the weekly Standard

HILLARY'S BENGHAZI WOES
STEPHEN F. HAYES
MARK HEMINGWAY

MAKING IT ALL UP

ANDREW FERGUSON on the scandal of the behavioral sciences

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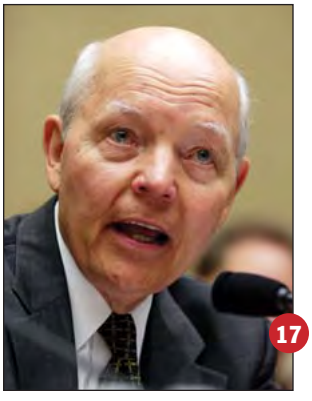

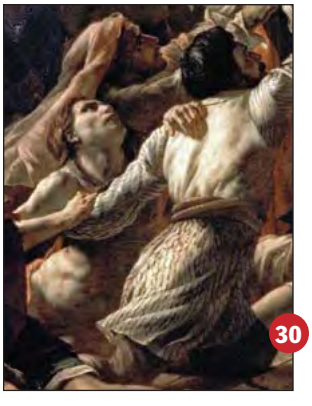

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COVER BY THOMAS FLUHARTY

China's Creepy New Form of Oppression

China's Communist government is rolling out a plan to assign everyone in the country "citizenship scores." According to the ACLU, "China appears to be leveraging all the tools of the information age—electronic purchasing data, social networks, algorithmic sorting—to construct the ultimate tool of social control. It is, as one commentator put it, 'authoritarianism, gamified.'" In the system, everyone is measured by a score ranging from 350 to 950, and that score is linked to a national ID card. In addition to measuring your financial credit, it will also measure political compliance. Expressing the wrong opinion—or merely having friends who express the wrong opinion—will hurt your score. The higher your score, the more privileges the government will grant you.

This horrifying plan is to be administered by Alibaba and Tencent, companies that run much of China's approved social networks and already have tremendous stores of data about what Chinese citizens are saying. When it comes to weaponizing oppression, even the Communist Chinese now see the value of private enterprise. That's something to keep in mind when American politicians inevitably start agitating to enlist Apple or Google in launching some grand political initiative.

It's worth noting that at least one big American tech company is already a party to this oppressive nightmare. Yahoo still owns a hefty chunk—worth about $23 billion—of Alibaba stock. As The Weekly Standard's Mark Hemingway noted in "The Media Kowtow" (Nov. 11, 2013), a feature on how American media are complicit in covering up Chinese human rights abuses, Yahoo was allowed to purchase a big chunk of Alibaba way back in 2006, less than a year after it voluntarily coughed up the identity of a democracy activist who was anonymously using a Yahoo email address, at the Chinese government's request.

Tiananmen Square, before the crackdown

Journalist Shi Tao as a result was sentenced to 10 years in prison for leaking Chinese Propaganda Department directives showing that Beijing was suppressing attempts to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre. Yahoo may hope you believe that approval to purchase what turned out to be an extremely lucrative pre-IPO stake in Alibaba was in no way related to its willingness to help the Chinese government imprison Shi Tao for the crime of wanting to live in a free country. But no one believes that.

Yahoo has plans to spin off their Alibaba investment into a profitable holding company so they can avoid billions in taxes, but so far the IRS has dragged its feet approving the deal. It would be nice if the American government—to say nothing of Yahoo's investors and business partners—did something to demonstrate they care that the company is set to make billions profiting off Alibaba and its plans to reduce the financial prospects and political freedom of 1.3 billion people to a "citizen score" controlled by a murderous and oppressive regime. ♦

There Goes the Neighborhood?

Because The Scrapbook believes so strongly in gun safety, and teaching children about the importance of gun safety, we were surprised by a recent story in the *Washington Post*. It seems that a firearms shop in McLean, Virginia—forced recently to relocate to seek more retail space—has found a new home in a converted house on a busy road in a commercial neighborhood. But certain residents of McLean, including the local county supervisor, want to force Nova Firearms to relocate yet again. Their ostensible reason is that the shop is now located near an elementary school, and, as the *Post* reports ominously, "one classroom looks out into its parking lot."

What the children in that classroom might see is not described, but we can imagine any number of dread possibilities: hunters buying rounds of ammunition; target shooters carrying home a new pistol; perhaps a father and daughter, worried about personal safety, walking to and from their car. These prospects seem to agitate the *Post*—and some McLean residents, who picketed the store on its opening day and now worry (in the words of one school parent) that "it's going to become very, very ugly" unless this useful business, entirely innocent of wrongdoing and fully compliant with the law, is driven from town.

In one sense, of course, The Scrapbook is not surprised. McLean, which used to be nestled in a rural farming community and is now a bedroom suburb of Washington, D.C., is so fully estranged from its historic roots that the mere presence of a gun shop inspires a mob

ASSOCIATED PRESS

mentality. Indeed, the owners of Nova Firearms had initially signed a lease in neighboring Arlington but were obliged to find a new home when critics forced the landlord to nullify their contract. The cost of yet another move could prove enough to put them out of business—which might well be the motive here.

To which The Scrapbook responds with a warning shot. As is often said, the overwhelming majority of gun owners in America are responsible, safety-minded people—of all ages, races, creeds, and political parties—who own their guns for any number of reasons: hunting, collecting, target-shooting, personal safety. And Nova Firearms has every right to set up shop where it is presently located. There is no evidence that it has been anything but a good commercial neighbor, wholly undeserving of public abuse or hostile treatment at the hands of the *Washington Post*.

Yet if the students at Franklin Sherman Elementary School in McLean, Virginia, see anything from their classroom window, they should be comforted to observe a firearms shop next door to a day spa, down the street from a garage, a bank, a carpet store, and gas station—taking part, in other words, in the normal, everyday life of its community. Far from an incipient threat to McLean, Nova Firearms appears to be a lesson in citizenship. This is the traditional role of guns and gun possession in American life. What is uncharacteristic of American life is public hysteria, class-based disdain, and press/political pressure grounded in prejudice. ♦

The 'Pen' Is Mightier Than . . . Harvard?

At this point The Scrapbook has become somewhat inured to tales of woe regarding the American educational system. Generally such wails are merely preludes to a call to arms on the part of teachers' unions and bureaucrats who want to expand government control over local schools and throw more money at the supposed problem.

Still, we were surprised to read that a team of Harvard debaters had been bested by three violent criminals. No, it wasn't a mugging, and it isn't the setup to a bad joke. Rather, it was an exhibition debate to highlight a program run by Bard College that aims to give motivated inmates a liberal arts education.

The six debaters spent just over an hour on the topic: Resolved: "Public schools in the United States should have the ability to deny enrollment to undocumented students."

The inmates were tasked with defending the resolution, a position with which many of them disagreed. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that the inmates argued "that the schools attended by many undocumented children were failing so badly that students were simply being warehoused. The team proposed that if 'dropout factories' with overcrowded classrooms and insufficient funding could deny these children admission, then nonprofits and wealthier schools would step in and teach them better."

At the end of the round, the panel of three judges deemed that the Harvard team had failed to respond adequately to the arguments.

One of Harvard's debaters told the *Journal* that the team was surprised by their opponents' preparation. "They caught us off guard," said Anais Carell, a 20-year-old junior from Chicago.

Adding insult to injury, the

inmates competed at something of a disadvantage. Unlike the Harvard debaters, they could not use the Internet to research their arguments and had to submit any requests for books and articles to the prison administration for approval.

The Scrapbook applauds the initiative of the inmates, who, in the words of one team member, "might not be as naturally rhetorically gifted, but . . . work really hard." Their success demonstrates that education is as much a matter of intellectual curiosity and self-discipline as classes and diplomas.

And in fairness to Harvard's debaters, they aren't the only ones with egg on their faces. The inmates also beat West Point's debate team in the spring of 2014, but lost a rematch this April. ♦

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BPA WORLDWIDE

Praising Arizona

We never thought we would find ourselves stocking a pantry in Arizona. But now that Phoenix is our winter base, there we were, on line at the deli counter of a supermarket located in one of the ubiquitous strip malls that we love because they are home to thrusting small businesses as well as huge anchor tenants like the store we were in. After waiting awhile, we realized we were in a take-a-number queue. We remedied the oversight and got number 61. We both remember it because of what followed. When a customer who'd arrived after us, but taken a number promptly, was called, she nodded toward us and told the clerk, "These people were here before me. They just forgot to take a number. So serve them first."

This prompted remembrance of things past. Some four decades before, Irwin took his son, Adam, then about 10 years old, with him on a business trip to Phoenix. His ever-gracious clients provided a pair of tickets to a Suns basketball game, during which Adam, by then a veteran of Madison Square Garden, went to buy a hot dog. He returned in a state of amazement: "No one pushed me!"

All of which set us to thinking. The driver in the family had noticed that when entering Highway 101 (Phoenix's Beltway, only without road rage), she was waved on by drivers of fast-moving oncoming vehicles. The non-driver, exiting a Starbucks, passed a woman who said, "Have a nice day." He stopped her, told her he was a newcomer, and asked her why she had done that. "Because it's a nice thing to do, I suppose."

We decided to satisfy our curiosity by eating at a Chick-fil-A—the originally southern fast-food chain that was fiercely attacked a few years back for its owners' support for groups promoting old-fashioned marriage. As soon as we walked in, we spotted an area set aside for little kids to play with toys rather than grow restless while their parents lingered over lunch. Nice again. Nicer still, we watched a boy of about 6 hold the door for a little girl maybe 4 when they were both going into the play area. He wasn't born courteous, so something was happening at home.

And the longer we stayed in the area, the more often we encountered not just "Have a nice day" but "Have a blessed day," offered by shop clerks and waitresses. There was something inexplicably warming about it. What was going on?

Disconcerting as it was to us East Coast types, we decided that what we were encountering was *civility*, and we were noticing it because we were accustomed to its absence in Washington, a place we had recently fled. Phoenix is a town where you don't need a permit to carry a gun, where Hispanics, legal and otherwise, make up a large part of the workforce, and where the heat should surely cause personal temperatures to boil at the slightest microaggression—so why here? Our answer: the large number of churchgoing, family-valuing, socially conservative members of the population.

Don't get us wrong. Arizona is not the overwhelmingly rock-ribbed conservative, evangelical community it might once have been. Still, when we joined 1,000 others at a Phoenix dinner featuring a talk by our friend Charles Krauthammer, we expected to be uncomfortable as clergymen invoked blessings from Jesus Christ and the audience cheered speakers who attacked gay marriage ("Since when are conservatives against marriage?" Irving Kristol once asked at one of our Sunday breakfasts) and other causes in what everyone present except us understood to be a still-winnable culture war. Uncomfortable? We felt fine.

In fact, we were moved by the pledge of allegiance to our flag, "one nation under God" included; the polite reception to some of Charles's provocations, including praise of Franklin Roosevelt—and the realization that these people were not the cause of the many problems that beset our society. These were people who could disagree without being disagreeable; who displayed good manners (remember them?) all around—not a bad thing, especially since we suspected that several members of the audience were legally carrying concealed weapons. Out there, patriotism was a virtue, not an embarrassment. God, country, family: What's not to like, especially when it produces personal courtesies that are increasingly rare in everyday American life?

Long ago, Irving Kristol warned Jews not to be hostile to evangelical Christians. Understanding them, he said, was essential if "American life is to retain some semblance of civility." Spending so much time among so many of them, we realized, and not to our surprise, that once again, Irving was right.

Cita & Irwin Stelzer

the weekly Standard

Looks Like a Good Deal

There are times when economics is secondary to other policy considerations—not irrelevant, but secondary. Last week, when 12 nations on the Pacific Rim finally agreed to the Trans-Pacific Partnership after years of negotiations, was one such time. This gives President Obama a much-needed victory—if he can persuade enough of his Democratic colleagues to join a majority of Republicans in approving the deal when Congress gets to have its say in up or down votes early next year. The opponents include the usual gang that doesn't trust markets and therefore opposes anything that opens them further: Bernie Sanders, trade unions, senators from states home to industries counting themselves among the losers or eager to remain aboard the Elizabeth Warren bandwagon, not to mention opportunists like Hillary Clinton, hoping to appeal to all of the above. And, to be fair, there are those who genuinely believe that past trade deals, which like this one create losers as well as winners, worked to the benefit of big corporations and to the detriment of average middle-class and unskilled workers and the environment.

Hillary: for it before she was against it

If you raise cows for milking or eating, or chickens, TPP will open more markets for your products, and if you grow soybeans you can cheer an end to 35 percent import duties in key markets, one of some 18,000 anti-U.S. tariffs consigned to the scrap heap of history. So, too, if you are in the services sector or manufacture heavy equipment or aircraft. If you sell tobacco products, you lose: The deal prohibits you from suing foreign governments over anti-smoking measures. And big pharma lost a battle to protect certain medicines from competition from generics for 12 years—a feature of the Affordable Care Act. TPP guarantees only five years, with extensions possible but not certain. If you work in the auto industry, you have to guess whether you win because restrictions on imports from Japan have been extended for 25 years, or lose, as Ford officials claim, because the TPP does not bar Japan from manipulating its currency, even though one surprise addition to the pact is a pledge of greater macroeconomic cooperation, "including on exchange rate issues."

We won't be able to guess at the net impact on the American economy, its corporations, workers, consumers, and the environment until we see the details and hear from all of the affected parties. Trading partners often give ground on tariff protection only to substitute even more effective protectionist barriers such as safety inspections and health codes that keep our goods out of their markets. Nor can we be certain that all provisions will be enforced, and if so how. The TPP sets up arbitration panels to settle disputes, which involves a transfer of sovereignty to these international panels from our own courts. That certainly won't trouble our president but should be counted as a negative feature of the agreement, or at least a worrisome one, since international panels are generally not optimal forums for the United States. And TPP contains enforcement provisions of uncertain effectiveness. Which is why Glenn Prickett, an official of the Nature Conservancy, one of the green groups delighted with the treaty's environmental provisions, cautions that much will depend on the effectiveness of monitoring and enforcement of the provisions protecting wildlife and endangered species.

One thing is certain: Obama is a winner and China is a loser in what is a regional zero-sum game. Some observers see TPP as less a tariff-cutting deal than a rule-making arrangement, better characterized as "managed trade." The Obama pivot to Asia that so far has succeeded only in posting 2,000 U.S. Marines in Australia, a bit closer to the islands China is building in the South China Sea—not intended to be potential competitors to Macao or Club Med—now includes a hard-won pact that makes

America an economic presence on the Pacific Rim, binds its 11 allies to it with hoops of cash and investment, and puts us in a position to set the rules of the economic road in an area accounting for some 40 percent of the world's output of goods and services and about one-third of world trade.

That is not to say that this deal is an offset to China's increasing belligerence in Asia, or enables us to take a more relaxed attitude towards the Communist regime's new ability to develop missiles that can sink our aircraft carriers. No trade deal could do that. But it does strengthen our hand in the region, give our allies there something other than still another abandonment of friends, and indicate that there is more to soft power than the production of academic papers at Harvard. Perhaps even more important, TPP serves as a template for an agreement covering the entire Asia-Pacific region, which accounts for over 60 percent of world GDP and 50 percent of international trade. With China on the outside looking in.

As details of the 30 chapters are published and leaked, we will be better able to form a final judgment. For now, the prospect of a more efficient allocation of the world's resources, the geopolitical win, and the possibility of a still greater win in a region, like so many others, in which we have not done well of late seem to us to carry the day, especially if policies to transfer some of the gains of the winners here to innocent bystanders, our collaterally damaged losers, can be devised.

—Irwin M. Stelzer

The Stormy Present

Time flies when you're having fun. It's been two months since the first Republican presidential debate. How do things now stand for the party upon whose success next year rest all of our hopes for constitutional government at home and a manageable world abroad?

The one constant over these past two months is, amusingly, the inconstant Donald Trump. He was the Republican frontrunner on August 6, the day of the Cleveland debate, with the support in polls of just under a quarter of GOP primary voters. And that's where he stands now. Even this apparent constancy masks motion, however, for Trump hit a high-water mark of about 30 percent in mid-September before receding to his still-impressive 23 percent today.

Everyone else has been in motion of a more directional sort. Jeb Bush, second at 13 percent two months ago, is now fifth at 8 percent. Scott Walker, third on that day in August and the only other candidate in double digits at 10 percent, is now out of the race. Mike Huckabee has slid from fourth place at 7 percent to a virtual tie with other also-rans, John Kasich, Chris Christie, and Rand Paul, at 3 percent.

But downward mobility for some has meant upward mobility for others. Ben Carson has gone from fifth place with 6 percent to a strong second at 17 percent. Carly Fiorina, who was too low in the polls to qualify for the main stage in Cleveland, has surged to third at 10 percent, tied with Marco Rubio, who two months ago was at just half that level. The devilish Ted Cruz was sixth then and is sixth now at 6 percent (I'll leave it to others to discourse on why the fates have assigned him a kind of 666 status in the race).

Meanwhile, on the Democratic side, Hillary Clinton has in the last two months lost almost a quarter of her support, going from 55 percent to 42 percent; Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden have advanced from 20 to 25 percent and 13 to 19 percent, respectively.

In short, no one has any very good idea what's going to happen. But there is one notable fact: Contrary to the fervent predictions and ardent hopes of the D.C. political class, there is no evidence outsider sentiment is ebbing. The three Republicans who've never held elective office had a total of just under a third of the vote two months ago; they now have the support of half of primary voters.

Pundits and consultants nonetheless tend to assume that normalcy will reassert itself. Perhaps it will. But why really should it? Consider the House Republicans, who have deposed one speaker and just seen his putative successor flame out. Is the spectacle on Capitol Hill likely to convince GOP primary voters that you need to hold or to have held elective office in order to govern effectively? Are the debt limit and budget showdowns coming up in November and December apt to persuade GOP primary voters that they should have more respect for conventional political credentials?

And among Democrats, will Hillary Clinton's amazing flip-flop on the Asian trade agreement help her reassure the left wing of her party that she's listening to them? Or will it simply leave her betwixt and between, with Joe Biden (or John Kerry, if Biden doesn't run) getting the support of moderate Democrats and Obama loyalists, while Sanders retains the allegiance of the progressive wing? Hillary used to look like Walter Mondale in 1984, a weak frontrunner who'd probably hold on. She now looks like Edmund Muskie in 1972, a once "inevitable" frontrunner who first waffled and then simply collapsed.

It seems safe to predict there will be more major surprises over the next months. Or maybe the surprise will be that there aren't any more surprises. But what would a

nonsurprise future look like at this point? If you extrapolate from current support and current trends, you can easily write a scenario for both parties in which the races aren't resolved until the conventions. No, one instinctively says, that couldn't happen. Or could it?

We're in a different political universe from the one most of us have gotten used to. At such a moment, "The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty and we must rise with the occasion." So we must, and so, one trusts, we shall.

—William Kristol

Reading Obama's Mind

Last week an Obama administration official bragged that the White House's Syria policy is working out just as planned. Special envoy for Syria Michael Ratney said that the "Russians wouldn't have to help [Bashar al-]Assad if we didn't weaken him."

His audience, a group of Syrian-American anti-Assad activists, was understandably appalled. Ratney's remarks were roundly mocked and left critics of Obama's Middle East policy shaking their heads in disbelief. Just three months after signing a deal to limit Iran's nuclear weapons program—the only alternative to war, we were told—the war in Syria has escalated dangerously.

Russian Sukhoi fighter in Latakia, Syria

Contrary to some reports, though, the White House has known for months that Russian premier Vladimir Putin was building up his forces in Syria. Much of the Russian materiel moved through the Bosphorus, so NATO watched Putin's buildup from a front-row seat in Turkey. All through the spring and summer sessions of the negotiations with Iran, the Obama administration could see what Moscow was up to. When the Russians demanded in July that the arms embargo on Iran be lifted, the American negotiating team conceded the point, facilitating the Russian-Iranian project in Syria. The $150 billion freed up for Iran as a "signing bonus" is the fund from which Tehran is drawing the $21 billion it pledged to Russia in exchange for arms, technology, and troops in Syria. Laugh if you will at Ratney's remarks, but he's not too far from the truth. The way Obama sees it, things really are working out as he planned.

It's important to understand that the Iran deal was never solely about Tehran's nuclear program. Ending 36 years of hostility, as Obama understands it, is supposed to relieve the United States of its overwhelming burden to ensure Middle East stability and compel other stakeholders to shoulder some of the burden. From Obama's perspective, that's a benign interpretation of what Putin is now doing in Syria.

What's more, to reach a deal, Obama decided he needed to show Iran that he was in earnest about a new beginning. That meant granting the mullahs their nuclear weapons program a few years down the road and hobbling Iran's enemies. Obama sought to weaken Israel and Saudi Arabia, America's traditional allies, not to punish them, but as part of his grand strategy for the Middle East, a "new geopolitical equilibrium" that would bring more stability to a volatile part of the world. Sure, Obama understands that the Iranians sponsor terrorism and act badly. But that doesn't mean America should have to come running any time the Arabs get scared. In May, Obama told a group of Arab officials that maybe they should take a page out of Iran's playbook and build their own Quds Force—and learn how to defend and advance their own interests.

As for Obama's view of Israel, well, it's a democracy, to be sure, and a cherished friend, but its unending conflict with the Palestinians fuels anti-American terrorism. Also, every time Israel gets in a shooting war with one of its neighbors—Hamas, Hezbollah—American policymakers have to get their hands dirty at the U.N. Can't have that.

A new geopolitical equilibrium in the Middle East would rein in America's troublesome partners and bring Iran in from the cold. It was precisely because none of them liked each other that the idea was so attractive. Obama would ensure a region where there was no victor and no

AP IMAGES

vanquished. This wouldn't eliminate war from the Middle East, but it would calm things down considerably and let America go home. For years, liberal internationalists had been talking about getting the rest of the world to share the burden, but Obama actually had a big idea about how to get everyone else to pitch in.

One problem for Obama was that most people wouldn't get it. And they wouldn't like large parts if they did get it. You can imagine him in front of pro-Israel groups answering questions about his Iran deal. *So when you talk about acknowledging Iranian interests in Syria, Mr. President, you mean we are acknowledging Tehran's right to ship Hezbollah missiles and point them at the Jewish state?*

George W. Bush had it easy, Obama must have thought. He could get up and speak openly about promoting democracy in the Middle East because Americans like feel-good stuff. That doesn't hold for Obama's big idea. For instance, the American public wouldn't like the idea of rapprochement with Iran. Polls show they hate Iran. It seems the only thing they like less is the prospect of America getting involved in another war in the Middle East. So tell them your deal is the only alternative to war.

Even Obama's cabinet didn't understand what he was doing. Two years ago they all wanted to back Syrian rebels as a proxy force against Iran and its Syrian allies. Obama's former CIA director David Petraeus and ex-secretary of state Hillary Clinton still want to set up a no-fly zone for Syria. It's a typical Cold War idea—but as Obama explained, "Syria isn't some Cold War chessboard."

There is no more Cold War and no more chessboards—the future is not about competition between rival powers but coordination. As Hudson Institute scholar Michael Doran puts it, "what Obama envisions is a concert system, where every international actor does its part."

From Obama's point of view, this is what Putin is doing in Syria, hands-on management of the balance of power—and it's about time someone else got their hands dirty. Let Putin do it, Obama thinks. It's not going to work perfectly. It's going to take some time before the world gets used to the new system. More people will die before the world learns how to sing together. But make no mistake: Putin's escalation is precisely the sort of thing Obama had planned.

The problem, as always with Obama, is the world doesn't work the way he thinks it does. It's not a chess game and it's not a concert hall. The world, as America's greatest Cold War poet Wallace Stevens reminds us, *is ugly / and the people are sad*. What we are really watching in Syria is Obama's grand theory exposed to reality and shattering on contact. The next administration will have to pick up the pieces, starting immediately.

—Lee Smith

Drip, Drip, Drip

Congress's Benghazi investigation has been slandered. BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

There was never any doubt that Democrats in Washington would launch an aggressive campaign to discredit the House Select Committee on Benghazi. The only question was when they'd do it.

That inevitable effort got under way last week, after House majority leader Kevin McCarthy boasted to Sean Hannity that the committee's work had hurt Hillary Clinton's public standing.

McCarthy's claim is undeniably true. The investigation uncovered the existence of Clinton's personal email server, and her mendacious efforts to explain why she didn't use a secure government email account to carry out her work as secretary of state have complicated her presidential bid. But it was a monumentally foolish thing for McCarthy to say. And his efforts to clean up the mess—in a follow-up interview on Fox News and later in a written statement—only made matters worse. When McCarthy stunned the political world on October 8 by announcing he would not be a candidate to replace John Boehner as speaker of the House, he cited his unhelpful comments and the furor they created as a contributing factor.

Within hours of his original comments, Democrats were recasting McCarthy's words as an admission that the committee's purpose had been political. And within days the Clinton campaign released an ad featuring McCarthy's comments, echoing claims that the committee had been designed to bring down Clinton. "The Republicans finally admit it," says the narrator. "The Republicans have spent millions attacking Hillary because she's fighting for everything they oppose."

So much drama. So much nonsense.

Acknowledging that the probe has had a political impact is in no way an admission that it was conceived to do so. But like Republicans who mischaracterize Clinton's "what difference" comment as a declaration of indifference to the murder of the American ambassador and three colleagues in Benghazi (it was not), Clinton defenders are happy to distort McCarthy's comment to make a political point.

Clinton testifies before the House Foreign Relations Committee, January 23, 2013.

Here's the reality: Chairman Trey Gowdy has gone out of his way to accommodate Democrats on the committee. The committee has obtained copious amounts of fresh information somehow missed by the previous Benghazi inquiries. And Gowdy's had this success despite a concerted and sustained effort by the Obama administration to obstruct his efforts.

The committee began its public work in the spring of 2014 with a hearing focused on the State Department's progress in making policy changes that might prevent future attacks like the one in Benghazi. There was no shouting and little partisan rancor. The topic had come from Adam Schiff, a California Democrat, often a partisan one, who floated the subject after Gowdy asked Democrats for input. Some conservatives criticized Gowdy for going soft. Dana Milbank, a left-leaning columnist at the *Washington Post*, wrote that the hearing "was exactly what congressional oversight should be."

This wasn't just a public show of good faith. Behind the scenes, Gowdy invited Elijah Cummings, the top Democrat on the committee, to add topics to the investigation and to suggest witnesses that Democrats wanted to hear from. Cummings made no additions and offered no witnesses.

Gowdy set aside a tall stack of résumés from lawyers and investigators interested in the all-important job of chief counsel—many of them well-qualified, but with partisan background. He selected instead a no-nonsense three-star general whose political leanings, if he has any at all, remain a mystery even to his colleagues. His deputy chief counsel is a career former prosecutor who served under both Republicans and Democrats.

Despite these efforts, Democrats on the committee have sought to undermine its work and tarnish its credibility. The Obama administration has consistently refused cooperation or slow-rolled responses to the committee's requests for access to witnesses or documents. What little cooperation the administration has provided has often come only after courts responding to outside lawsuits have forced the administration to cough up information.

Despite the administration's attempt to thwart his investigation, Gowdy has managed to gain access to thousands of pages of previously unseen documents and more than 50

LINDA DAVIDSON / THE WASHINGTON POST / GETTY

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witnesses who were not interviewed in any previous Benghazi inquiry. The committee's day-to-day focus remains on the attacks—the conditions that preceded them, the events of September 11-12, 2012, and the false narrative offered afterwards by key administration officials to downplay their significance. But public attention on the committee's work has shifted from the attacks themselves to Clinton's emails, in part because most journalists long ago lost interest in Benghazi details but more directly because so much of what Clinton has said about her emails has turned out to be untrue.

Clinton at first claimed she turned over all work-related emails to the State Department. False. (The committee later found emails between Clinton and both Sidney Blumenthal and David Petraeus that were not included by Clinton in her initial production.) She claimed that she turned over her emails in response to a routine request the State Department made of former secretaries. False. (A State Department spokesman acknowledged the request for Clinton's emails was triggered by the revelation that she had a private server.) She claimed she never received a subpoena for the emails. False. (Gowdy produced one publicly to demonstrate that Clinton's claim was untrue.) She claimed she used only one email device as secretary of state. False. (Clinton herself has acknowledged using multiple devices, and FOIA requests make clear that she used at least an iPad and a BlackBerry.) She claimed that she withheld her "personal" emails because of her private communications with her husband, among others. False. (A spokesman for Bill Clinton said the former president has sent just two emails in his life, both when he was president.) She claimed she never sent classified information on her email. False. (Reviews by the inspector general for the intelligence community found dozens of Clinton's email exchanges included classified information.) She claimed that everything she did with respect to her email was allowed. False. (Clinton's email setup indisputably violated the record retention requirements of the Obama administration, and the chief transparency officer at the State Department said the arrangement was "not acceptable.") She claimed Blumenthal's emails to her were "unsolicited." False. (Clinton repeatedly solicited more information from Blumenthal in their email exchanges.)

On October 8, the Benghazi scandal and the email scandal, often treated as only tangentially related, converged in a striking way. That day, Gowdy released a blistering 13-page missive he had sent to Cummings. The letter opened by pushing back forcefully against claims of GOP partisanship, arguing such claims are undermined by the fact that the Obama administration—including the FBI and inspectors general of the intelligence community and the State Department—is now investigating the potential criminal wrongdoing surrounding the emails.

Public attention on the committee's work has shifted from the attacks themselves to Clinton's emails, in part because most journalists lost interest in Benghazi details but more directly because so much of what Clinton has said about her emails has turned out to be untrue.

Gowdy waited until page 10 to drop the bombshell. As Sidney Blumenthal was advising Clinton on Libya in early 2011, specifically pushing greater U.S. support for the Libyan opposition, a company he was working with was seeking security contracts with the Libyan opposition.

In an email to Clinton on May 5, 2011, under the subject "French economic grab," Blumenthal warns that the French are seeking security contracts with the Libyan opposition, a development he argues would give them an important foothold with the post-Qaddafi Libyan government. Clinton responds after meeting with officials of Libya's Transitional National Council (TNC). "Just met with TNC again, but no signed contracts! Thx."

While it wasn't clear whether Clinton knew about Blumenthal's interest at that time, she certainly knew about it in a subsequent exchange where she appeared to offer to serve as a Blumenthal emissary to the TNC. On July 14, 2011, Blumenthal provides Clinton information about U.S. security contracts in advance of her meeting with TNC representatives. Under the subject "H: IMPORTANT FOR YOUR MEETING. Sid," Blumenthal tells Clinton that she will soon learn about an agreement between a new company named Osprey Global Solutions and the Libyan opposition. Blumenthal touts the unique ability of Osprey to meet the security needs of the TNC and reports: "This is the group the TNC wants to work with." Blumenthal then notes that he and two other informal Clinton advisers "acted as honest brokers, putting this arrangement together through a series of connections, linking the Libyans to Osprey and keeping it moving."

Clinton responds by forwarding Blumenthal's email to Jake Sullivan, her deputy chief of staff, with a note that she wants to discuss it with him, and replying to Blumenthal, affirming that she'd received his memo and asking, "Anything else to convey?"

What exactly was Blumenthal's role with Osprey Global Solutions? Was he paid for brokering these deals? How much? What else did Clinton know about the arrangement? Did Osprey get the contract?

Why weren't these emails included in the initial Clinton email production? And what other emails haven't we seen?

These are just a few of the many questions that arise from the revelations last week. And we can be sure that Hillary Clinton will be asked about them when she appears before the committee on October 22. ♦

Hillary's Spymaster

Add to her private email server a private intelligence network. BY MARK HEMINGWAY

Hillary Clinton is running her first national television commerical, and amidst a cloud of scandal and falling poll numbers, she's already playing defense. The ad claims that the House Republicans' committee to investigate Benghazi "was created to destroy her candidacy." That was hardly the purpose of the committee, but it's true that the revelations have been politically fortuitous for Republicans. Since the committee exposed Clinton's apparently illegal use of a private server to conduct State Department business, she's been caught in more than a few untruths. Clinton can't seem to answer questions about her conduct as secretary of state fast enough to keep her presidential campaign on track.

And the latest question to emerge is a doozy: Did a former CIA officer on Hillary Clinton's payroll orchestrate a major media scandal in order to discredit Benghazi critics?

In March, a joint investigation by *Gawker* and *ProPublica* dug through Hillary Clinton's emails and found that longtime Clinton aide Sidney Blumenthal had been working with a former CIA officer named Tyler Drumheller as part of a "private spy ring." Blumenthal is a particularly oily operative best known for accusations that he dishonestly smeared Monica Lewinsky to the press. Of late, he's drawn a salary from the Clinton Foundation while, according to the *New York Times*, acting as "a paid consultant to Media Matters and American Bridge, organizations that helped lay the groundwork for Mrs. Clinton's 2016 campaign." If Blumenthal has a particular role in Clinton World, it's manipulating the media.

Like Blumenthal, Drumheller has a somewhat questionable reputation. He left the CIA in 2005 and wrote a book accusing his superiors of ignoring his warnings that evidence used to justify invading Iraq was flawed. For-

Tyler Drumheller

mer CIA director George Tenet, who served under Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, used several pages of his 2007 memoir *At the Center of the Storm* to discredit and otherwise challenge Drumheller's version of events.

As for what these two men were doing working together, emails show Drumheller was producing intelligence reports on Libya and other trouble spots that Blumenthal was passing on to Secretary Clinton. Drumheller was also coordinating operations with Osprey Global Solutions, an outfit headed by David L. Grange, a retired major general with a background in special forces. Osprey Global Solutions was being paid—we don't know by whom—to send men to terrorist hot spots such as Tunisia to gather intelligence that was also passed on to Clinton.

Emails documenting this activity went on through much of 2013. But just recently, on September 29, THE WEEKLY STANDARD reported online that Drumheller was working as a consultant on intelligence matters for CBS News and *60 Minutes* while simultaneously working for Blumenthal and Clinton. The overlap here raises questions, because this roughly coincides with *60 Minutes* stumbling into the biggest media scandal in recent memory.

A *60 Minutes* report aired on October 27, 2013, told the tale of a private military contractor named Dylan Davies who claimed to have heroically tried, but failed, to save the four Americans killed in the Benghazi attack the year before, on September 12, 2012. According to Davies, more could—and should—have been done by the U.S. government to rescue those who died. Davies's eyewitness account of what went down was a damning condemnation of the Obama administration's conduct.

But Davies, who had a book deal to tell his Benghazi story with a publisher owned by CBS's corporate parent, suddenly went silent after the October 27 report aired. Questions were being raised about the truth of his account, and his tale was contradicted by statements he had given to his employer, private security company Blue Mountain Group, and to Hillary Clinton's State Department.

With Davies unwilling stand by his previous account, *60 Minutes* retracted the report, going so far as to ask that the transcript be pulled off of news services. It was the worst television news screw up since Dan Rather rushed onto the air with documents, later shown to be fabricated, claiming President George W. Bush had failed to fulfill his obligation to the Texas Air National Guard. And once again, the phony news was a product of *60 Minutes*, and the integrity of CBS's legendary flagship news program was being called into question. Speculation immediately began to swirl that the reporter behind the segment, Lara Logan, would be let go by CBS News. (Logan ended up taking a seven-month leave of absence from the network.)

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It's difficult to overstate how much former secretary of state Hillary Clinton and the Obama administration benefited from the collapse of *60 Minutes*'s report. After the report aired, both Clinton and Obama had faced heavy criticism for obscuring who was behind the Benghazi attack for over a year. Logan's report also punched holes in a common media narrative that had been very helpful to the White House—that Benghazi was not a terror attack.

The problems with Logan's report were prominent in the news in November 2013. Then in December, the *New York Times* published a lengthy Benghazi report declaring "months of investigation by the *New York Times*, centered on extensive interviews with Libyans in Benghazi who had direct knowledge of the attack there and its context, turned up no evidence that Al Qaeda or other international terrorist groups had any role in the assault." For defenders of the Obama administration, the *60 Minutes* scandal and the *Times*'s authoritative-sounding report were a one-two punch of vindication. It appeared that critics who'd spent the last year accusing Obama and Clinton of obscuring the fact that Benghazi was a terror attack were both wrong and politically motivated.

But two years later, the media have had to come to terms with certain facts about Benghazi. For one thing, Logan was right where the *New York Times* was wrong: A report last year from the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence removed all doubt that Benghazi was in fact a planned attack with al Qaeda involvement.

So what, exactly, went wrong with Logan's Benghazi report? A 6,500-word *New York* magazine piece—"Benghazi and the Bombshell: Is Lara Logan too toxic to return to '60 Minutes'?"—attempted to uncover the story behind Logan's discredited report. While the *New York* piece lobs a lot of superficial, even catty, criticism at Logan personally, it contains an interesting revelation: Logan had been working on her Benghazi report for six months before the focus shifted to telling Dylan Davies's personal story.

This is where Drumheller's role at the network looks awfully suspicious. A source with personal knowledge of how the report came together told The Weekly Standard that when Logan started working on the report soon after the attack, in the fall of 2012, it was originally focused on establishing al Qaeda's role and the White House and State Department's attempts to obfuscate this central fact. According to the source, Drumheller was working behind the scenes to discourage Logan from making her report about the Obama administration's evading questions about al Qaeda's role in Benghazi.

A second source very familiar with CBS News operations confirmed Drumheller's behind-the-scenes meddling and told The Weekly Standard that Drumheller's closest relationship at CBS was with *60 Minutes* executive editor Bill Owens. According to *New York* magazine, Owens was responsible for vetting Logan's story.

Asked about Drumheller's role in shaping Logan's report, a CBS spokesman simply told The Weekly Standard, "Tyler Drumheller was not involved in any way on the Benghazi story." From the perspective of CBS management, that statement might be, to the best of their knowledge, true. CBS is hardly the only news operation that has former spooks and other shady operatives on the payroll to help them chase down leads. Such arrangements raise questions about how the news we get regarding sensitive issues may be manipulated. As a consultant on retainer, Drumheller had years to build up relationships with individual reporters and producers at CBS and *60 Minutes*. As to his qualifications, Drumheller was the former head of the CIA's clandestine operations in Europe—and ostensibly knew a thing or two about spreading misinformation and identifying, cultivating, and manipulating people to act for his own benefit. CBS brass would likely have no idea who at the network their intelligence consultant was talking to. And, if asked, individual reporters and producers might be reticent to answer questions about whether they had been duped into getting a story wrong.

If Drumheller was telling people at *60 Minutes* to back off the issue of al Qaeda's involvement in Benghazi, that would stand at odds with what he knew. The day after the Benghazi attack, emails show Drumheller authored a memo that was passed on to Secretary of State Clinton identifying terrorist group Ansar al Sharia as being behind the attack. (Though the connection was hardly a secret at the time, it would be two years before the U.N. would get around to adding Ansar al Sharia to the list of groups being sanctioned for their ties to al Qaeda.) Despite the information in Drumheller's memo, Clinton went on television the next day and blamed the attack on a spontaneous protest that was a result of a blasphemous YouTube video.

If this seems too much like it was ripped from the pages of a spy novel, it is hardly the only time *60 Minutes* has been suspected of manipulating coverage to benefit Hillary Clinton and the Obama administration. In an interview with *60 Minutes* the day after Benghazi, President Obama told Steve Kroft it was "too early to know" whether Benghazi was a terror attack. A month later, whether Obama would admit that the attack was terrorism became a flashpoint in the presidential race, particularly during the second presidential debate, where GOP candidate Mitt Romney accused Obama of playing fast and loose with the truth. Though the clip of Obama vacillating about whether it had been a terrorist attack had tremendous news value, CBS, instead of rebroadcasting it, sat on the footage and quietly released a transcript of the interview two days before the election. In the meantime, former CBS investigative reporter Sharyl Attkisson charges that twice in five days following the presidential debate CBS headquarters in New York inserted "the same line and Obama soundbite in an *Evening News* story to imply that the president had called Benghazi a terrorist attack the next day."

The latest revelation is only a week old: On October 1, two days after The Weekly Standard first reported that Drumheller worked simultaneously for *60 Minutes* and Hillary Clinton, CNN reported on a new batch of emails in

which a State Department official brags about planting questions in another *60 Minutes* report, this one about WikiLeaks. CBS News again told The Weekly Standard their intelligence consultant had nothing to do with another high-profile report on intelligence issues. CBS also declined to comment when specifically asked if they'd done any internal review to determine whether Drumheller had unfairly colored any of their politically sensitive reports. It's hard to deny that CBS and *60 Minutes*'s coverage of issues affecting Secretary of State Clinton has been suspiciously favorable. Aside from Drumheller's role, it is worth noting that CBS News president David Rhodes is the brother of White House deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes.

The House Select Committee on Benghazi dragged Blumenthal in for questioning this summer: After ignoring multiple requests, he had to be served by federal marshals. And when pressed about his specific relationship with Drumheller, Blumenthal was characteristically slippery.

It turns out Blumenthal had a lot to hide. On October 7, Benghazi committee chairman Trey Gowdy released a long letter with new emails revealing that Blumenthal and Drumheller—along with Cody Shearer, another Clinton operative with a dubious reputation—were working with Osprey Global Solutions, and the company stood to profit from U.S. involvement in Libya. Gowdy promises to release many more emails spelling this out. The Benghazi committee could also release a transcript of Blumenthal's appearance before a closed-door session before the end of the year. If Blumenthal's testimony and the contents of the emails don't match, a big scandal is going to get bigger.

As for what was happening at CBS News, unfortunately the man best positioned to clear the air is unavailable. Tyler Drumheller died in August after a bout with pancreatic cancer. But with many more email revelations coming, both CBS News and Hillary Clinton are going to have to answer some pointed and uncomfortable questions. ♦

Equal Opportunity Terrorism

The Islamic State's female officials.

by Nina Shea & Farahnaz Ispahani

On September 29, the State Department added British citizen Sally Jones to its list of foreign terrorists. Jones is a 46-year-old punk rocker who converted to Islam and moved from Kent to Raqqa to join the Islamic State in 2013. She is also newly widowed, having lost her 21-year-old husband, ISIS hacker Junaid Hussain, in an American airstrike targeting him a few weeks ago. "Mr. and Mrs. Terror," as Hussain and Jones came to be known, were active on social media to extend the Islamic State's reach in the West. The State Department announcement duly noted that the pair had published a "hit list" of American military personnel to encourage lone wolf attacks, recruited foreign women for ISIS, and in August offered instruction in homemade bomb-making for attacks in Britain.

Jones clearly deserves to be on the terror list and to be on it in her own right. She is no innocent, duped into a life of terror, or pushover for male domination. In fact, she is living refutation of the theory that female empowerment alone is the path to Islamic moderation, as the State Department has long maintained. Women, too, can be seduced by radical Islamic ideology.

An old Facebook photo shows Jones in the costume of a Catholic nun, holding a gun. In her recent posts, she is shown wearing Islamic garb, with an AK-47 assault rifle. She tweets such violent threats as "You Christians all need beheading with a nice blunt knife and stuck on the railings at Raqqa. . . . Come here I'll do it for you." Lately she is taking credit for an online posting of the home address of the Navy SEAL who claimed to have killed Osama bin Laden, along with an appeal for American jihadists to murder him. It's not for nothing that State designates her a "fighter."

Women militants like Jones are on the front lines in enforcing the Islamic State's totalitarian system in the Khanssaa Brigade. Reportedly led by British women, the brigade is a morality enforcement militia by women against women. In the PBS documentary *Escaping ISIS*, two young members who functioned as Khanssaa shock troops before recently defecting in Turkey reported little regret about their jobs patrolling markets for female dress code violators, whom they would detain and lash 20 to 40 times with cables. Khanssaa is also responsible for enforcing the male guardianship regime, the Islamic State's principal means of institutionalizing the subservience of women within its territory. Though they don't hold rank or engage in battle, Khanssaa officers receive weapons training.

Jones, aka Umm Hussain al-Britani, has played an instrumental role in the Khanssaa Brigade, which, among other atrocities, has institutionalized the revival of sexual slavery. Khanssaa officials are reported to be the main enforcers of the rules issued by the ISIS *fatwa* department for its slave houses. Jones is hardly alone.

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Over several months before being killed last February while an ISIS captive, 26-year-old American humanitarian worker Kayla Mueller was repeatedly raped by the Islamist terror group's highest leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. This was not just one more battlefield atrocity. Using the group's only American female hostage, the "caliph" was setting a precedent—one that would revive the long-abandoned institution of *sabaya*, the enslavement of female infidels captured in battle and their use by jihadists for sex. Baghdadi blessed these serial rapes, not only as acceptable, but as moral behavior for ISIS men. Since then, slavery, rape, and sexual abuse at the hands of ISIS have become the fate of thousands of Yazidi women and girls, as well as smaller numbers of Christians, Shiite Muslims, and females of other religious minorities.

Recent reporting has uncovered numerous details of ISIS's enslavement and sexual abuse of female "unbelievers," each instance more extreme than the last. But often overlooked amid the victims' horrifying accounts is the indispensable role played by Jones and other female officials in institutionalizing sexual slavery in the Islamic State.

It was, in fact, an Iraqi woman, Nasrin As'ad Ibrahim, commonly known as Umm Sayyaf, the wife of ISIS chief financier Abu Sayyaf (also now deceased, killed in May by American special forces), who organized ISIS's use of *sabaya*, and who personally managed Kayla's enslavement. We know of Kayla's ordeal from media accounts of interviews with her parents, who were briefed by U.S. officials after questioning Umm Sayyaf, and with a teenage Yazidi girl who had been chained with Kayla in the Sayyaf home.

From Umm Sayyaf, American interrogators uncovered the existence of a wives' club of the ISIS leadership. These women gather and exchange intelligence to transmit to their powerful husbands. Precisely because they are not suspected, they are given responsibility to carry out missions and provided with deep knowledge of ISIS's financial and tactical operations.

Jones, as the State Department noted, served as an ISIS propagandist. She and others like her have already lured some 550 foreign Muslim women, who, as potential brides, are used, in turn, to lure the foreign men who will be suicide bombers and militants—an estimated 30,000 so far, with 1,000 new arrivals every month. They aggressively employ social media to portray the ISIS war zone as an Islamic utopia, replete with free houses, taken from those who've been killed or have fled, and household appliances. Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhajirah is a propagandist who defends slavery and forced sex with female slaves on theological grounds. In the May issue of *ISIS Dabiq* magazine, she stresses that becoming enslaved to a Muslim is actually a blessing for the infidel slave girls for it can lead them to Islam. Holding this belief, Abu Abdullah al-Ameriki, a Muslim convert, is an American ISIS leader who prays before and after raping his captives, it was revealed in late September on CNN by Bazi, a 20-year-old Yazidi woman who managed to escape from his home in Syria.

Several women medical doctors in Mosul courageously defied ISIS and were consequently punished with death. But other female doctors are cooperating and have even moved to Islamic State-ruled territory to set up practice. Their OB-GYN skills are badly needed since males are barred from this field. But Zainab Bangura, the U.N. expert on sexual violence in conflict, herself a Muslim, provides disturbing evidence suggesting that some of these women doctors may be the Mengeles—the angels of death—of their day. For instance, she reports that a 21-year-old girl had been sold as a bride 22 times, and "every time this marriage was arranged, they had to do a surgical operation to her, to be able to rebuild her virginity so that she can become a virgin for her next marriage."

As the Islamic State has evolved, it is relying on women to perform roles beyond wife and mother that, while not involving combat, use or promote violence and provide essential support to the organization. For too long American forces seemed to underestimate such women, taking them to be simply victims within a large undifferentiated class of oppressed women.

Sally Jones before her conversion and, at right, more recently

In May, Umm Sayyaf was captured by U.S. Delta Force soldiers during a raid targeting and killing her husband. After questioning, she was released without charge to the Kurdish Regional Government. It's unthinkable that Jihadi John, who beheaded Jim Foley and Steven Sotloff, would have been dealt with the same way, though she is no less responsible for war crimes.

The Islamic State's female supporters demonstrate agency in carrying out egregious human rights abuses and terror. If the West is to understand and defeat the Islamic State, it must recognize these women for the serious threat they represent, and it must understand that ideology, not gender, explains Islamist extremism. Including Sally Jones on the terror list is a good start. ♦

IMAGES AT LEFT AND AT RIGHT: TWITTER

The Claws Are Out

When government bureaucrats attack.

BY GEOFFREY NORMAN

It has long been good sport to make fun of the government. Ronald Reagan did it with a fine, almost deft touch. "The nine most terrifying words in the English language," he would tell an audience, "are I'm from the government, and I'm here to help."

Just about everyone, at one time or another, has used the phrase "Good enough for government work," and we all know what it means: that something conforms to the high customer service standards one enjoys when shopping for stamps in the post office.

Government was a sort of easy punching bag and nobody much minded. It was considered harmless stuff. As long as we were compelled to have government, then we could gently mock the government we had. It was sort of an implicit deal. One of the benefits that came with being an American citizen.

Generous IRS head John Koskinen

But lately, government seems to have decided not to roll over and take it any more. The people in Washington who once routinely reported for work, did their jobs (more or less), and counted the days until they could retire on that splendidly guaranteed pension are now showing their teeth.

Consider three stories from the last week of September.

Start with everyone's favorite agency, the IRS. It has been a difficult couple of years for the tax collectors. They have been shown—conclusively to all save the mainstream media—to have engaged in politically selective enforcement of the law and even in harassment of people whose agenda might be considered antigovernment. Those would be Tea Party types.

The midlevel bureaucrat who had the most to tell about this practice—one Lois Lerner—dummied up when called to answer the question of a congressional committee. The agency denied everything and claimed to have innocently destroyed evidence that might have been useful to the committee. The big chief of the IRS told Congress, essentially, to stuff its investigation and, also, that if it didn't appropriate as much money as he said the agency needed to do its job, then the taxpayers would suffer even more than usual from slow and unprofessional service. Nobody doubted him, and he still has his job.

Well, in the waning days of September, we learned that the agency had enough money floating around to pay bonuses to more than 1,000 of its senior employees and that one of them, a lawyer, performed so ably that he got over a quarter of a million dollars. Furthermore, as reported by Paul Bedard in the *Washington Examiner*, ordinary IRS workers got $62.5 million in total bonuses in fiscal year 2013, which was when the targeting scandal first began to bubble. And then there was $50 million for conferences and $23.5 million for union activities. But no money to be spent for improving client services.

And aggravating as those numbers are—think about them when you are on hold, waiting to discuss a fine point of tax law on the IRS hotline—the most distressing thing is that it took a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit to pry them from the agency's claws.

Well, none of us has ever felt warmly about the IRS. But the Department of Veterans Affairs is a different story. It was not so long ago that pundits like Paul Krugman were writing that the proof government could deliver health care was right there in front of us in the form of Veterans Affairs. One merely needed eyes unblinded by right-wing ideology to see that the VA had a record of success that proved "a government agency can deliver better care at lower cost than the private sector." Ezra Klein, the left's tireless explainer of everything, went so far as to write, "The unquestioned leader in American health care is a government agency that employs 198,000 federal workers from five different unions, and nonetheless maintains short wait times and high consumer satisfaction."

Well, we all subsequently learned, the VA routinely denied health care to eligible veterans and covered it up through the usual bureaucratic legerdemain. And, in a nearly sublime exercise of arrogance, some of the responsible bureaucrats rewarded themselves with performance bonuses.

So late last month, as we learned of the IRS giving itself little gifts, it came out that VA executives had found a ploy that enabled them to get their fingers on some taxpayer cash. It is pretty simple, really. You get yourself transferred from one VA jurisdiction to another. Maybe get a little promotion along with the change of scenery. And then knock down moving expenses that would be justified if you were transporting priceless artworks. Which, by the way, is not so farfetched when it comes to the VA. It has recently come to light that the VA shelled out just under half a million for a rock sculpture that adorns the courtyard of its facility in Palo Alto. According to its designers, the rock is intended to evoke "a sense of transformation, rebuilding, and self-investigation."

Meanwhile, back in the real world of wage freezes and bureaucratic ploys for getting around them, 22 senior executives in the VA were transferred to positions where their salaries were increased or their responsibilities reduced. In the most egregious case, one VA bureaucrat in Washington used her authority to create a vacancy in Philadelphia and set herself up to fill it. The new job came with fewer

GETTY / ALEX WONG

Geoffrey Norman, a writer in Vermont, is a frequent contributor to The Weekly Standard.

responsibilities but the same money ($181,497), and the move up I-95 cost taxpayers a mere $300,000.

Responding to disclosure of this, the VA has said it will investigate and get back to us in 30 days. Which is its way of saying, "Buzz off, we are busy creating inspirational rock gardens."

Meanwhile, when the VA's scams and scandals first boiled over, the agency vowed to clean things up by the end of September. It missed the deadline, to the astonishment of no one. On September 28, the backlog of disability claims stood at more than 75,000.

Finally, there is the third entry in the trifecta. This one does not entail sleazy bureaucratic enrichment schemes or passive stonewalling of Congress but outright, proactive, and hostile acts by a federal police agency against a sitting member of Congress.

The Secret Service has had a bad run of late. It has been embarrassed by agents indulging in drunken orgies in foreign countries; failing to secure the White House to the point where an armed intruder made it inside; and driving into an active crime scene while off duty and possibly intoxicated.

Serious stuff, then. Serious enough to provoke a congressional investigation. To which the Secret Service responded with an effort to smear the member of the House who is leading the investigation. Seems Rep. Jason Chaffetz once attempted to become a member of the Secret Service and was turned down, the reasons for which remain in the agency's files. Governments hold on to that kind of information.

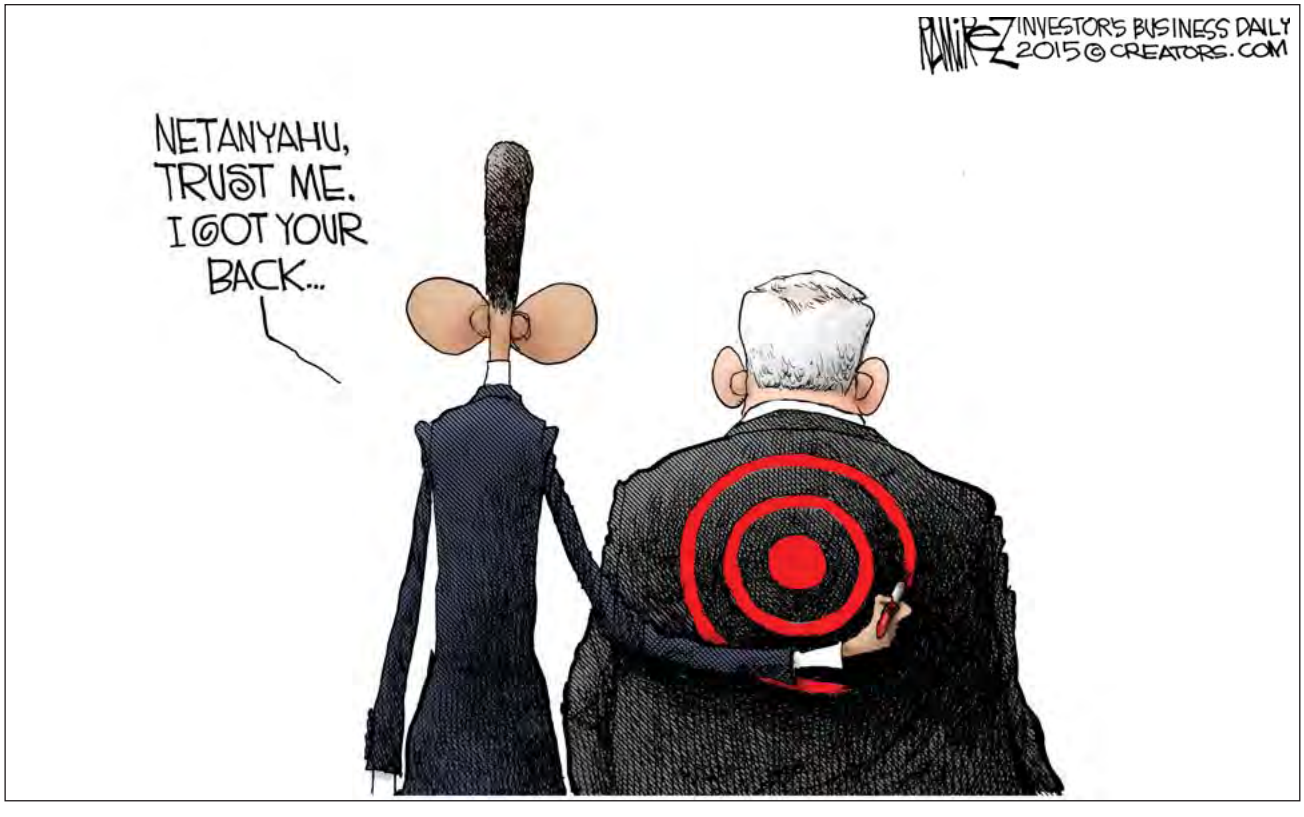
One of the agency's senior people wrote to another of the agency's (many) senior people that it might be a good idea to check out those files because "Some information that [Chaffetz] might find embarrassing needs to get out."

This is not the kind of ordinary Washington hardball that everyone is proud of playing. This is—not to put too fine a point on it—an exercise in blackmail. A bureaucracy—a law enforcement agency, no less—baring its fangs. And it wasn't just an idle memo exchange between two senior bureaucrats who undoubtedly have lots of time on their hands. According to an inspector general's report (and don't IGs have to be the busiest people in Washington, these days?), some 45 people in the agency accessed Chaffetz's records. All but 4 of them were unauthorized, and at least 18 of them senior staff.

The head of the agency said the usual things about how the facts would come out and the guilty be held accountable and this stood up until it was revealed that he himself was among the guilty and had forgotten this inconvenient fact.

This one may involve actual crimes—violations of the Privacy Act and all sorts of conspiracy raps and, who knows, maybe even a RICO beef. The Justice Department is fond of those. But, of course, Justice is unlikely to employ that or any of the other prosecutorial weapons in its arsenal. That would constitute what the military calls "friendly fire."

Justice, the Secret Service, Veterans Affairs, the Internal Revenue Service. All on the same team and all playing a game that has moved way beyond Washington hardball. ♦



Making It All Up

The behavioral sciences scandal

By Andrew Ferguson

One morning in August, the social science reporter for National Public Radio, a man named Shankar Vedantam, sounded a little shellshocked. You couldn't blame him.

Like so many science writers in the popular press, he is charged with reporting provocative findings from the world of behavioral science: ". . . and researchers were very surprised at what they found. The peer-reviewed study suggests that [dog lovers, redheads, Tea Party members] are much more likely to [wear short sleeves, participate in hockey fights, play contract bridge] than cat lovers, but only if [the barometer is falling, they are slapped lightly upside the head, a picture of Jerry Lewis suddenly appears in their cubicle . . .]."

I'm just making these up, obviously, but as we shall see, there's a lot of that going around.

Brian Nosek, right, with other members of the Reproducibility Project at the Center for Open Science, August 26, 2015

On this August morning *Science* magazine had published a scandalous article. The subject was the practice of behavioral psychology. Behavioral psychology is a wellspring of modern journalism. It is the source for most of those thrilling studies that keep reporters like Vedantam in business.

Over 270 researchers, working as the Reproducibility Project, had gathered 100 studies from three of the most prestigious journals in the field of social psychology. Then they set about to redo the experiments and see if they could get the same results. Mostly they used the materials and methods the original researchers had used. Direct replications are seldom attempted in the social sciences, even though the ability to repeat an experiment and get the same findings is supposed to be a cornerstone of scientific knowledge. It's the way to separate real information from flukes and anomalies.

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These 100 studies had cleared the highest hurdles that social science puts up. They had been edited, revised, reviewed by panels of peers, revised again, published, widely read, and taken by other social scientists as the starting point for further experiments. Except . . .

The researchers, Vedantam glumly told his NPR audience, "found something very disappointing. Nearly two-thirds of the experiments did not replicate, meaning that scientists repeated these studies but could not obtain the results that were found by the original research team."

"Disappointing" is Vedantam's word, and it was commonly heard that morning and over the following several days, as the full impact of the project's findings began to register in the world of social science. Describing the Reproducibility Project's report, other social psychologists, bloggers, and science writers tried out "alarming," "shocking," "devastating," and "depressing."

But in the end most of them rallied. They settled for just "surprised." Everybody was surprised that two out of three experiments in behavioral psychology have a fair chance of being worthless.

The most surprising thing about the Reproducibility Project, however—the most alarming, shocking, devastating, and depressing thing—is that anybody at all was surprised. The warning bells about the feebleness of behavioral science have been clanging for many years.

THINK POSITIVE

For one thing, the "reproducibility crisis" is not unique to the social sciences, and it shouldn't be a surprise it would touch social psychology too. The widespread failure to replicate findings has afflicted physics, chemistry, geology, and other real sciences. Ten years ago a Stanford researcher named John Ioannidis published a paper called "Why Most Published Research Findings Are False."

ANDREW SHURTLEFF / THE NEW YORK TIMES

"For most study designs and settings," Ioannidis wrote, "it is more likely for a research claim to be false than true." He used medical research as an example, and since then most systematic efforts at replication in his field have borne him out. His main criticism involved the misuse of statistics: He pointed out that almost any pile of data, if sifted carefully, could be manipulated to show a result that is "statistically significant."

Statistical significance is the holy grail of social science research, the sign that an effect in an experiment is real and not an accident. It has its uses. It is indispensable in opinion polling, where a randomly selected sample of people can be statistically enhanced and then assumed to represent a much larger population.

But the participants in behavioral science experiments are almost never randomly selected, and the samples are often quite small. Even the wizardry of statistical significance cannot show them to be representative of any people other than themselves.

This is a crippling defect for experiments that are supposed to help predict the behavior of people in general. Two economists recently wrote a little book called *The Cult of Statistical Significance*, which demonstrated how easily a range of methodological flaws can be obscured when a researcher strains to make his experimental data statistically significant. The book was widely read and promptly ignored, perhaps because its theme, if incorporated into behavioral science, would lay waste to vast stretches of the literature.

Behavioral science shares other weaknesses with every field of experimental science, especially in what the trade calls "publication bias." A researcher runs a gauntlet of perverse incentives that encourages him to produce positive rather than negative results. Publish or perish is a pitiless mandate. Editors want to publish articles that will get their publications noticed, and researchers, hoping to get published and hired, oblige the tastes of editors, who are especially pleased to gain the attention of journalists, who hunger for something interesting to write about.

Negative results, which show that an experiment does not produce a predicted result, are just as valuable scientifically but unlikely to rouse the interest of Shankar Vedantam and his colleagues. And positive results can be got relatively easily. Behavioral science experiments yield mounds of data. A researcher assumes, like the boy in the old joke, that there must be a pony in there somewhere. After some data are selected and others left aside, the result is often a "false positive"—interesting if true, but not true.

Publication bias, compounded with statistical weakness, makes a floodtide of false positives. "Much of the scientific literature, perhaps half, may simply be untrue," wrote the editor of the medical journal *Lancet* not long ago. Following the Reproducibility Project, we now know his guess was probably too low, at least in the behavioral sciences. The literature, continued the editor, is "afflicted by studies with small sample sizes, tiny effects, invalid exploratory analyses, and flagrant conflicts of interest, together with an obsession for pursuing fashionable trends of dubious importance."

Describing the Reproducibility Project's report, social psychologists, bloggers, and science writers tried out 'alarming,' 'shocking,' 'devastating,' and 'depressing.' But in the end, they settled for just 'surprised.' Everybody was surprised that two out of three experiments in behavioral psychology have a fair chance of being worthless.

Behavioral science suffers from these afflictions only more so. Surveys have shown that published studies in social psychology are five times more likely to show positive results—to confirm the experimenters' hypothesis—than studies in the real sciences.

This raises two possibilities. Either behavioral psychologists are the smartest researchers, and certainly the luckiest, in the history of science—or something is very wrong. And we don't have to assume bad faith on the part of social scientists, although it helps. The last three years have brought several well-publicized cases of prominent researchers simply making up data. An anonymous poll four years ago showed that 15 percent of social psychologists admitted using questionable research practices, from overmassaging their data to fabricating it outright. Thirty percent reported they had seen firsthand other researchers do the same.

THE LAB KIDS

Behavioral science has many weaknesses unique to itself. Remember that the point of the discipline is to discover general truths that will be useful in predicting human behavior. More than 70 percent of the world's published psychology studies are generated in the United States. Two-thirds of them draw their subjects exclusively from the pool of U.S. undergraduates, according to a survey by a Canadian economist named Joseph Henrich and two colleagues. And most of those are students who enroll in psychology classes. White, most of them; middle- or upper-class; college educated, with a

taste for social science: not John Q. Public.

This is a problem—again, widely understood, rarely admitted. College kids are irresistible to the social scientist: They come cheap, and hundreds of them are lying around the quad with nothing better to do. Taken together, Henrich and his researchers said, college students in the United States make "one of the worst subpopulations one could study for generalizing about Homo sapiens." Different nationalities show a large variation in precisely the kinds of responses today's social scientists love to study and generalize about: sexual and racial biases, expectations about the effects of power and money, attitudes toward social cooperation, habits of moral reasoning—even "spatial cognition." Deep differences are found as well within subpopulations of Americans according to age, income, geographical upbringing, and educational levels.

"U.S. undergraduates exhibit demonstrable differences, not only from non-university educated Americans, but even from previous generations of their own families," Greg Downey wrote of Henrich's study. The variations are found even between groups of college students, and from one college to the next. Henrich wryly suggested a prominent journal change its name to *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology of American Undergraduate Psychology Students*.

"Despite their narrow samples," Henrich wrote, "behavioral scientists often are interested in drawing inferences about the *human* mind. This inferential step is rarely challenged or defended—with some important exceptions—despite the lack of any general effort to assess how well results from [their] samples generalize to the species. This lack of epistemic vigilance underscores the prevalent, though implicit, assumption that the findings one derives from a particular sample will generalize broadly."

The defenders of behavioral science like to say it is the study of "real people in real-life situations." In fact, for the most part, it is the study of American college kids sitting in psych labs. And the participation of such subjects is complicated from the start: The undergrads agree to become experiment fodder because they are paid to do so or because they're rewarded with course credit. Either way, they do what they do for personal gain of some kind, injecting a set of motivations into the lab that make generalizing even riskier.

THE DANGERS OF MONOCHROME

Behind the people being experimented upon are the people doing the experimenting, the behavioral scientists themselves. In important ways they are remarkably monochromatic. We don't need to belabor the point. In a survey of the membership of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, 85 percent of respondents called themselves liberal, 6 percent conservative, 9 percent moderate. Two percent of graduate students and postdocs called themselves conservative. "The field is shifting leftward," wrote one team of social psychologists (identifying themselves as "one liberal, one centrist, two libertarians, two who reject characterization," and no conservatives). "And there are hardly any conservative students in the pipeline." A more recent survey of over 300 members of another group of experimental psychologists found 4 who voted for Mitt Romney.

The self-correction essential to science is less likely to happen among people whose political and cultural views are so uniform. This is especially true when so many of them specialize in studying political and cultural behavior. Their biases are likely to be invisible to themselves and their colleagues. Consider this abstract from a famous study on conservatism [with technical decoration excised]:

> A meta-analysis confirms that several psychological variables predict political conservatism: death anxiety; system instability; dogmatism—intolerance of ambiguity; openness to experience; uncertainty tolerance; needs for order, structure, and closure; integrative complexity; fear of threat and loss; and self-esteem. The core ideology of conservatism stresses resistance to change and justification of inequality and is motivated by needs that vary situationally and dispositionally to manage uncertainty and threat.

Only a scientist planted deep in ideology could read such a summary and miss the self-parodic assumptions buried there. Yet few people in behavioral sciences bat an eye. "Political Conservatism as Motivated Social Cognition," which this paragraph is taken from, has been cited by nearly 2,000 other studies, accepted as a sober, scientific portrait of the "conservative" temperament.

In his book *Moral, Believing Animals*, Christian Smith, a sociologist at Notre Dame, described the worldview that undergirds politicized social science.

"Once upon a time," Smith writes, describing the agreed-upon "narrative," "the vast majority of human persons suffered in societies and social institutions that were unjust, unhealthy, repressive, and oppressive. These traditional societies were reprehensible because of their deep-rooted inequality, exploitation, and irrational traditionalism."

Now, however, conditions have been improved, a bit, after much struggle. And yet the struggle goes on. "There is much work to be done to dismantle the powerful vestiges of inequality, exploitation, and repression." Behavioral science, in this view, is part of the ongoing project of redress. It can counteract the psychological processes by which the powerful subjugate the powerless.

CONFIRMING CONFORMITY

Aping the forms and methods of physical scientists, crusading social scientists are bound to produce a lot of experiments that are quasi-scientific. They will resist replication if only because an experiment is just a one-off, a way to agitate and persuade rather than to discover. Scientists themselves speak of "confirmation bias," an unnecessary term for a common human truth: We tend to believe what we want to believe.

When researchers, journal editors, peer-review panels, colleagues, and popular journalists share the same beliefs, confirmation bias will flourish. It's human nature! Reading a typical behavioral science study involving race or sex, privilege or wealth or power, you can find it hard to distinguish between the experimenters' premises and their conclusions. Better to scan the literature for what lawyers call "admissions against interest"—findings that contradict the prevailing creed. These are rare, but they exist, and they have undermined much of what behavioral scientists think they know about human behavior.

An image from footage of Stanley Milgram's experiment at Yale. A volunteer, at rear, watches as the supposed target of a memory study rolls up his sleeve and is shown how to connect electrodes, May 1962.

The subversion comes in many forms. A finding can often be undermined simply by looking closely at how the experiment was performed. Perhaps the most famous experiment in all of social science—I think we're supposed to call it iconic—was undertaken in the early 1960s by Stanley Milgram, an assistant professor at Yale. Milgram was struck by the trial of the Nazi mass-murderer Adolf Eichmann, then underway in Israel.

His hunch was that Eichmann wasn't singularly evil but merely a cog in the Nazi machine—a petty little man following great big orders. Nearly anyone, Milgram mused, could be induced to override his conscience and perform evil acts if he were instructed to do so by a sufficiently powerful authority. Even someone from Yale.

This has since become known as conformity (not confirmation) bias, another elaborate and unnecessary verbalism invented to describe a home truth: We crave the approval of our friends and families, of people we take to be like ourselves. But conformity bias has been stretched much farther. The enormous power it holds to guide our behavior has crystalized as a settled fact in behavioral science.

To test his theory Milgram told his subjects that they were participating in a study of "learning." A man in a lab coat took the subjects one at a time into a room and told them to turn an electric dial to shock a stranger in a room next door. They were to increase the strength of the shock by increments, finally to the point of inflicting severe pain. (The shock generator was a dummy; no one was actually hurt.)

The results were an instant sensation. The *New York Times* headline told the story: "Sixty-five Percent in Test Blindly Obey Order to Inflict Pain." Two out of three of his subjects, Milgram reported, had cranked the dial all the way up when the lab-coat guy insisted they do so. Milgram explained the moral, or lack thereof: The "chief finding" of his study, he wrote, was "the extreme willingness of adults to go to almost any lengths on the command of an authority." Milgram, his admirers believed, had unmasked the Nazi within us all.

Did he? A formidable sample of more than 600 subjects took part in his original study, Milgram said. As the psychologist Gina Perry pointed out in a devastating account, *Beyond the Shock Machine*, the number was misleading. The 65 percent figure came from a "baseline" experiment; the 600 were spread out across more than a dozen other experiments that were variations of the baseline. A large majority of the 600 did not increase the voltage to inflict severe pain. As for the the participants in the baseline experiment who did inflict the worst shocks, they were 65 percent of a group of only 40 subjects. They were all male, most of them college students, who had been recruited through a newspaper advertisement and paid $4.50 to participate.

The famous 65 percent thus comprised 26 men. How we get from the 26 Yalies in a New Haven psych lab to the antisemitic psychosis of Nazi Germany has never been explained.

Many replications of the Milgram experiments have succeeded, many have failed. But its importance to behavioral science cannot be overstated. It helped establish an idea that lies at the root of social psychology: Human beings are essentially mindless creatures at the mercy of internal impulses and outside influences of which they're unaware. We may think we know what we're doing most of the time, that we obey our consciences more often than not, that we can usually decide to do one thing and not another according to our own will. Behavioral scientists insist they know otherwise. This is the "mindlessness bias," a just-invented

(by me) term to describe the tendency of social psychologists to believe that their subjects are chumps.

There are other interpretations of Milgram's results, after all, that are not quite so insulting to human nature. Perhaps the shockers were indeed conscious moral agents; maybe they had been persuaded they were participating in Science and, given the unlikelihood that a Yale Ph.D. student would let them cause harm, they were willing to do what they were told to advance the noble cause. Later interviews showed that most subjects thought this at the time of the experiments and were glad they had participated for precisely this reason. Others said they assumed the experiment was a ruse but went along anyway—some because they didn't want to disappoint that nice man in the lab coat, some because they worried they might not get the $4.50. The theory that they did what they did "blindly," as the *Times* headline said, is an assumption, not a finding.

As one would-be replicator of the Milgram experiment, a heterodox researcher named Michael Shermer, wrote: "Contrary to Milgram's conclusion that people blindly obey authorities to the point of committing evil deeds because we are so susceptible to environmental conditions, I saw in our subjects a great behavioral reluctance and moral disquietude every step of the way."

PRIMED FOR SUCCESS

Milgram's experiment has fared better than other demonstrations of the mindlessness bias. For a generation now, "priming" has been a favorite way for behavioral psychologists to demonstrate the slack-jawed credulity of their subjects. The existence of "perceptual priming" is well established among real scientists: If you talk to a person about zebras, he will be more likely to pick out the word "stripes" from a word jumble than a person who wasn't thinking about zebras. This is an unconscious tendency that human beings undoubtedly possess, and the mechanism behind it is well understood by cognitive scientists.

But social psychologists set out to prove that social behavior, not just perception, could be determined by priming. Thanks to the pop science writer Malcolm Gladwell, who wrote about it in his bestselling book *Blink*, the most famous experiment in support of social priming involved a group of psych students (who else?) from New York University.

Thirty students were each given groups of words and told to arrange the words into coherent sentences. One set of students were given words that might be associated with old people: Florida, bingo, wrinkle. . . . The other group wasn't primed; they were given "neutral" words, like thirsty, clean, and private. None of the students was told the true purpose of the experiment. (Behavioral science usually requires researchers to deceive people to prove how easily people can be deceived.)

As students finished the task, a researcher used a hidden stopwatch to measure how quickly each walked from the lab. The ones who hadn't been primed took an average of 7.23 seconds to walk down the hallway. The ones who had been primed with the aging words took 8.28 seconds. The second group walked slower, just like old people! The kids couldn't help themselves.

The researchers barely disguised their feelings of triumph.

"It remains widely assumed," they wrote in their study, "that behavioral responses to the social environment are under conscious control." But not anymore, not after this! Here science had discovered the "automatic behavior effect." Some scientists call it "automaticity" for short. If you subtly set people up with the right cues, they'll start doing things, without thinking, that they didn't even know they were doing.

"The implications . . . ," wrote the researchers, "would appear to be formidable."

Oh, they were. Behavioral science went priming crazy. Since its publication 20 years ago, "Automaticity of Social Behavior" has been cited in more than 3,700 published studies—an average of more than 15 studies a month, a staggering figure. Social psychologists discovered that priming empowered them to trick their subjects in many wonderful ways.

One experiment found that students primed with words about honesty became more honest; another found that if you fed them "achievement-related words" they would do better on achievement tests. And you didn't need to use words. Another experiment found that subjects who held a heavy clipboard while conducting a job interview took social problems more seriously. If you showed subjects a picture of a college professor, their test scores improved. They reported feeling closer to their families if you showed them a graph with two points close together; if the points were farther apart, they said they felt more distant from their families.

The wonders rolled on. Students who were asked to type a morally questionable passage subsequently rated cleansing products more highly than other consumer products. (Because they felt dirty, see?) If they were required to wash their hands after describing an unethical act, they were less likely to offer help to someone who asked for it. (Because they had already washed away their guilt and felt no need to atone.) If they talked about an unethical act, they chose an offered bottle of mouthwash over hand sanitizer. (Because, without knowing it, they wanted to wash their mouths out.) And of course they preferred hand sanitizer

over mouthwash if they wrote about it by hand. Because they unconsciously thought their hands were dirty.

Perhaps the summit of priming experiments was reached by researchers at Cornell. They contended that political conservatives were more obsessed with cleanliness than liberals. And sure enough: When they placed students closer to a bottle of cleanser, the students became more conservative in their views. Science is amazing.

TOO GOOD TO CHECK

It was left to Gladwell to summarize the sorry truth that priming revealed about ourselves. The experiments, he wrote, were "disturbing" because they "suggest that what we think of as free will is largely an illusion: much of the time, we are simply operating on automatic pilot, and the way we think and act—and *how well* we think and act on the spur of the moment—are a lot more susceptible to outside influences than we realize."

Book buyers found the news of their own mindlessness more titillating than disturbing. *Blink* sold more than two million copies. Gladwell became a sage to the nation's wealthiest and most powerful businessmen and policymakers, bringing them the latest word from the psych labs—a hipster version of the ancient soothsayers placing chicken entrails before the emperor.

Behavioral scientists hope that news of the automatic behavior effect will corrode the ordinary person's self-understanding as a rational being in control of himself, more or less. Automaticity works all the way down, to where our moral views take shape. "Moral judgment . . . ," wrote one behavioral scientist recently, is "a kind of rapid automatic process more akin to the judgments animals make as they move through the world, feeling themselves drawn toward or away from various things."

The question that Gladwell and his fellow journalists never asked, at least in public, was the crucial one: Are social-priming effects real? Do the results from the experiments truly constitute scientific knowledge? Or are they, as we journalists say, too good to check? The original researchers say their study has "been replicated dozens of times all over the world."

This is true enough. But these studies are "conceptual replications"—experiments that are loosely modeled on the original experiment, or that simply accept its finding as a starting point for further manipulations.

The question that Gladwell and his fellow journalists never asked, at least in public, was the crucial one: Are social-priming effects real? Do the results from the experiments truly constitute scientific knowledge? Or are they, as we journalists say, too good to check?

Direct replications, on the other hand, including those for the Reproducibility Project, have failed to find a social-priming effect. Of seven replications undertaken for a project in 2014, only one succeeded. Again, no reason to be surprised. If "Automaticity of Social Behavior" hadn't fit so snugly into the ideology of social science, the weaknesses of the original study would have been more readily seen.

For starters, the samples used in the study were small—the finding from one version of the experiment turned on the behavior of 13 students. If you want to make split-second measurements, you should be able to do better than to put a stopwatch in the hands of a furtive grad student. The opportunities for the researchers to signal the true purpose of the experiment to the subjects, or otherwise to influence the outcome, were too great to ignore.

The reported effects were themselves weak, and they began to appear robust only after statistical enhancement. And no one, then or now, has been able to explain how social priming was supposed to work, technically. What possible mechanism, whether physical or psychological, would cause a word with many different connotations (Florida) to trigger the same stereotype (old people) and result in the same behavior (slow walking) in many different subjects?

When three researchers undertook a direct replication of the original social-priming experiment in 2012, they used a much larger sample in hopes of getting stronger effects. To measure walking speeds, they replaced the stopwatch with infrared signals and automatic timers.

When their replication found no evidence for social priming, they did something devilish. They turned their attention to their own researchers, the people hired to test the subjects. They did another experiment. Half of their experimenters were led to believe that the primed subjects would walk slowly, half were told the primed subjects would walk quickly. The first group of experimenters were far more likely to find a slow-walking effect than the second group of experimenters.

If there was a priming effect, in other words, it was operating on the people doing the experiment, not on the people being experimented upon. An earlier high-profile experiment, again using sensors, automatic timers, and a larger sample, likewise failed to confirm the slow-walking effect.

The lead author of "Automaticity," John Bargh of Yale, responded as a dogmatist would, with ad hominem attacks

on the researchers, accusing them of bad faith, incompetence, and a terrible case of (dis)confirmation bias. He and his defenders pointed to the many conceptual replications and argued, correctly, that a failure to reproduce an effect is not the same as proving it doesn't exist.

But the bad news for social priming keeps coming. The lead researcher on one of the social-priming replications next turned to "social distance" priming—the experiments judging familial closeness with points on a graph. It was a direct replication, and it failed. Next came a direct replication of the experiment showing that priming with "achievement words" led to higher achievement. No such result could be reproduced. An attempt to replicate the "honesty" experiment came next. Does speaking words about honesty make you more honest? The original finding had become a staple of the literature, cited in 1,100 studies. No effect was found in the direct replication.

The researchers concluded drily: "These failures to replicate, along with other recent results, suggest that the literature on goal priming requires some skeptical scrutiny." Because of the tendency to publish only positive results and ignore negative findings, "a published literature can easily provide a very misleading picture of reality." And if many kinds of priming can't be replicated under supposedly controlled laboratory conditions, how predictable could the effect be in the kaleidoscope of daily life, where human beings are battered and pummeled by an infinite number of influences? Malcolm Gladwell, meanwhile, has moved on to other things.

EPIDEMIC OF FAILURE

Even before the Reproducibility Project, direct replications failed to find evidence for many other effects that the social psychology literature treats as settled science. "Single-exposure conditioning"—if you're offered a pen while your favorite music is playing, you'll like the pen better than one offered while less appealing music plays. The "primacy of warmth effect," which tells us our perceptions are more favorable to people described as "warm" than to people described as "competent." The "Romeo and Juliet effect": Intervention by parents in a child's romantic relationship only intensifies the feelings of romance. None of these could be directly replicated.

Perhaps most consequentially, replications failed to validate many uses of the Implicit Association Test, which is the most popular research tool in social psychology. Its designers say the test detects unconscious biases, including racial biases, that persistently drive human behavior. Sifting data from the IAT, social scientists tell us that at least 75 percent of white Americans are racist, whether they know it or not, even when they publicly disavow racial bigotry. This implicit racism induces racist behavior as surely as explicit racism. The paper introducing the IAT's application to racial attitudes has been cited in more than 6,600 studies, according to Google Scholar. The test is commonly used in courts and classrooms across the country.

That the United States is in the grip of an epidemic of implicit racism is simply taken for granted by social psychologists—another settled fact too good to check. Few of them have ever returned to the original data. Those who have done so have discovered that the direct evidence linking IAT results to specific behavior is in fact negligible, with small samples and weak effects that have seldom if ever been replicated. One team of researchers went through the IAT data on racial attitudes and behavior and concluded there wasn't much evidence either way.

"The broad picture that emerges from our reanalysis," they wrote, "is that the published results [confirming the IAT and racism] are likely to be conditional and fragile and do not permit broad conclusions about the prevalence of discriminatory tendencies in American society." Their debunking paper, "Strong Claims and Weak Evidence," has been cited in fewer than 100 studies.

MOUNTING A DEFENSE

Amid the rubble of the replication crisis, the faithful of social science have mounted a number of defenses. "Critics will be delighted to crow over the findings of low levels of reproducibility," one wrote in the *Guardian*. "However, the crowing might die down when it is pointed out that problems of reproducibility have been raising alarm bells in many other areas of science, including some much 'harder' subjects."

Defenders cited a host of biases to which the original researchers might have succumbed, especially publication bias and selective data bias. And besides, the defenders pointed out, a failed replication doesn't tell us too much: The original study might be wrong, the replication might be wrong, they might both be wrong or right. Small changes in methodology might influence the results; so might the pool of people the samples are drawn from, depending on age, nation of origin, education level, and a long list of other factors. The original study might be reproducible in certain environments and not in others. The skill of the individual researcher might enter in as well.

All true! Rarely do social scientists concede so much about the limitations of their trade; the humility is as welcome as it is unexpected. But these are not so much defenses of social psychology as explanations for why it isn't really science. If the point is to discover universal tendencies that help us predict how human beings will behave, then the fragility of its experimental findings renders them nearly

useless. The chasm that separates the psych lab from everyday life looks unbridgeable. And the premise of behavioral science—that the rest of us are victims of unconscious forces that only social scientists can detect—looks to be not merely absurd but pernicious.

For even as it endows social scientists with bogus authority—making them the go-to guys for marketers, ideologues, policymakers, and anyone else who strives to manipulate the public—it dehumanizes the rest of us. The historian and humanist Jacques Barzun noticed this problem 50 years ago in his great book *Science: The Glorious Entertainment*. Social psychology proceeds by assuming that the objects (a revealing word) of its study lack the capacity to know and explain themselves accurately. This is the capacity that makes us uniquely human and makes self-government plausible. We should know enough to be wary of any enterprise built on its repudiation.

This is probably why humility among social scientists never lasts; it's not in the job description. No sooner do social scientists concede the limitations of their work than they begin the exaggerations again. A week after the Reproducibility Project set off its cluster bomb, President Obama's Social and Behavioral Sciences Team issued its first annual report. (Who knew there was such a thing?) The team describes itself as "a cross-agency group of experts in applied behavioral science that translates findings and methods from the social and behavioral sciences into improvements in Federal policies and programs."

We can be relieved that the work of the team is much less consequential than it sounds. So far, according to the report, the team has made two big discoveries. First, reminding veterans, via email, about the benefits they're entitled to increases the number of veterans applying for the benefits. Second, if you simplify complicated application forms for government financial aid—for college students and farmers, let's say—the number of students and farmers who apply for financial aid will increase. "One behaviorally designed letter variant" increased the number of farmers asking for a microloan "from 0.09 to 0.11 percent."

Evidently impressed with all this science, President Obama issued an executive order directing federal agencies "to use behavioral insights to better serve the American people." Agency heads and personnel directors were instructed to "recruit behavioral science experts to join the Federal government as necessary to achieve the goals of this directive." We should have known! After all the bogus claims and hyped findings and preening researchers, after the tortured data and dazed psych students, this is the final product of the mammoth efforts of behavioral science: a federal jobs program for behavioral scientists.

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ONWARD

A few days after his report on the Reproducibility Project, Shankar Vedantam was back at his post. He sounded much better, and with good reason: He had found a new study. Israeli researchers had examined why girls, who do better than boys on math tests, shy away from math courses when they get to high school. This is a very hot topic in social science, and in journalism.

Perhaps chastened by the findings of the Reproducibility Project, Vedantam told listeners that the study would someday need to be replicated, but for now . . .

"The new study suggests," Vedantam said, "that some of these outcomes might be driven by the unconscious bias of elementary school teachers."

"*Suggests . . . some of . . . might be . . .* " He was showing admirable restraint.

But then he must have figured, what the hell. In the rest of his report he treated the bias as unassailable fact.

So did the researchers. NPR listeners, if they had the energy, could have downloaded the study for themselves. They would have seen firsthand that the study compared apples and oranges, that it was statistically suspect, and that it recorded no instance of actual bias but simply assumed what it hoped to prove: that the bias of elementary school teachers was keeping women out of mathematics.

Vedantam showed great sympathy for these deluded teachers, most of them female, who were victimizing their female students without knowing it.

"It's hard to imagine that these teachers actually have conscious animosity toward the girls in their classroom," said NPR's social science reporter. "Much more likely these biases are operating at an unconscious level."

Not anymore! The headline over Vedantam's NPR blog said it all: "Hard Evidence: Teachers' Unconscious Biases Contribute to Gender Disparity."

Hand in hand with journalism, Science marches on and on. ♦

A Failing Grade

Hillary Clinton's Arkansas education record

By Jonathan Leaf

For Republican presidential candidates planning to run against Hillary Clinton, the critique of her record these days often begins and ends with Benghazi and her email server. This is partly because these are so damning but partly because there's a near-universal assumption that Clinton has no domestic record to run against. After all, her health care initiative famously failed.

Like many things that are generally believed, however, this is simply not true. In fact, as chair of the Arkansas Educational Standards Committee, Hillary Clinton undertook one of the most dramatic policy initiatives in America back when she was the state's first lady. That effort helped push her husband into the front ranks of Democratic governors, paving the way for his presidency.

Hillary Clinton at a meeting of the Arkansas Educational Standards Committee in July 1983

Hillary's education plan was not cheap. It called for what Bill Clinton himself admitted was "the biggest tax increase for education in Arkansas history," a 1 percentage-point increase in the state sales tax. Of course, proportionately this was paid more by the poor than the rich. Understandably, all Hillary Clinton biographies prominently feature her role in enacting the Clintons' education plan and their claim that they were "keeping faith" with the state's children.

And Hillary's role was central. She helped develop the plan, and her personal intervention and testimony before the assembly committee that held the bill up is what pushed it through. That performance led state representative Lloyd George to remark that Arkansas had elected the "wrong Clinton." It followed on her meetings in each of the state's 75 counties to drum up support for the bill. Later Hillary's intense personal lobbying would guide the bill through the legislature's main session, where it passed by one vote.

That much of the story is Arkansas political legend, and every Hillary biographer, whether of the left or the right, writes about it.

What's curious is that no biographer or journalist has ever bothered to examine the official data on what resulted. Those records tell a crucial story: one of calamitous failure.

To understand how and why the Clinton education plan proved so flawed, let's backtrack.

The immediate impetus for the education reform campaign the Clintons announced in 1983 was a state judicial ruling calling for greater equity in spending on primary and secondary schools. That decision, along with two subsequent Arkansas supreme court rulings on the subject, would become the focus of most state education legislation for the next quarter-century.

It's clear from their statements at the time that the Clintons understood the importance of improving Arkansas schools. Bill Clinton argued that with factory jobs going overseas, the state could no longer rely on manufacturing and needed a more skilled workforce. But Arkansas students were scoring poorly on national exams.

The Clintons' response focused on spending. That's perhaps not surprising since it's what education experts like Jonathan Kozol (a hero then and now to progressive reformers) were emphasizing. That spending on education and performance are not correlated was rarely acknowledged in the early 1980s. And it's still only grudgingly admitted. When I spoke at length about education reform under the Clintons with Mike Beebe, a later two-term Democratic governor who helped shepherd education bills out of the state senate in the 1980s, he managed to discourse on education for close to half an hour without ever talking about anything *except* spending.

And in 1983 Arkansas was spending comparatively little

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on schools. The state ranked 48th of 50 in disbursement of funds for education. Kindergarten was still optional and absent in many rural districts. Moreover, focusing on spending and narrowing the differences in the amounts provided for students was not simply something the state's high court had called for but was consistent with Hillary Clinton's ideological background as an adviser to the left-leaning Children's Defense Fund.

However, increasing spending—especially in poorer areas—was not all that was proposed. The Clintons' plan also called for increased funding for advanced courses at high schools. A public-school choice system was presented, but genuine charter schools were deliberately left out. Then there was one more thing added for political reasons.

Cleverly realizing that a proposal of a massive tax increase had to be matched to something perceived as adding value and not just cost, the Clintons demanded that all public school teachers in the state take and pass a minimum skills test.

In theory, this was not just sensible but necessary. Arkansas had the same problem most states have. Especially at the elementary school level, while there are some high-IQ instructors fond of reading Jane Austen, there are also teachers who are not much more than functionally literate. In Arkansas the problem was complicated by the fact that a large proportion of the lowest-skill teachers were black.

Thus, if the state were to zealously implement such a policy, it would have to fire hundreds if not thousands of teachers, and easily a third or more of those instructors would be minorities.

In his role as Clinton *consigliere*, Dick Morris came up with a solution. Since Morris's polling data indicated that Arkansas voters expected a 10 percent fail rate, the Clintons recalibrated the exam so only that number would flunk. This was well down from initial fail rates above one-third, and that was even when the test was, in the words of University of Arkansas education professor Jay P. Greene, "incredibly minimal."

Still, the Clintons watered down the requirement further by giving teachers who had failed a chance to retake the test until they passed it, over a period of up to two years. Then the test was put aside and never given again. In the end, only a handful of teachers lost their jobs.

Nonetheless, the test was strongly opposed by the state teachers' unions, and in both 1984 and 1986 the unions refused to endorse Bill Clinton. That, naturally, made him a hero to moderate Democrats nationally, and it led to Clinton's selection, along with Republican governor Lamar Alexander, to lead a national panel on education reform.

The Clintons' path to the White House had been laid out by this brilliant piece of "triangulation."

But what was happening with educational performance? That few have ever known the results is not surprising. Public school test data are a little like statistics on postal service mail delivery. While they surely exist, they are purposefully made obscure and arcane—then manipulated further.

The extent of the chicanery is hard to exaggerate. Education expert Chester Finn has pointed out that at one time all 50 states were claiming above average student test results.

A change from the state's use of the Metropolitan Achievement Test to the Stanford Achievement Test occurred in 1992 as Bill Clinton was running for president—just when data showing further drops in student performance might have been most damaging to the couple's political future.

There are many ways to conceal the truth. First, the data are typically released in limited sets that are sent only to state research libraries. The data are not put online. Then the numbers are arranged so that they cannot be readily compared with earlier numbers. An easy way to do that is by repeatedly changing the test given. Finally, state officials may simply refuse to provide old data sets to researchers, much less journalists.

The Clintons and their successors in Arkansas have used all these tricks. But the data are still out there. I was fortunate in that I began my research on this subject back in 1994. Yet even then, Arkansas officials would not, as I requested, provide me information dating from before 1987, and they would not give me data on anything more than their records of minimum performance tests for the first year they did provide. Arkansas uses two types of statewide student tests: In addition to its minimum performance tests, it also uses academic competency exams.

Let's look at the minimum performance data first. These tell us whether the number of children reaching the lowest level of intellectual competence has gone up or down. If we take 1988 as our base year, state minimum performance test data show that through the four years 1988-1992 the proportion of Arkansas third-graders failing to meet minimum standards increased in mathematics and held steady but dropped 1 point in reading. Sixth-grade students were doing just as poorly in language arts at the end of the period, and even worse in social studies and

math. Eighth-grade students were doing worse in reading and social studies, were just as ineffectual in math, and were improving only slightly in science.

And what of the academic tests? Arkansas changed its academic competency exams during this period, following several years of declining scores. The change from the state's use of the Metropolitan Achievement Test to the Stanford Achievement Test occurred in 1992 as Bill Clinton was running for president, just when data showing further drops in student performance might have been most damaging to the couple's political future.

The minimum performance findings cited above, however, are confirmed by the data on academic competency exams. Reading and math scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Tests either did not improve or dropped at *both* the fourth- and seventh-grade levels. In fact, in only 3 of 12 categories of rankings provided in these grades did Arkansas students actually manage to maintain their prior mediocre level of performance. In the other 9 categories they did worse.

Two years of comparison, 1992 and 1993, were provided me for the state's results on the Stanford Achievement Test, and here again reading scores were poor and, for younger students, declining. Furthermore, the data on elementary school students showed math scores were falling during the two years for which data were available. Of course, not being an Arkansas education official, I do not know what population of students nationally the children were being "normed" or compared against. As well, I don't know if the tests were of equal difficulty from year to year or were getting easier. ("Test drift" is a common problem with such tests.)

Who was responsible for this catastrophe? To get some perspective, it's worth looking at what little federal data on educational outcomes exists from the period before the Clintons gained power in Arkansas. The best generally available federal data on past educational performance are provided by Army induction tests to draftees, the most recent of which were conducted near the end of the Vietnam war.

Tests from the end of that period ranked draftees from 15 states below those from Arkansas on basic skills and intelligence tests. What the figures suggest, in short, is that six years before Clinton became governor, Arkansas was not at the nation's absolute bottom educationally. Most of the states around it in the deep South and in Appalachia were doing either somewhat or very much worse. By contrast, by the time the first state-by-state federal surveys of math performance were being done during the Bush administration, Arkansas ranked seventh from the bottom.

It is possible, of course, that the largest decline took place during the brief period between the end of American participation in the Vietnam war and Clinton's first inauguration. There is, however, little or no evidence from national surveys of SAT scores or anything else to suggest this.

What's more, the failure was compounded by corruption. The Clintons' last two commissioners of education, Tommy Venters and Burton Elliott, were both indicted in a massive kickback scandal involving payoffs for education department contracts. While neither went to prison, Elliott was forced to pay restitution. Also named in the 133-count federal indictment were 10 Democratic state senators.

When I spoke with the now-retired Elliott, he described Hillary as "hard-driving" and said that "she completed the project" of education reform in Arkansas, noting that he "always enjoyed working with her." Venters called her "very aggressive" and said she was "very involved."

When I asked Elliott what tangible results they had accomplished, he mentioned the watered-down teacher testing scheme and then referred to one math and science high school that had been set up in Hot Springs. That was all, it seemed, that he could think of to cite for a doubling of state spending on education. Like many education officials, he did not refer to performance data at all.

When I asked what their accomplishments were, Venters responded by saying "funding and implementing standards." I was not able to follow up and ask what he meant by standards as moments later he hung up the phone.

Venters's tenure as commissioner of education was also marked by a successful raid on the state teachers' retirement fund, which was unlawfully used to provide extra funds for schools on top of what came from the tax increase.

What were Hillary's and Bill's own responses to the havoc they had wrought at such great expense? Concerned about their next steps up the political ladder, the couple eventually made peace with the Arkansas branch of the National Education Association, the state's main teachers' union. Bill would get their support in his later political runs, and he would tell a national NEA convention in 1992 that were he elected president he would be "their partner." Here at least he was a man of his word, and there was, naturally, no push for vouchers or charter schools during the Clinton presidency.

Then in 2008, Hillary, not Obama, ran with the unions' support. When Hillary talks about education as an issue these days, she talks about making changes in policies regarding student loans. Professor Greene says that "since 1993 Hillary has been almost completely absent in educational policy debates." The result is that the unions are "comfortable with her. They don't think education will be a priority for her." He adds: "She'll do whatever is required to advance herself." ♦

'The Raft of the Medusa' by Théodore Géricault (1818-19)

Way of Illustration

The art of writing about art. BY MAUREEN MULLARKEY

The British painter Howard Hodgkin came to the Frick Collection some years ago to lecture. After pained attempts to deliver a prepared talk, he abandoned his notes for a monologue. Zig-zagging through art in general, his own work, and the historical canon, he came to that curious contemporary genre: *art writing*. Hodgkin dismissed legions of contemporary art writers with one sentence: "Too many people think they can write without ever having had to read." It was a nimble curtsy to his longtime friend Julian Barnes.

Maureen Mullarkey is a painter who writes about art and culture.

Keeping an Eye Open
Essays on Art
by Julian Barnes
Knopf, 288 pp., $30

Booker-winning novelist and decorated Francophile, Barnes is a keen, absorbent reader. His writing is a measure of the breadth and pitch of his reading. And he said as much in *Through the Window*:

> I have lived in books, for books, by and with books. … And it was through books that I first … encountered that deeply intimate bond made when a writer's voice gets inside a reader's head.

The voices in his head are mainly French, Flaubert in the lead. From them come the depth and carry of Barnes's own prose. He takes painting into custody as cover for his own working process. What he keeps his eye open for, in looking at art, are opportunities to put words to work—and he does it with dazzling efficacy. Whoever comes to this publisher's bouquet to develop an eye for art will not be disappointed. But blessed are those who come to calibrate their ear for language. They will be exhilarated.

All but one of the 17 pieces gathered here are commissions that appeared between 1993 and 2013. The single exception, a tour of Géricault's *Raft of*

the Medusa, was born as a segment of *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*, Barnes's 1989 novel-of-a-sort. Discount collegial tact toward Alex Danchev, a fellow contributor to the *Times Literary Supplement*. Take Barnes's fond tribute to Hodgkin ("a writer's painter") as a lively specimen of the creative writing that makes painting irresistible to wordsmiths. In the main, though, these essays remain wonderfully free of that mannered oddity—discourse production—that fuels standard art writing. All testify to John Cheever's claim that "the first canon of aesthetics is interest."

Stay awhile with "Géricault: Catastrophe into Art," the writer's first excursion into pictures. It showcases the demands of composition—painted or written—with a deft combination of two tellings at once. A chronicle of the nightmare saga of the doomed *Medusa* and her luckless crew annexes authorial delight in the subservience of life to art. Harrowing and witty by turns, two divergent moods penetrate each other in support of Barnes's own contention that historians—artists themselves—"keep a few true facts and spin a new story around them."

Géricault did his homework on the 1816 shipwreck. He read survivor accounts and adjusted historical details to heighten the emotional and allegorical tenor of his painting. Barnes, too, read eyewitness testimony, holding historic events against details chosen for depiction. He weighs the significance of facts kept to those omitted. With a novelist's eye for the narrative hook, he winnows what his own art needs from a 13-day hell of storms, delirium, mutiny, murder, and cannibalism that reduced 150 castaways to 15.

The actual raft was too weighted to float on the surface of the water. It was submerged a full meter, leaving terrified occupants herded together up to their hips in the sea. Yet the painting shows it riding the waves. Why? Because "what is true is not necessarily convincing." Géricault discarded his preliminary sketch of an act of cannibalism: "Tone was always going to be a problem here."

A pioneer of art's turn from neoclassicism toward realism, Géricault went to a morgue to study the skin tones of the dead. Where is any corresponding verisimilitude in the bodies of his starved and dehydrated castoffs? Why the classicized, Michelangelesque muscularity of survivors and cadavers alike? How come the central figure at the apex of the painting is African, a seemingly inappropriate choice? Why omit Géricault's test sail at sea on a scale model of the *Medusa*? Leave all that for an art historian. A novelist cares only for the narrative potential of the incident:

Julian Barnes

AP / KATHY WILLENS

> Why did it happen, this mad act of Nature, this crazed human moment? Well, at least it produced art. Perhaps, in the end, that is what catastrophe is *for*.

Throughout, Barnes rejects that old deceiver, the biographical fallacy. He disallows Degas's anti-Dreyfus sympathies to stand against the accomplishments of his art. He spurns "the fizzing puritanism" that stalks the painter for his supposed misogyny (based on little more than a putative "lack of amorous means"). And, please, let us have no "hissy fit" over a great painter's attentiveness to female bodies:

> His ballet-dancers are not the sylphs and nymphets … that previous male painters had portrayed. They are real women engaged in hard physical work, who sweat and complain, tear muscles and bleed from toes; but who even in their states of exhausted resting (that hands-on-waist, backstrainy, can't-wait-for-the-day-to-end pose) imply a vital physical life.

Admit it: Degas was a voyeur, no? "But that is exactly what an artist should be: one who sees." And besides,

> if you look at, say, Degas's *La Fête de la patronne* and see only abhorrence of female sexuality, than I suspect you are in deep critical—and maybe also personal—trouble.

Not one to waste eye-time, Barnes trusts paintings themselves ahead of morally tinged interpretations drawn from the artist's life or the rhetoric of a manifesto. Unimpressed by the "socio-aspirational" lure of elephantine blockbuster exhibitions, he knows the worth of smaller ones. There is as much, often more, pleasure to be had with fewer pieces and less crowd: "You often understand an artist better by seeing less of his or her work, rather than more."

Barnes's attention to tone animates each of these commentaries, necessarily so. Art writing, a species of rhetoric, tells as much about the observer as about the art observed. Sensibility is key. Talent is common enough; only sensibility is rare. At the heart of all salutary writing about art lives a persuasive, distinctly personal intuition. Minus that, historical references, critical assessments, and applications of aesthetic theory fill the pantry but never make it to the table. It is the observer's quality of discernment, a convincing grace, that makes the meal. And marks the writer.

Listen to the finale of Barnes's defense of Bonnard ("the private right-wing stay-at home") against dismissal of him as a servant of nature by Picasso ("the public, left-wing show-boater"):

> Bonnard's last completed painting was *Almond Tree in Blossom*. The tree was in his own garden. He had barely signed the picture when he died. On the day of his funeral, 23rd January 1947, snow fell on the pinkish brightness of the almond, as it did on the yellow brightness of the mimosas. Quite obviously, Nature was bidding farewell not to a grovelling servant but to a passionate love. What, out of interest, did Nature do for Picasso when he died?

Some 30 years ago, Barnes described Flaubert in his letters as "remorselessly intelligent; he's never dull, he's never banal, he's very funny." The applause suits Barnes himself. ♦

B&A

Who's Sorry Now?

In the wrong hands, 'shaming' can lead to coercion.

BY STEFAN BECK

Is Shame Necessary?
New Uses for an Old Tool
by Jennifer Jacquet
Pantheon, 224 pp., $24

When Jennifer Jacquet, an assistant professor in the department of environmental studies at New York University, was a child, she persuaded her mother to buy her a book called *50 Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth*. One of the simple things that the book induced her to do was to shame her parents into boycotting canned tuna.

"The evidence of mangled dolphins [caught in fishing nets] saddened and outraged people around the world," she writes. It felt good to adjust her behavior as a consumer. How much better, she seems to have asked herself, might it feel to force other people to adjust their behavior, preferably on a very large scale? "Shame can lead to increased stress and withdrawal from society," Jacquet writes. It "can hurt so badly that it is physically hard on the heart. But shame can also improve behavior."

If you find yourself wondering who, exactly, gets to define *improve* in this context, Jennifer Jacquet's book is not for you. She is writing for an audience that prefers not to trouble itself with the role of individual preferences and priorities in what constitutes rational choice, and a more honest subtitle for her book would have been *My Pet Uses for an Old Tool*.

Shame has been much on people's minds lately, and *Is Shame Necessary?* reveals (if accidentally) why people find the resurgence of public shaming so frightening. It is fundamentally about coercion and not persuasion. It is a shortcut, and a shameful one at that.

It bears mentioning at the outset that Jacquet's book is mostly about the shaming of industries and corporations, not of individual "transgressors," to borrow her sinister term. A useful companion volume about the latter is Jon Ronson's recent *So You've Been Publicly Shamed*, a far more entertaining and less strident affair, recently reviewed in these pages ("Here Comes Trouble," April 6). Yet the distinction is not so significant as Jacquet thinks. She briefly examines the difference between guilt and shame, noting that "guilt acts as a form of self-punishment," but it doesn't seem to occur to her that shaming is an effective punishment whether or not one believes he has done anything wrong. It can, in other words, compel a person to modify his behavior for reasons that have nothing to do with his conscience and, in fact, may betray it.

When people see a corporation change its practices in the face of a shaming campaign, they are likely to draw one conclusion: that it changed its mind to protect its bottom line. It stood to lose more to negative publicity or a boycott than it stood to gain from economical but negligent (as defined, of course, by Jacquet) practices. The lesson absorbed by individual observers is that they have more to lose in social capital by straying from the herd than they have to gain by following the dictates of conscience. Thus, the seemingly harmless or even praiseworthy expedient of shaming a corporate ne'er-do-well has a trickle-down effect on the public, which learns in a hurry that ridicule and opprobrium are on the menu if the wishes of the mob are defied.

Furthermore, the large and faceless entities that Jacquet considers appropriate targets of shaming are often guilty not of slaughtering dolphins or dumping toxins into rivers but of holding attitudes that *individuals* hold as well. She repeatedly discusses the Twitter backlash faced by the Susan G. Komen foundation when it announced that it would no longer help fund Planned Parenthood. Writing for that notorious hotbed of conservative extremism, the *Atlantic*, Megan McArdle said, "Though I'm pro-choice, I don't share the outrage that was roiling my Twitter feed. … Since I think this is a very tough issue on which reasonable people can disagree, I can see why … private foundations … would decline to fund their operations."

What would Jennifer Jacquet make of that concession? Abortion is not only an issue on which reasonable people can disagree but also one of the most striking illustrations of how public shaming cuts both ways. Apoplectic Twitter users barraged the Susan G. Komen foundation with over 200,000 negative messages. But then apoplectic antiabortion protesters have been waving signs and screaming outside of Planned Parenthood clinics for decades. If there is anything in Jacquet's book that explains why the former is a "new use for an old tool" and the latter is merely rude and cruel, good luck finding it. And if you are tempted to suggest that, because access to abortion is the law of the land, it is no longer a valid subject for public shaming, keep in mind that Jacquet is also fine with shaming people who consume cigarettes, alcohol, fatty foods, and "excessive" salt.

The problem here, if that example didn't cast it in sharp enough relief, is that one man's "collective action problem" (as Jacquet puts it) is another man's collective action problem in the opposite direction. To assert the self-evident correctness of a position is to abdicate the responsibility to persuade. No case should be easier to make than

Stefan Beck writes about fiction for the New Criterion *and elsewhere.*

Resignation of the Toshiba Corporation CEO, Tokyo (2015)

AP / SHIZUO KAMBAYASHI

the one that is self-evidently correct; yet people choose shaming over persuasion in just those cases in which they are, ostensibly, most convinced of their rectitude. Why? "Guilt, like all emotions, has its strengths," Jacquet writes, "but it also has its limits when it comes to what it can accomplish, and how quickly."

The aim, it turns out, is getting what one wants as rapidly as possible. And there it is: Guilt is what we feel when we have been persuaded that something is wrong but we do it anyway; shame is what we feel when we sense imminent ostracism. And this is what makes shaming so appealing to Jacquet: *It gets the job done*—through bullying and fear.

There was a time when women remained in terrible, even violent, relationships because of the stigma attached to divorce or single motherhood. Since Jacquet is obviously not advocating a return to those dark days, it is hard not to conclude that she believes that shaming is terrific when put into the service of whatever Jennifer Jacquet happens to want. There are a number of adjectives one might apply to this attitude. None of them would make for a very nice blurb for this book.

Consider Jacquet on juvenile executions:

> Nonprofit groups successfully used shaming to convince the U.S. government to stop executing juvenile offenders. As part of their strategy, institutions like Amnesty International pointed out that only seven countries apart from the United States—Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen—had executed juveniles since the 1990s, and this was not particularly admirable company to keep. In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court, by a vote of 5-4, outlawed juvenile executions. Shame can scale to the group level and it can work quickly when the time is right.

There is a powerful case to be made that capital punishment is barbaric, but the possibility that our highest court bows to the demands of peer pressure and "optics" is hardly cause for celebration. More disturbing than Jacquet's openness to a compromised court is her enthusiasm for what she calls "norm entrepreneurs." These are what used to be called "role models," back when there was substantial agreement as to what ought to be modeled. But what Jacquet means by a "norm entrepreneur" is closer to a state-sponsored or celebrity bully of the sort who shames you into enrolling in Obamacare or snitching on your parents for stockpiling incandescent light bulbs.

"Prestigious people … more strongly influence beliefs," she says, before going on to cite "the one-child policy of Mao Zedong" as an example of a prestigious person influencing beliefs. One takeaway of *Is Shame Necessary?* is that Jacquet is not all that clear on what the rest of us mean by "influence."

The funny thing about shortcuts is that, despite all the lessons of history, nobody ever seems to believe that the other guy, once he has the upper hand, might take them, too.

A parting thought: The first three of the seven liberal arts, called the trivium, were grammar, logic, and rhetoric, and they were thought so basic compared with the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy) that they gave rise to the word *trivial*. But they are neither trivial nor easily mastered. They are the prerequisites of all effective persuasion. We are all born with lungs, however, and we use them to get what we want from the minute we are born. No wonder that shaming—the game of who can scream the loudest at whom—comes so naturally to so many of us. One certainly hopes that we can grow out of it. ♦

B&A

History Meets Dogma

One way of putting the Holocaust in perspective.

BY ANDREW NAGORSKI

Children at Auschwitz after liberation (1945)

Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* was both critically acclaimed and fiercely denounced. Its detractors accused the Yale historian of relativizing the Holocaust by placing it in the context of the other acts of wholesale violence in the region, particularly the terror unleashed by Stalin against his own people. In *Black Earth*, Snyder implicitly responds to his critics by stating the obvious: "The Holocaust was different from other episodes of mass killing or ethnic cleansing because German policy aimed for the murder of every Jewish child, woman, and man," he writes. But he is anything but apologetic.

Part of Snyder's latest volume elaborates on the themes of his earlier work, while also examining Hitler's worldview and how it could lead to the conclusion that all Jews needed to be wiped off the face of the earth. His short answer: "This was only thinkable because the Jews were understood as the makers and enforcers of a corrupt planetary order." However, it is his longer answers in his often-ruminative chapters that make this such a valuable new contribution to a much-dissected subject. They examine everything from the differing prewar views of Jews in Germany and its neighbors, especially Poland, to the broad range of behavior of local populations during the Holocaust.

Black Earth
The Holocaust as History and Warning
by Timothy Snyder
Tim Duggan Books, 480 pp., $30

Snyder begins his study by examining Hitler's descriptions of Jews in *Mein Kampf* as "a spiritual pestilence, worse than the Black Death." Hitler's creeds, he argues, indicated that he believed that "Jews were not a lower or higher race, but a nonrace, or a counter race." While real races battled over land and food in a Darwinian world, Hitler maintained, the biggest sin of the Jews was to introduce the mendacious notion that ethics and ideals, including the concepts of good and evil, could and should play a role in the organization of modern society.

For Hitler, "nature was the singular, brutal, and overwhelming truth," Snyder writes, and nature dictated racial struggles for supremacy, especially over the earth's limited resources. The only credo was that the strong had to defeat the weak, and any show of mercy was in itself an indication of weakness. "Thou shalt preserve the species," he intoned. Nothing else mattered.

This is familiar territory. After all, the idea that the Germans had to fight to expand their *Lebensraum* and, in the process, subjugate or murder the *Untermenschen* was at the heart of all Nazi propaganda. But in *Black Earth*, Snyder uses distinctly contemporary phrases to describe what he calls Hitler's "ecological" worldview.

> By presenting Jews as an ecological flaw responsible for the disharmony of the planet, Hitler channeled and personalized the inevitable tensions of globalization. The only sound ecology was to eliminate a political enemy; the only sound politics was to purify the earth.

To which a reasonable response might be: "Yes, but why bother to restate such theories using catchphrases of our era?" Far more interesting are Snyder's observations as a historian who is not afraid to press his thesis that the Holocaust, while a singular event, did not occur in isolation. It was no accident that the Holocaust played itself out on territory between Russia and Germany that had endured the terror of "double occupation," he argues. When the Soviet Union invaded eastern Poland in 1939 as a logical sequence to the Nazi-Soviet pact, Stalin's henchmen

AP / CPA

Andrew Nagorski is the author of Hitlerland: American Eyewitnesses to the Nazi Rise to Power. *His next book,* The Nazi Hunters, *will be published next year.*

promptly began deporting hundreds of thousands of Poles to the Gulag and murdering thousands of Polish military officers. In their part of occupied Poland, the Germans began by executing the Polish elite as well, everyone from university professors to early underground activists. Jews, at that point, were usually targeted because they fell into such political and social categories, not primarily because of their race.

The opening acts of the Holocaust took place after Hitler broke off his de facto alliance with Stalin and attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941. The early mass executions of Jews, Gypsies, Communists, and others by *Einsatzgruppen*, special killing squads, largely occurred in the territories that had already been occupied and terrorized by Stalin's security apparatus. These populations had lost any semblance of statehood, their leaders, and often their livelihoods. For instance, as a result of Stalin's forced collectivization policy in the early 1930s, more than three million inhabitants of Soviet Ukraine died of starvation and disease. Little wonder that many Ukrainians initially viewed Hitler's invading armies as liberators, only to be quickly disabused of that notion by the German dictator's ruthless policies.

Snyder points out that Hannah Arendt, no stranger to controversy about the Holocaust herself, made a similar observation. Jews, she noted, "were threatened more than any other by the sudden collapse of the system of nation states." Even in prewar Eastern European countries, where antisemitic attitudes and policies were often commonplace, the existence of the state offered more basic protections than what would soon follow.

As Hitler saw it, the Soviet Union was a Jewish empire, Snyder explains, and his followers eagerly propagated the myth of "Judeobolshevism." In other words, the entire Communist experiment was a Jewish project. This was both Nazi doctrine—and a poisonous weapon to be exploited. When Hitler's armies were pushing eastward, they were encountering local populations that had been forced to collaborate with Soviet authorities, the previous occupiers. Jews were among the collaborators, but far from the majority of them. "In defining communism as Jewish and Jews as communists, the German invaders in fact pardoned the vast majority of Soviet collaborators," Snyder notes.

Ukrainian nationalists who participated in pogroms as the German forces arrived were helping the new conquerors "translate the experience of Soviet rule into a fantasy of Ukrainian innocence and Jewish guilt," Snyder writes. Many of the Ukrainians, Poles, Balts, and, yes, Russians who attacked Jews had been Soviet collaborators; in a world of double occupation, double collaboration was all too common. And what better way to prove your loyalty to the new German masters than to kill Jews? In some cases the tradeoff was clearly spelled out: Imprisoned young Lithuanian Communists were offered their freedom if they would murder a Jew.

Of course, it was the *Einsatzgruppen*, backed by regular German Army units, who carried out the major massacres of approximately one million Jews in that first chapter of the Holocaust, marked by the methodical executions by firing squad in town after town, village after village. But the Nazis sought to recruit, or at least implicate, the local populations wherever possible, especially in the double occupation zones. Collaborators could also share in the spoils, seizing the belongings of victims.

The iconic symbol of the Holocaust is Auschwitz but, as Snyder points out, that camp became the major killing ground for Jews only in 1943-44. Before then, in 1942, some 1.3 million Polish Jews were murdered in Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. To be sure, Auschwitz was where the gas chambers started working with deadly efficiency, speeding up the process of mass murder. But Snyder is troubled by the conflation of Auschwitz with the entire Holocaust, which "made plausible the grotesque claim that Germans did not know about the mass murder of the European Jews while it was taking place." He concedes that some Germans did not know exactly what was happening in that camp, but "millions of Germans" knew about the earlier mass executions on the Eastern Front from the letters, photos, and stories of the executioners themselves, along with the stream of loot they sent home.

Snyder argues against any sloppy syllogism along the lines of *Eastern European countries were antisemitic before the war; Jews died there during the war; therefore, it was local antisemitism that killed the Jews*. The world's largest prewar concentrations of Jews were located in Poland and the Soviet Union. To fulfill Hitler's vision of a world without Jews, his executioners did their work in the places where most of them lived. To that end, they destroyed the states and institutions that had allowed Jews and gentiles to live together for centuries—despite frequent tensions and, at times, violence on a scale that cannot be compared to what followed.

Then there were the anomalies that defy easy explanation. In the Netherlands and Greece, there were very few virulent antisemites, while antisemitism was far more prevalent in France. Yet, Snyder notes, three-quarters of French Jews survived while three-quarters of Dutch Jews and Greek Jews were killed.

Snyder paints a particularly complex picture of Polish-Jewish relations, both before and during the war. Even when the relatively liberal autocrat Marshal Józef Piłsudski died in 1935 and was replaced by a right-wing regime, the government supported the aspirations of Zionist activists by providing military supplies and training. Polish Army officers helped train the young men of Betar, the Jewish right-wing paramilitary group that included Menachem Begin as one of its leaders. They also backed Irgun, the paramilitary group that was already fighting against the British in Palestine and attracted many of the Betar members from Eastern Europe. The Poles were eager to encourage migration to Palestine as a way of reducing their Jewish population, and antisemitism was officially tolerated

after Piłsudski's death. But his successors rebuffed Hitler's overtures to join forces with him against the Soviet Union as part of a worldwide crusade against Jews.

During the war, the Polish government-in-exile and Jan Karski, the famous courier of the Polish underground, warned the West about the Holocaust, providing detailed, chilling testimony about what was happening inside their occupied country. While some Poles denounced or even killed Jews, others risked their lives to save them. The Polish Home Army, the largest resistance movement, had a special unit that saved Jews. Among the saviors were antisemites, again demonstrating the complexity of the times. The odds for survival had more to do with the level of organization and dedication than the personal views of the saviors, Snyder insists. While some people saved Jews on their own, they were certainly the exceptions.

In his final chapter, Snyder warns against the complacent assumption "that we are ethically superior to the Europeans of the 1930s and 1940s, or for that matter less vulnerable to the kind of ideas that Hitler so successfully promulgated and realized." He is hardly the first to suggest Nazi analogies to the current era. But he risks losing a lot of readers when he slips into a rambling discussion of global warming and denounces conservative politicians who "deny the validity of science." How this ties into the Holocaust becomes murkier and murkier, but it does explain his effort to frame his argument using contemporary political terms. He suggests that those who deny science and "fantasize about destroying governments" are conspiracy theorists who "edge towards Hitler."

For a historian who has done an impressive job presenting his extensive research, and spurred genuine intellectual debate with controversial ideas, the temptation to take the next step and apply history's "lessons" to today proved too powerful to resist. That's unfortunate, since there is a rich trove of information and reflection in this volume. The final chapter only detracts from Snyder's accomplishment. ♦

B&A

Honest Acceptance

A poet who contends with the world as it is.

BY WILL BREWBAKER

My Feelings
Poems
by Nick Flynn
Graywolf, 96 pp., $16

Nick Flynn writes in defiance of despair, and the poet's fourth collection is as emotionally fraught as its title. Even the dust jacket art, which depicts an abandoned laundromat, is exhausted. *My Feelings* confronts suffering without flinching. The speaker sounds emotionally spent, but these poems endure in the midst of exhaustion.

Flynn says that he no longer tries to write poetry that will "impose meaning on chaos." Instead, he recognizes here that "one can't impose one's reality on the world. One has to just accept it." And this honest acceptance drives *My Feelings*: "I don't want poetry to be anything except an experience."

It is this experience, though filled with pain and self-doubt, that ultimately leads Flynn to authentic hope. Flynn's fans know his story—suicidal mother, homeless father—but unlike earlier volumes, this one doesn't dwell on the horrors of his past. His familial tragedy hovers in the margins, but it is no longer the subject of every poem. Instead, Flynn expresses his haggard emotional state through new forms and dissonant images. He lifts the epigraph from Emily Dickinson—"You cannot fold a Flood / And put it in a Drawer"—using the two lines as a declaration of the emotional scale of the following 32 poems. *My Feelings* refuses to constrain Flynn's emotions, choosing instead to revel in excess.

In the second poem, "AK-47," Flynn writes in an experimental form called pecha kucha, a nonliterary presentation format born from the same PowerPoint womb as TED talks. In pecha kucha, the speaker deploys a rapid-fire sequence of slides, speaking briefly about each one. Topics range from beer brewing to a critique of selfies, and "AK-47" models this cadence, moving breathlessly through a 23-section poem in just 64 lines.

Rather than express his original thoughts, the poet hides behind subjects ranging from Jack Gilbert's poetry to plot summaries of Christopher Nolan's film *Memento*. The first section contains Gilbert's line "*love lays hold of everything*," and in the sixth section, the speaker declares that "the amnesiac in the film last night tattooed words on his / body." Aware of the risk of such an avant-garde form, the speaker wavers uncertainly in lines such as "think *whatever abstraction*, *you can / insert here* _____" or "we could melt it down [*could we?*] into nails or bells."

But this is not novelty for its own sake. It is more akin to Elizabeth Bishop's "One Art," in which the speaker admonishes herself to "*Write it!*" even if the results are disastrous. The speaker in "AK-47" summons courage from wherever he can find it, whether poetry or pop culture.

"My Feelings" is one of Flynn's biggest wagers. "Maybe I / should be locked in a cage in the center of / the village," he begins. The following lines show a mind in crisis, reeling over failed love. As in "AK-47," the speaker is uncertain and halting.

I want to say we
really tried but maybe it was simply

Will Brewbaker, an undergraduate at the University of Virginia, was an intern at The Weekly Standard.

the first moment I could be with someone
& say nothing & know
the other understood.

Flynn characterizes the confusion of his lonely voice through false starts such as "I want to say" and ambiguities like "maybe." But the poem ends with Flynn's gamble: 12 lines of crossed-through adjectives between the first word, "my," and the last word of the poem, "feelings." The rejected adjectives flow without order or punctuation, ranging from "oceanic" to "purple." Yet even with the tricks and maneuvering of the earlier poems, "My Feelings" falls short. In his longing for originality, Flynn comes across as too clever, heavy-handed, and "My Feelings" is a rare miss.

"Polaroid" is a brilliant, three-line composition about a conversation between Pablo Picasso and Gertrude Stein. Flynn uses pop culture as a template in "Gravity," "The Day Lou Reed Died," and "Philip Seymour Hoffman," and, in the latter two, examines his father's death and the temptation of suicide through the deaths of two celebrities. In "Forty-Seven Minutes," Flynn describes a debate in a high school English class about whether rain is an image or an idea. A student asks, "*Does it matter?*" The speaker answers, "no, it doesn't … *But to get through the next forty-seven minutes / we might have to pretend it does*."

My Feelings is not about grandeur but surviving the next hour. Flynn's poetry is temporary and laden with the transience of pop culture and experimentation. But it is also rife with the steady endurance of a man who refuses to acquiesce to sorrow. The final poem, "Marathon," is about the Boston Marathon bombing. But rather than wallowing in violence or loss, Flynn writes with more compassion than elsewhere: "Petals / on a river, a tree in blossom, one / pink bud—unopened—falls." The calm image is jarring after the chaos of the previous 31 poems, and Flynn ends with an image of life after death: "Look," he says,

everyone we've ever known
runs without thinking
not away but into *the cloud where we are*
waiting. ◆

AP / BETTMANN CORBIS

B&A

Wag on the Air

Fred Allen and the invention of modern comedy.

BY PHILIP BRANTINGHAM

Mary Livingston, Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Portland Hoffa (1937)

"*Mister AL-len!*" was the screechy cry of Portland Hoffa, announcing the entrance of Fred Allen on his popular radio show, *Town Hall Tonight*. Portland was Fred's wife and sidekick on the show, at the time when it was one of the top three radio programs in the 1930s. (The others were Jack Benny's and Eddie Cantor's.) The popularity of Fred Allen's several programs lasted into the 1940s, when the last one finally expired in 1949. By that time, radio entertainment itself was beginning to fade, as television began replacing it as the favorite source of home entertainment.

Fred Allen (1894-1956) had been on radio since 1932, when he, like so many old vaudevillians, turned to the new medium for a living. Vaudeville was slowly dying, wounded by the Depression, and Allen was not only looking for work but also searching for a steady income. He had married Portland Hoffa in 1927 and was tired of the hop-skip-and-jump life of the vaudeville circuit—as well as the uncertainties of work in stage shows. For besides appearing in vaudeville, Allen had also been performing on Broadway since 1929, in stage revues such as *The Little Show* and *Three's A Crowd*, both with Clifton Webb and Libby Holman.

In September 1932, when he and Portland returned from their summer vacation, they found that a show promised to open that month had been canceled. "With the advance of refrigeration," Allen wrote later,

> I hope that along with the frozen foods someday we will have frozen conversation. A person will be able to keep a frozen promise indefinitely. This will be a boon to show business,

Philip Brantingham is a retired editor in Chicago.

where more chorus girls are kept than promises.

Faced with unemployment, or a return to three-a-day vaudeville shows, Allen investigated the option of radio. The new medium was burgeoning as a source of home entertainment, especially since radios were no longer awkward apparatuses with headphones and difficult reception, and entertainers such as Eddie Cantor, *Amos 'n' Andy* (Freeman Gosden, Charles Correll), and Ben Bernie were on the air, attracting listeners. Allen was willing to adapt his comic juggler routine, with Portland as stooge, and offer his humor in a variety format.

At the time, the Linit Bath Soap Company was looking for someone to host a half-hour program, and hearing of this, Allen proposed himself as host and producer. He had his own idea of what the program would be like: "Hoping for longevity in the new medium, I planned a series of programs using a different business background each week." The format would entail interviewing comic characters and feature topical repartee. Allen was hired, and on October 23, 1932, the *Linit Bath Club Revue* went on the air. Allen himself wrote the entire script—but soon hired a cowriter, thereby saving his nervous system.

Knowingly or not, Fred Allen was creating a unique format: news spots and comic interviews of "everyday" people—workers, politicians, ethnic characters—with musical interludes. And "guest stars" and, of course, advertising.

The Linit program lasted only six months, but then Allen was hired by Hellmann's Mayonnaise to produce *The Salad Bowl Revue*, with the same format, ending in December 1933. His next opening came from Bristol Myers, which was promoting a laxative called Sal Hepatica. So in January 1934, listeners heard a new program, *The Sal Hepatica Revue*, an hour program of which Fred Allen had a half-hour. The format remained the same—satirical interviews, music, skits—but being the second half of a one-hour program was not to Allen's liking, and he persuaded Bristol Myers to give him the entire hour, which he renamed *Town Hall Tonight*.

A circus atmosphere pervaded this one: Crowd noises were heard, alongside with bands playing, and the show was divided into segments, one of which was "The Mighty Allen Art Players," where the cast performed comic skits (later borrowed by Johnny Carson for his "Mighty Carson Art Players"). The show was a hit: Millions tuned in, and it competed with the top-rated Jack Benny and Eddie Cantor. In 1936 Allen initiated his mock-feud with Benny, during which both exchanged barbs on their shows. "Benny was born ignorant," said Allen, "and has been losing ground ever since." Benny replied: "Until you were born, no one knew what a cramp looked like."

Radio was burgeoning as a source of home entertainment, especially since radios were no longer awkward apparatuses with headphones and difficult reception.

What made Fred Allen's humor so unusual? Why was he so popular? It wasn't his voice, which was flat and nasal; but he was a master ad-libber, a genial satirist of American life, and he always sounded as if he were enjoying his program as much as the audience. By the 1940s, Allen had reduced his format to a topical review, where Allen and Portland strolled down a mythical city alley, asking comic characters their opinions of questions of the day, most derived from the newspapers: "Are children as smart today as they were 10 years ago?"

The characters he interviewed were much the same each week and gained as much fame as Allen himself: Falstaff Openshaw, a poet of doggerel, Senator Claghorn, a bombastic southern politician, Titus Moody, the wry New Englander, Mrs. Pansy Nussbaum, a Jewish housewife, Ajax Cassidy, an Irish rapscallion. The characters formed part of what came to be called, from 1942 on, "Allen's Alley."

Today, of course, many of the jokes are dated, along with the sensibility; but Allen pioneered a kind of topical humor—with riffs on Fiorello La Guardia, Wendell Willkie, Harry Truman—which endures.

When Allen's radio show ended, in 1949, it was a blessing to his blood pressure. But it troubled him to be sidelined: He made occasional personal appearances on radio and television, and sometimes joined the panel of the new television quiz show *What's My Line?* Writer-friends John Steinbeck and Edwin O'Connor encouraged him to write his memoirs. There were two volumes: *Treadmill to Oblivion* (1954), the story of his life in radio, and *Much Ado About Me* (1956), which began with his childhood in Boston and ended on Broadway in 1929. This was the literary side of Allen, not always noticeable in his shows, but reflective of the man who read voraciously, closely followed the news, and enjoyed the friendship of Groucho Marx and James Thurber.

Fred Allen's last hurrah was also radio's. In 1950 he appeared on an NBC extravaganza called *The Big Show*, which premiered in the desirable Sunday night slot, 99 minutes hosted by Tallulah Bankhead. It featured a lineup of famous entertainers, including Allen (who also did a bit of scriptwriting), as well as music, drama, and comedy. The critics were delighted, but sponsors were not, falling away one by one over the next two years. By the time *The Big Show* was canceled by NBC, Allen's health was in decline. Walking down a Manhattan street in 1956, age 61, he died of a heart attack.

For all his sophistication, Allen was a man of simple habits: He neither smoked nor drank; he avoided nightclubs; he didn't own a car. He vacationed in a small town in Maine. Of his life's work, his biographer wrote: "His great contribution to life in America came in the marvelous 18-year run of weekly satiric invention which was the Fred Allen Show on radio." ♦

B&A

Lost and Found

Unexpected bliss from interplanetary angst.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

When was the last time a movie was just, you know, lovable? *Guardians of the Galaxy*, maybe—all the more so because its lovability was so unexpected, coming as it did from the Marvel comic book movie factory. The same is true of *The Martian*, a movie so spectacularly winsome it's almost beyond criticism. How could this have happened with this piece of hard science fiction, full of talk about orbiting distances and vectors and botany, derived from a nerdy novel first published chapter by chapter on the writer Andy Weir's blog?

The Martian is about a man stranded on the Red Planet, which is hardly the sort of plot you expect will leave you in a state of near-bliss at the end. That sure wasn't the case with the somewhat similar *Cast Away*, which told the story of the marooning of Tom Hanks on a South Sea island; nobody left the theater after that powerfully intense study of loneliness and isolation with a smile on his face.

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

The Martian
Directed by Ridley Scott

Nor was there any reason to expect much from its director, the 77-year-old Ridley Scott, who has spent the past decade making an almost unrivaled procession of stinkers (*A Good Year*, *Body of Lies*, *Kingdom of Heaven*, *Prometheus*, *Exodus*, *The Counselor*). But it just goes to show what can happen when a filmmaker as accomplished and visually sophisticated as Scott finally gets his hands on a good script (by Drew Goddard) and succeeds in gathering a large and perfect cast led by the (always quietly and unshowily) splendid Matt Damon.

But even all these elements, brought together, wouldn't normally result in *The Martian* being lovable. No, what makes it lovable is that it's a work of hard science fiction about a man stranded on Mars that chooses not to stress the existential agony of his solitude, but rather the conscious and brave decision made by Damon's character, Mark Watney, to evade despair and use everything he knows and everything he's learned and everything that he has at hand to keep himself alive.

"I'm going to have to science the shit out of this," he says in one of the narrative logs he keeps of his four-year trial. Damon builds his character through these monologues, which is a very tricky acting challenge and one he pulls off magnificently. Damon and the creative team (especially Andy Weir, author of the original novel) have made Watney a classic old-fashioned astronaut—corny, jokey, not all that introspective, a doer rather than a ruminator. Watney may be a fictional character, and the things that happen to him may never have happened to anyone, but still, *The Martian* is one of the most inspiring movies I've ever seen.

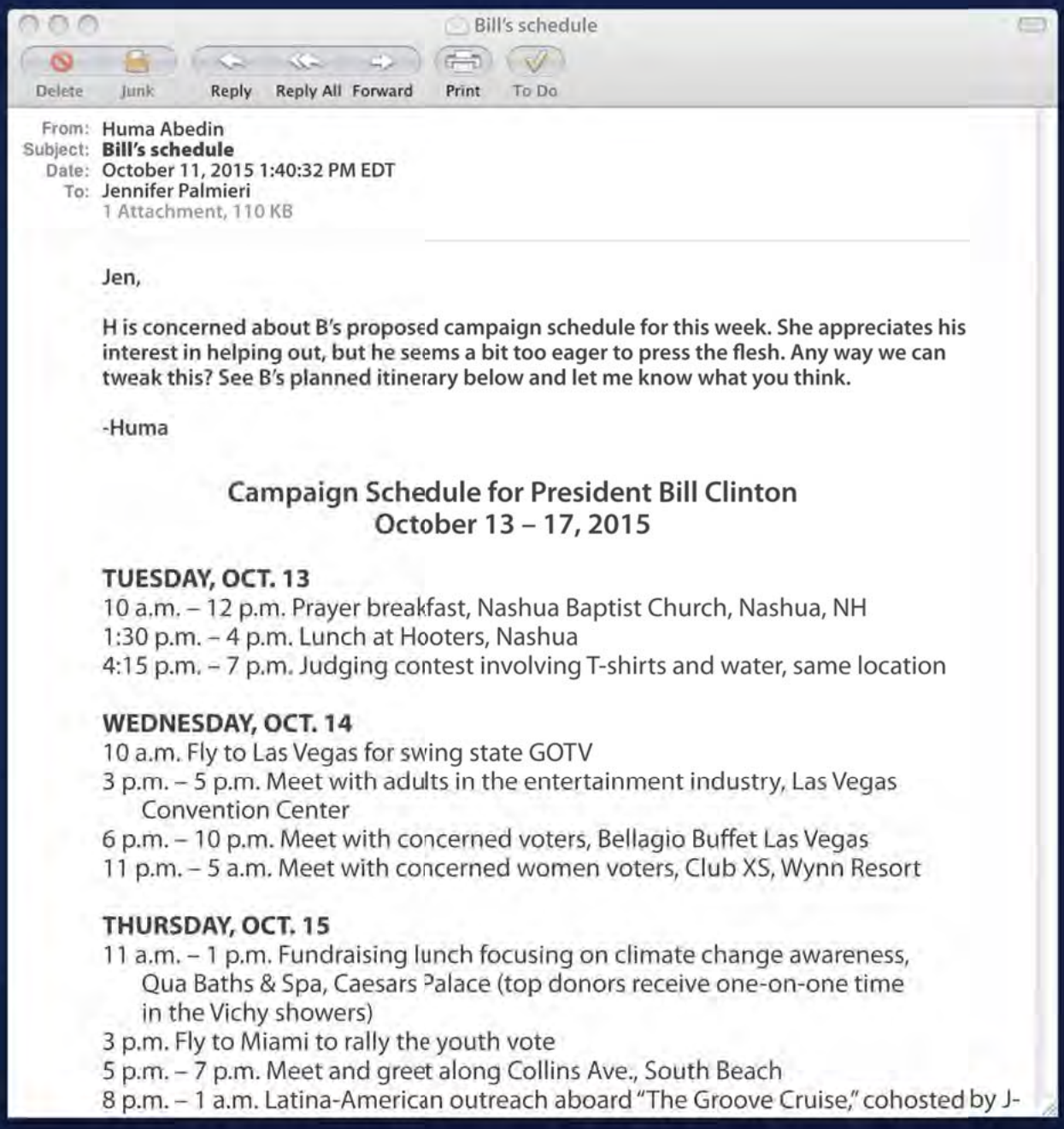
His humorous determination proves to be an inspiration to people back on earth as well, scores of whom dedicate themselves to figuring out how to launch a rescue mission before he runs out of food. And here again *The Martian* does something unexpected that elevates it from being a gripping race against time into something more like (you may groan prospectively at the cliché I'm about to use) a testament to the indomitability of the human spirit. Simply put: There are no bad guys. The movie wisely does not attempt to manufacture silly conflicts because the central concept is itself so awesome. As Watney says, everything he does is being done for the first time in four billion years, and that is drama enough—that, and the way he survives, and what has to happen for him to get back home.

There is only one narrative mistake I can think of. The chief PR person at NASA (Kristin Wiig) is annoyed when, in history's first interplanetary photo shoot, Watney ends up posing like the Fonz on *Happy Days* (one of the few entertainments he has as a diversion, along with disco music from the 1970s). That's just ridiculous. She, and the world, would swoon at such a thing—just as the audience at *The Martian* does, at that little bit and dozens more like it in this exhilarating feat of popular storytelling. ♦

TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX

"They'd kept him off the trail for months, but Hillary Rodham Clinton's campaign is finally deploying former President Bill Clinton, accepting the political risks he brings as worthy tradeoff if he can shore up support for his wife among longtime Democrats and build enthusiasm among Hispanic and black voters."

—Washington Times, *October 4, 2015*



Bill's schedule

Delete Junk Reply Reply All Forward Print To Do

From: Huma Abedin
Subject: **Bill's schedule**
Date: October 11, 2015 1:40:32 PM EDT
To: Jennifer Palmieri
1 Attachment, 110 KB

Jen,

H is concerned about B's proposed campaign schedule for this week. She appreciates his interest in helping out, but he seems a bit too eager to press the flesh. Any way we can tweak this? See B's planned itinerary below and let me know what you think.

-Huma

Campaign Schedule for President Bill Clinton
October 13 – 17, 2015

TUESDAY, OCT. 13
10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Prayer breakfast, Nashua Baptist Church, Nashua, NH
1:30 p.m. – 4 p.m. Lunch at Hooters, Nashua
4:15 p.m. – 7 p.m. Judging contest involving T-shirts and water, same location

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 14
10 a.m. Fly to Las Vegas for swing state GOTV
3 p.m. – 5 p.m. Meet with adults in the entertainment industry, Las Vegas Convention Center
6 p.m. – 10 p.m. Meet with concerned voters, Bellagio Buffet Las Vegas
11 p.m. – 5 a.m. Meet with concerned women voters, Club XS, Wynn Resort

THURSDAY, OCT. 15
11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Fundraising lunch focusing on climate change awareness, Qua Baths & Spa, Caesars Palace (top donors receive one-on-one time in the Vichy showers)
3 p.m. Fly to Miami to rally the youth vote
5 p.m. – 7 p.m. Meet and greet along Collins Ave., South Beach
8 p.m. – 1 a.m. Latina-American outreach aboard "The Groove Cruise," cohosted by J-