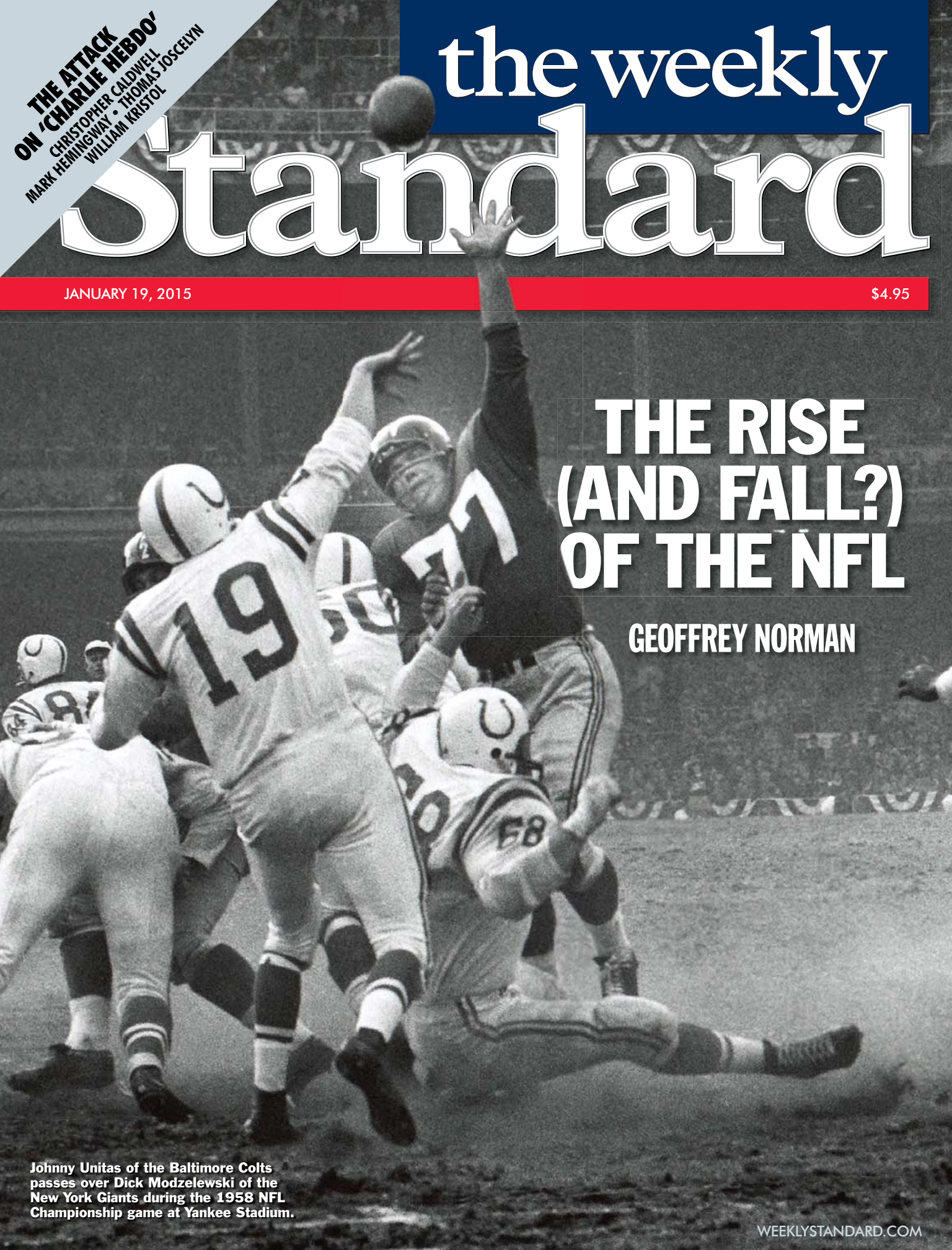
the weekly
Standard

JANUARY 19, 2015 $4.95

THE ATTACK ON 'CHARLIE HEBDO'
CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL
MARK HEMINGWAY • THOMAS JOSCELYN
WILLIAM KRISTOL

THE RISE (AND FALL?) OF THE NFL

GEOFFREY NORMAN



Johnny Unitas of the Baltimore Colts passes over Dick Modzelewski of the New York Giants during the 1958 NFL Championship game at Yankee Stadium.

Contents

January 19, 2015 • Volume 20, Number 18

5

7

12

26

Articles

Features

Books & Arts

COVER: GETTY IMAGES / ROBERT RIGER

Microaggression at Princeton

Last week was not a great week for Princeton.

In New York, a member of the Class of 2009 was accused of shooting to death his financier-father, who had been contemplating cutting back his son's $3,000-a-month allowance by $200. Then, on the campus itself, freshman Newby Parton, from McMinnville, Tennessee, took to the pages of the *Daily Princetonian* to complain that his fellow Tigers like to tease him about the way he pronounces "CoolWhip." He did so, however, in words that only an Ivy League undergraduate, ca. 2015, would choose.

> A friend of mine whom I quite like had put me through the "Cool Whip" routine, so I waited awhile and texted her this: "Making fun of regional speech is a microaggression." . . . There came no apology or retraction. She really did not understand that she had caused any offense, even after I had plainly told her so. . . . I am afraid that I have unwittingly hurt the feelings of people so accustomed to microaggression that they did not bother to speak up. . . . I am afraid because microaggressions aren't harmless—there's research to show that they cause anxiety and binge drinking.

And so on. For readers not acquainted with current academese, "microaggressions" are defined as subtle, seemingly innocuous words or habits that reinforce sexual and racial discrimination: For example, using

The topping of choice for hwipsters

the pronoun "he" when referring to a person who might be of either sex—and thus, according to microaggression theory, deliberately excluding females from the ranks of humankind. As Parton demonstrates, microaggression theory can be applied to just about anything—and, in fact, has been applied liberally, exposing such social indignities as "microinsults," "microrapes," and, perhaps worst of all, "microinvalidations."

It may be some comfort to know that the public reaction to Parton's declaration, even at Princeton, has been largely negative. Some self-described victims of microaggression have spoken up on his behalf, but the overwhelming response has been laughter. It's a relief to know that, in old Nassau Hall, the spirit of F. Scott Fitzgerald '17, Jimmy Stewart '32, George P. Shultz '42, and James Baker '52 hasn't entirely vanished.

On the other hand, The Scrapbook is genuinely mystified by Newby Parton's complaint. Not that microaggressive Princetonians get a charge out of his southern accent, but his claim that natives of Middle Tennessee pronounce the word "whip" as if the first two letters were reversed: "hwip." The Scrapbook is not unacquainted with this corner of the Volunteer State—McMinnville is 75 miles southeast of Nashville, 50 miles northeast of Sewanee—and has never heard this particular locution. The Middle Tennessee twang is easily identified, and there are regional indicators: For instance, the "ville" sound in McMinnville and Nashville tends to be swallowed and, combined with the aforementioned twang, renders Music City as "Nyshfle."

But Cool Hwip? Never heard of it. Those Princeton undergraduates have every reason to be fascinated. Should we chance to meet, The Scrapbook might even ask Newby Parton to pronounce Cool Whip, too. ♦

Martin Anderson, 1936-2015

Martin Anderson, the economist and adviser to Republican presidents, Ronald Reagan foremost among them, died this past week. The Scrapbook remembered with a pang being hosted by him one pleasant afternoon more than a decade ago at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, where he was for many years a senior fellow and adornment to that institution.

Anderson will probably be remembered primarily for his part in formulating President Richard Nixon's end of the military draft and for his key role in shaping economic policy during Reagan's critical first year as president. In the latter capacity, he helped smooth relations between the new president and the chairman of the Federal Reserve, who had been appointed by Reagan's predecessor. Steven F. Hayward tells an amusing story about the beginning of that relationship in his *Age of Reagan*:

> Reagan had his first meeting with [Chairman Paul] Volcker over lunch on his third day in the Oval Office. Reagan opened the lunch with a question that must have nearly knocked Volcker out of his chair: Why do we need a Federal Reserve anyway? Martin Anderson, who had prepared a memorandum for Reagan briefing him for the meeting, recalls Reagan's words as follows: "I was wondering if you could help me with a question that's often put to me. I've had several letters from people who raise the question of why we need a Federal Reserve at all. They seem to feel

that it is the Fed that causes much of our monetary problems and that we would be better off if we abolished it. Why do we need the Federal Reserve?" Had Volcker been chewing on one of his trademark cigars, Anderson thought, he would have swallowed it.

In his later years, Anderson was a tireless chronicler of the Reagan era, in books and monographs. *Reagan in His Own Hand*, edited with his wife Annelise Anderson and with Kiron Skinner, is a particular favorite of The Scrapbook's—a collection of the radio addresses, many of them handwritten on legal pads by Reagan, from the years leading up to his successful bid for the White House. We've passed many pleasant hours browsing its pages and commend it to readers along with its companion CD, *Reagan in His Own Voice*. ♦

The Streets of Paris

There are 6,100 streets in Paris. If you made a point of walking a different one each day, it would take you more than 16 years to see them all. That's just meant to be illustrative—you can cover many more of them than that in a day, as The Scrapbook often made a point of doing in its student days there many moons ago (the shortest street in the city is less than 20 feet long). Still, it would probably have taken a lifetime to see them all.

Unsurprisingly, then, we had never until the unhappy events last week heard of the Rue Nicolas-Appert, site of *Charlie Hebdo*'s offices. It runs a mere football-field-and-a-half in length, from the Passage Sainte-Anne Popincourt to the Rue Pelée, in the 11th arrondissement. In slight mitigation of our ignorance, we should add as a footnote that the street didn't exist until 1985, which postdates The Scrapbook's Parisian days.

We don't have more to add here about *Charlie Hebdo*—you can get your fill on that subject elsewhere in this issue. But if you saw the street name in the news, as we did, and paused for a moment in curiosity, we're here to report that M. Appert seems to have been an accomplished and more-than-admirable fellow.

AN OFFENSIVE CARTOON.

Sometimes called "the father of canning," Nicolas Appert (1749-1841) was what the French call a *confiseur*, a confectioner, who in the first decade of the 19th century invented the modern art of preserving various types of food by bottling them and then immersing the sealed bottles in boiling water. His first happy customer was the French Navy.

In 1809 he informed the government of his innovation (we're shamelessly stealing all these details from *Wikipédia*) and received a favorable reply from the Interior Ministry offering him a choice between a patent and a onetime cash prize. He took the latter, which meant publishing his methods so that everyone could freely use them. Or as the French Wikipedia entry grandly puts it, rather than enrich himself, he preferred that humanity should profit from his discovery.

The rest of the story, as Paul Harvey might have said, is a little less happy. After the defeat of the French Navy in the Battle of Trafalgar, his biggest customer fell on hard times, and so, therefore, did M. Appert. Some canny Englishmen (pun

MUSÉE DES BEAUX ARTS CHÂLONS-EN-CHAMPAGNE

Nicolas Appert

deliberately inflicted) figured out how to adapt his method for use with tin cans and did apply, successfully, for a patent. Monsieur Appert ended his life a pauper, buried in a communal plot, without the means even to pay for a gravestone.

There has, in recent years, been something of a Nicolas Appert boom, however, with a statue erected in Châlons-en-Champagne, a plaque attached to the house where he was born, a commemorative stamp issued, and several museum exhibits. For that matter, there are apparently 72 streets now named for him in towns across France.

The only mystery is how, in a city deeply devoted to all things culinary and boasting 6,100 streets, it took Paris until 1985 to name one of them for Nicolas Appert. ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

'Poetry is a window into the soul. And one lesson to me from the reaction to my 'When Whites Just Don't Get It' series is that we need soul-searching about race in America. So I invited readers this month to submit poems about race. Thanks to everyone for sending in more than 300 poems, and I'm happy to turn this column over to you readers and . . . " (Nicholas Kristof, *New York Times*, December 28). ♦

the weekly Standard
www.weeklystandard.com

William Kristol, *Editor*
Fred Barnes, Terry Eastland, *Executive Editors*
Richard Starr, *Deputy Editor*
Claudia Anderson, *Managing Editor*
Christopher Caldwell, Andrew Ferguson, Victorino Matus, Lee Smith, *Senior Editors*
Philip Terzian, *Literary Editor*
Stephen F. Hayes, Mark Hemingway, Matt Labash, Jonathan V. Last, John McCormack, *Senior Writers*
Jay Cost, Michael Warren, *Staff Writers*
Daniel Halper, *Online Editor*
Kelly Jane Torrance, *Assistant Managing Editor*
Julianne Dudley, Ethan Epstein, Jim Swift, *Assistant Editors*
Judith Ayers, *Editorial Assistant*
Philip Chalk, *Design Director*
Barbara Kyttle, *Design Assistant*
Teri Perry, *Executive Assistant*
Max Boot, Joseph Bottum, Tucker Carlson, Matthew Continetti, Noemie Emery, Joseph Epstein, David Frum, David Gelernter, Reuel Marc Gerecht, Michael Goldfarb, Mary Katharine Ham, Brit Hume, Frederick W. Kagan, Charles Krauthammer, Yuval Levin, Tod Lindberg, Robert Messenger, P.J. O'Rourke, John Podhoretz, Irwin M. Stelzer, *Contributing Editors*

MediaDC
Ryan McKibben, *Chairman*
Stephen R. Sparks, *Chief Operating Officer*
Tom Fowler, *Chief Revenue Officer*
Grace Paine Terzian, *Chief Communications Officer*
Kathy Schaffhauser, *Chief Financial Officer*
Catherine Lowe, *Integrated Marketing Director*
Mark Walters, *Sr. V.P. Marketing Services & Advertising*
Nicholas H.B. Swezey, *V.P. Advertising*
T. Barry Davis, Peter Dunn, Andrew Kaumeier, Brooke McIngvale, Jason Roberts *Advertising Sales*

Advertising inquiries: 202-293-4900
Subscriptions: 1-800-274-7293

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of Clarity Media Group, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, and fourth week in August) at 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-274-7293. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-386-597-4378 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, $4.95. Back issues, $4.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036.

That's a Nickel

I once appeared on a panel at the National Endowment for the Humanities with two women who talked about the importance of their secondary education. One was German and spoke reverently of the gymnasium she was fortunate enough to attend. The other, an American, spent her adolescence in France and mentioned her deep debt to the lycée that gave her so sound a grounding in the classics. When my turn came, I remarked how I envied them, and allowed that I had myself gone to a public high school in Chicago notable for its disadvantaged teachers.

I remember older women teaching in house slippers; a red-faced biology teacher who put the more bosomy girls in the front row, wrote out the pages of the textbook we were to read and which exercises at the end of the chapter to do, and promptly nodded off; gym coaches reeking of nicotine who did scarcely any coaching whatsoever. They represented the rich fruits of tenure in a public-school system.

One teacher I do remember fondly was Dr. Branz, a German émigré who taught a course called Commercial Law. He must have been a refugee from Hitler, with a doctor of laws degree; by the time he arrived in this country, I assume, he was too old to practice law, and so had to fall back on teaching the barbarian young of my high school. I cannot recall a single thing he taught. What I do remember is his instituting a system of fines for our misbehavior. If he caught any of us talking, or nodding off, or chewing gum, or not having read the day's assignment, he would say, in a singsong, heavily Teutonic accent, "That's a nickel." He used the nickels to pay for a picnic at the end of the term.

"That's a nickel" is a refrain much heard over the past month or so *chez* Epstein. My wife and I, two not always successful Couéists—Émile Coué being the French psychologist who said, "Every day in every way I am getting better and better"—have set out on another of our self-improvement programs. We are trying to eliminate the word "yeah" from our speech. Each time one of us fails, we pay a nickel fine, dropped into a large tin coffee mug, and announce, "That's a nickel."

DAVE CLARK

A modest enough program, trying to eliminate a single word from one's speech, or so one might think, and yet our success has been less than spectacular. I'd estimate that we currently have more than $15 in our cup or, in the good Yiddish word, *pushkeh*, and that's a lot of yeahs. When first we set out, the nickels were flying. We are now down to lapsing into error as seldom as one or two times a day. Few are the days when neither of us gets off without making a contribution or two to the *pushkeh*. Later in the evenings, our guards lowered by fatigue, our lapses tend to be more frequent. When the *pushkeh* is full, perhaps we'll treat ourselves to a bottle of champagne.

One of the things this little campaign of self-improvement reveals is how often the word "yeah" comes up in the talk of others and in the dialogue of movies and on television. The English now use it quite as much as we gringos do, though I haven't yet noted any yeahs on *Masterpiece Theatre*. Imagine how much the Beatles would have been fined for their song "She Loves You, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah." The singer Joe Nichols has a full song called "Yeah," which is about the affirmation a man feels for a beautiful woman—like, yeah!

A small enough improvement, this attempt to eliminate a single slurry word from my speech, yet I would nonetheless like to achieve it. Some years ago I gave up, with reasonable if not complete success, profanity, which was threatening to take over my speech. (I still require a certain amount of profanity for my thoughts.) I long ago eliminated psychobabble from my vocabulary. I attempt to speak in full and grammatical sentences, not to mix metaphors, to divest myself of clichés, even to eliminate split infinitives, so with all this grooming of my speech, yeah, I feel, also has got to go.

Yeah is of course a synonym for yes. In German and Dutch, *ja*—much closer to yeah than to yes—is standard. Is yeah the more natural word; is the synonym more sensible than the original? In some idiomatic phrases yeah seems irreplaceable. "Yeah, right, sure, you believe *that* you'll believe anything" is much better than "Yes, right, sure . . ." So is "Yeah, go for it" better than "Yes, go for it." For my own touchdown dance, followed by three vigorous fist pumps, I find only a concluding yeah will do.

Sometimes you just have to spend the nickel.

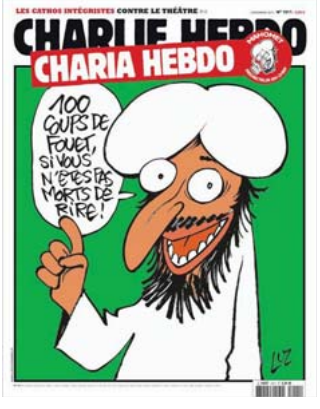
Joseph Epstein

the weekly Standard

The Attack on 'Charlie Hebdo'

This past week, at least a dozen French people, most of them journalists at the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, were gunned down during an editorial meeting by the brothers Chérif and Said Kouachi, two French Muslims who may have returned recently from waging jihad in Syria. French citizens crowded into public squares across the country to vent their grief and wave signs reading "I am Charlie." Foreign leaders professed their willingness to rally behind the values that France shares with the West. President Obama described France as "the culture and the civilization that is so central to our imaginations."

The events of January 7 were indeed an attack on French values. But, more important, they were an attack on France. The two terms are used as if they were interchangeable. They are not. The big difference is that states can fight back against terrorism. "Values" cannot. Values matter, but to invoke them too eagerly risks leaving the impression that one lacks the stomach for an antiterrorist fight.



'100 lashes if you're not dying of laughter'

The state depends, according to the classic definition of sociologist Max Weber, on its "monopoly on the legitimate use of force." This is the case no matter what a state's values are. Terrorists are a special kind of threat to states. They don't just break the rules the way ordinary criminals do. They compete with states in a business where there is not supposed to be any competition. That is why the United States has traditionally responded to acts of terrorism by reasserting its monopoly on force. This does not mean the state has to use violence. But it must signal a willingness to do so. In the wake of the September 11 bombings, George W. Bush's response was muscular to the point of controversy. It should be remembered that Bill Clinton responded to the 1995 bombings of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City with a similar forwardness, even supporting an expansion in the use of the death penalty for terrorists. The bombing was the turning point of his presidency.

NEWSCOM

At least since the firebombing and destruction of *Charlie Hebdo*'s old offices by angry Muslims in 2011, protecting the magazine's premises has been a benchmark of the French government's competence. Last week's attack—the realization of a long-announced jihadist objective—is a blow to the national prestige. No state is perfect or clairvoyant, but all have a responsibility to pick up the pieces. French president François Hollande is poorly positioned to do so.

This is not all his fault. France's membership in the multinational European Union makes it less than a fully sovereign country. It must defer to its neighbors even in matters of self-defense. No pro-European politician has ever frankly admitted this to French voters. France, for instance, has no death penalty to expand the way Clinton did—and it will not get one as long as it remains a member of the EU. The National Front, a party with roots in right-wing opposition to France's withdrawal from its North African empire, became the country's largest party in European elections last spring. That rise will now be retrospectively attributed to leader Marine Le Pen's stance on immigration and Islam—wrongly. The party's rise is due to its attitudes on sovereignty.

Nations exist, in the final analysis, to protect their citizens and their culture. The more such protection is deemed necessary, the more the EU appears feeble and unloved. Its leaders must sense that they are being ousted from the European public's hearts. In response to the latest attack, EU commission president Jean-Claude Juncker said that action was necessary on terrorism, but not yet, since "you can get it wrong by going too far or not going far enough." The EU's unelected defense chief, Federica Mogherini, urged calm. "Press freedom is a fundamental value of Europe," she said at a conference in Riga. "Fighting terrorism is a key challenge, not just in terms of politics and security, but [as] a cultural challenge."

Such values do indeed unify the countries of Europe,

but at a level too shallow to permit the forging of action. It is inspiring to see protesters in the United States and Europe rallying behind the slogan "I am Charlie," but this unity is also shallow. If the Frenchmen marching through their city squares really were like the martyred editors of *Charlie Hebdo*, then the terrorists of the future would no longer have any reason to fear them. To say "I am Charlie" risks sounding like an assertion of one's innocence and harmlessness. The terrorists, meanwhile, are plotting their next attack.

On September 12, 2001, the front-page headline in the *New York Times* read: "U.S. Attacked." Such a headline is hard to imagine today. The prevailing sentiment would be: "U.S. Values Attacked." American and European leaders, Obama and Secretary of State Kerry included, now think of a war as a misunderstanding or a poorly conducted discussion. If we could only identify the breakdown in communication that led people to disagree, if we could maybe phrase things in a different way . . . well, then we could get somewhere. They do not accept that anything could be too important to negotiate over, or anybody too impatient. They practice what Raymond Aron's Alsatian protégé, the sociologist Julien Freund, called denial of the enemy: "A nihilist in politics," Freund wrote in 1965, "is one who believes in absolute security and absolute prosperity, who denies the enemy and, whether out of weakness or heedlessness, delivers a people up to the mercy of its rivals."

It would be better for all of us if this were an attack on France's values. Then the appropriate thing would be to return to our coffeehouses and debate what France's values are. But this was not an attack on France's values. It was an attack on France. That calls for stronger measures.

—Christopher Caldwell

The Two Crises

It did not take the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* to reveal that the Islamic world has a terrible problem. For quite some time, that's been clearer than day. This is not an assertion made from outside Islam or against Islam. On New Year's Day, the president of Egypt, in a major speech, called for a "religious revolution" in Islam that would replace an embrace of violent jihad with "a more enlightened perspective." "We have to think hard about what we are facing," President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi told the clerics of Al-Azhar University in Cairo. He continued: "It's inconceivable that the thinking that we hold most sacred should cause the entire Islamic world to be a source of anxiety, danger, killing, and destruction for the rest of the world. Impossible."

But as Sisi knows, and as his speech suggests, the fact that the Islamic world is a source of danger and destruction is all too conceivable. Indeed, it's been on display, in plain sight, for years—both throughout the Middle East and of course in New York on September 11, 2001, and now in Paris on January 7, 2015.

The jihadist threat is real, and it must, obviously, be fought and defeated. But that raises another problem—not a problem with Islam, but a problem with the West.

We have lost our nerve. In recent years, the attitude of Barack Obama has prevailed over the spirit of *Charlie Hebdo*. The claims of sensitivity have trumped the attachment to freedom. Appeasement of jihad has supplanted the war on terror. Most fundamentally—let's be honest—fear has overwhelmed courage.

And so the American president has been happy to proclaim, as he did at the United Nations in September 2012, "The future must not belong to those who slander the prophet of Islam." He has been less willing to say that the future must not belong to those who kill in the name of the prophet of Islam. And he has certainly been unwilling to act in such a way as to ensure that the future does not belong to the killers.

Having failed in the past to stand with the brave editors and cartoonists of *Charlie Hebdo*, politicians raced this week to the microphones and to Twitter to proclaim, as one of them put it in a Tweet, *"Aujourd'hui nous sommes tous Charlie."*

The relevant word is *aujourd'hui*. Yes, *today* the bienpensants are all Charlie. But only today—not yesterday, and, we suspect, not tomorrow. Liberal politicians and enlightened intellectuals throughout the West have precisely failed to stand with *Charlie Hebdo* when it mattered most. And faced with the real-world difficulties of not just standing for liberty but actually going on the offensive against the jihadists on behalf of liberty, the West has shrunk from the task. Only a few short years after 9/11, we in the West have not been willing to bear the burdens of a policy that takes jihad seriously.

Perhaps January 7, 2015, will be a marker, a dark and terrible marker, that awakens us to the consequences of our inaction. Perhaps January 7 will overcome our weariness in dealing with the threats we face, a weariness made worse by leaders who justify and cater to it. Perhaps January 7 will cause us not merely to say, "We are *Charlie Hebdo*," but will lead us to act with more of the bravery of the French cartoonists. Perhaps January 7 will be the day when fear masked as sensitivity gives way to a vigor that calls forth courage. In late 1936, Winston Churchill warned the House of Commons, "The era of procrastination, of half-measures, of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays is coming to its close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences."

We face a crisis of Islam. We need to be clear-eyed about that. But we also face a crisis of the West. Only if

we come to grips with that second crisis will this period of consequences turn out to be an occasion for renewal rather than another marker on the path to decadence. Only then will we show (to paraphrase William Gladstone) that the resources of civilization against terror are by no means exhausted.

The desperate desire on the part of Western leaders to proclaim Islam a religion of peace now looks farcical. But the problem isn't simply that real, existing Islam is not a religion of peace, as Sisi acknowledged. The problem is that the liberalism of the West has become a religion of peace, which leads in practice to the appeasement of terror. Back in 1978, Harvey Mansfield wrote, "From having been the aggressive doctrine of vigorous, spirited men, liberalism has become hardly more than a trembling in the presence of illiberalism. . . . Who today is called a liberal for strength and confidence in defense of liberty?"

The editors and cartoonists of *Charlie Hebdo* remind us of a better liberalism. But that liberalism has receded. Nor do conservatives have cause to be smug. How many of them are confident and resolute in their defense of liberty?

We have met the enemy, most recently in Paris, and it is violent jihad. But it would be a disservice to the brave men and women of *Charlie Hebdo* if we did not acknowledge after this week's events that we have also met the enemy, and he is us.

—William Kristol

Ink-Stained Cowards

After the recent massacre by Islamic terrorists at the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, people around the world took to social media to declare "*Je suis Charlie*," or "I am Charlie." Solidarity is a nice sentiment, and journalists in particular are fond of uttering self-soothing words about their commitment to free speech at times like this. But "*Je suis Charlie*" is just another lie that the media tell themselves. *Charlie Hebdo*'s willingness to defend free speech only serves as a reminder that the magazine was a rare bastion of courage in an industry dominated by cowards.

Indeed, many in the media are in such denial they insist their cowering is brave truth-telling aimed at silencing bigots. "I hereby apologize to Muslims for the wave of bigotry and simple nuttiness that has lately been directed at you. The venom on the airwaves, equating Muslims with terrorists, should embarrass us more than you," wrote *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof in a column on September 18, 2010. "Muslims are one of the last minorities in the United States that it is still possible to demean openly, and I apologize for the slurs."

This simpering apologia was as unnecessary as it was untrue. It is not possible to demean Muslims openly. Among the many insulting things about Kristof's column was its timing. On September 14, 2010—four days before the column ran—the *Seattle Weekly* had announced that its cartoonist, Molly Norris, had "gone ghost." Earlier that year, Norris gained some prominence as the founder of Everybody Draw Muhammad Day, prompting none other than Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-Awlaki to issue a *fatwa* calling for her murder. Norris is still in hiding more than four years later, and for good reason. After the *Hebdo* massacre, many news outlets noted that one of the much-beloved, now-murdered cartoonists, Stéphane Charbonnier, aka "Charb," was recently listed by the al Qaeda magazine *Inspire* as "Wanted Dead or Alive for Crimes Against Islam." Also listed, at the bottom of the page, is Molly Norris.

Few in the media have ever so much as noted that Norris was forced to disappear. The *Washington Examiner*, one of the few outlets that did notice, published an editorial condemning various media organizations for failing to speak out in her defense, including the Society for Professional Journalists. SPJ responded by privately emailing reporters across the country that the *Examiner* editorial was "misleading and was most likely written to gain headlines/SEO." Fortunately, the *Examiner* editorial writer—who not coincidentally is also the Weekly Standard editorial writer you're reading now—had recorded his conversation with SPJ's spokesman. The transcript of that conversation made it abundantly clear who was doing the misleading.

This cowardice is bad enough. But what is beyond appalling is the fact that so many journalists are incapable of criticizing Muslim extremism without immediately offering up false equivalences with their preferred political targets. A few years back, *Salon* published this priceless headline: "What's the difference between Palin and Muslim fundamentalists? Lipstick." More recently, in October, there was a minor kerfuffle when Bill Maher said on his HBO program, "[Islam is] the only religion that acts like the mafia, that will [expletive] kill you if you say the wrong thing, draw the wrong picture, or write the wrong book." His guest, Ben Affleck, responded disapprovingly. "It's gross, it's racist, it's disgusting," he said. "It's like saying, 'Oh, you shifty Jew!' "

And right after the *Hebdo* massacre, *Esquire*'s Charles Pierce wrote, "We can all imagine in the abstract the reaction of the American right to a French (eek!) publication that ran cartoons of masturbating nuns and of the pope sporting a condom," as *Charlie Hebdo* did. But this dumb hypothetical isn't exactly unverifiable. The Associated Press, which as a matter of policy will not display *Hebdo*'s

offensive cartoons, sold photo prints of Andres Serrano's infamous "Piss Christ" on its website until it was forced to acknowledge its hypocrisy after the *Hebdo* slaughter. Yet not a single Christian shot up an AP newsroom.

We depend on a free press to check governments that would suppress speech, so the fact that the media have neutered themselves is harming free expression throughout the West. In Canada, journalists Mark Steyn and Ezra Levant have been dragged into legal proceedings and threatened with fines for criticizing Muslims. In the wake of a violent al Qaeda attack on a U.S. embassy, the U.S. government jailed the filmmaker behind an obscure YouTube video mocking Muhammad. And President Obama himself told the United Nations, "The future must not belong to those who slander the prophet of Islam." Let us be clear, then, in our own response: Perhaps the future shouldn't belong to those who slander Muhammad, but it damn well better belong to people who insist on the right to do so.

—Mark Hemingway

Wimping Out on Obamacare?

Republicans have now won two Obamacare elections, the first in 2010 and the second in 2014. (In 2012, their presidential nominee chose not to engage on the issue.) In the lead-up to their latest victory, Republicans ran far more ads against Obamacare than either party ran for or against anything else. Voters responded by giving the GOP 9 more Senate seats and 13 more House seats. The one candidate who ran on a genuine alternative to Obamacare, Ed Gillespie in Virginia, almost pulled off the upset of the night. Predicted by polls to lose by nearly ten percentage points, he lost by less than one.

One would think such resounding results would have given Republicans renewed confidence in pursuing repeal and reinvigorated interest in uniting behind a conservative alternative to pave the way to that repeal. One would expect the election to have reaffirmed the party's long-held position that the "comprehensive," 2,700-page overhaul of American medicine shouldn't be "tweaked," "fixed," or "repaired," but comprehensively repealed. That is, after all, what rank-and-file Republicans and a great many independents surely had in mind when they cast their ballots for GOP candidates.

Unfortunately, the early signs suggest that House and Senate Republican leaders think voters sent them to Washington to make Obamacare better—on the margins, in ways that appeal to corporate interests. At a time when neither political party is doing a very good job of standing with everyday Americans, Republicans appear to be listening to the lobbyists of K Street rather than the voters on Main Street.

Witness the first weekly Republican address of the new year. In it, Republicans touted two small-ball Obamacare fixes. The first was the Hire More Heroes Act, which the House passed last week. To quote the address, that act "exempts veterans already enrolled in health care plans through the Department of Defense or the VA from being counted toward the employee limit under the health care law." It had already passed the House last March by a vote of 406-1. Picking it as a lead-off item for the new Congress was akin to taking a vote in favor of puppies or baseball.

Worse, the address also declared that the House would act to modify Obamacare's definition of a full-time workweek, which it proceeded to do later last week. This is an example of lawmaking that is worse than doing nothing, for it will help give Obamacare—which the Democrats passed without a single Republican vote—a layer of bipartisan gloss. If President Obama were actually executing it as written, Obamacare would require all businesses with 50 or more full-time employees to provide them with Obamacare-compliant health insurance. Obamacare defines full-time employees as those who work at least 30 hours a week; House Republicans voted to change that to 40 hours.

But why would Republicans want to "fix" the law in this way? The focus of Obamacare's opponents should be on repealing and replacing the overhaul, not on repairing it—and everything they do should be with an eye toward advancing that larger goal. In the short term, therefore, they can look to pull pieces out of Obamacare—particularly pieces whose absence would simultaneously provide relief for Americans and undermine Obamacare. A fine example is the individual mandate: Americans hate it, and Obamacare relies upon it. Another good play is to highlight especially egregious sections that haven't gotten much popular attention, such as the effective ban on building or expanding doctor-owned hospitals—a striking example of Obamacare's rampant cronyism, and one that comes at the expense of a group with whom Republicans would be well-served to align themselves.

It is one thing to take pieces out of Obamacare in a strategic way, however, and quite another to reach inside and start actively tweaking and "fixing" it, a trap that Republicans had essentially avoided to date. If they succeed in changing the definition of full-time work from 30 to 40 hours, Republicans will put their fingerprints on Obamacare, a monstrosity not of their making, taking partial ownership of the president's unpopular namesake.

It is not even clear that this "fix" would help American workers. At *National Review Online*, Yuval Levin cites Sherry Glied and Claudia Solis-Roman's findings that there are almost 10 times as many yearlong employees

who work 40 hours as who work between 30 and 34 hours. In other words, there are a lot more employees who could see their hours cut to 39 than are currently seeing their hours cut to 29. The Congressional Budget Office notes the same thing: "Because many more workers work 40 hours per week (or slightly more) than work 30 hours per week (or slightly more), the changes . . . could affect many more workers than are affected under current law." On the other hand, larger companies have historically offered health insurance—although not expensive Obamacare-compliant insurance—to most 40-hour workers, without having the heavy hand of government order them to do so under penalty of law. So it's hard to say for sure whether this "fix" would make things better or worse for workers. It would, however, make things better—in the short term—for some corporations.

Why would Republicans want to 'fix' the law? The focus of Obamacare's opponents should be on repealing and replacing the health care overhaul, not on repairing it.

A third early Republican push, unmentioned in the address, is to repeal Obamacare's medical device tax. Like hundreds of other pieces of the mammoth legislation, the medical device tax is bad policy. But it's also a part of Obamacare that corporate interests loathe and hence are willing to put substantial amounts of money behind eliminating. So long as the medical device tax remains a part of Obamacare, these corporate interests will be engaged allies in the cause of full repeal. If the medical device tax is excised, a little of the wind will go out of repeal's sails.

The strong popular gusts of support for repeal can certainly withstand this slight diminishment of their power, but the move would still be counterproductive. It would also be a clear sign as to whom Republicans view as their most important constituents. One newly elected GOP member says that throughout more than a thousand campaign events with everyday citizens—with many of those events focusing on Obamacare—he never once had anyone ask about repealing the medical device tax. Yet Republican leaders, responding to lobbyists, are putting the matter at the top of their to-do list.

The new Congress has barely been sworn in, so there is still plenty of time for Republicans to alter their course for the better. By targeting aspects of Obamacare like the individual mandate and the war on doctor-owned hospitals—and, most important, by uniting behind a winning conservative alternative—they could lay the groundwork for full repeal in early 2017.

—Jeffrey H. Anderson

Jihad Comes to Paris

The long arm of al Qaeda.

BY THOMAS JOSCELYN

The jihadists responsible for the most successful terrorist attack in France in decades hunted down cartoonists. They did not target a significant historical landmark, such as the Eiffel Tower, or any well-known French politicians. They did not seek to maximize civilian casualties in a suicide bombing, a trademark of previous attacks. Instead, they methodically killed Stéphane Charbonnier, the editorial director of *Charlie Hebdo*, and other members of the French magazine's staff. This was deliberate. The attack was intended to convey a message straight out of jihadist propaganda. It is a message that the West still doesn't fully understand—and isn't prepared to combat.

Charlie Hebdo, as is widely known, specializes in uninhibited satire, lampooning and caricaturing celebrities and religious figures of multiple faiths. It was not the magazine's 2010 portrayal of Pope Benedict XVI holding a condom over his head that grabbed murderous attention, though. No, jihadist conviction mandated that Charbonnier and his colleagues be killed because of the magazine's depictions of the Prophet Muhammad.

In the hours since the attack, many in the Western press have engaged in a discussion about free speech; are certain images just too provocative? The Associated Press, the *New York Times*, and many other news organizations have gone out of their way to stress that they will not commit *Charlie Hebdo*'s offenses. They have even censored images of Charbonnier holding up the very cartoons that led jihadists to kill him.

These press outlets will not admit it, but they have surrendered—and not just to political correctness. There is still much we do not know about the terrorists responsible for the attack. We do know that their terror was planned and entirely consistent with previous threats by which al Qaeda and like-minded jihadists aim to impose their draconian views on our society.

Terrorists execute a policeman Wednesday.

In early 2013, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), an official branch of the international terrorist organization, released the tenth edition of its English-language magazine, *Inspire*. The issue included a "wanted" poster headlined "Dead or Alive For Crimes Against Islam" that encouraged followers to shoot 11 people. One of those pictured was Charbonnier.

It was just part of a broader propaganda campaign to portray the jihadists as the true defenders of Muhammad's legacy. Ayman al Zawahiri, the head of al Qaeda, and other key jihadist figures routinely expound upon this theme, hoping to incite other Muslims to commit acts of violence in defense of the prophet.

The same issue of *Inspire* that threatened Charbonnier also celebrated the September 2012 assaults on various U.S. diplomatic facilities, including the embassies in Cairo, Tunis, and Sanaa and the mission in Benghazi. The cover photo shows an al Qaeda-style black banner being raised in place of the Stars and Stripes on a flagpole in front of the U.S. embassy in Tunis.

The Obama administration told the American people that those attacks were the result of spontaneous riots provoked by an online video promoting an anti-Islam film. But that story was always false. More important, it ignored what the jihadists are really trying to do.

Multiple al Qaeda-linked organizations either helped incite protests outside U.S. diplomatic facilities or directly assaulted them beginning on September 11, 2012. In Cairo, Tunis, and Sanaa, they did so, they claimed, in defense of the Prophet Muhammad's reputation. But AQAP's tenth edition of *Inspire* magazine helpfully reminded readers that those events were not just a protest of an anti-Islam video; they were a celebration of Osama bin Laden's legacy. "We Are All Usama," the cover read, repeating a chant that was heard in front of multiple U.S. embassies.

An editorial in that issue of *Inspire* cites an infamous quotation from Osama bin Laden: "If there is no check on the freedom of your words, then let your hearts be open to the freedom of our actions." Some AQAP supporters repeated this same line on Twitter as a justification for the massacre at *Charlie Hebdo*'s offices. The meaning is obvious: If we will not restrict our speech in a way that satisfies al Qaeda, they will attack us.

Reports indicate that the terrorists responsible for the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* may have ties to AQAP. "You can tell the media that it's al Qaeda

Thomas Joscelyn is a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

A street vigil in the French province of Lorraine in memory of shooting victims, January 8

NEWSCOM

in Yemen," one of the attackers said during the assault, according to an eyewitness cited in the press. Al Qaeda in Yemen is, in fact, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. The gunmen have been identified as brothers Said and Chérif Kouachi. According to Fox News and CNN, one of the pair traveled to Yemen, where he was trained by AQAP.

As of this writing, it is too early to tell for certain if the terrorists were sent by AQAP. Regardless, their actions were obviously motivated by the same type of thinking advocated by al Qaeda and other jihadists. During the violent attack, the terrorists were reportedly heard yelling, "We have avenged the Prophet Muhammad!"

Chérif Kouachi is not a new jihadist, moreover. A French court convicted him in 2008 of being part of a terror network that sent recruits off to fight and die for Al Qaeda in Iraq. His dossier indicates that he is likely to have multiple ties to professional terrorists. He is not an ordinary Muslim who suddenly decided to act out one day because of some silly cartoons. The professional manner in which the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*'s offices was carried out also demonstrates that this was not a spontaneous event.

Which brings us back to the reaction of the Western media. There is a palpable fear that republishing the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons would further inflame the situation. But this assumes that the cartoons, and not the ideology that demands blood be spilled over drawings, are the proximate cause of the violence. This view also treats Muslims as caricatures, assuming they are so combustible that we dare not provoke them, lest last week's attack repeat itself. In other words, the media believe that al Qaeda is essentially right: The jihadists are defending Muslims against something so deeply offensive to their faith it cannot be shown, and there should be a "check on the freedom of [our] words."

A smarter approach would be to show the cartoons, pointing out that they are juvenile and *Charlie Hebdo* seeks to offend just about everyone. That is what satirists do. And declaring that because free speech is sacred in the West, the cartoons will not be suppressed.

"I am not afraid of retaliation," Stéphane Charbonnier once said. "I have no kids, no wife, no car, no credit. It perhaps sounds a bit pompous, but I prefer to die standing than living on my knees."

Unfortunately, few journalists feel the same way. And so al Qaeda and like-minded jihadists will dictate what is published and what is not. ♦

A Year of Conflict or Compromise?

The answer may depend on the Supreme Court.

BY JAY COST

Traditionally, the new year is a time for reflection on the year that ended and predictions about the one to come. Conservatives had an excellent 2014, as the Republican party gained control of the Senate, won more House seats than at any time since the Great Depression, and made historic gains in state governments. What of 2015?

I don't hate you that *much.*

Already a narrative seems to be taking shape. Republican leadership in Congress, cognizant of its party's still-damaged reputation, is looking to be as constructive as possible. Eschewing the brinkmanship that characterized 2011-2013, John Boehner and Mitch McConnell seem intent on proving that congressional Republicans can govern responsibly, so as to make voters comfortable supporting the party's presidential nominee in 2016.

Meanwhile, Barack Obama—now a lame duck—is left to hope that economic growth burnishes his reputation enough to give the Democratic nominee, presumably Hillary Clinton, a victory in 22 months. The president has few allies left on Capitol Hill, and beyond unilateral executive action he will struggle to dictate the political agenda this year. Increasingly, attention will turn to the pre-primary phase of the presidential campaign; the Republican contest looks to be broad and rollicking, while Democrats are waiting to see whether Hillary Clinton gets a real challenge.

In other words, 2015 won't be a year of conflict. Instead, we seem set for a period of quiescence, a nice change of pace from the rough-and-tumble year that just ended. This conventional wisdom rests on a fairly shaky assumption, though: that the Supreme Court will rule with the government in *King* v. *Burwell*.

The case involves subsidies provided in Obamacare's exchanges. As written, the Affordable Care Act permits subsidies only to residents of states that created their own insurance exchanges. Better than two-thirds of states balked at this task, however, so the federal government set up exchanges for them, and the Internal Revenue Service ruled that their residents could receive subsidies anyway. This gave individuals and employers standing to sue, because the distribution of subsidies triggers various taxes and penalties under the ACA.

A number of lawsuits followed. The Fourth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled for the government in *King*, while the D.C. Circuit ruled for the plaintiffs in *Halbig* v. *Burwell*. The latter decision, made by a three-judge panel, was vacated in September, though, when the D.C. Circuit agreed to rehear the case en banc, meaning the court's entire complement of judges would weigh in. This was widely seen as a signal that the government was set for a victory. Such en banc hearings are rare in cases like this, suggesting that the whole circuit court—now dominated by liberal judges—planned to rule in reverse.

Shortly after the midterm election, the Supreme Court shocked the political world by agreeing to hear *King*. Normally, the Court does not insert itself into a situation where there is no split among circuit courts, and the split between the Fourth and D.C. Circuits disappeared when *Halbig* was vacated—and looked unlikely to reappear. This implies there is a substantial bloc on the High Court ready to rule in favor of the plaintiffs. Whether it is a majority of the justices remains to be seen, but the Court's interjection suggests the very real possibility that the government could lose this case.

What would happen then? In a word: trouble. Millions of people would lose their insurance subsidies, increasing their out-of-pocket costs. Given the high cost of unsubsidized insurance on the exchanges—thanks to the broad array of coverage requirements and pricing restrictions—this could create a problem of adverse selection: Healthy people drop out of the exchanges because insurance is too expensive, leaving only the sick, which in turn pushes prices up further, driving more healthy people out.

A potential solution is for recalcitrant state governments to design their own exchanges. But that fails to account for the scope of Republican dominance on the state level. The GOP has staked its ground in opposition to Obamacare; how likely are Republican state governments to salvage it? Such a rescue operation, moreover, would trigger those levies upon private individuals and enterprises. When has the Republican party ever agreed to higher taxes on business?

The alternative is a federal answer. But that seems just as improbable. Barack Obama is the most liberal president since at least Lyndon Johnson, and Congress is now as Republican as it has been since the 1920s. Obamacare has dominated debate over the last five years. Just how likely are the two sides to broker a deal? Adding to the ideological divide is a mutual suspicion; Boehner and Obama have come to distrust each other since negotiations on a grand bargain for deficit reduction collapsed in 2011. And both leaders have

NEWSCOM

Jay Cost is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard *and the author of* A Republic No More: Big Government and the Rise of American Political Corruption.

had trouble persuading their allies in Congress to support them.

Liberals, of course, will blame the Supreme Court—and the Republican party—for such a mess. But the reality is that Obamacare is a terribly written piece of legislation. Put aside the big ideological question of the debate—how involved should the government be in the provision of medical care?—and that fact becomes even more apparent.

By furnishing public support to for-profit medical service providers, the law doubles down on the worst aspects of the American welfare state. It is a breeding ground for inefficiency, cronyism, and corruption. It was drafted by legislators who used budgetary legerdemain to hide its true costs, mask its effect on the broader market, and curry favor with special interests. And its Rube Goldberg design has far too many moving parts that could break down and ruin the whole scheme—which is exactly what might happen after *King*. If the government loses the case, liberal Democrats will have nobody to blame but themselves. They could have written a better law; indeed, they *should* have. It is inexcusable to redesign one-sixth of the American economy in such a shoddy manner.

Of course, pointing fingers will do nothing to fix such a mess. But there might be nothing else the major players could do. The current partisan breakdown is ill-suited to solve such a divisive problem, even if everybody agrees a solution must be found. In our system, it is not enough for all parties to agree that the status quo is intolerable. There has to be consensus that a *given alternative* is preferable. There is no such consensus today.

The most likely result of a government defeat in *King* is thus another protracted period of partisan gridlock, mutual animosity, and vicious recriminations. In that instance, it will be up to the American people in 2016 to finally break the logjam over health care—something they have so far chosen not to do—by voting for one party or the other. That will make for an epic campaign next year, but a miserable prelude in 2015. ♦

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY THE WEEKLY STANDARD

History Repeats Itself

The radical historians lose again.

BY RONALD RADOSH

At the annual conference of the American Historical Association in New York City this month, anti-Israeli activist historians suffered a rare double defeat. Calling themselves Historians Against War (HAW), the group pushed first for an academic boycott of Israel, then for condemnation of alleged Israeli violations of academic freedom. But a handful of AHA members led an effective fight against them—in an admirable echo of the great confrontation of 1970, when, thanks to the remarkable intervention of a then-Marxist historian, the AHA fended off a fierce challenge from the New Left.

Last week's drama seemed to culminate when outgoing AHA president Jan Goldstein ruled that HAW's boycott resolution lacked the requisite signatures. Goldstein's objections, moreover, were not only procedural. She argued that the AHA, as a scholarly organization, had no purview over any Palestinian "right of return," whose denial by Israel had been said to justify the boycott.

Goldstein had been lobbied intensely by historians Jeffrey Herf and Sonya Michel (University of Maryland), David Greenberg (Rutgers), Sharon Musher (Richard Stockton College of New Jersey), and others. They had warned her that many of the claims made by HAW to bolster its case against Israel were false. HAW maintained, for instance, that during the Gaza war, Israel had intentionally sought to destroy an oral history center at the Islamic University. Herf showed Goldstein evidence that the Israeli target was actually a facility where rocket components were manufactured for Hamas's military wing, the al-Qassam Brigades. Similarly, HAW maintained that Israel refused to allow Gaza students to study abroad, even in the West Bank, when in fact the restriction applied only to students supporting terrorist groups. Herf also warned Goldstein against further politicizing the AHA: The effect of endorsing HAW's resolution would be to "support the right of academics to aid in a terrorist war waged against Israel."

Undeterred by its initial defeat, HAW pushed its agenda again at the AHA business meeting on January 4. This time it sought votes on two resolutions that stopped short of calling for a boycott—but that had been submitted for consideration after the relevant deadline.

The first resolution accused Israel of violating academic freedom and

Ronald Radosh is an adjunct fellow at the Hudson Institute and coauthor, with Allis Radosh, of A Safe Haven: Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel.

called on the State Department to contest Israel's denial of visas to (pro-Hamas and Hezbollah) academics seeking to work at Palestinian universities. The second called on the AHA to condemn alleged Israeli acts of violence against Palestinian researchers and archival collections that threatened to "destroy the Palestinians' sense of historical identity as well as the historical record itself."

HAW produced 50 signatures from AHA members asking for votes on these measures. The controversy excited enough interest that the business meeting was moved to the large Hilton ballroom, where HAW tried to have the bylaws governing deadlines for resolutions suspended. But the vote on the bylaws went heavily against the radicals, 144 to 51, in a major victory for the forces of sanity.

No such victory is permanent, as those of us who lived through a major defeat of the left at the AHA in 1970 know all too well. Back then, the challenge came from a group called the Radical Caucus—some of whose members are still active now, in HAW or the Mid-Atlantic Radical Historians' Organization, an AHA affiliate. Their object back then was to get the business meeting to put the AHA on record as opposing the war in Vietnam.

In the early 1970s, the New Left radicals were a minority in the profession, which was dominated by established mainstream historians like John K. Fairbank, Richard Hofstadter, and C. Vann Woodward, old-style liberals who adhered to a strict separation of politics and history. The Radical Caucus, born in late December 1969, was at first composed largely of University of Wisconsin-Madison graduate students. But even then, left-wing historians were beginning to gain university appointments. One of them—Marxist Eugene D. Genovese, at the University of Rochester—argued that leftist historians should defend the university and seek to hold it to its own highest standards. The New Left preferred to confront the university and expose its links to other so-called oppressive American institutions.

And so it was that at the 1970 AHA convention, all hell broke loose. Radical historians Staughton Lynd and Arthur Waskow, speaking on behalf of the Radical Caucus, called for a commitment by the AHA not just to "historical studies," but to "the intellectual liberation of Americans" and the demystification of "the holders of power." Professional historians, they argued, were meant to serve the public. To this end, they demanded a "special Fund for the Liberation of Historians." Chicago radical Richie Rothstein called for historians to build the "people's identity as cadre of a radical movement (who happened to be engaged in the vocation of history) rather than as honest historians (who happened to be radicals)." He demanded an assault on the "professionalism" of academic history. The AHA, he said, should be used to recruit "young historians who have been touched by the Movement."

This forced a split between those who wanted historians to redefine themselves as activists practicing what Lynd called "guerrilla history" and those who believed a historian should study the record of what human beings have been capable of in the past. Lynd held up as model historians the Cuban revolutionaries who taped the experiences of young Fidelistas at work transforming a prison camp on the Isle of Pines into a youth retreat.

Like this year's confrontation, the one in 1970 came to a climax at the AHA business meeting. But instead of a few hundred attending, perhaps as many as 3,000 historians packed the ballroom. The Radical Caucus introduced, and later withdrew, a resolution demanding an end not only to the war in Vietnam but also to the "repression" of the Black Panther party. A substitute resolution introduced by the radical scholar Blanche W. Cook "deplored and condemned" the war and urged withdrawal of all American troops. It was Cook's resolution that eventually came to a vote.

But before that, there was discussion, the highlight of which was a speech by Genovese, a hero of the left ever since, as a young professor at Rutgers in 1965, he had called for a Vietcong victory, sparking criticism from Richard Nixon and a campaign to "Rid Rutgers of Reds."

Now, Genovese shocked the Radical Caucus. He stood up and said that, although he opposed the Vietnam war, if the radicals' resolution passed, the bulk of historians in the AHA, who

favored the war, would be forced to resign from the group. Noting that the majority of Americans also supported the war, he said that those citizens were as moral and deserving of being heard as the war's opponents.

The Radical Caucus, he continued in a booming voice, were a bunch of "totalitarians"—in private conversation he called them "Nazis, gangsters, and hoodlums"—and he ended his speech by saying that the time had come for historians to isolate and defeat the New Left and "put them down, put them down hard, once and for all."

Most of the AHA members present rose and cheered, as the Radical Caucus sat stunned. Genovese, it turned out, hated the antiwar movement and the New Left more than he hated the war. One Radical Caucus member rushed to the microphone and, pleading for the AHA to support the antiwar resolution, asked how historians could "tell their children years later that they did nothing when others were trying to make history?"

When the vote was finally taken, not by the full membership but by a governing body, the radicals lost, 647 to 611.

Serious antiwar liberals, like historian H. Stuart Hughes, publicly supported Genovese, agreeing that the New Leftists were "totalitarian." His judgment was vindicated when a young historian named Jesse Lemisch presented a paper at the Radical Caucus session the next day in which he argued that the stars of the profession—scholars like Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., Samuel Eliot Morison, Oscar Handlin, and Daniel Boorstin—were "cold warriors" who themselves were using history as a vehicle for fighting communism.

Lemisch had been dismissed from a teaching job at the University of Chicago, where department leaders said "his political concerns interfered with his scholarship." Today, he leads the movement of anti-Israeli historians who gained thousands of signatures on a petition circulated during the Gaza war, which Jeffrey Herf, writing in the *American Interest*, called a petition in support of Hamas.

Today, the profession is no longer led by old-style mainstream historians who understood the necessary division between political activity and scholarship and believed that professional organizations must remain impartial. The young radicals of the 1960s and '70s received their Ph.D.s and began their "long march through the institutions." They now dominate the profession. The heartening setback they were dealt last week, however, proved that some still resist the merger of history and politics. Perhaps the example of Eugene Genovese—who died in 2012, a professing Catholic and political conservative—will inspire them to remain stalwart in the cause he once so bravely led. ♦

The Speaker and His Critics

They wanted a public drama, and got it.

BY FRED BARNES

"I am for the most conservative outcome that we can get," Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell told *Politico*'s Manu Raju last summer. House speaker John Boehner would agree with that goal. But critics to their right disagree. They are for the most conservative outcome they cannot get.

This is the heart of the division between Republicans in the House and Senate. It was behind the effort to bring down Boehner. And though less than 10 percent of House Republicans voted to oust him as speaker, that small band is likely to be a recurring thorn in his side, just as Senator Ted Cruz has been in McConnell's.

Their grievance, for now anyway, is the 10-month budget negotiated by Boehner and Harry Reid, the outgoing Senate majority leader. It passed in the lame duck session of Congress a month after the Republican landslide in November's midterm elections. That Democrats still controlled the Senate (plus the White House) gave them leverage. The best option for Republicans was a compromise. The dissidents, however, claim Boehner merely surrendered. And they've been very noisy on the subject.

He'll need more than the gavel.

"I cannot stand beside the same leadership that . . . has refused to take swift action against the president and his administration's unconstitutional actions," Rep. Paul Gosar (R-Ariz.) said in a statement. "Not enough is done to stop him," Rep. Jeff Duncan (R-S.C.) said. "Speaker Boehner went too far when he teamed with Obama to advance this legislation," Rep. Jim Bridenstine (R-Okla.) complained. "With this vote, Republicans gave away the best tool available to rein in our liberal activist president: the power of the purse."

Not quite. McConnell intends to use 12 separate spending bills to make numerous changes affecting Obama's policies and programs. For instance, he has vowed to propose

Fred Barnes is an executive editor at The Weekly Standard.

NEWSCOM

amendments to eliminate various parts of Obamacare.

That won't be enough to assuage dissidents with high-toned reasons for opposing Boehner. Rep. David Brat (R-Va.), who defeated then-majority leader Eric Cantor in a GOP primary, declared on *Breitbart*: "Washington is broken in part because our party's leadership has strayed from its own principles of free-market, limited government, constitutional conservatism." That wasn't all. He cosponsored an amendment to defund Obama's executive amnesty, only to have Boehner block it. The amendment's chance of passage: zero.

On other issues too, the dissidents ignored the fact that what they sought was unattainable, since Republicans lacked the votes. They had no choice but to settle for a bipartisan agreement or force a government shutdown.

Cruz and his allies favored a shutdown in 2013 in hopes it would stir national support for defunding Obamacare. It didn't come close. On the contrary, it caused the favorability of the Republican party to drop from 38 to 28 percent, while Democratic popularity held steady. It took a year for Republicans to recover.

So what was the point of voting against Boehner, as 24 House Republicans did? They didn't have a popular candidate to replace Boehner, and the campaigns run by backbenchers Louie Gohmert (R-Tex.) and Ted Yoho (R-Fla.) were amateurish. Gohmert got 3 votes, Yoho 2. Daniel Webster (R-Fla.) received 12 votes, but he's hardly a full-blown conservative.

Several Republicans said they had little choice. "A large number of my constituents have called on me to demand new leadership in the House," Rep. Scott Garrett (R-N.J.) said. "I hear you and I agree." Before the vote, Rep. Gary Palmer (R-Ala.) met with Boehner and explained he had promised as a candidate to vote against him. "To a certain extent, I regret having said that," he told the *Birmingham News*. "But I said it, and I can't walk it back. You give your word, you've got to keep your word."

In the House, the anti-Boehner bloc wanted visibility. They could have organized against Boehner when House Republicans met privately and chose him as their candidate for speaker. They didn't. They waited until last week's vote on the House floor and succeeded in attracting enormous media attention.

No more than a dozen of the dissidents, once dubbed "chuckleheads" by former representative Steve LaTourette (R-Ohio), are firmly opposed. But their political strength goes far beyond their numbers.

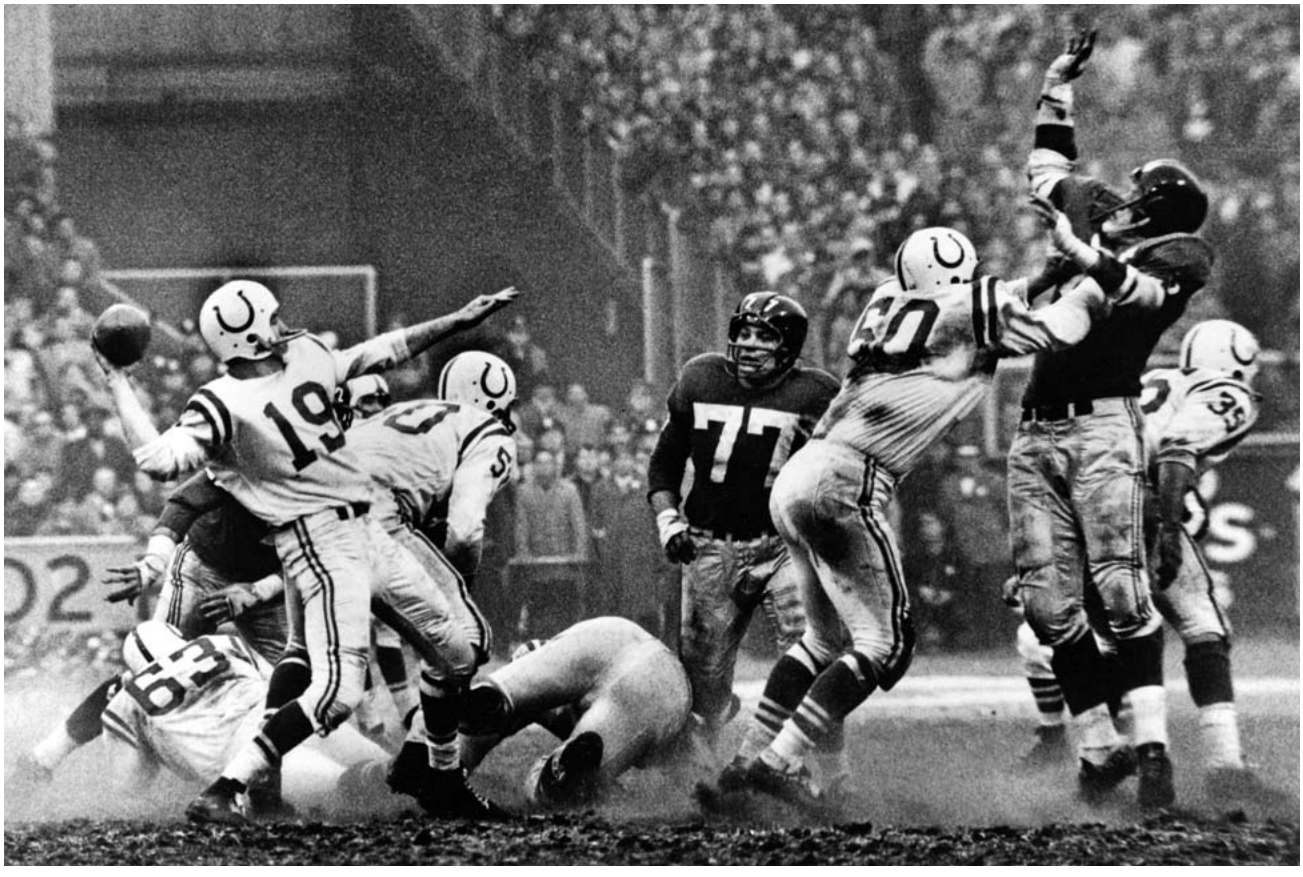
They aren't well known nationally, but they are household names to the Republican base. This is especially true of Gohmert, thanks to his many appearances on Fox News. And they are in sync with conservative talk radio (Rush Limbaugh, Mark Levin) in their low opinion of Boehner. Levin asked listeners to target Rep. Raúl Labrador (R-Idaho) for his vote for Boehner. The 4,000 comments received by Labrador included "worthless shill" and "you're just another jackass" and "Judas."

Gohmert and company are also aligned with well-organized groups influential with grassroots conservatives. The Madison Group made Boehner the test for endorsing candidates. If they said they'd vote against Boehner, they got the endorsement.

Matt Kibbe, president of the small-government group FreedomWorks, said Boehner "has caved on numerous massive spending bills at the eleventh hour, and abused the legislative process to stomp out opposition by holding surprise votes and giving members little time to actually read the bills before they vote." FreedomWorks members, he said, sent more than 20,000 messages to Congress and made 13,000 calls to oppose Boehner.

Boehner is already unpopular with the base. One poll found that 60 percent of Republicans want him to be replaced. Constant turmoil "really does erode a majority," Rep. Peter Roskam (R-Ill.) says. It's up to Boehner to make sure this doesn't happen.

An achievable agenda conservative enough to shame the dissidents into supporting it might do the trick. ♦



Johnny Unitas, about to pass, during the overtime of "the greatest game ever played," December 28, 1958

The Rise (and Fall?) of the NFL

There were Giants in the earth in those days . . . and Colts

By Geoffrey Norman

The New York Giants faced the Baltimore Colts, and the winners would be the champions of the National Football League. But while it was a championship game, it did not sell out, meaning television was blacked out in the city where it was played. The Giants had the better record so the game was played in New York. Since the Giants didn't have their own stadium, built for their game, they played in Yankee Stadium. Baseball was the American pastime. In the mind of the public, football was a college game, played by amateurs. Professional football was still a sort of orphan of the sports world, getting by on hand-me-downs. But that was all about to change. It was 1958.

The ground was hard and the air was cold and the game, by any strict measure, was a sloppy affair. Six lost fumbles and an interception made it something less than a masterpiece. Still . . . a few hours after the Colts had won, it was being called "the greatest game ever played." Henry

GETTY IMAGES

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

Luce didn't know much about sports but he knew what Americans liked. So he had created a magazine that would cater to what he had spotted as an American passion for sports and hired a very shrewd editor named André Laguerre who knew the game had been big. Knew it right away and made sure that the readers of *Sports Illustrated* knew it, too, in the issue published immediately after the game and then, again, two weeks later in a piece called "Here's Why It Was the Best Football Game Ever."

Many of the 45 million who watched the game on television knew, too, even though the game was broadcast during the barren time between Christmas and New Year's Day and in the afternoon. Professional football was not yet ready for prime time. That would come later. New Year's Day was, of course, reserved for those college bowl games that were, in those days, the highest expression of the football arts, so much so that Red Smith, who knew sports almost as well as he wrote about them, turned in a newspaper column the next day on the firing of Notre Dame's head coach. The pro game did not yet interest him.

Those who were interested enough to watch the broadcast saw something that looked, in the essentials, like the college game. But these teams were playing a different game. What the viewers saw was not spirit and emotion and "win one for the Gipper," but professionalism—what Santiago saw in "the Great DiMaggio" and his creator famously called "grace under pressure."

This was especially true with less than two and a half minutes left in the game and the Giants up 17-14. The Colts had the ball on their own 14 yard line, and after two incompletions, their quarterback hit Lenny Moore for 11 yards and a first down. Then it began.

Another incompletion, then it was Johnny Unitas to Raymond Berry for 23. Unitas to Berry for 15. Unitas to Berry for 22. The time was ticking away as Unitas huddled the team and brought them up to the line for these plays. But there was no sense of panic. To the contrary. He looked serenely confident until, with the ball on the Giants' 13 yard line and seven seconds left in regulation, the Colts' kicker came out on the field and put it through to tie the score. The suspense had been exquisitely unendurable for the viewers, and this was made more so by the composure of Unitas.

There was something so precise and disciplined and professional about the drive, about the way Unitas would throw to the spot and the ball would be in the air before Berry made his cut, and the almost cold-blooded way that Unitas did it. Like John Wayne in the movies.

And then came overtime. It was a first. No championship game had ever gone into overtime. When the college teams, playing in their bowl games, finished tied, that was it. Nice game, see you next year. But this was *professional football*. There was money at stake and the winners, of course, got the bigger share. Enough to make a down payment on a house.

The Colts lost the coin toss. But they held the Giants, who punted on fourth and one. Unitas went back to work. By now, the millions watching—and probably a lot of the players on the field—just *knew* he was going to do it. The only question was . . . *How* was he going to do it?

Mostly the same way he had done it on that final drive: by throwing the ball—with precision—to Raymond Berry, who made an obsession out of running precise pass routes. But on one play, Unitas did the unexpected and called for a pass to the tight end, Jim Mutscheller. The Colts were close enough for a field goal so it was a gamble. But Unitas was the kind of gambler who bet only on sure things, and everything about him that day said he believed *he* was a sure thing, including the way he turned his back on one of his completions, like a Hemingway hero showing his back to the bull. Professional.

The Colts won on a fullback dive from one yard out. The winner's share of the "greatest game ever played" was $4,718.77. Unitas turned down $500 to appear on *The Ed Sullivan Show* that night so that he could ride the train back to Baltimore with his teammates.

Unitas was the star of that particular game and also of The Game, of what the NFL became that day. But there were other players and coaches whose names became familiar to NFL fans, whose numbers increased, it seemed, exponentially and overnight. There was Sam Huff, the Giants' middle linebacker, who eventually appeared on the cover of *Time*, in November 1959. (When Henry Luce had a hunch, he played it.) The article inside was called "A Man's Game" and opened with these lines:

> The quarterback snaps "Let's go," the eleven burly men clap their hands in a single, sharp crack, and the offensive huddle dissolves. Then, taking his place behind the looming rump of his center, the quarterback looks with narrowed eyes across the line of scrimmage at the most formidable sight in professional football.
>
> The four blue-jerseyed men facing him are mountains of muscle. Alert and agile as jungle cats, two linebackers crouch outside the ends. Ranged in an arc behind them are four lean, whippet-fast backs.

On the offensive side for the Giants, there was a running back named Frank Gifford who had the good looks of a movie star to go with his athletic gifts and who seemed to move through life according to some sort of special grace. This, at least, was the way Frederick Exley saw him in his novel/memoir *A Fan's Notes.* The book, published in 1968, is a semi-obscure tour de force that goes to the heart of the

American obsession with sports and the pain of being a spectator. Exley was a student at the University of Southern California when Gifford played there, and "the USC publicity man, perhaps influenced by the proximity of Hollywood press agents, seemed overly fond of releasing a head-and-shoulder print showing him the apparently proud possessor of long, black perfectly ambrosial locks that came down to caress an alabaster, colossally beauteous face." Gifford went, inevitably, from football to a career in broadcasting.

There were two men on the Giants' sideline who went on to glory and football immortality greater, perhaps, than any of the players. The defense was coached by Tom Landry, who became the face of the Dallas Cowboys and among the most successful head coaches in the history of the game. The offense was coached by Vince Lombardi. He, of course, went on to coach the Green Bay Packers and became the most exalted of all NFL coaches. Winners of the Super Bowl are awarded the Lombardi Trophy. Lombardi is probably best remembered for the line, "Winning isn't everything. It is the only thing." He may not have said it. Or he may not have been the first. Defenders of Lombardi insist that the actual quote was "Winning is not everything, but making the effort to win is."

Whatever, as the current argot would have it. Lombardi certainly coached to win. He was not "about" building character or any of that college stuff. This was professional football. This was *life*.

On the Baltimore side of the field, there was a player who qualifies for tragic status. Eugene Lipscomb was a defensive lineman who weighed 300 pounds in a time when that was beyond uncommon. But he was no freak or fat boy. He was all athlete. He moved like a big cat, and when he tackled a runner, he often corralled the blockers as well. He described this style of play, saying: "I just wrap my arms around the whole backfield and peel 'em one by one until I get to the ball carrier. Him I keep."

It was Lipscomb's habit to call strangers, or someone whose name he had forgotten, "Little Daddy." So he became "Big Daddy." He was splendid and awesome to watch, and his personality was as large as his physique. A few years after "the greatest game ever played" he was found dead of a heroin overdose.

Randall Jarrell immortalized him in his poem "Say Good-bye to Big Daddy."

Big Daddy Lipscomb, who used to help them up
After he'd pulled them down, so that "the children
Won't think Big Daddy's mean"; Big Daddy Lipscomb,
Who stood unmoved among the blockers, like the Rock
Of Gibraltar in a life insurance ad,
Until the ball carrier came, and Daddy got him;
Big Daddy Lipscomb, being carried down an aisle
Of women by Night Train Lane, John Henry Johnson,
And Lenny Moore; Big Daddy, his three ex-wives,
His fiancée, and the grandfather who raised him
Going to his grave in five big Cadillacs;
Big Daddy, who found football easy enough, life hard enough
To—after his last night cruising Baltimore
In his yellow Cadillac—to die of heroin;
Big Daddy, who was scared, he said: "I've been scared
Most of my life. You wouldn't think so to look at me.
It gets so bad I cry myself to sleep—" his size
Embarrassed him, so that he was helped by smaller men
And hurt by smaller men; Big Daddy Lipscomb
Has helped to his feet the last ball carrier, Death.

The big black man in the television set
Whom the viewers stared at—sometimes, almost were—
Is a blur now; when we get up to adjust the set,
It's not the set, but a NETWORK DIFFICULTY.
The world won't be the same without Big Daddy.
Or else it will be.

The game set up what became The Game. And it was perfect, somehow, for the times: new decade; new, young president who surrounded himself with technocrats whose pride was in being tough-minded and unsentimental, who cultivated the "Can Do" attitude. John Kennedy was fond of the "grace under pressure" line, and would doubtless have been equally fond of Lombardi's "winning" quote, which wasn't that far in spirit from the old Washington saw "Don't get mad; get even."

Pro football did not just grow, it exploded. Another, rival league was formed; one of its founders, Lamar Hunt, had been inspired by the "greatest game ever played." For several years, the American Football League and the National Football League existed in a state of corporate war, bidding up the salaries of players like Joe Namath, who was signed by New York's AFL team, the Jets, for the astonishing sum of $400,000. Johnny Unitas had made $17,550 the year of the greatest game ever played. In 1966, when it finally became clear that the new league was not going away and that the bidding war for players would continue, perhaps ruinously, there was an armistice and a merger, sealed by the scheduling of a game called—awkwardly, it seemed at the time—the Super Bowl.

The first Super Bowl was won by the Green Bay Packers. As was the second. Neither matched the NFL championship game, played both years between the Packers and the Dallas Cowboys, who were coached by Tom Landry. The second of those two games, played on December 31, 1967, added to the legend of pro football and became almost as iconic as the greatest game ever played.

This was the Ice Bowl. It was played in Green Bay and the temperature at kickoff was minus 15 degrees and dropping. An official blew a whistle to start the game. When he removed the whistle from his mouth, the skin of his lips came away with it. The blood froze instead of clotting. One fan in the stadium died. Many suffered from frostbite. The players could not feel their feet, the ball was like

a rock in their hands, and when they went down it was on ground as hard as concrete.

The game was close and the Packers were behind with slightly less than five minutes left in the game, when their quarterback, Bart Starr, took them on a drive of some 68 yards that ended when he went over the goal line from one yard out. Starr followed the block of a lineman named Jerry Kramer whose book became a bestseller and its title a sort of mantra: *Run to Daylight.*

The Packers went on to win the second Super Bowl, which qualified very much as anticlimax. But professional football was, less than 10 years after the greatest game ever played, firmly established both as a business proposition and in the national psyche. The game drew better television ratings than any sport, which seems only natural and logical. Pro football might have been made with television in mind. It had action, violence, drama—there was nothing in sports to match the suspense of a long drive, game on the line, less than two minutes on the clock, and a quarterback like Unitas or Starr over center. The game was a gift to television, and television returned the favor with slow motion, instant replay, multiple camera angles, and other innovations that made it, in the end, more satisfying to watch on television than in the stadium. Until, that is, the stadiums began installing giant television screens, like today's Jumbotron in Dallas, so fans attending the game could see replays just like the people watching at home.

Fans swarm the Colts' bus, upon its arrival in Baltimore.

AP / WILLIAM A. SMITH

And the game provided something far greater than a rooting interest for many fans. There were, of course, stars to idolize for those whose fandom had never progressed much beyond the adolescent, autograph-seeking phase. There was the simple emotional release that came with cringing over a big hit. The white-knuckle thrill of watching one of those two-minute drives. And then there was the cerebral pleasure of learning the game and how to watch it with a cool understanding, the way a coach would when studying game film. You could learn to "read coverages," identify the "hot receiver," spot a blitz, and so forth. Learning the game and its intricacies could become anything from a pastime to an obsession.

And the various skills required of each position made it possible to follow players for reasons that went beyond mere star worship. Linebackers, for instance, represented one cluster of values and characteristics; defensive backs, another; and the men who caught the long passes, the wide-outs, another. You could fantasize about playing a position that fit with the essentials of your inner life and character. You could be Dick Butkus and a terror to anyone between you and the ball. Or you could be Jerry Rice, agile and graceful as a ballet dancer, elusive as smoke, with magic hands and the nerve to catch it over the middle; or Emmitt Smith, who could run over you or around you, depending on the need, then get up and do it again. You could even be Jerry Kramer and block for Bart Starr sneaking it over for the winning score. And you could, of course, be any one of those quarterbacks who followed in the footsteps of Johnny Unitas. You could be Roger Staubach, Joe Montana, Brett Favre, Randall Cunningham, or fulfill all your fantasies and be . . . Tom Brady.

The same sort of diversity (if you will) of character applied to teams and the followings they built. There were the outlaw Oakland Raiders. The Steelers, who were strong as, well, steel. Or the Cowboys, who . . . you get the point. The NFL supplied the world of fans with all manner of what would, today, be called "options."

And then there were the values of the game itself. It was violent, plainly. Lombardi, or someone like him—Duffy Dougherty, perhaps—once said, "Football is not a contact sport. Dancing is a contact sport. Football is a collision sport." But it is also a sport that calls for discipline and strategic thinking. It is a team sport that elevates individual stars. It was (is) the perfect American game.

So it thrived. The third Super Bowl became one of the greatest upsets in sports history. The New York Jets of the upstart American Football League, with Namath their quarterback, beat the heavily favored Baltimore Colts with Unitas, near the end of his career, coming in as a backup quarterback and coming up short. It helped that Namath had the sort of personality that made him a plausible "rebel" at a time when America had developed an attachment to iconoclasts, when Muhammad Ali was standing his lonely ground. Namath was actually

not much more than a free spirit and a party boy, but the media made it work.

Football stayed right in step. And for the longest time, it seemed to play out that way. The NFL came to prime time with Monday Night Football, which became first a hit and then an institution, corralling celebrities and notables, including a president of the United States, to perform cameos in the program's tease, in which they would ask, "Are you ready for some football?"

Millions, of course, were.

There were setbacks along the way. But somehow the NFL seemed always able to surmount them, adding, perhaps, to a sense that it was inevitable and bulletproof. There were player walkouts—strikes, they might be called, though it was hard to imagine Mean Joe Green and Larry Csonka singing "I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night" in harmony.

During one player walkout, the team owners voted to continue playing the games with replacement players. It was an embarrassment, but the NFL survived it. The players came back and made ever more money, in spite of the imposition of a "salary cap" that was designed to keep owners from spending themselves into penury in their lust to get their fingers around that Lombardi Trophy.

There was plenty of money, from television, of course. Pete Rozelle, who became commissioner of the NFL a year after the greatest game ever played, had shrewdly persuaded the owners to agree to a revenue sharing plan that divided up the television money among all the franchises. This allowed teams in places like Green Bay and Buffalo to survive and, if they drafted wisely, even prosper. The draft was also a means of imposing equality on the franchises, which, while they were rivals on the field, were equal shareholders in a vastly profitable business monopoly.

The draft was (and is) anticapitalist in spirit, operating on the principle of "the last shall be first." Lose all, or most, of your games and in the off-season draft of eligible college players, you get first pick or close to it. This came, of course, with no guarantee that you wouldn't blow it and take a player who would never make the team, which happens often enough. And so, in addition to the coach who combined a cerebral appreciation of the game with an ability to lead (and strike fear into) great big men who were millionaires, a successful franchise needed a new kind of star, the personnel guy who could reach way down in the draft and find a jewel or trade for someone another team had not been able to motivate or find a place for and make him a star. And there were some who were both coach and personnel guy, New England's Bill Belichick being the supreme example. These figures were to NFL junkies what celebrity CEOs are to readers of *Fortune*.

The game's prosperity seemed to know almost no bounds. There was money from licensing, so team colors and logos appeared everywhere. The appetite for the NFL on television led to the creation of an NFL network on cable, which began to broadcast games on Thursday nights. So there is now Sunday Night Football, Monday Night Football, and Thursday Night Football. This on top of football all Sunday afternoon and a couple of Saturdays at the end of the college season and before the bowl games. Too much, it seems, is not enough.

The Super Bowl, which didn't sell out the stadium for those first two Green Bay victories, became the top-ranked television show of the year, almost every year, with people tuning in around the world to watch. It is a global event and a quasi-official holiday in the United States, around which urban myths have sprung up, such as the one about 90 percent of the avocado consumed in this country being eaten on Super Bowl Sunday. Or how, at halftime, so many toilets are flushed simultaneously that small-town sewer systems are overloaded. Then there is the more serious one (famously debunked by Ken Ringle) about how hospital emergency room admissions for battered women spike dramatically on Super Sunday.

Any mention of hospitals and emergency rooms gets to a piece of what many see (and some welcome) as a crisis that threatens the very existence of the NFL.

Hard to imagine, as the ratings climb and the revenues roll in, that there could be honest speculation about "death of the NFL." But that is the theme one encounters more and more often, and from sources that cannot be dismissed as crackpots. Troy Aikman (another of those quarterbacks with a name that might have destined him for the role) won three Super Bowls with the Dallas Cowboys and has gone on to a career in broadcasting. His life, then, has been football. And it has been a good life.

But recently Aikman was quoted as saying, "If I had a 10-year-old boy, I don't know that I'd be real inclined to encourage him to go play football, in light of what we're learning from head injuries. And so what is the sport going to look like 20 years from now? I believe, and this is my opinion, that at some point football is not going to be the No. 1 sport."

Aikman suffered several concussions as a player. They came with the territory. He was tough, stood in the pocket, and took the hits, one of them in a championship game that left him, several hours later, lying in a hospital bed and asking his agent if he had played that day, and if so, how had he done. The next week, he suited up and led the Cowboys to a second consecutive Super Bowl win over the Buffalo Bills.

Aikman has said he is fine now and feeling no long-term effects. Other players, most of them less celebrated

than Aikman, can't say the same. Some former players have experienced the early onset of dementia and other debilitating conditions, to include extreme depression and violent mood swings, that can be traced to chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE). A number of them have joined in a lawsuit against the NFL that the league is eager to settle. A trial would be exceedingly harmful to the NFL's image, win or lose.

The legal maneuvering goes on in relative obscurity. Not so the suicides of several players and former players with CTE considered at the very least a contributing factor. Junior Seau, a star linebacker, killed himself at 43, two years after his retirement. Interviews with his family suggest that Seau, who had been notable for his ebullience as a player, had become depressed, withdrawn, and subject to silences and exceedingly dark moods that were entirely out of character. He shot himself in the chest so that his brain would not be damaged and, thus, would be available for study.

The late Junior Seau intercepts a pass, October 2007.

Research of that sort goes on, and science learns more—none of it good—about CTE. Meanwhile, football, at all levels of play, does what it can about concussions. Players are pulled from games when they show symptoms. They are not allowed to return to games when it has been established that they have, indeed, been concussed. Protective equipment has improved and the rules are rewritten to eliminate, to the extent possible, those hits that cause concussions.

Still, Lombardi (or whoever it was) had it right. Football is a collision sport. The equipment can pad the head but it doesn't do anything about those sudden stops where the brain keeps traveling and slams into the inside of the skull. Eliminate those big hits and you have . . . soccer, which works perfectly well, football critics might say, in most of the world.

One can almost sense a movement to ban football coming. It would start, of course, with the children. The Centers for Disease Control estimate that some 4 million concussions occur annually in high school football. A ban would be sold and justified as necessary to protect the health of boys too young to know any better. (And, not incidentally, too young to vote.) Many of their mothers would join the movement or, at least, pray silently for its success.

And there would be lawsuits, class action and otherwise, that could mean bankruptcy for high schools and even colleges without the resources of the NFL. Who would want to be a volunteer referee or coach if there were a risk of being named as a party in a multimillion-dollar lawsuit resulting from an injury suffered under those famous Friday Night Lights? Sponsors, too, might be sued. Why would the owner of a car dealership want to take on the risk?

This is not a hard scenario to imagine in a world where playground jungle gyms are disassembled and sledding hills closed as a way of avoiding "legal exposure." And it could happen even though one feels certain that almost everyone playing football at what is called a "high level" is willing to live with the risk. Many, no doubt, embrace it, risk being a narcotic of sorts, like adrenaline, which is the first drug that football players become addicted to. Knowing that they will pay, somewhere down the line, makes their time in the arena that much more intense, that much sweeter. As Chicago Bears safety Chris Conte put it recently, "I'd rather have the experience of playing in the NFL and die 10 to 15 years earlier than not play in the NFL and have a long life."

And how many men in the stands or in front of the television might think to themselves, "I'll see your 'ten to fifteen' and raise you five"?

A comfortable, pain-free old age is little guarantee when the price is the kind of fame and money that comes with being a player in the NFL. And anyway, there are things that could cut you down in old age that have nothing to do with football. Life is tough and brutal that way—sort of like football but without the crowds and the cheering. Only a few get to experience those. Troy Aikman, conspicuously, doesn't say that *he* regrets playing and taking all those hits, and he has refused to join the lawsuit against the NFL.

Conte missed parts of the season after suffering, among other injuries, two concussions. He chooses to keep playing. As long, no doubt, as he can. In the not-too-distant future, one suspects, players may not have the luxury of that choice.

You wonder, with the Super Bowl upon us, if Unitas and Lipscomb, Huff and Gifford, and the others would say that playing in the "greatest game ever played" was worth the risk and the eventual pains and infirmities that were the price of their glory.

No. Actually, you don't. You don't wonder at all. ♦

NEWSCOM

Liars' Remorse

Democrats have second thoughts about Obamacare

By William Voegeli

In the *Time* magazine issue published after the 2008 election—whose cover depicted Barack Obama as Franklin Roosevelt—Peter Beinart anticipated a new "era of liberal hegemony" that would last until "Sasha and Malia have kids."

President Obama is not yet a grandfather, but his era of liberal hegemony only appears to have lasted months, not decades. Photoshopping gave Obama the pince-nez and cigarette holder that were FDR's trademarks but could not conjure the startling congressional majorities of the 1930s. The Depression and New Deal left Republicans discredited, irrelevant, and shattered. GOP House and Senate majorities of 62 percent and 58 percent, respectively, after the 1928 election shrank to caucuses of 20 percent and 17 percent after 1936. Under Obama the trajectory has been the opposite: Republicans have gone from 41 percent of the House seats after the 2008 election to 57 percent after 2014 and from 40 senators to 54.

Inevitably, Democrats are trying to figure out why the present that dismays them is so much less congenial than the future they recently anticipated. Some have begun to disparage Obamacare, the incumbent's most FDR-like achievement. Half of the 60 Democratic senators who voted for the Affordable Care Act in December 2009—the exact number needed to prevent its being filibustered to death, since all Republicans opposed it—are no longer in the Senate. These ex-senators include eight who were defeated by Republicans, and eight more who chose not to run again and were succeeded by Republicans.

One of the latter, Tom Harkin of Iowa, recently told a reporter, "I look back and say we should have either done [health care reform] the correct way or not done anything at all." Charles Schumer of New York, in the remnant of Democrats whose Senate careers have survived Obamacare, voiced similar sentiments in a National Press Club speech three weeks after the 2014 elections. "Democrats blew the opportunity the American people gave them" in 2008, Schumer said. "We took their mandate and put all of our focus on the wrong problem—health care reform." Arguing that 85 percent of Americans had health insurance they were satisfied with when Democrats took power in 2009, and few of the uninsured voted at all, much less on the basis of health policy, Schumer contended, "To aim a huge change in mandate at such a small percentage of the electorate made no political sense."

Despite these recent recriminations, Harkin and Schumer had been like most Democrats in believing that Obamacare was good policy that would quickly prove to be good politics. In 2012 Harkin praised the Affordable Care Act for bringing us closer to the day when "every person has affordable, quality health care." Months before Democrats were routed in the 2010 midterms, Schumer predicted that Obamacare would be an asset to politicians who had supported it and a liability for its opponents.

Not just health care policy but the value and political feasibility of modern liberalism's raison d'être is at stake. The main point of Schumer's recent speech was "Democrats must embrace government" as "what we believe in," "what unites our party," and as "the only thing that's going to get the middle class going again." He thought that Obamacare was regrettable to the extent it had complicated rather than furthered that fundamental purpose.

The *Daily Beast*'s Michael Tomasky strongly endorsed Schumer's argument: Since "Democrats are the party of government," the "one principle they all subscribe to is a belief that the federal government can and must intervene in the economic and social spheres to even things out." The party will never create political openings for new government interventions, however, until it solves the public relations problem that afflicts existing ones. Democrats, he wrote, have done a "pathetic job" of getting people to appreciate "the dozens of ways in which the federal government already helps them and their communities." The resulting "hatred of government we see in this country is sickeningly childish and hypocritical." Instead of acknowledging and appreciating government successes against water pollution, for example, most people "just think that lake cleaned itself somehow over the years."

Another liberal columnist, Michael Hiltzik of the *Los Angeles Times*, agreed and went further, insisting that Obamacare, rightly understood, would greatly help the Democratic cause. That Obamacare is unpopular and

William Voegeli, a senior editor at the Claremont Review of Books*, is the author of* The Pity Party: A Mean-Spirited Diatribe Against Liberal Compassion.

voting booth poison is the Democrats' "own fault." They've "utterly failed" to make voters aware that Affordable Care Act components include popular benefits like preventing health insurance companies from rejecting applicants with preexisting medical conditions and allowing parents to keep sons and daughters as old as 25 on their policies. Democrats' "spinelessness" has "allowed Republicans and conservatives to depict a measure that improves the lives and health of millions of Americans as harmful, even un-American," Hiltzik says.

The gullibility of the millions of Americans who have been helped by Obamacare, but can be led to believe it's harmful, goes without saying. Such sentiments confirm that today's Democrats are only quasi-democratic. They're adamant about government of and for the people, but dubious when it comes to government by the people. Yes, they say, government must intervene in the economic and social spheres to do what's good for the people, but the people are often too limited to understand what's good for them and too ungrateful to appreciate the benefactions government is already delivering.

GARY LOCKE

The voters' cognitive deficiencies are a retrospective problem for Democrats, as Tomasky and Hiltzik point out, but also a prospective one. They mean that new government interventions cannot be secured through candor and clarity, but require guile and subterfuge, a position made clear by MIT economics professor and Obama administration adviser Jonathan Gruber. Explaining, in 2012, why the Affordable Care Act taxes insurance companies, which will pass along the costs to policyholders, rather than taxing the insured directly, Gruber said, "It's a very clever, you know, basic exploitation of the lack of economic understanding of the American voter."

In 2013 he told a University of Pennsylvania audience that the ACA "was written in a tortured way" so that neither the Congressional Budget Office nor the public would see its individual mandate to buy heath insurance as a new tax. "Lack of transparency is a huge political advantage," Gruber concluded. "Call it the stupidity of the American voter or whatever, but basically that was really, really critical to getting the thing to pass."

When, days after the 2014 midterm elections, Gruber's remarks were publicized, Democratic politicians and journalists scrambled to denounce them, and Gruber himself apologized in congressional testimony for his "glib, thoughtless, and sometimes downright insulting comments." Disdaining and deceiving the people are indeed affronts to democracy, but are not the only transgressions against American self-government. Gruber's arrogance was gratuitous, but the deceptions he smugly praised served a Democratic purpose: convincing people that government interventions that can bestow formidable benefits while imposing negligible costs are, despite sounding too good to be true, low-hanging fruit ready to be harvested.

If Democrats were forthright and respectful they would have enough confidence in their proposals and their countrymen to speak plainly. They would say: "We're not idiots; you're not idiots; and only an idiot could believe it's possible for government to do big things that help lots of people without also imposing big costs, through taxes and regulations, that adversely affect lots of people. The reason you should support the Democratic agenda is not that we're magicians who can make something out of nothing. It's that the benefits of our programs will exceed their costs—so much so that our country and most of our citizens will be better off paying the higher taxes and complying with the more stringent regulations than we would be absent the taxes, the regulations, and the benefits they make possible."

Democrats eschew such candor with reason. In 1984 Walter Mondale told the voters, "Mr. Reagan will raise taxes, and so will I. He won't tell you. I just did." Mondale went on to sweep the jurisdictions of Minnesota and the District of Columbia, forcing President Reagan to cobble together an Electoral College majority by carrying the other 49 states.

Subsequent Democratic politicians have chosen to acknowledge difficult realities at such a high level of abstraction that no voter could possibly object. In 2007, presidential candidate Obama said, "Telling the American people what we think they want to hear instead of telling the American people what they need to hear just won't do." He spent the following year promising to: (a) create dozens of new government programs and expand dozens of existing ones; and (b) confine federal tax increases to the 3 percent of the population with incomes above $250,000. His decisive victory in November 2008 suggested that telling the people what they want to hear instead of what they need to hear will, at least for electoral purposes, do just fine.

In 2009 the newly inaugurated President Obama said the time "of putting off unpleasant decisions . . . has surely passed." And yet, Obama's audacious hope to provide health insurance to tens of millions of people, while improving the quality and lowering the cost of health care for those already insured, seemed to require nothing other than extremely pleasant decisions. His campaign promised in 2008, "Obama's plan will reduce a typical family's premium by up to $2,500 by reducing costs, improving technology, and reining in the power of insurance companies."

In November 2009 the White House blog declared, "Objective Analysis Shows Reform will Help Small Businesses, Lower Premiums for American Families." The analysis, performed by the legendarily objective Jonathan Gruber, discovered that the Democratic proposal would lower health insurance premiums, saving the typical individual from $500 to $3,000 per year, and the typical family from $1,260 to $9,000. These reductions would come "*in addition* to the more generous benefits consumers would receive," and "also *in addition* to increased protections." (Emphasis in the original.)

Obama himself bore nothing but glad tidings when urging support for his reforms. Most famously, he promised over and over that all Americans who were satisfied with their health care providers and health insurance arrangements would be able to keep them. And the costless benefits he promised would help people not only in their capacity as patients and policyholders, but as taxpayers and citizens. Speaking to Congress in September 2009, the president declared, "I will not sign a plan that adds one dime to our deficits, either now or in the future." Because of the "skyrocketing costs" of Medicare and Medicaid, he said, "our health care problem is our deficit problem. Nothing else even comes close." Because the existing health care system "is currently full of waste and abuse," it will be possible to extend health insurance to 30 million uninsured Americans and improve the coverage and health care for millions more without increasing federal debt. "Reducing the waste and inefficiency in Medicare and Medicaid will pay for most of this plan."

In 2009 the federal government spent $425 billion on Medicare and $251 billion on Medicaid. Together they accounted for 19 percent of all federal spending that year. If the two programs were indeed full of waste and abuse, citizens would be fully justified in the modest demand that their elected officials treat making Medicare and Medicaid effective and honest as an urgent end in itself, rather than hold the discharge of that duty hostage to the political effort to make those wasteful, abusive programs even bigger. They would be further justified, as opposed to sickeningly childish and hypocritical, in supposing that if two huge, 44-year-old government programs' endemic waste and abuse had not been rooted out, there might be good, daunting reasons for that problem's persistence. Voters would go on to conclude, plausibly, that prudence dictated reducing the waste and abuse first, rather than making massive new spending commitments that were predicated upon reducing it somehow, someday.

It's easy for a sweeping new program to "pay for itself," when its specific, generous benefits are "offset" by notional stringencies. (The advocates of each one of the sweeping government programs that drive our perma-deficit announced at one time or another that it would pay for itself, if not pay for itself "many times over.") As left-leaning economics journalist Robert Kuttner wrote of Obamacare in 2013, "Obama, looking to fund his initiative without raising taxes, hit on the idea of imagining a trillion dollars in yet-to-be specified savings in Medicare." Mr. Full-of-Surprises, Jonathan Gruber, told a reporter last year that the whole idea of saving money was "sometimes a misleading motivator for the Affordable Care Act." In reality, "The law isn't designed to save money. It's designed to improve health, and that's going to cost money."

Of course it will. The dark secret always turns out to have been the obvious, commonsense truth that everyone knew all along. Its revelation, long after the law has been passed, refutes the promises about huge benefits that will require no costs, assurances that should have been derided from the start.

Milton Friedman's favorite maxim—there's no such thing as a free lunch—doesn't mean that there's no such thing as a lunch worth paying for at the price listed on the menu. This is true whether the diner is privately or publicly owned and operated. In either case, some lunches are and others aren't worth the cost. And in either case, an advertisement promising free lunches should make us more skeptical, not more enthusiastic.

If the Democratic party were a private business worried about the declining sales of its flagship model, Government

Intervention, it might call in a management consultant to figure out what was wrong. He would do well to follow the advice of the Democrats' CEO and tell the clients what they need to hear rather than what they want to hear. What every business wants to hear in these circumstances is the same reassurance: Because there's absolutely nothing even slightly wrong with the product, the changes needed are in the sales, marketing, and public relations departments. Once the buying public is reacquainted with Government Intervention's many extraordinary features, it will fly off the shelves the way it did in the glory days of the 1930s and 1960s.

The assessment Democrats need to hear is less comforting. Their problem is not solely or even primarily in sales and marketing, but in production, management, and quality control. The customers shunning Government Intervention today are no less intelligent than the ones who embraced it two or three generations ago. And the GOP, the competing firm disparaging it, is no more aggressive.

What's changed is that a growing portion of the electorate has come to suspect that the Democrats, while still the party of government in the sense of advocating government intervention as the solution for many, many problems, has become the party of government in other, more disquieting ways. It seems strongly committed to the idea that government should do more, but not that it should do it well. The party of government demands more responsibilities for government, but can't or won't demand consistently high performance from government.

President Obama has acknowledged this problem but, again, at a high level of abstraction. "The question . . . is not whether our government is too big or too small, but whether it works," he said in his first Inaugural Address. "Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward. Where the answer is no, programs will end. And those of us who manage the public's dollars will be held to account to spend wisely, reform bad habits, and do our business in the light of day."

But no programs have ended since January 2009. Is it because all of them work? After Presidents Carter and Clinton, Obama has led the third Democratic administration entrusted with operating and improving the megastate for which Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson are largely responsible. All three devoted rhetoric to making it work efficiently and responsively. Carter hailed the transformative power of sunset laws and zero-based budgeting. In 1993 Clinton promised to redesign, reinvent, and reinvigorate the entire national government. In 2011 Obama promised to "merge, consolidate, and reorganize" it, so government would be more affordable, competent, and efficient.

After all these improvements, it should have been easy for the party of government to refute political scientist Steven Teles, who argued in 2013, "America has chosen to govern itself through more indirect and incoherent policy mechanisms than can be found in any comparable country." Democrats would have cited endless instances of successful programs and consequential reforms that belied Teles's contention that "sluggish administration, blame-shifting, and unintended consequences" were pervasive problems. But they didn't. And their silence suggests they couldn't.

It appears that Obama's attempt to stipulate the terms of national debate at the outset of his presidency has failed. The question of whether government should be smaller or bigger—and if the latter, how much bigger—remains important and legitimate. It is not, in other words, kept alive by "cynics" who "fail to understand . . . that the stale political arguments that have consumed us for so long no longer apply." The explicit call by such Democrats as Schumer and Tomasky for their party to recommit to government intervention as its central purpose demonstrates that this contested proposition remains vital.

The public is justifiably dubious about assigning government more powers when even the party of government says it needs a complete overhaul.

Furthermore, the question of whether government works is not the real issue to be debated in lieu of the spurious question of government's size. To the contrary, both are valid, necessary topics. Whether government works; whether and how it can work better; and what it means if experience and analysis argue that in some respects it cannot be made to work better—these are all legitimate questions in themselves.

But they are also closely connected to the question of determining government's right size. The public is justifiably dubious about assigning government more powers and responsibilities when even the party of government's leaders say it needs a complete overhaul—one which they fail to perform and scarcely attempt. And when the costs that were supposed to be trivial turn out to be substantial, while the benefits sometimes do and sometimes don't come through the pipeline, the skepticism deepens and hardens into cynicism.

That some Democrats want to deny these problems by blaming the unpopularity of government intervention on the ignorant, ungrateful voters or on the feckless Democratic politicians who won't proclaim their triumphs is the strongest evidence that the party of government won't or can't remove the political barriers preventing more government. In that regard, the news in the aftermath of the 2014 elections is even better for Republicans than the reports on election night. ♦

Dawn of the commercial tie-in/product placement era (ca. 1955)

Designs for Living

On the architecture of (commercial) desire. BY VIRGINIA POSTREL

When we look back on the late-19th/early-20th century and think of the technological changes that made life "modern," we usually imagine the conquests of distance: telegraphs and telephones, trains and steamships, automobiles and airplanes. We don't think about canned goods, cigarettes, soda pop, phonographs, or Kodak cameras. These things might have been new. They might have been ingenious. But they don't strike us as especially world-shaking.

In *Packaged Pleasures*, though, Gary S. Cross and Robert N. Proctor argue that such everyday consumer products exemplify a truly revolutionary phenomenon.

> Toward the end of the nineteenth century, a host of often ignored technologies transformed human sensual experience, changing how we eat, drink, see, hear, and feel in ways we still benefit (and suffer) from today. Modern people learned how to capture and intensify sensuality, to preserve it, and to make it portable, durable, and accessible across great reaches of social class and physical space.

Eating canned peaches in the winter, buying a chocolate bar at the corner newsstand, hearing an opera in your living room, and immortalizing baby's first steps in a snapshot all marked a radical shift in human experience. Replacing scarcity with abundance and capturing the previously ephemeral—these mundane pleasures defied nature as surely as did horseless carriages.

It's a keen insight and a valuable reminder of the power of seemingly trivial inventions to utterly transform

Packaged Pleasures
How Technology and Marketing Revolutionized Desire
by Gary S. Cross and Robert N. Proctor
Chicago, 336 pp., $35

Candy
A Century of Panic and Pleasure
by Samira Kawash
Faber & Faber, 416 pp., $27

Virginia Postrel is the author of The Power of Glamour: Longing and the Art of Visual Persuasion *and a columnist for* Bloomberg View.

ROBERT LANDAU / CORBIS

our notion of "normal" life. Cross and Proctor carry their theme through chapters on cigarettes, mass-market sweets (candy, soda, ice cream), recorded sound, photographs and movies, and amusement parks. The somewhat eccentric selection reflects the authors' scholarly backgrounds. In his previous work, Cross, a historian at Penn State, has focused primarily on childhood and leisure, which presumably explains the amusement parks. Proctor, a historian of science at Stanford, has written extensively on tobacco and cancer, including in his *Golden Holocaust: Origins of the Cigarette Catastrophe and the Case for Abolition* (2012).

The authors are at their best when showing how incremental improvements cumulate to create dramatic technological and cultural changes. They start with the packaging itself. "Industrial containerization," they write, "made it possible to distribute foods throughout the globe; think only of what it would be like to live in a world without tin cans, cardboard cartons, and bottled drinks." The "tubularization" represented by cylinders such as cigarettes, tin cans, and soda bottles (not to mention lipsticks and bullet shells) transformed manufacturing and marketing as well as distribution, giving producers easily fillable containers that could be labeled, branded, and advertised.

Historians unduly slight packaging technologies, the authors suggest, because "tubing the natural world" developed so gradually. Although the metal can dates back to 1810, it took nearly a century of refinements in stamping, folding, and soldering to achieve the design that changed the world: the "sanitary can," which used crimped double seams and no interior solder to create an airtight seal. This was the design, Cross and Proctor write, that "allowed a wide range of tinned food to reach urban populations, especially as rival processors introduced ever-cheaper and more attractive foodstuffs festooned with colorful labels and catchy brand names."

Cigarettes represent a similar, if more problematic, story. Clever inventions made the product so mild, cheap, and convenient that smoking became a deadly and widespread addiction. As the book's first in-depth example, cigarettes taint by association everything that follows. Twice the authors call them "the quintessential packaged pleasure." The next chapter, on the sweets responsible for what they term today's "health and moral crisis," has some fun details—explaining, for instance, how "moxie" went from a brand-name for a bittersweet tonic to a synonym for gumption—but it, too, is downbeat. Candy bars and colas constitute "an assault on local and regional cuisine and family meals," they write. "Jell-O replaced local variations in pies and pastries for dessert, just as Coke prevailed over a broader array of local brewing and harvest cultures."

The Cadbury assembly line, Birmingham

By the time they're fretting in the final chapter about the social isolation fostered by video games and the short attention spans created by television, we get the message: What looks like progress is really decline.

Distrustful of both artifice and commerce, Cross and Procter are essentially Rousseauian romantics. They disapprove of packaged pleasures. "Nature's attractions, after all, are often subtle and diffuse—lots of browns and greens and grays, with here and there a few red raspberries," they write. "But the package promises us raspberries all the time. And it can easily displace other, more subtle delights and experiences: candy bars drive out carrots, just as the hi-definition screen drives out the low, and convenience trumps toil."

Rah, toil.

They forget that desire (and commerce) gravitates toward what's scarce. In the early 1900s, many people had experienced entirely too much nature, whether in the form of rural droughts or urban disease. Claims that factory foods were more "sanitary" were alluring because nature seemed so dangerous and dirty. But nowadays, the natural is glamorous. Have the authors not heard of the environmental movement? Of backpacking and adventure travel? Today's comfortable urbanites buy off-road vehicles, relish organic Brussels sprouts, and read *Modern Farmer*.

The authors' eccentric selection bolsters their gloomy take on history. Writing of cigarettes, they declare that "mechanization dramatically lowered prices while also creating an excess of supply that, when filtered through mass marketing, created addictive overconsumption." True enough. But the very same economics applies to bar soap, toilet paper, and toothpaste. Such classic consumer packaged goods also relied on advertising to spur demand, largely by altering norms about cleanliness and appearance. These products, too, changed our sensory experience. (Smell is notably the one sense not on the authors' list.) They, too, were entirely unnatural. But it's harder to turn Ivory soap and Pepsodent into a warning about "addictive overconsumption."

More telling still is the omission of penny newspapers, dime novels, and mass-circulation magazines—mass-market publications supported by advertisements for packaged goods and read largely for enjoyment. Aside from a passing swipe at the Harvard Classics, Cross and Proctor have nothing to say about literary pleasures, even lowbrow ones. You can tell academic critics of "addictive overconsumption" aren't entirely serious when they fail to notice that you can spend way too much time and money—and precious natural resources!—on reading material.

Abundance does, indeed, present new personal and cultural challenges, but Cross and Proctor offer

RICHARD LEA-HAIR / EPA / NEWSCOM

no insights into how to adapt. They just tell us it's bad: "This seemingly limitless array of commercial goods," they write in their concluding chapter, "makes Americans appear to be global gluttons, slaves to desire, mocked by friends and despised or even terrorized by adversaries."

You can blame 9/11 on too many Hershey bars.

In *Candy*, Samira Kawash takes a more constructive, less anachronistic, and altogether more delightful approach to packaged pleasures. A literary scholar by training, Kawash retired in her mid-40s as a Rutgers women's studies professor to research and write about candy. (I discovered her "Candy Professor" blog while investigating the history of Tootsie Rolls.) Like Cross and Proctor, Kawash tells a story of late-19th-century innovation and ingenuity leading to new, highly artificial packaged pleasures. She combs a wide array of sources to discover how people in the past responded as industrial production made food plentiful, varied, and appealing—but also disconcertingly mysterious, unnatural, and a little weird.

The result is not just engaging history but subtle and provocative social criticism.

> The story of candy in America is a story of how the processed, the artificial, and the fake came to be embraced as real food. And it's also the story of how it happened that so much of what we call food today is really candy.

Candy as we know it barely existed before the middle of the 19th century. In "A Visit from St. Nicholas," written in 1823, the sleeping children dream about sugar plums because, Kawash writes, "it would have been at Christmastime, and only at Christmastime, that most children would have anticipated such a treat." Within a few decades, though, a series of mechanical inventions made "penny candy" common childhood fare.

In 1857, a class of Ohio fifth-graders gave their teacher a litany of "things to be eaten" that included a long list of candies: "Cream candy, pop-corn, peppermint, molasses, rose, clove, nut, Butterscotch, sugar plums, lemon drops, lemon candy, peppermint drops, French kisses, cinnamon, Ice-cream, wintergreen, sour drops, hoarhound, lavender, gum drops, vanilla, Rock, birch, cats-eyes, orange, cough, kisses." Kawash, who discovered the list in the *Ohio Journal of Education*, notes that these antebellum kids already "expect variety, novelty, a certain beguiling sparkle in the candy jar." Yet they're still "living in a universe with no jelly beans, caramels, chocolate bars, candy corn, or gummy bears." Those touchstone candies would come later, with such turn-of-the-century inventions as the starch mogul, the chocolate-dipping machine, and Milton Hershey's technique for making industrial quantities of milk chocolate.

From the 19th century to the present, Kawash argues, anxieties about candy have channeled and expressed concerns about processed foods more generally. "'Candy from strangers' might be a good metaphor for everything we eat," she writes. "We don't really know what most food we buy is, where it came from, or who made it. Is it as good as it looks? Or does the alluring surface hide something harmful?"

In an industrializing America that, like contemporary China, was rife with often-valid fears of adulterated foods, "poison candy" was a favorite story of the sensationalist press. Investigators never turned up evidence of harm from off-the-shelf candy, as opposed to foul play, but the fear persisted. (More recent stories of Halloween poisonings are equally enduring and, Kawash reports, equally baseless.) The tales captured the imagination of a public convinced that "when control of food was given over to the factories and machines and chemists, what came out was candy: fake food, deceitful and deadly."

Candy's reputation improved after World War I, when lemon drops, peppermints, and chocolate bars were standard military rations. "By the time the war was over," writes Kawash, "candy was universally embraced as real food, fit for men, women, and children alike." Aviators, boxing champions, and long-distance runners extolled candy's virtues as performance food. Early nutrition science equated calories with "food value," and wrapped candy bars made that value cheap and portable—the perfect lunch for busy people on a budget. By the 1930s, a trade magazine editor recalled in a 1976 interview, "a quarter pound of Baby Ruth and a glass of milk was considered a very substantial, nourishing meal." (A standard Baby Ruth bar today weighs half as much.)

Soon, however, people discovered that too many calories could make you fat, and a Swedish study in 1954 suggested that candy could rot your teeth. (The study's actual result, a dentistry professor wrote in a 1980 article, was: "Don't feed 24 extra large and extra sticky toffees to mental patients, who can practice no oral hygiene, every day for a period of three years.") Candy anxiety continued. Today it takes perverse forms, as conscientious parents deny their children jelly beans and Snickers while feeding them "fruit snacks" and granola bars—candy in everything but the packaging. Kawash has little patience with the subterfuge. "Here's a not-so-radical thought: fruit is not candy, and candy is not fruit," she writes.

Although Kawash subscribes to Michael Pollan's trendy distinction between "real foods" and "edible food-like substances," she defends candy as a legitimate pleasure. It is, she writes, "the one kind of processed food that proclaims its allegiance to the artificial, the processed, the unhealthy. This is something I really like about candy: it's honest. It says what it is." Candy may not be "real food," but neither is it poison. As long as you eat it for what it is, rather than expecting it to replace more nourishing fare, you'll be fine. "That little jelly bean is just a jelly bean: it won't rot your teeth, or make you fat, or drive you to drink, or give you cancer," she says.

An advocate of frank but moderate indulgence, Kawash writes approvingly of the Swedish tradition of *lördagsgodis* or "Saturday Candy,"

whose origins lie in a 1959 government campaign against tooth decay: "All the sweets you like, but only once a week." Swedes still make weekend shopping trips to load up on candy, feeling free on Saturdays to enjoy these sweets "without any guilt, worry, or remorse."

It's a great example. The ritual embodies a wisdom about culture and human nature absent from the romantic, at times apocalyptic, rhetoric of *Packaged Pleasures*. Saturday Candy at once sanctions and restrains the pleasures of abundance. (I once knew a rabbi who took a similar approach to dieting: dessert only on the Sabbath.) The spread of food taboos among America's educated classes, who increasingly eschew processed foods, embrace veganism, or follow meat-heavy paleo diets, suggests a similar quest for self-imposed limits.

Little by little, our culture will evolve to meet the challenges of abundance. But treating pleasure as poison won't get us there. ♦

B&A

Men of Gravity

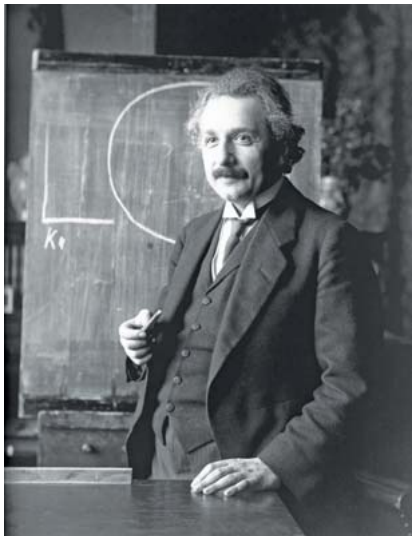
How to deal with a world turned upside down.

BY JOSHUA GELERNTER

The Perfect Theory
A Century of Geniuses and the Battle over General Relativity
by Pedro G. Ferreira
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 304 pp., $28

At a joint meeting of the Royal Society and the Royal Astronomical Society in 1919, Arthur Eddington announced a discovery that turned physics on its head. Eddington had measured the position of a star cluster near the limb of the sun during a total solar eclipse; the stars appeared to have moved from their normal spots in the sky. This proved that Isaac Newton's theory of gravity was wrong, that it ought to be replaced with a new theory—the "general theory of relativity"—from another physicist, Albert Einstein.

It will be no surprise to hear that Eddington's pronouncement was controversial. Newton was the father of modern physics—in some ways, the father of modern science. He was the patron saint of the Royal Society. And now his work was being overturned by an upstart German-Swiss Jew who made his breakthrough at a desk in the Bern patent office, where he kept his notes in a drawer he referred to as his "theoretical physics department." Still, that's what the data said: Einstein's theory correctly predicted the star cluster's position; Newton's did not. During the century since that meeting, Einstein's physics has been debated, dismissed, accepted, exceeded, and returned to. It has remained obscenely contentious and provoked some of the most remarkable ideas in the history of human scholarship. It changed the world, and its story is told in *The Perfect Theory*.



Albert Einstein (1921)

After graduating from the Polytechnic Institute of Zurich in 1900, Einstein's lackluster grades kept him from securing a university position. Nonetheless, "over a period of just a few months," writes Pedro Ferreira, "Einstein had written a string of papers that were . . . transforming physics." The papers were on the behavior of light and the chaos of dust particles; one "tackled a problem that had been plaguing physicists for almost half a century: how the laws of physics seem to behave differently depending on how you look at them." Einstein "brought them together with his principle of relativity."

In 1907, Einstein was still working through a daily quota of patent applications, but his reputation was sufficient for an important journal, the *Yearbook of Electronics and Radioactivity*, to commission him to write a review of his work, "On the Relativity Principle and the Conclusions Drawn From It." He was given two months, "and in those two months Einstein realized that his principle of relativity was incomplete. It would need a thorough overhaul if it was to be *truly* general."

Einstein's special relativity rectified inconsistencies in Newton's mechanics and Maxwell's electromagnetism; but it didn't include gravity, so that's where Einstein directed his thinking. His work on relativity had been based on inertial frames of reference, in which everything moves at a constant velocity. Whether you're sitting in a parked car or driving at 90 miles per hour on a level road, you're in an inertial frame of reference, and relativity says that physics will behave the same in either circumstance. That's why when you toss your cell phone into the passenger seat while cruising at 90 mph the phone doesn't fly backwards and crash through the rear window.

What Einstein began to consider for a more general theory of relativity was accelerating frames of reference. Ferreira provides a metaphor:

Joshua Gelernter is a writer in Connecticut.

Imagine getting into a ground-level elevator and hitting the button for the top floor. As your frame of reference accelerates—as the elevator begins to go up—you feel a little heavier. As the elevator descends, you feel lighter. Einstein couched this in terms of a thought experiment: "If a person falls freely he will not feel his own weight." In physical terms, he concluded, acceleration and gravity are indistinguishable. If you're weightless in a spaceship beyond the influence of any source of gravity, and it starts to accelerate upwards at a rate of 32.2 feet per second squared—equivalent to the force of gravity on Earth—everything would appear to behave exactly as it does on Earth's surface.

This conclusion has substantial implications. "Imagine yourself riding in a spaceship far from any planets and stars," writes Ferreira.

> Now imagine that a ray of light . . . enters through a small window directly to your right, cuts across the inside of your ship, and exits through a window to your left. If your spaceship is standing still, and the light hits the window straight on, it will exit through the window directly to your left. If, however, the spaceship is moving at a very fast but constant velocity when the light ray enters, by the time the light hits the far side of the spaceship, the ship will have moved forward and the ray will exit through a window farther back on the ship. If the ship is accelerating, things will look quite different: the light ray will curve through the ship.

Einstein realized that acceleration could deflect light. Therefore, he concluded, gravity could as well. This would be the idea at the core of a truly general relativity. When, at that 1919 meeting, Arthur Eddington said that he had seen the Sun's gravity bending the light of a cluster of stars (making them appear to have moved), this was the idea he confirmed. This idea would eventually be spun into notions of black holes, plastic space-time, a Big Bang, an expanding universe, waves of gravity, and vibrating strings that may or may not make up everything—notions that would come from a Belgian priest, a World War I pilot, an exercise-obsessed English pacifist, and other charmingly colorful characters.

If you want to know more, read *The Perfect Theory*. Find out how an antigravity essay contest led to a major breakthrough, and which physicist wrote the "perfect paper in just under three pages." Find out who the "pope of modern string theory is," and how the international conspiracy of Jewish scientists became so powerful that that Nazis tried to replace quantum mechanics with something called Deutsche Physik. Find out why an attempt at having a computer solve Einstein's field equations was summed up as having "only two possible outcomes: 'either the programmer will shoot himself, or the machine will blow up.'" Read about the Russian-Jewish dissident-physicist who was released from Lubyanka but refused to work on the Soviet atomic bomb.

This is one of the most vigorous and entertaining science books I've ever read. ♦

B&A

A Tar Heel Meteor

The pol at the dawn of North Carolina's modern era.

BY EDWIN M. YODER JR.

Some eight miles west by south of the central North Carolina town of my boyhood, one comes upon red-clay dairy country, furnished with lush pastures and comfortable houses. Hawfields, as the neighborhood is called, dates from colonial times: The route of Cornwallis's fateful retirement toward Yorktown runs close by. It was the home of W. Kerr Scott, governor of North Carolina from 1949 to 1953 and U.S. senator from 1954 until his death in 1958.

Among mid-20th-century Tar Heel politicians, Scott was arguably the most accomplished, and yet he is the hardest to capture in cold print. But Julian Pleasants is well qualified to portray this elusive maverick, having cowritten the definitive account of a contest for which Scott (unintentionally) provided the sacrificial victim.

That was the troubled Senate Democratic primary of 1950. When the incumbent senator died in office, then-governor Scott plucked from academia an improbable successor, the revered president of the University of North Carolina, Frank P. Graham. Scott had been reading aloud a list of possible appointees when he came to Graham's name. "Stop there, Kerr," Mrs. Scott said, according to legend. "He's your man." Stop he did—and the embattled liberal forces of the southern United States enjoyed a fleeting moment in the sun. Graham's candidacy for the remainder of an unexpired term collided with two pivotal Supreme Court decisions that summer, ordering the racial integration of graduate and professional education and railroad dining cars, thus agitating the "race issue" and, not least, arousing the determined opposition of the young Jesse Helms.

The Graham appointment, although brief, was a signature episode of the Scott term. Scott was bent on shaking up a complacent rural state that had

The Political Career of W. Kerr Scott
The Squire from Haw River
by Julian M. Pleasants
Kentucky, 408 pp., $50

Edwin M. Yoder Jr. is the author, most recently, of Vacancy: A Judicial Misadventure.

been governed for four decades by the proper but conventional Shelby Ring of lawyerly/business-oriented figures. The shakeup was needed. North Carolina had a high rate of illiteracy; it was short of hospitals and health services; its rural schools, black and white, were poor, shabby, and short of competent teachers; and many of its country-dwelling citizens, which made up 60 percent of the population, lacked electricity and telephones and lived on dirt roads that became all but impassable in muddy weather. Getting children to school or produce to market was always a challenge.

Scott's opponent for governor was the veteran state treasurer Charles Johnson. (Scott himself had served several terms as commissioner of agriculture.) Johnson was a typical representative of the respectable "progressive plutocrats," as they were memorably called by V.O. Key Jr. in his classic *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (1949). Johnson, although the favorite, had made a fateful blunder, of which he was apparently unaware: As the official custodian of the state's substantial revenue surpluses, he had farmed money out to more than 230 favored banks—without drawing a dime of interest. The Scott camp came up with the term "lazy money," and Scott won.

A North Carolina governor of that era confronted three formidable obstacles: He could not succeed himself; he had no veto; and he was easily bullied, then as now, by a hidebound legislature. Johnson's lax handling of state monies was typical of much that was lethargic in North Carolina's governance. Scott, making use of accumulated surpluses and bond issues, managed a big boost that launched North Carolina toward the busy high-tech and urban commonwealth it would become. He paved scores of muddy roads, sponsored educational improvements, and led the way to founding the first state medical and dental schools and the wholesale building of hospitals.

Two years after his gubernatorial term ended, Scott won a Senate seat: The incumbent who had defeated Graham in the ugly campaign of 1950 died, and an appointed seat-warmer proved an easy mark. Unfortunately, Scott's talents were not tailored for the national stage. The rancid politics of race had already begun to obsess the southern congressional delegations. As governor, Scott had resolved to advance the fortunes of North Carolina's black population and had appointed the first biracial state boards. But his progressive instincts were eclipsed, and he began to echo the sullen southern mood—even siding with Orval Faubus in the obstruction of desegregation at Little Rock. His one good idea, in a term abbreviated by his early death at 62, was a "world food bank" that would relieve famine with American farm surpluses. Its like would come, but not in his time.

Campaigning for the Senate (1954)

HANK WALKER / THE LIFE PICTURE COLLECTION / GETTY IMAGES

Julian Pleasants sticks carefully to public matters in this interesting and well-researched book, but he makes slight allowance for the colorful plumage of W. Kerr Scott that generated an abundance of tales.

According to one story, the dairy farmer-statesman was once asked why North Carolina, with its fertile eastern pasturelands, had not developed a great dairy industry, as a Wisconsin of the east. "Simple," was his reply. "They ain't bred a cow that don't have to be milked on weekends"—a tease of the famously leisure-loving eastern Carolinians. Later, when an Atlantic hurricane was taking aim at the coast that had been devastated by Hazel in 1954, Scott proposed to disperse it with an atomic bomb. This was presumably also meant as a tease—but it was ominous enough to stir the attentions of North Carolina's editorial writers. Some jokes were less felicitous. On the eve of his Senate term, Scott cracked that "Korea is a long way from Haw River," his rural seat. His enemies whacked him for a parochial jape that seemed to minimize a costly and controversial war, and his allies shuddered. But as usual, there was a seed of wisdom among the flying hayseeds.

My father, who knew Scott and admired his labors for health, education, and literacy, often said that his frailty was a tendency to overplay the rustic pose—of which the "long way from Haw River" remark was typical. And, in fact, the rustic pose consorted superficially with the solid, serious character of this literate, highly intelligent Presbyterian elder. Yes, he exhibited a trace of the Louisiana Longs, a dollop or two of the Jimmy Carter earnestness (without the piety), and other features of the stereotypical southern pol, including the ever-present wad of chewing tobacco and cigar. But none of these defined him. W. Kerr Scott was one of a kind. ♦

B&A

Where's Waldo?

There is less to the Bard of Concord than meets the eye.

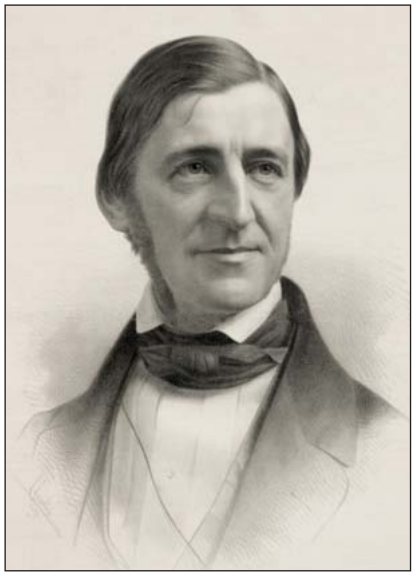
BY MICAH MATTIX

Last February, Harvard's Belknap Press issued the final volume of Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Collected Works*, a project that had taken over 40 years. It was conceived at the beginning of what is now called "The Emerson Revival." Before the 1970s, Harvard professor Lawrence Buell remarks, "even specialists could not be counted on to treat Emerson as anything better than an amateur warmup act." Poststructuralism, however, provided a paradigm for "Emerson's fragmentary, self-reflexive prose," and as its star rose, so did Emerson's.

Interest in Emerson has been going strong ever since. When I completed graduate school six years ago, no discussion of American literature seemed complete without reference to Emersonian this or Emersonian that: He was regularly brought up in discussions of contemporary poetry and contemporary politics, and once he was even suggested as a source of personal *ressourcement* during the grind of academic life. In the last half-decade, over 20 books solely or partly devoted to Ralph Waldo Emerson (excluding collections and reprints) have been published by major university presses.

But now that his *Collected Works* is complete, I'd like to suggest that we close the book on the Emerson Revival. Earlier scholars got Emerson right: He may serve "to swell a progress, start a scene or two," but he is no American Hamlet, and his work is no great matter.

Most people agree that Emerson is not a philosopher. Logic is a problem for him. So are categories. In case it has been a while since you've read



Ralph Waldo Emerson (1845)

the Bard of Concord, let me give you just one example from his only sustained attempt at philosophical argument, "Nature." He opens with the seemingly central distinction between "Nature" and "Soul" and almost immediately ties himself in knots. "Nature," he writes, is "NOT ME, that is, both nature and art, all other men and my own body."

It's odd to think of "my own body" as "NOT ME," but let's move on. Stopping to think when reading Emerson rarely pays off. So what is "Soul"? If you think it's "ME," you're being entirely too consistent with your categories to benefit from Emersonian wisdom. No, it's the spiritual force, the "Spirit," the "infinite mind," or the "Father," that is *distinct* from both "ME" and "NOT ME" of which "ME" and "NOT ME" are *symbols*.

Actually, not symbols; the "ME" is more like "a transparent eyeball," and "Nature" is more like a river "whose floods of life stream around and through us," in which we become "nothing" or "part or particle of God" or something. Emerson is a monist who uses the categories of dualism, and, because of this, he rarely makes sense.

How about Emerson's much-lauded practical wisdom? Perhaps I'm missing something, but he is rarely either practical or wise. His aphorisms tend to be either chicken soup for the academic soul or the gobbledygook of a man who prefers the sounds of words to their meanings.

In the chicken soup category, we have: "The best moments of life are these delicious awakenings of the higher powers"; "All things are moral"; "To be great is to be misunderstood"; "Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind"; and "If a man is at heart just, then in so far is he God," among others.

In the gobbledygook category, we have: "Your conformity explains nothing" (which I've been tempted to shout at my son's Little League games); "The relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure that it is profane to seek to interpose helps"; and "Every man's condition is a solution in hieroglyphic to those inquiries he would put."

Other sayings are downright troubling. "No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. . . . Good and bad are but names," for example. "I hope in these days we have heard the last of conformity and consistency," Emerson writes. "Let us never bow and apologize more."

His central idea, of course, is "Trust thyself." In his earlier essays, he encourages his readers to disregard the past, institutions, and dogma, and to obey "the eternal law" within. "I will not hide my tastes or aversions," he writes. "I will so trust that what is deep is holy, that I will do strongly before the sun and moon whatever inly rejoices me, and the heart appoints." But in a later essay on Napoleon, who seems to have embodied the "deep" self-trust Emerson lauds, he states confusingly (after praising Napoleon) that what made Napoleon's egoism wrong was that it "narrowed, impoverished and absorbed the power and

Micah Mattix is assistant professor of literature at Houston Baptist University.

existence of those who served him." And whose fault is this?

> It was not Bonaparte's fault. He did all that in him lay to live and thrive without moral principle. It was the nature of things, the eternal law of man and of the world which baulked and ruined him.

Read that again. It was the "world" that ruined Napoleon, not Napoleon who ruined the world.

To live "without moral principle" is a bad thing for Emerson. He writes in "Self-Reliance" that the "rejection of popular standards" is not "a rejection of all standards." Yet he refuses to state how we are to decide which ones are good and which ones are bad other than by, again, looking within. The "law of consciousness abides," he writes—except, of course, when it doesn't, which is why Emerson concludes his essay on Napoleon with a confusing warning on the dangers of being (you guessed it) selfish: "Every experiment, by multitudes or by individuals, that has a sensual or selfish aim, will fail." In short: "Trust thyself, but not always!"

While some Emersonians have tried to untangle Emerson's prose, most have pivoted to the argument that what makes him worth reading is either his originality or his dazzling metaphors. In a recent issue of *Humanities*, Danny Heitman asks why Emerson has endured. His answer is that Emerson teaches us "that questioning orthodox belief was not only acceptable, but vital." The Emerson scholar Donald McQuade, whom Heitman cites, states that it's easy to forget how radical Emerson's ideas were, because they have been so thoroughly assimilated: "Faith in human potential, belief in self-reliant individualism, resolute optimism, moral idealism, worshipful return to nature—these are but a few of Emerson's principles that remain central to the national ideology he helped articulate and popularize." He was not only the artificer of his age, Lazer Ziff has argued, but of America itself. Those who "believe themselves to be influenced by America," Ziff writes, "are actually responding to what Emerson said America means."

Yet, while Heitman (and McQuade) make hay about how Emerson challenged "the ecclesiastical and intellectual status quo," it is more accurate to say that Emerson espoused the "new thinking" that had been bouncing around New England for a couple of years at just the right time. True, his address to the Harvard Divinity School was unpopular with the old professors, but the students loved it, as did a good portion of New England's population.

In his excellent *American Transcendentalism* (2007), Philip Gura notes that Emerson was one of many Unitarian clergymen to be influenced by German idealism and to take part in the pejoratively named "Transcendental Club," which included William Henry Channing, Orestes Brownson, William Henry Furness, Theodore Parker, George Ripley, and others. Gura writes that there were two basic strains of Transcendentalism: One focused on practical reforms in labor and education, and one (championed by Emerson) proposed "hyper-individualism" or "egotheism."

Emerson worked hard to control the meaning of the movement in his essays and lectures, ignoring figures such as Brownson, Channing, and Ripley in "Nature" and "The Transcendentalist." But the work that Brownson did on behalf of laborers, that Bronson Alcott did with respect to education, and that Theodore Parker did on behalf of abolition were, if not perfect, far more important than Emerson's bloated obscurities and inane aphorisms. To treat Emerson as the central genius of the "new thought" is to swallow his self-serving omissions whole hog.

Greatly reducing Emerson's presence on course syllabi and in anthologies would free up space to consider other deserving figures. In the five-volume *Norton Anthology of American Literature*, for example, other than 50 pages devoted to Margaret Fuller, there are no selections from the work of any other Transcendentalist: nothing from Brownson's many essays or treatise, nothing from Parker or Ripley, nothing from Channing or Furness. Nor is there anything from other, now largely forgotten 19th-century figures unassociated with the Transcendentalists, such as Elizabeth Ellet, Charles Fenno Hoffman, and William Gilmore Simms, who might at least help to give a sense of the period's diversity. By contrast, over *200* pages are devoted to Emerson.

Finally, regarding Emerson's supposed poetic language: While some of his metaphors are pleasing enough, and while he can put together some nice extended metaphors, he too often lacks control. Mixed metaphors abound. "*Embosomed* for *a season* in nature," he writes (emphasis mine), "whose *floods of life* stream around and through us, and invite us, by the powers they supply, to *action proportioned* to nature, why should we *grope among the dry bones* of the past, or put the living generation *into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe?*"

Can "sliding scales" identify? According to Emerson, they can: "The consciousness in each man is a sliding scale, which identifies him now with the First Cause, and now with the flesh of his body; life above life, in infinite degrees." Can light or an appulse reproduce itself? Yes, says Emerson: "Yet, in our experience, the rays or appulses have sufficient force to arrive at the senses, but not enough to reach the quick and compel the reproduction of themselves in speech."

Even when Emerson does stay on course, the scenery often distracts: "Life," Emerson writes in "Experience," "is a train of moods like a string of beads, and as we pass through them they prove to be many colored lenses which paint the world their own hue, and each shows only what lies in its focus." Translation: The adolescent years are rough.

Emerson did get one thing right. In his "Divinity School Address," he says: "But the man who aims to speak … as fashion guides … babbles. Let him hush." So be it. The academic fashions that revived Emerson have guided for too long. It's time for him to hush so that other voices might speak. ♦

B&A

Freedom's Partner

'Good things are easily destroyed, but not easily created.' BY RYAN SHINKEL

How to Be a Conservative
by Roger Scruton
Bloomsbury, 208 pp., $23.99

What does it mean to be a conservative today? It may mean defending individual freedom against bureaucratic largess. "Freedom" was the anthem for the political right in the time of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, yet "that word demands a context," Roger Scruton writes here. He answers that freedom is a means for conservatism, but not its end. Conservatism, rather, is about a shared love of home.

In this instructional book for the English-speaking reader, Scruton argues that conservatism is inseparable from the institutions, customs, and culture that embody freedom. We have retained as our historic inheritance the habits and culture of Western civilization and the English-speaking traditions of freedom under the law—all "good things that we must strive to keep." The purpose of conservatism is the object of our conservation, our shared space for social life which makes us free beings. Conservatism means being a lover of the home in which we find ourselves.

This begins, Scruton writes, with "the sentiment that good things are easily destroyed, but not easily created." And these good things do not just include the Bill of Rights; they are the historic pillars and protections of civil society: an impartial rule of law, our shared environmental and cultural assets, a civic identity of citizenship and not creed, marriage, Western democratic accountability. "These and many other things are familiar to us and taken for granted," says Scruton. "All are under threat." Moreover, they are under threat from the excesses of ideologies—economic, social, political—with conservatism being the only rational response.

Scruton begins and ends this account by describing how his socialist father embodied Robert Conquest's first law of politics: Everyone is right-wing about what they know. Jack Scruton "believed in socialism, not as an economic doctrine, but as a restoration to the common people of the land that was theirs." And he held onto this love of home, or *oikophilia*, which means loving "not only the home but the people contained in it, and the surrounding settlements that endow that home with lasting contours and an enduring smile. … [It] is the place that is not just mine and yours but *ours*." Home is where we make space to enshrine what we have and who we are. It is how we are able to identify, in the first-person plural, *our* Burkean "little platoons" of civil society.

This *oikophilia*, Scruton writes, includes a love of home as it has come to us: "We *inherit* it, and inheritance brings not only the rights of ownership, but the duties of trusteeship" for those who have yet to be born, since it is their inheritance as well. We are entrusted to maintain all institutions not run by the state: "The main emphasis of conservative politics ought now to be in freeing autonomous associations from adverse regulation," since these associations are part of "a common dwelling-place—the place that is ours." Again, home precedes freedom.

Scruton writes that while his father's "grievances were real and well-founded," his top-down solutions "were fictions." There was a core truth to Jack Scruton's socialism; likewise, there are core truths in other specific "-isms" (nationalism, capitalism, internationalism, etc.), known from our collective historical experience, whose falsehoods are the threats to maintaining our inheritance.

The truth of capitalism, for example, is that "private ownership and free exchange are necessary features of any large-scale economy" in which we depend for our "survival and prosperity on the activities of strangers." But the falsehood of capitalism occurs when the efficient means of free exchange becomes an all-encompassing worldview. Conservatism corrects this falsehood by reminding us that there are "realms of value" in life—love, marriage, beauty in human settlement, the duties of free beings—that supersede the market. These things are intrinsically valuable and cannot have a price.

Of course, the division that Roger Scruton makes between two types of conservatism—a metaphysical kind of religious impulse to protect sacred things from desecration, and an empirical kind reacting to the excesses of modernity—does not necessarily apply to Scruton himself. He says that he is mainly concerned with earthly things, yet a religious sensibility against cultural repudiation animates his writing. Scruton argues that aesthetic value is an end in itself, and criticizes its debasement in, say, modernist architecture. This love of home embodied in design aesthetics protects the temple of human settlement against the moneychangers for whom form follows function. Scruton is a metaphysical cultural conservative!

Yet conservatism is a political outlook as well, precisely because it derives from a prior perspective on civil society in which we cultivate *our* shared inheritance from generations past for generations to come. Scruton reminds us that we conserve freedom to fulfill our love of home by making and protecting human settlement. ♦

Ryan Shinkel, an undergraduate at the University of Michigan, is a contributor to First Things.

B&A

King in Stone

When a historical drama is devoid of drama.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

The marketing genius of movies like *Selma*, the highly praised docudrama about the march in Alabama that triggered the 1965 Voting Rights Act, is that they simultaneously confuse and intimidate critics and audiences by making them feel as though it would be an act of disrespect to speak anything but words of praise for the way they depict life-and-death historical events of great moral moment. In other words, to speak ill of *Selma* is to risk speaking ill of Selma—to belittle the event's importance and to demonstrate insensitivity or even unconscious animus toward those who made the enormous sacrifices we are watching on screen.

It is therefore with some trepidation that I must report *Selma* is actually quite boring. This is a careful, respectful, well-made, intelligent, and serious piece of work, but as a *movie* it is only intermittently compelling and never manages to overcome the crucial problem of imbuing its central character, Martin Luther King, with full-blooded life. King is not exactly a waxwork deity here—the movie makes a plot point out of his infidelities—but you never get a sense of just how intellectually and politically confident he was, how spirited and improvisatory he and his team were compelled to be under incredibly difficult conditions.

Under the direction of Ava DuVernay, the British actor David Oyelowo gives King the gravity he certainly possessed but adds to it an unfortunate lugubriousness. The movie is reverent toward King, which is understandable, but its reverence creates a dramatic hole at its center. When Oyelowo is called upon to give the audience some sense of King's astounding personal force, he gets all the gestures and poses right but he falls sadly short in conveying King's incantatory power and staggeringly magnetic personality.

Selma
Directed by Ava DuVernay

Selma desperately needs some of what Daniel Day-Lewis and screenwriter Tony Kushner brought to Steven Spielberg's *Lincoln*: a way of seeing King fresh. Day-Lewis did that for Lincoln with the unexpectedly light tenor of his voice and a reedy midwestern accent, and Kushner did it by showing the ways in which Lincoln proved to be a canny political player in his pursuit of the 13th Amendment. DuVernay, who reportedly rewrote Paul Webb's screenplay, treats the months surrounding the Selma march as a dark night of the soul for King; but surely they also constituted a heady moment—a moment in which much of the American story had come to pivot around this amazingly young man, only 36 at the time, who had become one of the two or three most important people in the United States and perhaps the most celebrated. But this real King, the worldly King, is of no interest to DuVernay and her larger project.

Selma wants to offer us something of an overview of the civil rights movement as it sought to force Lyndon Johnson to put voting-rights legislation at the top of his agenda. And when the film leaves King to concentrate on lesser-known figures—from the future congressman John Lewis to the daring Selma nurse Annie Lee Cooper, played rather wonderfully by Oprah Winfrey—it is more effective precisely because it loses its reverence and becomes a richer and more human story. But it also loses its way in the thickets of a movement too complex to be captured in a few minutes of screen time.

King wanted to shame White America into supporting voting rights, and in the movie, President Lyndon Johnson (played unconvincingly by the British actor Tom Wilkinson) serves as the stand-in for the United States. *Selma* begins with Johnson telling King he has bigger fish to fry than voting-rights legislation in the year 1965, and it effectively concludes with Johnson having learned his lesson from King's moral example and telling Congress and the nation that it is time for a Voting Rights Act.

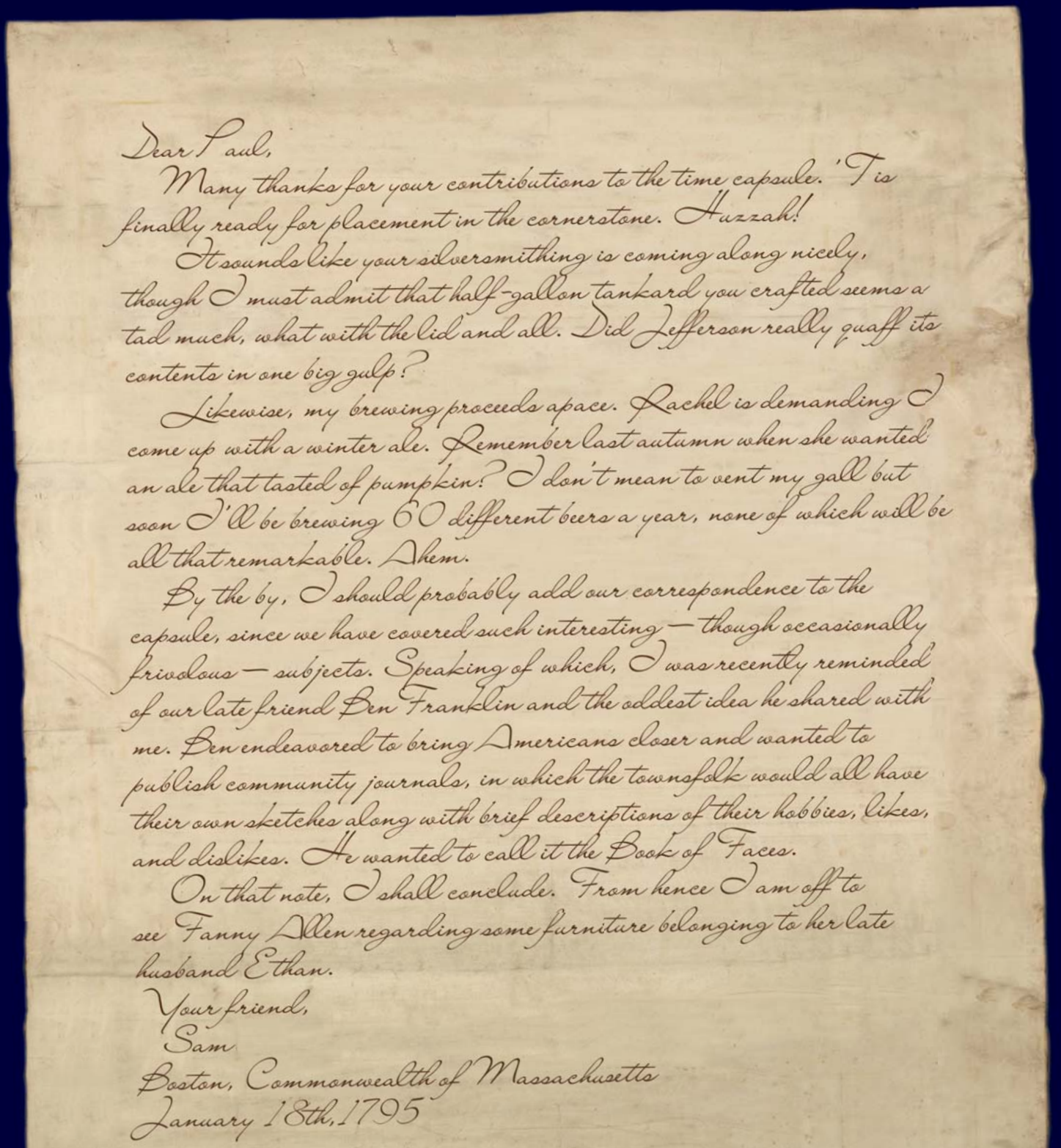
This portrayal of Johnson is simplistic, but not without some validity—and it has, of course, triggered classic autonomic responses among Washington's gray-haired Democratic veterans. Joseph Califano, a key Johnson aide half a century ago, took to the pages of the *Washington Post* to declare that Johnson was actually the Machiavellian intelligence behind the Selma strategy and that King had actually served as Johnson's front man. In fact, King was ever a dogged pursuer of his own and his movement's openly stated goals; Johnson was, in this as in most other aspects of his presidency, spectacularly inconstant and given to radical and highly emotional shifts in temperament and approach. Califano's assertion is so ludicrous that it almost beggars belief.

In framing the story of the events in and around Selma as a struggle for Johnson's tarnished soul, and by extension the tarnished soul of the United States, the movie ends up as something of a pageant. Like all pageants, *Selma* is designed for our moral elevation rather than our entertainment. To be sure, pageants have their place, but it's usually not on a top-10 list. ♦

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

"Officials opened a time capsule buried by Paul Revere and Samuel Adams over 200 years ago containing several historic artifacts."
—CNN.com, January 7, 2015

PARODY



Dear Paul,

Many thanks for your contributions to the time capsule. 'T is finally ready for placement in the cornerstone. Huzzah!

It sounds like your silversmithing is coming along nicely, though I must admit that half-gallon tankard you crafted seems a tad much, what with the lid and all. Did Jefferson really quaff its contents in one big gulp?

Likewise, my brewing proceeds apace. Rachel is demanding I come up with a winter ale. Remember last autumn when she wanted an ale that tasted of pumpkin? I don't mean to vent my gall but soon I'll be brewing 60 different beers a year, none of which will be all that remarkable. Ahem.

By the by, I should probably add our correspondence to the capsule, since we have covered such interesting — though occasionally frivolous — subjects. Speaking of which, I was recently reminded of our late friend Ben Franklin and the oddest idea he shared with me. Ben endeavored to bring Americans closer and wanted to publish community journals, in which the townsfolk would all have their own sketches along with brief descriptions of their hobbies, likes, and dislikes. He wanted to call it the Book of Faces.

On that note, I shall conclude. From hence I am off to see Fanny Allen regarding some furniture belonging to her late husband Ethan.

Your friend,
Sam

Boston, Commonwealth of Massachusetts
January 18th, 1795