lady named Roosevelt, it is Eleanor they have in mind.

The life and work of the first member of the family to hold that position has received much less attention. That is, in part, because Edith Roosevelt was a private person, and she lived in a time when media coverage of the presidency was far less comprehensive. But Lewis L. Gould's account of her life and influence is as insightful as it is compact, combining distinguished scholarship with engaging storytelling.

Theodore Roosevelt's first love and second wife was from a prominent Brahmin family that had seen some of its fortune wane. Although she wasn't especially political and found the nature of campaigning beneath someone of her station, Edith had strong views on certain subjects, and she wasn't afraid to express those views to her husband.

In a letter to one of her sons, for example, she describes some of the people who greeted her during a visit to the Panama Canal Zone as "poor little scraps of humanity born of Jamaican negroes" and "chocolate drops." Gould argues that her use of this kind of language was one of many factors that shaped Theodore Roosevelt's views on race—and what the author sees as his less-than-enlightened treatment of blacks. Since there isn't extensive correspondence between the Roosevelts during this time, many of Gould's conclusions are based, in large part, on speculation and reading between the lines. My reading about the era leads me to conclude that Gould is probably correct; and, given his expertise,

*Claude R. Marx is writing a biography of William Howard Taft.*

**Edith Kermit Roosevelt**  
*Creating the Modern First Lady*  
by Lewis L. Gould  
Kansas, 176 pp., \$34.95



*Edith Roosevelt, Helen Taft*

we'll give him the benefit of the doubt.

Though Theodore Roosevelt was an effective president, and an extraordinarily intelligent man, he wasn't always the best judge of his fellow human. By contrast, Edith Roosevelt seems to have had a sixth sense about people, and she used that skill to influence her husband. (He once declared, "Whenever I go against her judgment, I regret it.") Henry Stimson, himself a shrewd judge of humanity, wrote that Edith's "judgment of men was nearly always better than [her husband's]. Her poise as to events in which they were both concerned was nearly always better than his." Gould notes that, in previous studies, "precise evidence of her influence has been elusive." But he documents incidents that spell out her importance to the Roosevelt administration: "Many of Theodore's friends relied on his wife as a back channel to get information to him without going through the White House bureaucracy. . . . The British

diplomat Cecil Spring Rice used his private letters to her to communicate with the president outside the accepted avenues of foreign policy."

Her influential role, which was more the exception than the rule at the time, isn't surprising, given what Gould describes as Edith Roosevelt's "inner toughness." She wasn't reluctant to remind people that TR had first proposed marriage to her, and that after she refused him, he had married Alice Lee, who died after giving birth to their daughter, Alice. Two years later, Roosevelt would propose to Edith again. Gould describes her (mostly successful) efforts "to first blur and then almost expunge the memory of her dead rival for the affection of her husband," including having young Alice called "Sister" by family members so that the name would never be mentioned in their household. Edith's armor was tough to pierce—and she looked down upon those of lesser means and those she deemed *arrivistes*.

Among those who felt her disdain were her husband's friend and ally (and subsequent rival) William Howard Taft and his wife, Helen. The Tafts were prominent citizens of upper-middle-class stock—Taft's father had served in the cabinet of President Grant, and Mrs. Taft's father was a lawyer—but Edith Roosevelt never regarded them as social equals. Their personalities clashed, and the dislike was mutual. "The tension between the two women," writes Gould, "well hidden from their husbands, accumulated. Neither Edith Roosevelt nor Helen Taft had a high opinion of the other's marital partner." That personal frostiness was no doubt a factor in the irreparable rift that developed between Roosevelt and Taft during the Taft presidency (which, of course, led Roosevelt to challenge his handpicked successor in 1912).

The author of an earlier study of Mrs. Taft, *Helen Taft: Our Musical First Lady* (2010), Lewis Gould performs an invaluable service in drawing attention to two prominent women, neglected by history, who not only supported their husbands' careers but successfully carved out their own niches in political Washington as well. ♦

# Is Hollywood Broken?

*The problem is bigger than one 'legendary flop.'*

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

By now, it no longer matters that the new version of *The Lone Ranger* is a remarkably entertaining, amusing, and exhilarating romp—not to mention eye-poppingly beautiful. In contrast to every other big-ticket film of the past five years, *The Lone Ranger* doesn't exhaust you by the time the final action sequence sets in. Instead, its final 20 minutes feature a chase scene in which the villains and the good guys leap back and forth across two speeding trains, and the whole shooting match is one of the damndest things I've ever seen.

What's more, Armie Hammer (as the title character) and Johnny Depp (as the wise Indian sidekick Tonto) manage to pull off that rare buddy-film combination of being consistently funny and believably tough. Depp, in particular, does something entirely new and hilarious with his part: His monotone voice and calm body reflect Tonto's stolidity and patience, but his wildly expressive eyes betray every possible emotion.

Even though it's full of tiresome piety toward Native Americans and gibes about the injustices of capitalism, *The Lone Ranger* is a truly refreshing riposte to the undercharged and overdone superhero movie.

But it was all for naught. *The Lone Ranger* is a financial disaster of epic proportions. It cost \$225 million to make, another \$175 million to market, and, because of revenue-splitting with theaters, must earn \$800 million worldwide for the studio to break even. It will be lucky to make half that. Fancy that: a consumer product

## The Lone Ranger

Directed by Gore Verbinski



that grosses \$400 million, and is still a catastrophe. The gleeful obituaries that began to be written only hours after the movie opened on July 3 suggest *The Lone Ranger* may be the kind of legendary flop that ends up reshuffling the cards in Hollywood.

Numbers like these do seem to induce an automatic revulsion in all of us, a revulsion for which a moment's reflection suggests there is really little justification. It's not our money, after all, and if investors and stockholders don't mind studio executives making damn-fool decisions, why should we? It's not as though that \$400 million would go to the poor; it would just be poured into a few other projects that would likely be worse than *The Lone Ranger*.

So why the tap-dancing on *The Lone Ranger's* grave?

Some of this comes from people inside the entertainment industry who don't want to make the kinds of movies the studios now want to make and feel as though they've been rendered obsolete. Lynda Obst, whose chief claim to fame is having produced Nora Ephron's best movies, has just written a whiny book on the subject called *Sleepless in Hollywood*. According to Obst, Hollywood is broken because it no longer has the market in DVD sales it once had and must now rely on foreign markets for added revenue—foreign markets where fantasy and action sell and clever dialogue doesn't. The problem with Obst's complaint is that she seems to think it's terrible that she wouldn't be able to make *How*

to *Lose a Guy in 10 Days* today, when that horribly witless pseudo-comedy should never have been made in the first place.

Obst and others accuse the studios of being risk-averse for avoiding mid-priced movies for adults. But in truth, studios like Disney are driven to insanely risky investments, of which *The Lone Ranger* is only one of two dozen this summer. If the bet pays off, as it did with Depp's horrible *Alice in Wonderland* (worldwide gross: \$1.2 billion), the studio executives look like geniuses. And if it doesn't—well, then they're guilty only of following the same model everybody else in the industry is following.

So nothing will change, because there's no reason for anything to change. And Obst is wrong, anyway, because there are plenty of new-fangled versions of *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*: Somewhat modestly budgeted hits like the \$43 million female buddy-cop movie *The Heat* and the dreadful \$32 million horror comedy *This Is the End* have both earned around \$90 million already and will prove highly profitable.

What will end is the weird effort to find a pre-sold title from the ruins of pop culture. Disney has embarrassed itself not only with *The Lone Ranger*, best known as a radio program 80 years ago, but also with *John Carter*, a movie based on a series of deservedly little-known pulp novels published in the 1920s. Two years ago, another radio character, the Green Hornet—who was actually supposed to be the Lone Ranger's nephew!—was the subject of a major failure. So, too, *Battleship*, which was, God help us, based on a board game.

In her book, Obst concludes that the system in Hollywood doesn't work any longer, and that it will all come crashing down. Steven Spielberg said the same thing a month ago. Though they claim the problem is with the financial model, it really isn't. Their distress is over something else: the fact that movies have lost their sexiness, their power, their position at the red-hot center of popular culture. Television is better now, and it kills them that television is better. And it should. ♦

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

**"A 33-point memo detailing ways to praise top White House aide Valerie Jarrett was sent out to staffers shortly after an unflattering profile of the adviser was published in the New York Times last year, the new book *This Town* by Mark Leibovich says. . . . 'Valerie is someone who other people inside the building know they can trust. (need examples)' one bullet point said, according to an advance copy obtained by the Washington Post."**  
—Politico, July 5, 2013

**PARODY**



To: Friends and Family of Valerie Jarrett  
From: The White House  
Subject: Help Make Valerie's Birthday Magical

As I'm sure you all are aware, Valerie's birthday is fast approaching. In light of how poorly you all did in sending her birthday wishes last year, here are a few simple suggestions for how you can give Valerie a birthday she deserves, one that she will remember and cherish forever:

- Say "happy birthday" when you see her or via a phone call. And remember: Smile when you say it (in person or on the phone; she'll be able to tell).
- Send her an e-card wishing her a happy birthday. She is particularly fond of the irreverent birthday greetings found on the website someecards.com. But please be sure not to send a card with a puppy or kitten on it, as we all know how she feels about them.
- Give her an actual birthday card purchased from a gift card store. And please be sure that your card relates to one of Valerie's interests and is not just a card chosen at random from a CVS on your way to work. Valerie is such a wonderful person that she really deserves some of your time and attention in making your card selection (again, no puppies/kittens).
- Write a happy birthday post on her Facebook page. It might even be a good idea to stay up until midnight the night before her birthday, so you can post as soon as her birthday officially begins. This will demonstrate that she is important to you and that you were thinking about her. But please, DO NOT just write "Happy Birthday"; take the time to craft a personal and heartfelt message that she will truly appreciate.
- Buy her a gift (minimum \$50; NO STARBUCKS GIFT CARDS, NO HOMEMADE JUNK).
- In the course of your conversations with her throughout the day, be sure to tell her a story of a time when she did or said something memorable that positively affected your/everybody's life/America/the world in general (need examples).
- Don't forget to mention how much younger she looks than David Axelrod. It would be best to say that she looks at least seven years younger than David, even though she is in fact only one year younger. The disparity between how much younger than David you say she looks and how much younger she actually is will bring a smile to Valerie's face and boost her already high self-esteem.