the weekly Standard

HILLARY'S STACKED DECK OF CARDS
NOEMIE EMERY

MAY 25, 2015 $4.95

A Dad's Life

JONATHAN V. LAST
on fatherhood, manliness, and failure

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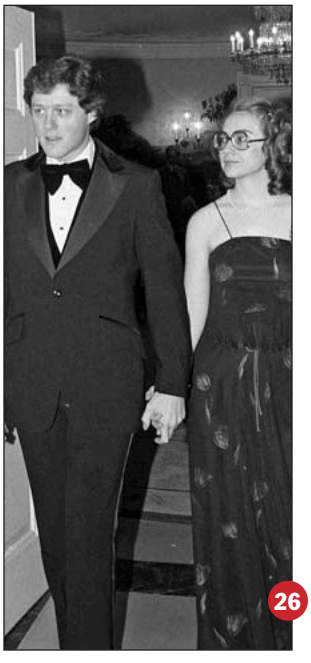
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COVER BY GARY LOCKE

Hubris Meets Nemesis

For a fuller account of the surprise Tory victory in Britain's general election last week, you'll want to read Ted Bromund's piece elsewhere in this issue. The Scrapbook, for its part, chooses to believe, eccentrically, that the polls were basically correct until a massive last-minute swing against Labour's Ed Miliband, too late to be measured by pollsters. And what caused that swing? Well-deserved ridicule of Miliband's hubris in engraving his platform on a mammoth stone tablet.

In Boris Johnson, the mayor of London, newly elected Conservative MP, and peerless polemicist, Miliband met his nemesis. Johnson posted this rhetorical masterpiece on his Facebook page on May 4, and the rest is history:

"It's the smugness that gets me. It's the brass-necked complacency. As a piece of premature chicken-counting combined with insolent disrespect to the will of the electorate, this Labour stunt is frankly unbeatable.

"Never mind measuring the curtains for Downing Street, Ed Miliband is so confident of victory this Thursday that he has already commissioned a vast monument to himself. He has caused a stonemason to engrave an 8ft 6in slab of limestone with a series of fine-sounding but essentially vacuous slogans, as if this were East Germany circa 1973, and he has promised—nay, sworn—that on the very first day of his regime the work will be religiously installed in the garden of the prime minister's offices.

"In true totalitarian fashion, he has signed it himself, and appended the red-rose Socialist logo of the Labour Party.

"When someone showed me a pic of Ed in front of this absurdity, I thought it was a joke, some photoshopped wheeze.

"It is no joke, my friends. This thing exists, and Ed fully intends that this tasteless, verbless, truthless stele should loom over No. 10 like some kitsch version of the laws of Hammurabi, or some new Decalogue—except that he couldn't think of 10 things to say.

"What was he drinking? What was he smoking? What was he on when he came up with this one? Keep taking the tablets, Ed—don't erect them in government offices. There are all sorts of people who

Above, the 'weird commie slab'; at right, Boris Johnson

are capable of putting a stop to this vandalism. If (heaven forfend) Ed Miliband were indeed to find himself in Downing Street this week, then the head of the Civil Service would quietly tell him not to be such a confounded idiot. No. 10 is a department of state; you can't use it for party-political propaganda. Imagine the hoo-ha if I had festooned City Hall with the Conservative logo, after we kicked out the Labour administration in 2008.

"Then there is Westminster Council, for whose punctilious planning department I have deep respect. No. 10 is a Grade I-listed building. Would they allow it to be desecrated with some weird commie slab? No way.

"But there is another far more important person who can kibosh the whole thing—and that, of course, is you: you, the dear, the gentle, the reader who has already put up with so much election coverage and who is now about to take centre stage.

"You can stop Ed and his monument; you can stop him stone dead. After all the yarping and the carping from the media and the politicos, it is time for you to have your say; and on Thursday you have a decision-making tool more powerful than 100 TV studios or a million barrels of newspaper ink. You have the stubby pencil and the bit of paper, and you hold the destiny of the country in your hands.

"It will take only 23 more seats to give the Conservatives the stability of an absolute majority—something that is now completely beyond the reach of the Labour Party. So wherever you are voting, I hope you will consider why Ed Miliband reached for this preposterous gimmick. Why carve slogans in stone? Why pretend that there is something imperishable about his words? Why go to these lengths to tell us there is something fixed and rocklike about his agenda? Why? Because he knows—and he knows that we know—that the opposite is the case.

"If this country were to make the tragic mistake of electing Ed Miliband and the Labour Party, we would usher in perhaps the most intrinsically weak government of modern times. Far from being graven in stone, his words would not be worth the paper they were written on. Miliband knows that his intentions would count for nothing—that he could not get a single bill through the Commons—without the approval of the Scottish Nationalists. He wouldn't be Moses or Hammurabi; he would be rapidly transformed into the obsequious butler of Downing Street, constantly tending to the demands of fiery Aunt Nicola, always making sure that Alec Salmond was topped up with pink champagne—and at the expense of the English taxpayer.

"Britain's political stability would be seriously weakened. The two parties

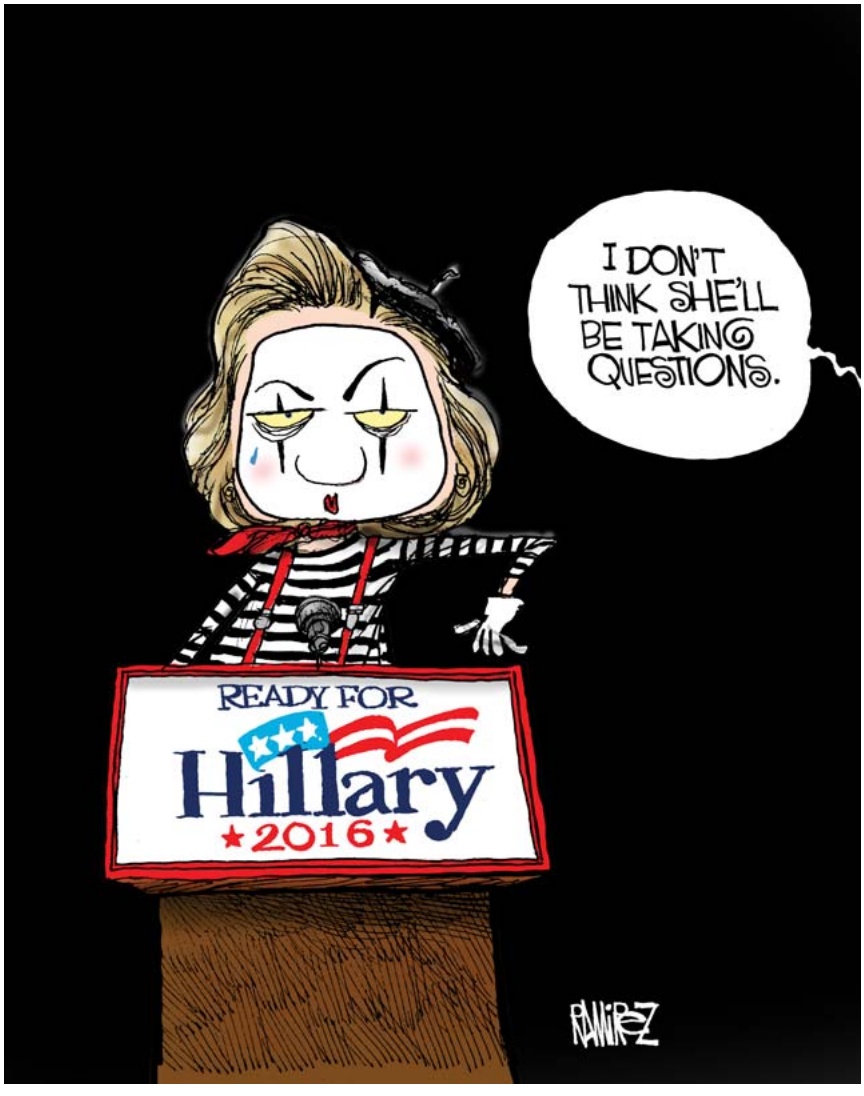
COMMIE SLAB, NEWSCOM; JOHNSON, ANDREW PARSONS

plainly despise each other, and already fight like ferrets in a sack. The economy would be weakened, as Labour and SNP competed to impose a series of smash-and-grab policies that would simply discourage enterprise and drive away investment. British public services would be weakened by the consequent fall in economic confidence and tax revenues. Britain's defences would be weakened, as the Scots Nats campaigned for nuclear disarmament; and Britain's standing abroad would be weakened by Miliband's refusal to take on the British responsibility—to lead reform in Europe, and then put those reforms to the British people in a referendum.

"With the eurozone still in turmoil, with a revanchist Putin, with the American economy wobbling again, there is only one way to give this country the strong leadership it needs—and that is to give David Cameron and the Conservatives five more years. We have come back from a terrible recession—exacerbated by Miliband and Ed Balls—to be one of the fastest-growing economies in the West, with dizzying growth in employment and new businesses. This country has amazing potential standing at the crossroads of the global economy: the commercial, cultural, creative, tech, medical and university capital of Europe if not the world—and still a huge manufacturing power.

"Our mission now must be to ensure that more people share in that success across the country, to raise productivity, and to harness a more dynamic market economy to help pay for the poor, the needy, and better and better public services. I cannot believe that people will want to put that at risk, and to return to the Seventies nostrums of Labour. The Tories need another five years to embed and extend the considerable achievements of this coalition.

"Let us therefore consign Milibandias and his tombstone to the bafflement of future archaeologists. Let it go down as the last act of a desperate candidate, and the heaviest suicide note in history." ♦



If We Had a Nickel for Every Time …

'Skip the Bag, Save the River." No, it's not a line from *The Godfather* (that would be "Leave the gun, take the cannoli"). Rather, it was the District of Columbia's motto for a 2009 initiative to clean up the Anacostia River by charging five cents for every plastic bag used by consumers in D.C. shops and supermarkets (anywhere food is sold). The idea was twofold—reduce the number of bags that end up in the Anacostia and generate revenue to clean up the river from folks who persist in using plastic instead of reusable totes. Practically from the outset, D.C. officials have been touting it as a singular legislative success.

In only a matter of months, plastic bag use was reportedly down 85 percent. And yearly bag revenue has steadily increased from $1.5 million in 2010 to $2.1 million last year. Amazing, isn't it? All that money coming in from people who continue to ask for plastic bags at the store *and* a dramatic reduction in the number of plastic bags people are requesting at the store.

Well, you probably won't be surprised to learn that the numbers turn out to be phony. As the *Washington Post* observed in a lengthy analysis of the program last week, "According to a footnote in a report from the Office of the Chief Financial Officer in 2009, there was no reliable estimate of bag use in the District."

So officials modified estimates from Seattle Public Utilities, which came from a 2004 waste-composition study that involved sifting through loads of trash in garbage trucks. D.C. officials came up with a figure of 270 million bags used annually in grocery, drug, convenience and liquor stores in the District—more than 450 per person.

Phil Rozenski, director of sustainability for South Carolina-based Novolex, one of the nation's leading manufacturers of plastic and paper bags, said he pointed out to D.C. officials that the Seattle numbers exceeded federal estimates for the number of plastic bags the average American used.

But wait, there's more: Concerning the millions of dollars supposedly generated by the initiative since 2010, it seems only a small amount has gone directly to cleaning up the Anacostia. The *Post* notes that "more of the fund money has been allocated for field trips for schoolchildren and employee salaries than to tangible cleanup projects on the river and its watershed."

The largest grant from the fund so far, $1.2 million, will be paid over the next two years to send every D.C. fifth-grader on a two-night field trip at campsites outside the District, some up to 30 miles from the Anacostia River. Ten thousand children will participate in activities designed to provide a "meaningful watershed education experience," such as canoeing, talking about trash, conducting water-quality experiments and learning to milk a cow.

Finally, it turns out there's a clause in that bag law stating funds cannot be used to support existing salaries—they can only be spent on jobs created by the fund. Based on an audit, says the *Post*, "fund money paid for portions of the salaries of 17 employees, although only one new position was created as a result of the fee." Luckily, the audit was "relabeled a 'concern' rather than a formal audit finding, and there was no mention of the clause." Problem solved!

Why is it that even President Obama hasn't been forcefully pushing for D.C. statehood? ♦

Must Reading!

Father's Day is still a few weeks away, but it's not too soon to order the perfect gift for the fathers in your life. We're referring to the fabulous new book edited by our colleague Jonathan V. Last, *The Dadly Virtues: Adventures from the Worst Job You'll Ever Love* (Templeton Press). Not since the 1927 Yankees has there been a Murderers' Row like the writers Jonathan lined up: P.J. O'Rourke, Matthew Continetti, Stephen F. Hayes, James Lileks, Jonah Goldberg, Tucker Carlson, Larry Miller, Joe Queenan, David "Iowahawk" Burge, Toby Young, Matt Labash, Michael Graham, Christopher Caldwell, Andrew Ferguson, Rob Long, and Joseph Epstein.

There is endless enjoyment to be had in these authors' musings. But it would be remiss of The Scrapbook not to mention that the blurbs (all of which come from children of the writers) are also priceless. Here are a few of them:

"When we left for college, we thought no one could have a more liberating experience. Then we heard the champagne pop before we had closed the door. Apparently the only thing more liberating than getting rid of your parents is getting rid of your kids." (Gillum and Emily Ferguson, ages 24 and 22.) "Wait, Dad wrote a chapter about his kids getting along? For a guy who makes a living observing things, he's clueless." (Grace Hayes, age 10, Conner Hayes, age 8, and Jane Hayes, age 5.) "I thought it was funny. I didn't understand all of it. I'm glad I have a mother." (Cliff O'Rourke, age 11.) ♦

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Dream Boat

I had coffee at Peet's with a childhood friend who is plotting a major change in his life. Victor will pull it off. He has done it before. He does not subscribe to the lazy American view that there is something special about having big "dreams." Every loser has them. But Victor works. In him, romanticism and *Sitzfleisch* meet. He got a doctorate in physics from one university and a doctorate in chemistry from another, probably just to show he could do it. He taught both subjects at a third. Then he started a high-tech firm in Silicon Valley. Still, I was uneasy about what Victor might be planning. The resolutions of driven men in their prime often involve moving to Tahiti, giving their fortune to some communistic cause, or running off with a 19-year-old who "makes me feel young again."

Victor's new life plan is shocking in its simplicity. It has three steps. He is going to:

1. learn to smoke fish,
2. buy a boat,
3. fish.

Victor imparted this information in the tone you'd use to tell a friend you were embracing his religion, or an addict that you were checking in to detox. Victor expected me to find his new enthusiasm comradely, validating, and even flattering. It was odd. I am every bit the child of the Information Age that Victor is, albeit with less income to show for it. Yet for him, wandering from meeting to meeting in Palo Alto and Menlo Park, I had somehow come to represent the yellow-raingear-wearing New England fisherman of folklore.

It is true that, as kids, my friends and I fished every day we could. We cast for striped bass off the rocks at the beach. We fished for flounder (with drop lines on wooden frames shaped like tic-tac-toe grids) off other people's moored boats in the harbor. My father and I even trolled for bluefish on our 13-foot Boston Whaler. I caught tons of fish—literally. My father could filet and skin a flounder in about a minute. We wound up eating these filets—dipped in egg-white, dragged through bread crumbs, and pan-fried—for every meal. It was a glorious thing on a summer evening, with corn on the cob. In fact, we caught enough fish to fill a highly unreliable second freezer we'd bought used. (Thawed flounder, eaten months later, meal after meal, on nights when the sun sets at 4:15 P.M., is a bit less glorious.)

DAVE CLARK

My father's ambition to exploit the ocean was imperial. He would wake us for the two or three dead-low "clamming tides" every summer, which came when the moon was full, seemingly always at 3:30 in the morning. Clamming required not only setting an alarm but also procuring a permit from town hall. Lobstering posed a bigger bureaucratic hurdle—a state license. These licenses were sold only to commercial fishing operations, not to pikers like us, and they cost hundreds of dollars. But there was a loophole: me. For $15 Massachusetts issued "student licenses," on the theory that the only thing that stood between the small-town coastal proletariat and hopes of the Ivy League was the authorization to sell $800 worth of crustaceans every summer. So there I was—a licensed member of the Massachusetts fishing fleet when my voice had barely cracked.

Pulling lobster pots is easy (if slimy) work. It was made much easier by the light-alloy wire pots that had just come on the market. Unfortunately, my dad and I didn't know this and armed ourselves for the first few years with a dozen of the ancient, wooden, always-waterlogged, hernia-inducing behemoths that you see in children's books from the 1940s and nailed to the walls of failing seafood restaurants.

Modest though the operation was, it turned us into the local equivalent of gourmets. We might never have heard of pesto or hummus or Manchego, but we ate lobster every other day. One night we took Victor out on the boat. He had grown up in town but had never fished. We let him maneuver the boat, pull the traps, measure the lobster backs with the "gauge," band the claws with the purpose-built backward pliers, store the surplus lobsters in the "car," and row us back to the beach. We took half a dozen lobsters home in a canvas bag and ate them with melted butter.

Clearly this was one of the great nights of Victor's life. He tells me about it every time we meet. It constitutes an alternative vision of happiness around which he is even building an entire midlife crisis. I really am flattered to think about that, just as he thought I should be.

"When you come to Massachusetts this summer, we'll have a man's day," he said. "We'll get a buncha roast beef sandwiches, take 'em out on the boat and catch some fish, and then we'll go watch the Red Sox."

It sounded great to me. I told him I'd call if I wasn't in Tahiti.

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

the weekly Standard

'A Perverse Consequence'

Let's begin by doing something we don't often do, and that is quoting the *New York Times* at some length. We do this because David Sanger's report of Thursday, May 14, makes clear how mistaken are the premises underlying President Obama's forthcoming Iran deal:

> When President Obama began making the case for a deal with Iran that would delay its ability to assemble an atomic weapon, his first argument was that a nuclear-armed Iran would set off a "free-for-all" of proliferation in the Arab world. "It is almost certain that other players in the region would feel it necessary to get their own nuclear weapons," he said in 2012.
>
> Now, as he gathered Arab leaders over dinner at the White House on Wednesday and prepared to meet with them at Camp David on Thursday, he faced a perverse consequence: Saudi Arabia and many of the smaller Arab states are now vowing to match whatever nuclear enrichment capability Iran is permitted to retain.
>
> "We can't sit back and be nowhere as Iran is allowed to retain much of its capability and amass its research," one of the Arab leaders preparing to meet Mr. Obama said on Monday, declining to be named until he made his case directly to the president. Prince Turki bin Faisal, the 70-year-old former Saudi intelligence chief, has been touring the world with the same message.
>
> "Whatever the Iranians have, we will have, too," he said at a recent conference in Seoul, South Korea. . . .
>
> [B]y leaving 5,000 centrifuges and a growing research and development program in place—the features of the proposed deal that Israel and the Arab states oppose virulently—Mr. Obama is essentially recognizing Iran's right to continue enrichment of uranium, one of the two pathways to a nuclear weapon. . . .
>
> Although "the small print of the deal is still unknown," [Prince Turki] added, it "opens the door to nuclear proliferation, not closes it, as was the initial intention."

Iran's unhappy neighbors, at Camp David, May 14

So: One of the main justifications of the Iran deal was that it would slow down nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. But it turns out it will do the opposite. This is a "perverse consequence" of the deal only from President Obama's point of view, as expressed by the *New York Times*. From the point of view of anyone familiar with the Middle East, it is in fact a predictable consequence. The Iran deal is making nuclear proliferation in an unbelievably unstable region of the world—one made more unstable, we would add, by President Obama's policies of retreat in Iraq and inaction in Syria—more likely and more imminent.

Maybe this is an unfortunate price one has to pay if a deal could, as President Obama said this past week in an interview with the Arab daily *Asharq al-Awsat*, "strengthen the hands of more moderate leaders in Iran." But there's no sign of that. Quite the contrary.

This past week Reuters reported that Iran tried just a few months ago—in violation of its 2013 interim agreement with the United States and our allies—to procure "a large shipment of sensitive technology usable for nuclear enrichment." The Czech Republic blocked the attempted purchase. As Reuters explains, this is detailed by an expert U.N. panel, which reports that in January Iran attempted to buy compressors useful for extracting enriched uranium from cascades of the sort that Iran possesses—cascades that Iran will continue to possess under the agreement. Furthermore, according to the U.N., "the procurer and transport company involved in the deal had provided false documentation in order to hide the origins, movement and destination of the consignment with the intention of bypassing export controls and sanctions." The U.N. panel also notes that Britain had discovered a further illicit Iranian nuclear procurement network linked to blacklisted firms.

Reuters concludes, in an understated way: "The incident could add to Western concerns about whether Tehran can be trusted to adhere to a nuclear deal being negotiated with world powers under which it would curb sensitive nuclear work in exchange for sanctions relief."

NEWSCOM

In sum: Iran is cheating, as it always has, despite all the concessions and happy talk and group hugs from Western diplomats. Given the weak inspections and verification regime envisioned by the final deal, how likely is that to change?

Furthermore, given this evidence of very recent Iranian behavior, how likely is it that the deal will strengthen the forces of moderation in Iran? In fact, achieving a deal that amounts to a huge series of concessions by the West and that allows Iran to leave its nuclear infrastructure in place—a deal that legitimizes Iran as a nuclear threshold state—will have the opposite effect. It will leave the regime in Iran strengthened and emboldened. After all, to say nothing of other considerations, if there's a deal, the regime will, thanks to the unfreezing of sanctioned assets, quickly receive a "signing bonus" of $30-50 billion from the deal, an immediate cash infusion equivalent to more than 10 percent of Iran's GDP.

Indeed, when pressed, even the Obama administration acknowledges that enriching the Islamic Republic of Iran may only accelerate its mischief-making. White House spokesman Josh Earnest said on May 5 that the administration hopes "that the influx of resources will be devoted to meeting the needs of the population there and to strengthening the economy that has taken a terrible toll on the daily lives of millions of Iranians." But he admitted that "even while these sanctions have been in place we have not seen Iran significantly scale back their support for terrorism or their destabilization activities in the region." Ultimately, he said with resignation, Iran "is a sovereign country that will make their own decisions."

So there are two fundamentally flawed assumptions—really, hopes—underlying the Obama administration's deal. The hope is that such a deal (a) would lead to improved Iranian behavior and (b) would slow down nuclear proliferation in the region. But based on current Iranian behavior and today's reactions in the region, both hopes are false. In fact, they are the complete opposite of the dynamics we already see playing out. The nuclear deal with Iran would have the "perverse consequence" both of making the Iranian regime stronger and more apt to engage in bad behavior, and of contributing to instability and nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.

It's up to Congress to kill the deal, and thereby to save us from the predictable consequences of the Obama administration's perverse view of American interests and of how the real world works.

—William Kristol & Michael Makovsky

They Said It Couldn't Be Done

David Cameron's surprise victory.

BY TED R. BROMUND

A victorious David Cameron and his wife Samantha arrive at No. 10 Downing Street, May 8, 2015.

London

The smart money said there was no way the Conservatives could win a majority in last Thursday's general election in Britain. On the left, the *New Statesman*'s widely followed *May2015* blog offered a cogent argument that there would be a blocking majority even against any repeat of the Conservative-led coalition government. On the right, columnist Matthew Parris echoed many Tories in fearing that the British people were about to make a terrible mistake. But it turns out that you hold elections because you don't know the result in advance. On May 7, the British people returned a majority Conservative government. The smart money was wrong.

Ted R. Bromund is the senior research fellow in Anglo-American relations at the Heritage Foundation's Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom.

It's not fair to say that no one saw this coming: Sir Bernard Ingham, Margaret Thatcher's bulldog press secretary, called it in a column in the *Yorkshire Post*, and, in the aftermath of the election, one firm privately claimed to have detected a last-minute swing to the Tories in a poll it found too incredible to publish. Still, hundreds of polls over the previous months had shown the main parties essentially tied. None of the Tory candidates I canvassed with in the days before the election saw victory coming, nor did any of the center-right think tanks. Most were preparing for a Tory defeat.

In the end, it was a victory: 331 Tory MPs, as against 325 needed for a majority, and a vote share of 36.9 percent. Labour tallied only 232 MPs and 30.4 percent of the vote. The polls weren't all wrong: They were right about the scale of the Scottish National party's (SNP) triumph and the failure of the U.K. Independence party (UKIP) to break through, and they also called the collapse of the Liberal Democrats, though no one expected the Tories' coalition partner to slump from 57 MPs down to 8, putting them about where they were in 1979.

Unfortunately, the polls were wrong where it mattered most: They didn't pick the winner. When shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer Ed Balls went down in a symbolic defeat in the small hours of Friday morning, traders in the City of London cheered, while the Tories in the Savile Club rushed to Marks & Spencer to buy more champagne. In 1997, Labour's celebrants asked each other the next day if they'd been "up for Portillo"—still awake when the defeat of Labour hate-figure Michael Portillo was announced. In Balls, the Tories now have an equivalent scalp.

NEWSCOM

The inquest is under way. The slightly superannuated figures of New Labour—Tony Blair and Peter Mandelson in the vanguard—argue that under Ed Miliband, Labour lost its way. Believing that the financial crisis signaled a permanent turn to the left, it forgot about the aspirational classes, who may dislike bankers but have no appetite for a war on business. Aspiring Labour leaders like Chuka Umunna agree. Writing in the *Guardian*, Umunna condemned his party for having "too little to say to the majority of people in the middle."

That is indeed a problem, but it is not the only one. There's the matter of Miliband's campaign, advised by a well-paid David Axelrod. Cameron's government wasn't perfect, but Miliband's effort to bring it down was clownish. His signature moments were securing the endorsement of comedic has-been Russell Brand and engraving his pledges to the nation on a stone tablet, which sparked a flurry of #Edstone Twitter mockery.

Labour's structural dilemmas are far more serious and cannot easily be remedied by better campaigning. It has lost all but one of its Scottish seats to the SNP. If it does not recover them—and there is no immediate reason to believe it will, though Labour must hope that the SNP is a classic political bubble—it is unlikely to be able regularly to win a majority in England alone. That means it will need to rely on coalition deals with the SNP—but it was, in part, the threat of such a deal that scared English voters into swinging to the Tories. In other words, Labour's weakness in Scotland feeds its weakness in England.

Moreover, in England, its coalition is similar to Obama's: The progressive elite and some ethnic minorities give it much of London, and the postindustrial working class gives it the Midlands and the north. One weak point of this coalition is that the London elite love the workers in theory, but despise them in practice; another is the friction between the workers and the minorities. The Lib Dems have proven even more fragile. Comprising the most naïve and self-righteous elements in Britain's body politic, they could not stand the realization that being in government means making tough choices. They therefore committed political suicide.

The SNP's triumph is the largest shadow on Labour. That triumph is not hard to explain. In the 2014 referendum, 45 percent of Scottish voters supported independence; in this election, 50 percent supported the SNP. Support for Labour and Scottishness used to go together easily. Now, they do not, and a little less than half of Labour's voters have decided to plump for Scottishness. In those circumstances, and coupled with the collapse of the Liberal Democrats, Britain's first-past-the-post system meant doom for Labour.

For the Tories, the great risk is that they will mistake the win for a landslide. Three hundred thirty-one MPs, though impressive in context, is a narrow majority: By way of comparison, Margaret Thatcher won 397 seats in 1983.

The distant shadow on Labour—and the Tories, though even less immediately—is UKIP. On the surface, it had a bad election night. Its leader, Nigel Farage, lost his election bid, and his party, which won only a single seat in the Commons, descended into turmoil after initially refusing to accept his resignation. But UKIP finished second in 120 constituencies, took a swath of local council seats, and won 4 million votes, more than the SNP and the Lib Dems combined. The SNP concentrated its vote in Scotland and won; UKIP spread its vote around England and lost. But in the north of England, Labour may in future have as much to fear from the antiestablishment sentiment that drives UKIP as it clearly does in Scotland from the SNP.

For the Tories, the great risk is that they will mistake the win for a landslide. Three hundred thirty-one MPs, though impressive in context, is a narrow majority: By way of comparison, Margaret Thatcher won 397 seats in 1983. The talk in Tory circles now is about the "shy Tories" who—shades of the party's unexpected victory in 1992—won it for them this time.

That is a bit too comfortable a thought. It is likely that the winning margin came not from shy Tories, scared into silence by the progressive media, but from a last-minute swing by the undecideds, who will have to be wooed again next time, and from Labour voters who, alienated by Miliband and his inept campaign, decided on the day to stay home. The Tories did a superb job of mobilizing their base and targeting the right seats, and they were lucky in their opposition. But the Conservative party has serious organizational weaknesses, and it badly needs to expand its base. If it gets 37 percent of the vote in a good year, a bad year doesn't bear thinking about. The total Tory popular vote in 2015, at 11.3 million, is still 2.7 million below what the party won in 1992.

A decisive election result, for a time, throws all worries in the shade. For democracy's sake, that is a good thing. But all of Britain's problems—an AWOL foreign policy, tattered armed forces, serious long-term indebtedness, national finances that still rely too heavily on borrowing and easy credit, low productivity growth, excessive regulation and welfare spending, Islamist radicalism, Scotland, the European Union, and unskilled European immigration, to name only a few—are still with it. In their first term, the Tories, in harness with the Liberal Democrats, made headway on reducing the deficit and reforming the benefit system and education, but to the extent they didn't make the other problems worse, they did nothing about them.

Now, with his majority of a mere 12 MPs, David Cameron has it all to do, and he has no more coalition to excuse any failures. The smart money would say he can't do it. Of course, the smart money's been wrong before. ♦

A Failure As a Salesman

The trade treaty may pass, no thanks to the president. BY FRED BARNES

There was a time when Democrats were free traders and getting trade treaties through Congress was a snap. No more. In the last quarter-century—with most Democrats having slipped into the protectionist camp—winning ratification has become difficult. Today it takes a majority of Republicans to pass a trade pact.

That is particularly true with the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the treaty being negotiated by the Obama administration that aims to cut tariffs and open markets with 11 countries in Asia and South America. At the moment, it has a slightly better than 50-50 chance of being enacted.


Warren


Roskam


Ryan


Toomey


Portman

Here are a few of the important players in the battle over TPP and the "fast track" legislation, known as Trade Promotion Authority, that will keep the treaty from being amended to death once TPP negotiations are completed.

■ President Obama. He's a great campaigner, but he must have missed the lecture on lobbying Congress. In dealing with Congress, Obama is a klutz, including in his attempts to persuade Democrats. Last week, all but one of the 45 Senate Democrats voted against fast track. After some tinkering, it passed the next day.

Obama ignores the truism that it's easier to catch flies with honey than vinegar. He's heavy on the vinegar. He has accused Democrats of "making stuff up" to strengthen their argument against the treaty. "On trade, I actually think some of my dearest friends are wrong," he said. "They're just wrong."

■ Senator Elizabeth Warren. The Massachusetts Democrat, a leader of the anti-treaty forces, drew the president's roughest attack. Questioning her motives, he told Yahoo News she is "a politician like everybody else" and her arguments "don't stand the test of fact and scrutiny." His criticism backfired. He was accused of sexism.

■ Representative Peter Roskam. The Illinois Republican, an influential member of the Ways and Means Committee, says Democrats are balking at Obama's case for the treaty—that it will generate economic growth and jobs. That's a "different world view" from the case for "zero-sum economics" that Obama's been making since he was elected in 2008, Roskam says. He is pro-treaty.

As for Republicans, they simply distrust the president. After tarring them as protectors of the rich and enemies of the poor, Obama has hostile relations with them.

One other problem: lack of effort. In 1993, President Clinton called all hands on deck to pass the North American Free Trade Agreement. He set up a war room and recruited William Daley, a respected strategist, to manage the pro-NAFTA campaign. The treaty passed with Republicans voting 132-43 in favor, Democrats 156-102 against.

Obama hasn't matched the Clinton push. House speaker John Boehner "has been telling the White House they've 'got to work this thing.'" That Obama hasn't was confirmed in last week's vote against fast track. "All the blame for this is at Obama's feet," Roskam says.

■ Paul Ryan. No one makes the case for free trade and TPP more cogently than does Ryan, the Republican chairman of Ways and Means. The committee passed fast track 25-13, with two Democrats joining all 23 Republicans. "Either we create the rules of trade with our allies or the Chinese will," Ryan told me.

He says the treaty is far from merely Obama's doing. "We are binding the president to our will" with the fast track legislation, he said. It sets 150 guidelines for TPP and requires a 60-day period following congressional approval before the treaty is sent to the president for signing. That will give the public time to see what's in it. And Congress has insisted on access to the treaty as it unfolds. That provides at least some transparency.

Selling the treaty to Congress and country has started "late in the game because of Obama, but it's better late than never," Ryan says. He's held "listening sessions" for members of Congress, lined up conservatives "on the Hill and off the Hill," and created "a drumbeat of support."

Ryan opposed adding enforcement of anti-currency-manipulation measures to the treaty. "Manipulation is hard to value and hard to prove." If the problem is China's currency manipulation designed to spur exports, enforcement shouldn't be in TPP. China isn't a member.

By the way, Ryan is critical of Obama's clumsy lobbying. "Democrats are beginning to see what Republicans have been dealing with for the last

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TOOMEY AND PORTMAN: NEWSCOM

seven years," he says. "It's an ability problem" with Obama. "He's out of his comfort zone."

■ Pat Toomey. The Republican senator from Pennsylvania is a committed free trader. He voted for fast track when it was reported out of the Finance Committee. In January, the *Allentown Morning Call* noted "a developing trade deal that includes several Asian countries . . . has Toomey pressing the Obama administration's trade agenda and Casey expressing unease." Democrat Bob Casey is Pennsylvania's other senator.

Voting for liberalized trade rules is risky for a free trader in a unionized, manufacturing state like Pennsylvania. Toomey is running for reelection in 2016 and depends on the votes of blue-collar Democrats to win. If TPP is a major campaign issue, Toomey would have some explaining to do. Yet he is expected to vote for the treaty—a principled vote.

■ Rob Portman. The Ohio senator, a Republican, is a former special trade representative. His currency amendment to the fast-track legislation was sharply criticized last week in a *Wall Street Journal* editorial. It dubbed him one of "the Senate's trade killers" for his insistence on a currency amendment "that could poison the entire bill."

Whew! That was harsh. Portman responded the next day in a letter to the *Journal*. "Everyone agrees that agreements should establish rules against government actions that distort trade, including export subsidies," he wrote. The administration opposes "our amendment" because "it fears other countries won't support it. Yet the administration supports making labor and environmental standards enforceable."

That's a fair point. Portman's amendment was rejected 15-11 in the Finance Committee. But the manipulation issue was attached to a separate bill that passed 79-20. Portman can still bring it up in the floor debate over fast track. Adding it there and possibly jeopardizing Obama's first serious attempt to generate economic growth isn't worth the risk. ♦

The Other Racial Divide

Were Asian-American businesses targeted in the Baltimore riots?

BY DENNIS P. HALPIN

When guests at a North Korea Freedom Week dinner in Northern Virginia learned the Korean-American pastor at our table led a Maryland church, they immediately asked about the situation in Baltimore. It was May 1, and National Guard troops had been deployed to the city three days earlier to help quell the unrest sparked by the death of a man in police custody.

A store burns during riots in Baltimore, April 28, 2015.

The pastor let out a deep sigh before responding. A few members of his congregation had lost everything. After working diligently for years building small businesses in a new country, they watched their efforts literally go up in flames as looters trashed their shops and carted off their merchandise.

The crisis reminded many in America's growing community of two million Korean immigrants and their descendants of another city's devastation two decades earlier. Baltimore's riots began two days before the anniversary of the outbreak of the 1992 Los Angeles riots, in which Koreatown, the heart of the Korean diaspora in America, was subjected to pogrom-like attacks by irate mobs. Though Asian Americans had nothing to do with either Rodney King's or Freddie Gray's injuries, they appear to have been the targets of some of the animosity unleashed by rioters.

The depth of feeling about the L.A. riots—which left some Korean-American business owners who lacked insurance permanently impoverished—reached even the ancestral homeland, as I well remember. A delegation of dissidents, including pastors, labor leaders, academics, and students, called at the U.S. consulate at which I was stationed in Busan, South Korea's second-largest city, in the spring of 1992 to demand that President George H.W. Bush "do something to protect our compatriots from rioters." They considered inadequate the official U.S. government response that protection of life and property in civil disturbances in the United States was a local issue, primarily for Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley, and that deploying the National Guard was the prerogative of California's governor, then Pete Wilson. That evening, an enraged student demonstrator tossed a Molotov cocktail at the U.S. consul's car—my car—as it departed through the consulate's gates. Fortunately, the official car was armor-plated, a surplus U.S. government vehicle left over from the 1988

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Calgary Winter Olympic Games, so the gasoline-filled, lit bottle bounced off it without igniting.

Baltimore has brought back these painful memories and raised a less-examined racial divide than the obvious one between black and white America. Not only in Los Angeles and Baltimore, but in Ferguson and other cities caught up in racially charged confrontations, Asian-American shopkeepers, including Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, and Arab Americans as well as Koreans, appear to have been the victims of racial profiling. These recent immigrants came to the United States largely after the Civil War and the Jim Crow system of segregation and thus have no connection to the charges of continued institutional racism that some blame for the disturbances. Yet the *New York Times* reported April 27 that gang members in Baltimore had specifically "stood in front of stores that they knew were black-owned businesses to protect them from looting and vandalism," pointing the rioters instead "toward Chinese- and Arab-owned stores."

The *Korea Times* reported April 30, quoting the Korean-American Grocers Association International and the Korean Society of Maryland, that at least 40 Korean-owned businesses in Baltimore were damaged in the riots. One Korean-American-owned business, Fireside North lounge and liquor store, was set on fire, with its owner and the owner of another business, Uptown Liquor, reportedly sustaining injuries. The Associated Press stated that a total of 200 small businesses, many owned by Asian-Americans, were shut down as a result of damage caused by rioters.

Baltimore's WBAL News reported the same day that "42 Korean grocers, delis, and carry-outs" had been "destroyed or damaged during the unrest," with the total number still being tallied. The television station also noted that the Korean consulate and the Korean-American wife of Maryland governor Larry Hogan subsequently held meetings with some business owners to discuss reconstruction.

WBAL added that masked intruders not only looted Freddie's Liquor but beat up store owner Young Park. John Bang, the owner of Hopkins Beauty Supply, said he applied lessons he learned from the L.A. riots: He barricaded himself "with an arsenal of weapons." He told WBAL, "I have registered firearms, a shotgun, AR-15, pistols." Bang said that if rock-carrying looters tried to enter his business, "I would say 'I'm armed! Don't come in!' And if they don't believe me and became more aggressive, I would give them a warning shot."

CNN carried a report on May 7 of a young Korean-American man viewing with shock a video of an older Korean woman sobbing in the ruins of her 30-year-old wig and beauty shop on Pratt Street that had been destroyed by looters. Her son, Matthew Chung, wrote on Facebook, "My parents came to this country with no money and worked hard to set up a little business that's been in the same neighborhood in Baltimore City for over 25 years. But just in one night everything they have worked for is now all gone."

Resentment of the commercial success of these immigrant communities, though this success is based on the age-old American dream of achievement through hard work and family values, seems to have been a factor in the attacks. National Public Radio reported from the Sandtown neighborhood of west Baltimore April 30 that "many Asian-owned businesses were targeted for destruction." Yvonne Gordon, a witness to the looting, told NPR that the store where she works "was spared because it is owned by black people. . . . But she says that the Korean-owned shops on the block didn't get that protection." A young African-American man stated that the vandalism was "payback" and added, "I don't feel like it was the most reasonable thing to do, but it's definitely justified," noting that the few businesses in the neighborhood that do exist are mostly Asian-run.

British newspaper the *Daily Mail* said shop owner Rajneesh Nagpal, 39, called the police 50 times during the riots, "but nobody came to help him." He added: "This is not protest. They're destroying their own community. I don't see any national guard. Nobody cares about us." Subsequent media reports, quoting police sources, indicate that Baltimore mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake issued a "stand-down" order to police on April 27, the date of Freddie Gray's funeral, thus enabling looters to attack Nagpal's business as well as others in the city. Governor Hogan eventually, at the mayor's belated request, activated 5,000 National Guard troops to assist in imposing a curfew and restoring order.

African immigrant Kibrom Ghebremeskel, 38, who came to the United States from war-torn Eritrea, boarded up his delicatessen before the "swarm" of youths arrived; he managed to keep the mob at bay. He told the *Daily Mail* that he thought he was free in America of daily unrest and violence—but now feels even less safe in Baltimore. "In Eritrea people die because of the political situation, here people die for no reason at all," he said. "How can the U.S. let this happen?" Korean-American immigrant Sung Kang, 49, left his job at Johns Hopkins last year to open his own business, a tavern, which was looted. "This shop is everything I have," he said. "This is America. I wanted to follow my dream and wanted to make something for myself."

The new attorney general, Loretta Lynch, has announced a Justice Department probe of Baltimore police over possible violations of civil rights. She should also order a federal investigation of whether the assaults on ethnic Asian business owners in Baltimore involved racially motivated hate crimes. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 permits federal prosecution of anyone who "willingly injures, intimidates or interferes with another person, or attempts to do so, by force because of the other person's race, color, religion or national origin." Reports from the *New York Times* and other media suggest that business owners in Baltimore were targeted based on their ethnicity. The constitutional rights of Asian minorities in a majority African-American city, with an African-American mayor and African-American police chief, demand equal protection under the law. ♦

Rejuvenated Royals

The Saudis push back against the Obama foreign policy. BY HUSSAIN ABDUL-HUSSAIN

The Obama administration put a happy face on its Camp David summit last week, even as four of the Gulf Cooperation Council's six leaders turned down Obama's invitation to attend. The most significant absence, of course, was that of Saudi Arabia's king, Salman. In his place, Riyadh sent Salman's 55-year-old nephew, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, and Salman's 28-year-old son, Mohammed bin Salman, deputy crown prince and defense minister.

Both men are said to be responsible for the aggressive Saudi policies in confronting Iran, especially in Yemen, where Mohammed bin Salman is leading the campaign against the Iranian-backed Houthis. In other words, while snubbing Obama, King Salman also delivered a strong message through the two men who are in line to lead Saudi Arabia for the foreseeable future. They're not happy with what they correctly perceive as the White House's pro-Iranian tilt in the Middle East—and they're in a position to challenge it.

King Salman

In Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, referred to in Western policymaking circles as MBN, the White House is likely to find an especially able statesman. MBN served as the deputy minister of the interior under his father and then won the top post himself, where he has distinguished himself as a tough-minded security official who proved instrumental in dismantling terrorist networks and providing U.S. officials with valuable insight into their workings. He has survived at least four assassination attempts.

But it is MBN's studious navigation of court politics that landed him in the number two spot. Indeed, it's something of a paradox that a man so skillful in handling intra-Saudi rivalries is now behind a foreign policy that, in contrast to Riyadh's all-too-frequent navel-gazing, is remarkably activist. MBN owes his power to ambition, skill, and the fact that he has no sons to move into the line of succession, which has made him a useful ally in court maneuvering.

Saudi royal politics are typically inscrutable, since the Saudis do not make a habit of publicizing divisions within their ranks, and their disagreements are resolved in private. But here is the short version of what has happened in 2015: Since taking over earlier this year after the death of his predecessor, King Salman has engineered a new line of succession. The upshot is that we are witnessing something novel in Riyadh. For the last several decades, the succession question has dominated Saudi politics—which is hardly a surprise when 70-something monarchs name 70-something crown princes, and illness and sudden death become central concerns in policymaking circles. That instability often incapacitated Saudi decisionmakers and at times left an otherwise preoccupied Riyadh vulnerable to regional issues. But with a 55-year-old crown prince and a 28-year-old deputy crown prince, the royal palace seems set to enjoy a level of stability it hasn't seen since the death of Ibn Saud, the regime's founder, in 1953.

This is perhaps one reason why Riyadh seems more determined than ever to roll back Iranian influence in the Middle East. For once, they're able to focus on external threats rather than who will inhabit the palace. For Riyadh, this fresh blood and surge of confidence couldn't come at a better time. They're concerned that the White House is downgrading the 70-year-long alliance with Riyadh in favor of upgrading relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Saudis have given up on the Obama administration. In return for helping the White House combat Sunni terror, Riyadh assumed the White House would keep its word and push back against Iran. However, the Obama administration has done exactly the opposite. It has paved the way for Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon within the next 15 years and accommodated Iranian interests around the Middle East, from Iraq and Syria to Lebanon and Yemen.

But to hear the Obama administration tell it, Saudi Arabia's biggest problem comes not from Iran but inside. It's unemployment, lack of opportunities, and a faulty education system that ail the Gulf Arabs, Obama has said in several interviews. And that, says the White House and its various media surrogates, is why the Saudis create so many terrorists.

There's no doubt that Saudi society is riven by a host of problems and that private charities from the Gulf Cooperation Council states have frequently filled the coffers of terrorist outfits. However, why the White House feels comfortable chastising an ally of more than 70 years while turning a blind eye to Iran is unclear. After all, every indicator, from suicide to drug use, birth rate to prostitution, shows that Iranian society is as bad as or much worse than the societies of the Gulf states. Moreover, unlike Saudi Arabia and the Gulf sheikhdoms, Iranian state institutions are actively exporting terrorism.

Perhaps Obama is worried that calling out the Iranians as he has called out the Saudis might push Tehran away from the negotiating table. What he's done instead is endanger the relationship with one of the pillars of American Middle East policy and sent Riyadh out looking for new friends. It appears that the message Riyadh is sending through MBN is that they're not going to take it anymore. Maybe they don't have to. ♦

NEWSCOM

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The Common Perception Is True

It really is nearly impossible to fire a federal employee.

BY KEVIN R. KOSAR

Some credulous Beltway media sure took the bait last week. Consider:

"A lot of people still think it's close to impossible to fire a federal employee, but that's just one of the misperceptions the Merit Systems Protection Board is trying to debunk with its new report, 'What is Due Process in Federal Civil Service Employment?'" (Federal News Radio, May 11).

"The agency that hears appeals from fired federal employees has listed common misconceptions about the firing of federal employees—with Number One being that it never happens" (*Washington Post*, May 11).

The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) has been around since 1979, when Congress spawned it from the Civil Service Commission. It is a quasi-judicial entity that, *Government Executive* magazine notes, "adjudicates appeals of 'adverse personnel actions' from federal employees who've been fired, suspended, furloughed, demoted or had their pay cut." This makes it both expert about and invested in employee due process.

The agency's new report has a helpfully descriptive title: "What is Due Process in Federal Civil Service Employment?" The board's head, Susan Tsui Grundmann, told the media her agency spent a year working on it. Her executive summary states in placid governmentese:

> In the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (CSRA), Congress sought to ensure that agencies could remove poor performers and employees who engage in misconduct, while protecting the civil service from the harmful effects of management acting for improper reasons such as discrimination or retaliation for whistleblowing. Recently, Congress has expressed an increased interest in amending the CSRA, including those provisions that apply to adverse actions. To assist Congress in these endeavors, this report explains the current civil service laws for adverse actions and the history behind their formation.

One need read just a few pages more to see this is a report with an agenda. Grundmann's introduction makes this ringing declaration: "Due process is a constitutional requirement and a small price to pay to ensure the American people receive a merit based civil service rather than a corrupt spoils system." This defense of the status quo is a blatantly political statement that denigrates the legitimate concerns of many members of Congress. The recent discussion on Capitol Hill has centered on how to amend the 1978 act to make its process more reasonable. No legislation would permit federal employees to be fired on a whim.

Grundmann's pronouncement also is tendentious history. Congress destroyed the spoils system long ago, starting in the 19th century, by mandating that agencies use objective criteria for hiring. Being a good partisan was no longer enough; applicants had to take tests and demonstrate knowledge relevant to the work. This in no way describes what took place in 1978, when federal unions lobbied a Democratic Congress and President Jimmy Carter to erect a system that makes removing an employee all but impossible.

The 1978 statute and the myriad rules propagated thereafter require a lousy employee first to be given notice of his shortcomings, allowed to present counter-evidence, then provided help and opportunities to improve. If the cock-ups continue, another meeting will be scheduled where the supervisor must marshal still more evidence. Should the boss dare to proceed with demotion or termination, the employee is entitled to be represented by an attorney.

Any adverse action against the employee can be appealed to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or the MSPB, which may overturn the decision for violating baroque legal standards. It is a grueling process, and very few supervisors can muster the time and energy to pursue it. Consider the case of S.P. O'Hara, who was caught viewing porn on his work computer in February 2012. It took a year and a half for the Department of Homeland Security to clear all the hoops required to fire him. He appealed to the MSPB, which did not decide his case until April 2015. (It supported his termination.)

Tucked in a cheekily titled appendix to the report ("Clearing up the confusion") is the factoid that received so much buzz: "Perception: It is impossible to fire a Federal employee. Reality: From FY2000-2014, over 77,000 full-time, permanent, Federal employees were discharged as a result of performance and/or conduct issues." That sounds like a big number that indicates the system is working. It is not.

The 77,000 employees the MSPB says were fired over the past 15 years averages out to 5,133 employees annually, or just 0.26 percent of the 1,940,000 civil service workforce. But the percentage is even lower. MSPB told me that 41 percent of the fired employees were in their first-year, probationary period. These employees lack the extensive job protections of permanent federal employees. Adjusting to include only those employees past their probationary period, we arrive at a figure of just 0.15 percent of federal employees who are shown the door each year. Statistically, that is pretty close to "impossible." ♦

Kevin R. Kosar is director of the governance project at the R Street Institute.

Fixing Puerto Rico

Bankruptcy is the answer.

BY IKE BRANNON

Puerto Rico is in a financial bind. The Commonwealth, along with its public utilities and various municipalities, collectively owes more than it can realistically repay.

The island's government would like the option to do something similar to what Michigan did to help Detroit: give its municipal corporations the ability to restructure their debts under Chapter 9 of the federal bankruptcy code, bring its creditors into a negotiation, and craft a viable reorganization plan that gives the island's economy some breathing room and politicians some authority to undertake further economic reforms.

Teachers protest pension cuts, December 21, 2013.

The only problem is that Puerto Rico—unlike the 50 states—cannot use Chapter 9, for historical reasons that no one remembers and that don't make good financial sense. The island tried to get around that obstacle by passing legislation that would have accomplished nearly the same thing as a Chapter 9 restructuring, but a federal judge in Puerto Rico struck down the new law. Puerto Rico also has asked Congress to amend the bankruptcy code to treat it like the 50 states, and the House Judiciary Committee recently held a hearing on the issue.

This effort has fomented opposition among some Tea Party groups, who argue that such an action would be tantamount to a federal government bailout of the island's economy. This opposition apparently worries some Republican congressmen, who fear any accusations of profligacy.

However, the notion that it would cost the federal government money if Puerto Rico's municipal corporations were permitted to restructure their debts under Chapter 9 woefully misconstrues both Puerto Rico's current situation as well as how a Chapter 9 proceeding actually works. Absent some sort of restructuring under Chapter 9, Puerto Rico's situation may keep deteriorating until a federal role—along with a potential federal bailout—becomes necessary.

There is no disputing that Puerto Rico faces financial problems. The island has been in a recession for nearly a decade and has run annual deficits that entire time, leaving it with an accumulated debt of $73 billion, or about 70 percent of annual output.

At this point, it is pretty much out of options: It has privatized its airports and many of its roads, and has gone about as far as it can, politically speaking, in reducing government employment and boosting taxes. Such measures have not proven to be enough.

Its creditors have come to appreciate the bind and have acted accordingly: It has become much more expensive for the Commonwealth to borrow money, and its outstanding debt trades at a steep discount. Any mom and pop investors who bought Puerto Rican debt in order to possess a safe, predictable, and tax-favored investment have long since sold off, and these days most of the island's debt is held by hedge funds that fully understand the risks inherent in investing in the island.

The creditors who remain would like to see some sort of resolution that puts Puerto Rico on a path to a sustainable economy, and most of them would take a haircut on their debt if it gave them some hope that growth on the island would resume.

What would happen if the island were allowed to exercise the options inherent in a Chapter 9 restructuring? The municipalities and public utilities in the worst shape (most notably PREPA, the debt-burdened public utility) would file under Chapter 9 and there would be a restructuring process akin to Detroit's.

Everyone—from the bondholders to the pensioners to the taxpayers to PREPA's ratepayers and customers—would end up taking a hit, and they would all acquiesce if the pain were shared and the resulting reforms gave hope of a significant improvement in the island's economy and fiscal health.

Without any legal suasion to force its various creditors to come together, the island could limp along a while until its credit markets simply seize up and there is no way to refinance its debt.

When that happens, the federal government's hands will be tied—it will need to act, and in a way that will probably cost it some money, either by financing the Commonwealth's loans or by providing more tax breaks to further incentivize businesses to locate there. A Chapter 9 restructuring would preclude precisely such a necessity.

Many on the right have a reflexive opposition to bankruptcy. That is unfortunate, because it is a tool that is ultimately beneficial for economic growth. Once an entity—whether an individual, a business, or a government—reaches a point where it cannot pay its debts, everyone is better off if the creditors and debtors come up with a plan that compensates the creditors as fairly as possible, while allowing the debtor to emerge without an unmanageable debt constricting its options.

Denying Puerto Rico the option of Chapter 9 under the guise of fiscal conservatism simply makes no sense. There is no reason to think that an orderly restructuring would cost the federal government any money: The reality is that the longer we allow the island's debt situation to metastasize, the more likely it is that the feds will end up on the hook. ♦

NEWSCOM

Ike Brannon is a former economist with the United States Treasury.

A Dad's Life

On fatherhood, manliness, and failure

By Jonathan V. Last

I was once reasonably dignified. I dressed like a gentleman and luxuriated in the cultural heritage of Western civilization. My three places of residence—my home, my office, and my mind—were free of clutter and arranged so as to allow me both to make the most of my days and to begin to venture out into intellectual life. Then I became a father.

One afternoon, I was changing my infant son's diaper when he began micturating. Not in a feeble stream, but in a great, turbo-charged geyser, like one of the fountains in front of the Bellagio. As was his wont. So I reached over, cupped my hand above his manhood, and waited in quiet satisfaction as he peed on me. I was pleased—genuinely pleased, the way I once might have been, say, after finishing *Middlemarch*—that my reflexes had prevented him from spraying the wall and nearby bookshelf. The dismantling of my dignity took three weeks, more or less. I don't keep strict count of these things. Not anymore.

This is about when I started to realize that the primary effect of children is to take things from you. It begins with sleep, time, and dignity and then expands over the years to include serenity, sanity, and a great deal of money. I am making an observation here, not complaining. It's just what they do. In that way, children are like the aging process itself: an exercise in letting go of the ancillary parts of your existence until you are stripped bare, and what remains is your elemental center.

NEWSCOM

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Your soul. I'm told Jews see something of this in the Suffering Servant songs in Isaiah. Christians know it as the Way of the Cross. A consultant from McKinsey would call it addition by subtraction.

I'm not going to lie to you. In fatherhood there is much—so much—to be lost. But there is much to be gained, too. For example, while it may seem diametrically opposed to the indignities of the job, fatherhood is the wellspring of a quality critically important to our culture: manliness.

There is a school of thought that views the idea of manliness—and even men themselves—as obsolete, or unnecessary, or perhaps even harmful. You can see it in contemporary books, such as Hanna Rosin's *The End of Men* (which is more celebration than lament), but you also find it earlier. At the height of the women's suffrage movement, Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote a novel called *Herland* in which three male explorers stumble upon a lost society made up entirely of women. It's paradise. Until the men muck everything up. Obviously.

For thousands of years masculinity and femininity were the yin and yang of the world—the opposing sensibilities whose interaction created harmony at every level, from the societal to the personal. As a result, the modern push to downgrade half of humanity has created some confusion. On the one hand, it's now socially acceptable for young men in their early twenties to wear footie pajamas. Which suggests surrender. On the other hand, there has emerged a self-conscious "men's movement." What began with drumming and sweat lodges has expanded to include Brooklyn hipsters paying for facial-hair transplants. It often manifests in a talk-radio-friendly form, such as Helen Smith's book *Men on Strike* or the collection of websites known as the "manosphere." The men's movement is fighting what its followers see as a feminizing culture and asserting themselves as manly men. This frequently involves complaining about child custody laws and bad divorce settlements. Not that I'm judging.

Any way you slice it, manliness is in a patch of trouble. Yet it remains an indispensable, vibrant quality that shapes the world in ways large and small. Consider two men, Dave Karnes and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

You probably know about Solzhenitsyn, a Soviet dissident and writer who was one of the most consequential figures of the last century. He was born in Russia in 1918, a bad time in a hard place. In 1945, he was arrested, tortured, and sent to the Gulag for criticizing the Soviet regime in a private letter. During his imprisonment he began what would become his life's work—a series of novels and poems dissecting communism and erecting a moral framework for opposing it. He wrote in secret, while doing hard labor, under the threat of further torture, and while battling the early stages of cancer. During one stretch he composed an epic poem, "The Trail," more than 7,000 lines long, entirely in his head because he had neither pen nor paper.

When Solzhenitsyn was released, he continued writing. As his work began to circulate as *samizdat* and leak out, it exposed the Gulag to the world. He was eventually labeled a "non-person." In 1971, the KGB tried to poison him. He survived, so later, they exiled him, and he lived for years in Vermont. The Communists were right to be afraid of Solzhenitsyn, because he was trying to destroy their revolution. But he was also fighting for the soul of his people by articulating a positive vision of what it meant to be Russian. That's manliness.

Dave Karnes showed his steel on a smaller scale. A retired Marine, he was working as an accountant in Connecticut on September 11, 2001. When he heard the news, he left his office and went to a barbershop, where he got his hair buzzed high and tight. Then he went home and put on an old uniform. Then he went to church, where he asked his pastor to pray for him. And then, with his errands complete, he drove 41 miles south to Manhattan, where he passed himself off as an "official" rescuer and set to work combing the ruins for survivors. It was in this smoldering graveyard that Karnes met Chuck Sereika, another man who had taken the initiative to go help out.

Karnes and Sereika spent hours picking their way through the twisted steel and shifting rubble, calling out, over and over, "United States Marines. . . . If you can hear us, yell or tap." They were alone after the official rescue teams had been called off the pile because conditions were deemed too dangerous. Around 7:00 P.M. Karnes and Sereika heard voices. It took them three hours, but eventually they dug out the last two survivors of the attack, Will Jimeno and John McLoughlin, who had been trapped 20 feet underground.

"Manliness brings change or restores order at moments when routine is not enough, when the plan fails, when the whole idea of rational control by modern science develops leaks," explains the political philosopher Harvey Mansfield. "Manliness is the next-to-last resort, before resignation and prayer." Which is a perfect description of what Solzhenitsyn and Karnes did, each in his own way.

The problem is that manliness has a dark side. "Manliness can also be vainly boastful," Mansfield cautions, "prone to meaningless scuffling and unfriendly." It can drive quarrels and conflicts for small reasons, bad reasons, or no reason at all. Thugs and bullies are manly. I would even go so far as to say that Joseph Stalin and Mohamed Atta, who forced Solzhenitsyn and Karnes

into action, acted from manliness themselves. So manliness can be a source of trouble and a cure for it, too. Mansfield is probably the greatest exponent of manliness since Plato, and even he admits that on the whole, manliness "seems to be about 50-50 good and bad." For every Wyatt Earp, there is a Johnny Ringo; for every Fitzwilliam Darcy, a George Wickham.

The question we should ask ourselves, then, is whether there is anything that unifies the good parts of manliness. And indeed there is. If you drill all the way down to the nuclear core of manliness, Professor Mansfield says, what you find is a familiar impulse: chivalry.

The chivalric nature of manliness reasserts itself through history, from the knight, to the samurai, to the soldier. Why? Because, as Mansfield explains, "Masculinity must prove itself and do so before an audience. It is understood often to be an act of sacrifice against one's interest, hence concerned with honor and shame rather than money and calculation."

If you wanted to distill these two big, interlocking concepts, you'd say that manliness is chivalry, and chivalry is the impulse to seek honor by protecting the weak and the innocent. What you have just described is the essence of fatherhood. We might even take this a bit further: Fatherhood isn't just manliness. It's the purest form of the good side of manliness, the side that brings light into the world.

If you wanted to get really metaphysical about the whole thing, you could note that this link between manliness and fatherhood goes even deeper. The Greeks originated the concept of *thumos*—it means "spiritedness." It is *thumos*, Mansfield says, "that induces humans, and especially manly men, to risk their lives in order to save their lives."

So this, finally, is fatherhood: We destroy our lives so that life will continue and be renewed, with part of ourselves baked into it. Through our DNA, of course. But also, transcendently, through the ideas and truths and loves that we teach our children.

By "fatherhood," I mean the raising of and caring for, as opposed to the siring of, children. And in this regard, American men have, to a shameful degree, abdicated their posts. When we talk about the decline of manliness, it's not just the footie pajamas that should worry us. The single worst thing men have done over the last two generations is abandon their families: Today, 40 percent of children in America are born out of wedlock—that is to say, without a father standing there, committed to help raise them.

That number is worse than you think. In America, only about 69 percent of kids live in a home with two parents. How do we stack up against the rest of the world? In 2014, the World Family Map project looked at the 49 countries that make up the vast majority of the world's population. The percentage of children who live with two parents is 88 percent in the Netherlands, 85 percent in the Philippines and Indonesia, 83 percent in Germany, 78 percent in Canada, 76 percent in Nigeria—*Nigeria*—74 percent in Ethiopia, and 72 percent in Bolivia. With our 69 percent, the United States sits in 32nd place. We beat out Uganda. Barely.

If you believe that (1) manliness, however problematic, is essential for a society, and that (2) the positive aspects of manliness stem in large part from fatherhood, then this abandonment is, as the philosophers might note, a Very Bad Thing.

And, believe it or not, philosophy has consequences. Take a look around modern America. With each passing year our society becomes more callow, nasty, and unpleasant—predisposed to juvenilia, ephemera, and self-centeredness. Look at our politics. Look at our entertainment. Look, by God, at Twitter.

Now, this isn't the sort of thing you can measure precisely, but ask yourself this: Does America feel like a happier, more contented place than it was five years ago? Ten? Twenty? This is a subjective question, but if you're the kind of person who likes confirmation, the data are there. The General Social Survey finds that over the last generation, the percentage of Americans who identify themselves as being "not too happy" has nearly doubled.

Economists and sociologists have spent years trying to figure out why this is. It isn't a question of money—in real terms, per capita GDP has increased by 37 percent in a generation, so we're a lot richer. It isn't a question of education—more people go to college and graduate school than ever before. It might have something to do with marriage and family, though. For decades, surveys have consistently shown that married people are happier, on average, than people who aren't married. And today, the percentage of married people in America is at an all-time low. People stay single longer, get divorced more often, and have fewer children to boot. The American decline in happiness has occurred at the same time as the collapse of the family.

All of which is to say that if we are failing as a nation, it may well be because we're failing at manliness. And if we are failing at manliness, it's almost certainly because we're failing at fatherhood.

For my part, I fail at fatherhood six days a week and twice on Sundays. A few months after my first child was born, I sat visiting with my best friend trying to convey what I had learned thus far about being a father.

"You see," I explained, "it turns out that it's not hard work in the intellectual sense. It's not rocket science, where some people can figure it out and others can't. No, it's hard work in the way that digging a ditch is hard. Anyone can dig a ditch. There's no way to dig smarter. Or dig faster. Having a baby is like being assigned to dig a ditch. That goes all the way to the horizon."

"Okay," he replied warily. "But it's good, right? You're glad you did it?"

"Sure," I said. "It's like going to the dentist. Everyone dreads the dentist. And it's no fun. But when you're 70 and still have your teeth, you'll be grateful you went."

I turned to my wife for confirmation. Her face was frozen in horror. "You just compared parenthood to ditch digging and dentistry," she said evenly.

It was at this point I realized I might be doing fatherhood wrong. But the good news for dads is that it's a long game and you get points just for showing up.

And it turns out that the street runs both ways. Society is greatly enriched by fatherhood, yes, but so are fathers themselves. For instance, a man with no children can easily be lulled into the sense that time is standing still. It is not. It is marching past us, relentlessly. Having a child growing and changing before your eyes makes this unavoidably clear. This realization is depressing, but also necessary. Because it means that your time on earth won't sneak past you. And if you're living well, it helps you focus on not wasting the time you have.

As I said at the beginning, fatherhood costs us a great deal. Every hour you spend driving your minivan to Babies 'R' Us is an hour you can't be sleeping, or watching football, or reading Dostoyevsky. And in truth, I'm not sure the ditch-digging metaphor is entirely wrong. Much of childrearing—the tantrums, and the sibling rivalry, and trying to get them to sleep, and *will you please eat your dinner already!*—is deeply unpleasant. But to paraphrase James Madison, if children were angels, fatherhood would be unnecessary.

As a general rule I try not to talk in the conditional mood, especially when it comes to family life. Everyone has their own circumstances and I respect that. I really do. But if you aren't otherwise engaged in some duty that precludes it—say, the priesthood—and you have the opportunity, then you should be a father. There is nothing more vexing, exhausting, noble, or manly.

It's the worst job you'll ever love. ♦

The Spin Never Stops

Michael Morell's memoir doesn't come clean on the Benghazi debacle

By Stephen F. Hayes

Michael Morell wants you to know that he's been misunderstood, mischaracterized, and maligned. Morell, the former deputy director of the CIA, was at the center of the controversy over the Benghazi attacks and the Obama administration's attempts to sell the country a phony narrative about what had happened and why. He's written a memoir of his time at the highest levels of U.S. intelligence, *The Great War of Our Time: The CIA's Fight Against Terrorism—From al Qa'ida to ISIS*, and it includes two chapters on Benghazi.

Morell would have us believe that he's written these 47 pages on Benghazi to correct misperceptions about his role and provide context for his actions. His critics will see his account rather as a transparent attempt to rewrite history and salvage what little credibility Morell retained after the Benghazi scandal. The critics are right. Morell's attempt fails miserably.

Michael Morell

Start with the facts about Benghazi that Morell doesn't challenge:

■ In every case, the changes made by administration and intelligence officials to the Benghazi talking points originated by the CIA had the effect of downplaying the significance of the attacks—cutting "Islamic," replacing "attacks" with "demonstrations," removing "with ties to al Qaeda," excising mention of the involvement of Ansar al Sharia.

■ Despite his own heavy hand in editing the Benghazi talking points, Morell sat silent when members of Congress grilled intelligence officials, including Morell, about who had made the changes.

■ When he was asked if the intelligence community had provided the Benghazi talking points to the White House for "awareness or coordination," Morell claimed that they were provided for awareness—as something of a courtesy. He made that claim despite the existence of dozens of pages of email traffic showing the clear coordination of the talking points between the intelligence community and top Obama officials at the White House and elsewhere.

■ Although Susan Rice made misleading claims during her Sunday television appearances—claims that never appeared in the intelligence on Benghazi—Morell agreed to a White House request that he accompany her to a meeting with senators as she prepared for her possible nomination as Obama's next secretary of state.

Morell doesn't dispute these facts. That is both prudent and necessary: They're indisputable.

Instead, he concedes that it was a "serious mistake" for CIA public affairs officials to remove the fact that the attackers had "ties to al Qaeda." He allows that the talking points "could have been more robust." He concedes that he should have acknowledged his role in editing the talking points when members of Congress asked him about the changes. He abandons his claim that the talking points were shared with the White House only for "awareness" and not "coordination," and concedes that his original claim "was clearly not right." He further concedes that he never should have accompanied Rice on her repair-the-damage visit to Capitol Hill: "Attending the meeting was a mistake."

Such mea culpas are common in political memoirs. The former government officials who write tell-all accounts of their service often include admissions of error or mistaken judgment, and whether the authors intend it or not, these confessions often engender some empathy and occasionally seem to restore some of the credibility lost in the original commission of the errors.

That doesn't happen here because Morell's revisionist account of what happened in Benghazi reeks of the same mendacity that got him in trouble in the first place. At times, Morell, who scratched and clawed and pleased his way to the very top of the intelligence bureaucracy in Washington, would have us believe that he was a naïf, unaware of the politics being practiced by everyone around him. This is true of his explanation for his decision to accompany Susan Rice to Capitol Hill.

Morell writes that there were two sets of talking points:

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those produced by the intelligence community and a second set produced by the White House. In its talking points, the White House was "blaming the Benghazi attack on the [YouTube] video which is not something CIA did in its talking points or in its classified analysis." And while Rice echoed the intelligence community talking points in her Sunday show appearances, "she also said that the video had led to the protests in Benghazi," Morell argues. "Why she said this I do not know."

This is no small point. The video story was the centerpiece of the White House effort to create a false narrative of what happened in Benghazi. The president repeatedly blamed the attacks on the video. At the memorial service for those killed, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton promised family members that the administration would make sure the filmmaker was brought to justice. White House spokesman Jay Carney repeatedly invoked the video as the proximate cause of the attacks. But Rice, in particular, sought to shift the blame for American deaths in Benghazi from a terrorist attack on U.S. facilities on the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks to unruly protesters whose understandable anger over a video disrespectful of Islam spun out of control.

The consulate aflame, September 12, 2012

This created a problem for Obama. He wanted to nominate Rice to replace Hillary Clinton as secretary of state, but in the face of the politicization of Benghazi she was unlikely to win support from Republicans. As Morell writes: "It was clear that her potential nomination for secretary of state was in jeopardy." In an effort to revive her prospects, the White House asked Morell to accompany her to meetings with Republicans on Capitol Hill.

Morell writes that Denis McDonough, then a deputy national security adviser, gave him the simple task of showing that "the talking points were fully consistent with the classified analysis produced by the intelligence community." So he agreed to go. "I was politically naïve to have attended," he says.

This strains credulity. If that had been the objective, Rice could have simply brought copies of the classified analysis and the talking points. The Republicans were sure to ask about the video, the heart of the administration's Benghazi story. Morell knew that Rice's claims were not backed up by either the talking points or classified analysis, and he understood that the purpose of the trip to the Capitol was to save her potential nomination. So what would Morell say when he was asked about the video? Was he prepared to sink Rice's nomination by telling the truth? Or would he spin for his political masters?

We don't get the answer from his book. But here's how he put it last week:

> [Susan Rice] said that the motivation here was the YouTube video. We had not said that, but . . . I have to tell you, I was not particularly surprised by that because we had said that the assault on the U.S. embassy in Cairo that happened the previous day was caused by the video. And we said that what happened in Benghazi was guys trying to—to repeat what happened in Cairo. So by simple implication, you can say what happened in Benghazi was caused by the videos.

That's Morell in an interview with Bret Baier, anchor of *Special Report* on the Fox News Channel. It's a telling argument. U.S. officials on the ground in Libya have made clear that the video played no role in the attacks. Gregory Hicks, the top diplomat in Libya after Ambassador Christopher Stevens was killed, told Congress, "The YouTube video was a nonevent in Libya." That's consistent with the account in *13 Hours*, a book about Benghazi from several CIA contractors who fought the attackers there. The security personnel in Libya "had been told about the events in Egypt, but they neither saw nor heard anything to suggest that anyone in Benghazi was upset about an offensive YouTube video clip from an anti-Muslim movie."

So Morell is still defending Rice, whose account is contradicted by CIA analysis and credible witnesses on the ground. Why he says this we do not know.

One of the most striking aspects of Morell's chapters on Benghazi is his dogged insistence that the attacks were simply the result of a mob spinning out of control. He does not resurrect the long-discredited claim that they were merely part of a protest, and he allows that some in the group were, in fact, "hardened Islamic extremists." But Morell maintains that the attacks were not planned and claims, repeatedly and bizarrely, that the attackers did not necessarily want to harm Americans.

The events of 9/11/12 took place "with little or no advance planning," he writes. Morell argues that after watching video from that evening, his view was that the group "did not appear to be looking for Americans to harm." And "the rioters started to set fires, but there was no indication that they were targeting anyone." He adds: "Clearly, this was a mob looting and vandalizing the place, with tragic results. . . . There is no evidence that the attackers were targeting the ambassador specifically or U.S. officials generally when they set that fire or any of the other fires that night."

It's a bizarre line of argument. But it's not hard to understand why Morell would use it. If the attacks of

September 11, 2012, were planned in celebration of the anniversary of the September 11, 2001, attacks by terrorists with ties to al Qaeda, they would undermine claims from some at the CIA, amplified by the Obama campaign, that al Qaeda was on the verge of elimination. What's more, the failure to anticipate and prevent such attacks would be, by definition, an intelligence failure.

While Morell continues to peddle the notion that the Americans who died in Benghazi were accidental victims of looters and vandals, the U.S. government has publicly abandoned that falsehood in its case against a ringleader of the Benghazi attacks.

The indictment of Abu Khattala, a leader of Ansar al Sharia Benghazi, tells a very different story. The "objects and purposes" of the attackers in Benghazi, it says, were to "kill United States citizens at the Mission and the Annex." Khattala and the other attackers acted "willfully, deliberately, maliciously and with premeditation and malice aforethought" when they killed Ambassador Stevens and the others. The indictment charges that Khattala "committed the offenses after substantial planning and premeditation to cause the death of a person and commit an act of terrorism" and "intentionally participated in an act intending that lethal force be used in connection with a person other than one of the participants in this offense, and the victims died as a result of the act."

According to the indictment, Khattala learned before the attacks that there was "an American facility in Benghazi posing as a diplomatic post," and "he believed the facility was actually being used to collect intelligence." Khattala believed U.S. intelligence activities were "illegal" and "was therefore going to do something about this facility."

Baier asked Morell about the indictment.

"Is the indictment wrong?"

"So, I'm not an attorney. I'm not a Justice Department lawyer. I'm just telling you what the intelligence community's analysis was and is of what happened there that night," Morell responded. "If you read further in the indictment, there's—there is also charges with softer language." And, later, in response to a question about Susan Rice's claims about the YouTube video: "If you keep reading in the indictment, right, even Abu Khattala says that that was one of the things that motivated him."

This is false. There is no mention of the video in the 21-page indictment.

Morell spends much of his Benghazi chapters challenging his critics. One of his biggest complaints: His critics have cherry-picked information in their effort to build a case against him. "Critics cannot have it both ways," he writes, using information from a source that "fits their narrative and rejecting from the same source what does not."

It's an odd charge for Morell to level. Nowhere in his two chapters does Morell tell his readers that his central claims about the attacks are directly contradicted by the Khattala indictment, the U.S. government's official account of the attacks. Similarly, in attempting to convince readers that the attacks were not planned, Morell chooses to exclude evidence that strongly suggests they *were* planned.

In *13 Hours*, the CIA contractors describe in great detail the surveillance of the U.S. diplomatic facility in Benghazi in the hours before the attacks. On the day of the attacks, "at 6:43 A.M., three men in a car with Libyan police markings slowed to a stop on the gravel street on the north side of the U.S. diplomatic compound." One of the men "climbed to the second floor of a half-finished building . . . that overlooked the compound." That vantage point gave him a "clear view over the wall and into the compound" and allowed him to see "the villa where Ambassador Chris Stevens slept." The man "recorded what he saw with a cell-phone camera."

They write: "Surveillance of an American diplomatic site was worrisome, to be answered at a minimum by countersurveillance to determine the observer's identity and intent. Reconnaissance was worse, as it anticipated offensive military or militant action." The incident caused U.S. security officers to go on "high alert," and these officers "informed officials at the CIA Annex of the suspicious incident as part of their longstanding arrangement to share security information."

These are important details that have a direct bearing on how we understand the attacks. But they are inconvenient to Morell's insistence that the attacks were spontaneous. So he simply left them out.

Will Morell's rehabilitation tour work? It might. *Politico* published an excerpt of Morell's book under the headline "The Real Story of Benghazi," and the *New York Times* published an article that accepted at face value most of Morell's claims and portrayed him as an apolitical intelligence professional.

Morell, for his part, has offered occasional criticism of the Obama administration, a fact that has won him softer interviews than he might have expected in some quarters. But on the big questions, Morell is still spinning for the White House.

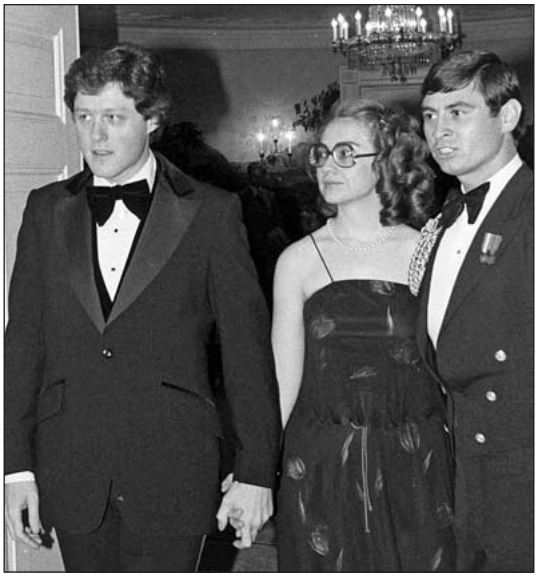
Speaking of the president, Morell said last week: "He always did the right thing when it came to protecting the country." But Morell's assessment is not rooted in a dispassionate analysis of the intelligence. Obama has repeatedly argued throughout his tenure that the "tide of war is receding" and that he is bringing the 9/11 wars to an "end." The president has never told the American people that we are embroiled in what Mike Morell now calls "the great war of our time." ♦

House of the Stacked Deck of Cards

The privilege of being Hillary Clinton

By Noemie Emery

"The deck is still stacked in favor of those at the top," Hillary Clinton has warned us, and she ought to know. Having been "at the top," or close enough to it, since 1976, when her husband was elected attorney general of Arkansas at age 30—not the biggest job ever, but one with a whole lot of power to play with—she has leveraged every ounce that it held to bring to them ever and ever more money and power, until at this moment, 14 years after leaving the White House, she and Bill sit on a mile-high mountain of both. Their wealth is immense and their power unlimited, at least in their party. The very few viable national candidates left after the two midterm wipeouts that decimated Democratic ranks in the reign of Obama are so afraid to risk the Clintons' wrath that she is cruising unopposed to the nomination for the first time since no one knows when. How did two penniless kids living in roughly 1,000 square feet in Fayetteville, Arkansas, reach such heights? Let us look back and see.



At a White House dinner for governors, February 27, 1979

Our story begins as boy wonder Bill Clinton wins his first election and moves with bride Hillary to the state capital and into a new way of life. Biographers Sally Bedell Smith (*For Love of Politics*) and Carl Bernstein (*A Woman in Charge*) seem to agree it was then and there that three things converged: For the first time, Bill was in a position to do things for people; the state was in the middle of a get-rich-quick boomlet; and Hillary, thinking now about starting a family, realized that, given Bill's disposition and fairly low salary, the family fortunes would be in her hands.

"It was Hillary who decided she wanted to be financially secure, and took the steps to accomplish that," family friend Betsey Wright told Bernstein. "She had come a long way from her rejection of 'our prevailing acquisitive corporate life' that she condemned in her Wellesley commencement address." Rationalizing shady deals apparently came naturally in "an easy atmosphere of conflicts of interest" in which "everyone does it" was the rule.

"It was a culture in which the moral architecture was weak, and in which everyone assumed that 'fixing' was a requirement for getting things done," as Smith tells us.

> The Clintons' connections helped them enrich themselves in the go-go 1980s, a period they were to denounce as the "greed decade." . . . In that atmosphere, Bill and Hillary developed a sense of entitlement, an expectation that others would take care of them. They became accustomed to borrowing from banks operated by political friends and accepting favors from individuals and corporations, such as the free use of private airplanes.

By the same sort of happy coincidence that saw a Chicago hospital create a $300,000-per-year job for Michelle Obama when her husband emerged as a comer, Little Rock's venerable Rose Law Firm hired Hillary Clinton in 1976 after Bill was elected attorney general and made her its first female partner when he became governor. This was the start of a cascade of good tidings that would

AP / BARRY THUMMA

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quickly come her way. On top of her $110,000 Rose salary, Hillary cleared $64,000 yearly for sitting on corporate boards, including those of Wal-Mart and TCBY Enterprises, whose chairman explained her presence on the board as "making sure he was in good grace with the people in power." The favor of other people with similar motives enabled the couple to live very well. According to Smith, Hillary "put $2,104 into a cellular-phone franchise operated by a policy adviser to the governor and walked away with a profit of $46,000." But her most notorious coup was her $1,000 investment in cattle futures that in less than a year returned an astounding hundred-fold profit of $100,000, this windfall coming just as Bill was first taking office as governor in 1979.

Forced to try to explain this in 1994, when her past was coming under increased scrutiny, Hillary at first said she had done the trading herself, after her father had taught her to read the stock pages. But she eventually admitted that most of her trades had been made by Jim Blair, a counsel to Tyson Foods, the Arkansas-based conglomerate, and a hot-shot commodities trader, with the assistance of local broker and former Tyson executive Robert (Red) Bone, who seemed to have shielded her from damaging margin calls and thrown other favors her way.

The exceptional profits didn't pass anyone's smell test. The *New York Times*, which broke the commodities-trading story, concluded that "at every turn of their financial life . . . [the Clintons] were receiving financial favors from individuals who had something to gain from having friends in high places" and had trouble seeing the difference between the public interest and their own. But money wasn't the only thing the Clintons tried to get the stacked deck to yield them. Sometimes it was power, too.

Even the *New York Times* concluded that 'at every turn of their financial life . . . [the Clintons] were receiving financial favors from individuals who had something to gain from having friends in high places.'

Many times before, people have run for public office from positions of privilege, having been rich and/or connected, having been famous as athletes or actors, as millionaires funding themselves, or as celebrities whose names were already on everyone's lips. But no one before Hillary had launched their political career from the White House as first lady, able to enlist the prestige, perks, and glitz that surround that position. From the moment she decided to run for the Senate (late 1998, by most estimations) she drew attention and money away from the sitting vice president, whose presidential campaign was relatively neglected by a husband who, probably out of guilt and loyalty justly mingled with gratitude, turned all his attention her way.

"Hillary continued to vie with Gore for attention and money and to benefit enormously from Bill's advice as well from her First Lady perch, while Gore essentially left the White House," Smith tells us, noting that Bill showered his wife with praise, attention, and fundraising efforts, showcasing her in 1999 at 20 feel-good events at the executive mansion, featuring children, the elderly, and Medal of Freedom Award winners, compared to just one for Gore. Hitting up rich donors who would normally have given heavily to the vice president, she began competing with Gore for contributions, sometimes even making her personal pitches for money at his fundraising events. Talking to Hillary "all the time, every day," Bill gave her advice on how to talk about issues, made plugs for her while campaigning for others, extravagantly talked up her virtues and talents, and urged people at fundraisers for other Democrats to also send something to Hillary. ("A lot of you have given to Hillary," he would say. "If you haven't, I hope you will.")

The Democratic convention in 2000 at which Gore was nominated also turned into an extravaganza for Hillary, with a packed schedule of events before Gore arrived, "siphoning off Democratic money and further angering" Gore. Even her husband's impeachment seemed to work for Hillary and against the vice president, casting her as the brave little woman seeking a new start in life after a great disappointment, while Gore had the more delicate job of trying to run on the Bill Clinton record while disassociating himself from the president's sins. Hillary was given an 18-minute speech at the convention, and after that her campaign against a hapless Rick Lazio was practically an afterthought. On election night the Clintons watched from their suite in New York as Hillary won by 12 points while Gore, declared the winner at 8 P.M., was then declared the loser at 2 A.M., and at dawn headed into the Florida recount, which he would lose over a month later by a few hundred votes. If the White House epitomizes what it means to be "at the top," never had the cards been stacked more in favor of anyone than they were for Hillary Clinton when she had a Senate seat in a state that she never had lived in more or less placed in her hands.

With an ex-president licensed to coin money and a

former first lady in the Senate planning her own eventual run for president, the Clintons were in a unique position to leverage their power—past (Bill), present, and future (Hillary). Former presidents had in various ways cashed in before, but by that time they were no longer able to do people very meaningful favors. A donation to Bill, on the other hand, could mean favors from Hillary, in the job she was holding (senator, then secretary of state), and even as president sometime down the line. As the *New York Times* has noted, four days after Hillary was mentioned to head Barack Obama's State Department, TD Bank (Canada's largest) hired Bill to give speeches for a fee of $1.8 million. It must have been just a coincidence, like all the others she had enjoyed since their Little Rock days, that Secretary of State Clinton would be ideally placed to push for the approval of the Keystone XL pipeline, in which the bank held a large block of shares.

At a Clinton Global Initiative meeting in New York, September 24, 2012

As the *New York Post*'s Kyle Smith noted, in a piece on Peter Schweizer's new book *Clinton Cash*, "Eleven of the 13 highest-paid speeches [Bill] ever gave took place while . . . Hillary headed the State Department." Other ex-presidents had nostalgia to sell, which quickly lost value. Bill had "access to a family member who was secretary of state and perhaps a future president. That's why his fees actually went up over time, and not down." The Clinton machine is best explained as a wondrous contraption designed to funnel cash to Bill Clinton, with a million or two tossed now and then in the way of the needy, along with a supply of fascinating new friends, ready to fly him to beautiful islands, in the pursuit of women and song.

And what did Hillary hope to get from all this, beyond a share in the family fortunes? Much the same thing that she got when she lived in the White House as first lady during the years that she ran for the Senate, namely a series of glamorous feel-good occasions meant to showcase her as a species of royalty, altruistic, benevolent, and above it all. As Kenneth Vogel explained in *Politico*, this summer was supposed to be a four-month display of Hillary mania, with "a splashy Clinton Global Initiative conference in Marrakesh . . . followed by a lavish reception and conference in Athens in June, and . . . a September extravaganza in Manhattan, featuring an appearance by Elton John." Alas, the release of Schweizer's *Clinton Cash* and related reports in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* caused the Athens event to be canceled, with the family foundation "scrambling to address concerns about its budgeting, fundraising, and donor vetting, while being buffeted by a raging political storm."

That storm may have been augmented by the revelation last summer that Chelsea Clinton, hired by NBC News along with Jenna Bush Hager as a part-time contributor, had not only not distinguished herself as a TV reporter, but had pulled down a yearly salary of $600,000 while having done practically nothing. It came to something over $26,000 for every minute she had been on the air. "Chelsea Clinton Leaving Her Unbelievably Cushy Fake Job at NBC" ran the *New York* headline. The magazine added that "she will no longer pretend to be a reporter," calling her "one of the most boring people of her era" and her salary "insane." A tipster told the *New York Post* that the disclosure (by *Politico*) of Chelsea's salary had been "catastrophic for NBC, because not one of the other correspondents, not even Jenna Bush Hager, is in on that sort of money." The NBC insider added that George W. Bush's daughter—who is "extremely well-liked on *Today*, and [who] scored a sit-down with President Obama and reported on the Sochi Olympics—is rumored to be among those who expressed their dismay at Chelsea's huge salary for apparently very little work." (Laura Bush, of course, isn't running for president and has no future favors to give to the network.) Nonetheless, seemingly heedless of her own family's fortunes, Hillary continues to rail against income disparity as a crisis, and the unfair advantages given the already powerful as a national shame and a sin.

Nobody knows about stacked decks better than Hillary Clinton, who found the deck stacked slightly in her favor 40 years ago and has spent her whole political life stacking it further, to the benefit of herself and her husband and their daughter and Hillary's brothers, all of whom have managed to make out like bandits, the latter two with no talents to speak of besides being related to her. The Democrats may want to run on inequality, but they should look for some other candidate to do it, and not someone who has made inequality, when it heavily tilts in her direction, her singular calling and life's achievement. ♦

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Saul Bellow (1962)

On His Way

The irresistible rise of Saul Bellow. BY WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

Saul Bellow died in 2005, a few years after he was accorded full biographical treatment by the critic James Atlas. In 700 pages, Atlas provided a crisply written, fair-minded account of the novelist and fellow Chicagoan up through the publication of his final book, *Ravelstein* (2000). With some notable exceptions (Richard Poirier and James Wood), the biography was well received. Now, the scholar and biographer Zachary Leader has produced a book of about the same length, but taking Bellow only up to the appearance of *Herzog* in 1964, with a second volume to follow that will cover the remaining 40 years. As a biographer, Leader tends to write long: His life of Kingsley Amis clocked in at over 900 pages; similarly, this new book seems to have overlooked nothing in laying out a life, along with extended commentary on the writings.

The Life of Saul Bellow
To Fame and Fortune, 1915-1964
by Zachary Leader
Knopf, 832 pp., $40

One of the attractive things about Leader's manners as a biographer is his relation to his predecessor. He never attempts to justify his book by claiming that Atlas had left out *this*, or didn't know or misinterpreted *that*. In fact, he refers to Atlas a number of times, uses him often to confirm things, and generously acknowledges him as the most important source for making his own book possible. Nor does he claim that this or that aspect of Bellow's character has been revealed for the first time. The man he writes about doesn't seem to be essentially

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TRUMAN MOORE / THE LIFE IMAGES COLLECTION / GETTY IMAGES

different from the one Atlas presented.

Deference to his predecessor doesn't mean that Leader has shirked the tasks of interviewing and consulting the libraries and archives. He spoke to three of Bellow's five wives (the others have died) and was given a copy of Bellow's second wife Sondra's unpublished memoir, a lively account, so it appears, of a relationship that finally went bad. Bellow's three sons were also cooperative. And Leader makes use of a short memoir, "Mugging the Muse," written by Bellow's third wife, Susan. Other new sources are very interesting transcripts of conversations between Bellow and Philip Roth, as well as Roth's *New Yorker* essay "Rereading Saul Bellow." Roth gave Leader a valuable piece of advice when he warned him about the interviews Leader would have to conduct: "Saul was no monster," said Roth, "but he loved monsters and you're going to have to interview them."

One example may do to suggest the size of Leader's enterprise and the leisurely pace of his narrative. It took only eight pages for Atlas to tell of Bellow's birth in Lachine, Quebec. Thirty-five of Leader's pages lead up to that event. In them are sketched the life in Russia of his parents and related family matters, the ship to Canada, and the settling-in of the parents and older siblings, culminating in the birth of Saul in 1915. Atlas writes of the "bibulous obstetrician" who (Bellow later claimed) delivered his mother Liza of the new boy: Leader, after describing the French-Canadian doctor as "quite drunk when he arrived," thinks of the narrator of Bellow's fine story "The Old System," who is delivered by a similarly drunken doctor. Then there is a mention of Bellow's 9-year-old sister, June, who, in a letter decades later, recalled "a beautiful white bundle with an angelic face . . . lying at the foot of Ma's bed." Leader also refers to Bellow's unpublished "Memoirs of a Bootlegger's Son" for another instance of a child "being delivered after great trouble."

Leader has committed himself to using scenes and characters from Bellow's writings whenever they help to illuminate some "real life" event. This practice provides a fuller, rounded-out picture of things, but it also takes up more narrative time, and it is doubtful that even the closest student of Bellow's life and work is going to pay careful attention to all of the illustrations. As for Leader's scrupulosity of documentation, there are over 100 pages of single-spaced endnotes. The text itself contains (for better or worse, depending on your taste) plenty of documentation of Bellow's erotic life. Particularly after the bitter marital breakup with Sondra—in Leader's words, a terrible time for him—Bellow entered what Leader deftly calls "a period of strenuous womanizing." As we read about the writer traveling throughout Europe on cultural business, his biographer provides a list of conquests with specific names and countries attached: Poland, Yugoslavia, and so on. Near the end of the trip, Bellow assures Ralph Ellison in a letter that he's "much better, I'm beginning to sit up and take nourishment."

Glenne Headly, Robin Williams in 'Seize the Day' (1986)

Perhaps the most memorable summing-up of Bellow's sexual appetite was made by a painter, Arlette Landes, who remarked that "he had a biblical Old World morality, but his fly was entirely unzipped at all times." It is to Leader's credit that he doesn't attempt to "explain" this by psychologizing.

Nor does he offer some hitherto overlooked interpretations of Bellow's fiction, from *Dangling Man* (1944) through *Herzog* (1964). Instead, he gives us a full account of how the particular book was received and what academic critics, as well as Bellow's fellow writers, had to say about it. This matter is of special interest when the account reaches *Herzog*.

A generally admiring response to the novel was broken when Richard Poirier, then an editor at *Partisan Review*, a magazine that published Bellow more than once, wrote a "wounding" review titled "Bellows to Herzog," which ridiculed the novel's intellectual aspirations. An "insufferably smug book," Poirier called it, while he found the much-praised letters, of which Herzog wrote so many, often "uninventive and tiresome." But there was a hidden agenda behind this review, insofar as Jack Ludwig, like the novel's Valentine Gersbach, who cuckolds Herzog, had cuckolded Bellow while presenting himself as a good friend. The fact that Richard Poirier and Jack Ludwig were close friends should be taken into account in assessing the negative thrust of the review. Leader notes that Norman Mailer, the contemporary whose *An American Dream* (1965) Poirier had just admiringly reviewed, couldn't stay out of the fray, praising the depth of feeling in *Herzog* but finding it intellectually barren.

Looking back on the minor tempest of *Herzog*'s reception 50 years ago, it seems far away—the sense or belief that argument about the quality of a novel was a very serious matter indeed. (Bellow resigned from the Century Association when it admitted Poirier and William Phillips, the head *Partisan* editor.)

Leader remains objective about the conflict between Bellow and Sondra, as when she hired a truck to pick up her belongings from the Hudson River house in Tivoli where they had lived. She wrote later that when the goods arrived, they included several barrels of ashes and a pair of men's shoes on top, prompting their 5-year-old son, Adam, to wonder why his father had "sent the garbage." Sondra also accused Bellow of inventing things, such as claiming

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that she had tried to run him down with the car.

Leader justifies this rehearsing of "accusations and counter-accusations" as making up "part of the life Bellow lived as he wrote *Herzog*, in which marriage . . . adultery . . . and the mental state of a hero much like himself are given fictional form."

> Real life is woven into fiction almost immediately. To look to the novel for what really happened—who did the provoking, how much violence there actually was, who lied or shaded the truths—or even what Bellow thought happened, is futile.

If we look at the novel imaginatively, we see only "What Bellow made of his experience . . . how he turned the thoughts and feelings it raised into art."

Before Bellow's death, Philip Roth undertook the task of rereading and writing about the earlier books, and in so doing he produced original criticism, especially of *Herzog*. My own revisiting of the earlier novels resulted in a confirmation of what I had thought about them earlier: The first two, *Dangling Man* and *The Victim* (1947), are apprentice works of what Bellow later called "victim literature, in the main depressing work." Matthew Arnold's words about his own depressing (so he thought) poem, *Empedocles on Etna*, were that "the suffering finds no vent in action . . . a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope, or existence; in which there is everything to be endured, nothing to be done."

"Morbid" was Arnold's adjective, and it is fairly applied to Bellow's first books. But then came the breakthrough novel, *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953). I have tried to admire (in Roth's words) its "inexhaustible passion for a teemingness of dazzling specifics," but found myself only able to endorse the words about *Augie* that Norman Podhoretz used in reviewing it: "forced, strained, shrill, and finally even tiresome." (Bellow himself later said that the book is about 200 pages too long.) Yet for all its excess, it freed him from morbidity.

Then came *Seize the Day* (1956), the novella that Roth suggests was undertaken as a "grim corrective" to *Augie*'s manic hopefulness. One notable thing about that book is the presence in it of poetry, beautifully employed in Tommy Wilhelm's recollections of reading Milton and Shakespeare in college, but also in the impressionistic ring of many of Bellow's sentences. *Seize the Day* seems to me endlessly rereadable, a great work of fiction that ranks with Joyce's "The Dead" as a heart-stopper.

Roth called *Henderson the Rain King* (1959), which followed *Seize the Day*, a "screwball" novel, but liked it no less for that. To me, it is just a screwball book, not very funny and not profound—certainly Bellow's strangest literary performance. As for *Herzog*, to which Leader devotes many observant pages, it is, for want of a better word, a masterpiece that holds up after repeated readings and teachings of it. In Mailer's mixed response, admiring *Herzog* even as he deplored its "hopeless" protagonist, there is a moment that Leader doesn't quote but that has always seemed to me a wonderful tribute: "Bored by *Herzog*, still there is a secret burning of the heart. One's heart turns over and produces a sorrow. Hardly any books are left to do that."

In the novels that Leader will discuss in his second volume, one's heart seldom, if ever, turns over; it is, rather, some of Bellow's stories and novellas that have that effect. He once declared himself fond of these shorter writings: "Sometimes I feel that maybe that's what I should've been doing all the time. I'm freer in those things; in a way they're less ambitious and I feel more liberated when I write them." In "By the St. Lawrence," "A Silver Dish," "Zetland: By a Character Witness," and, especially, "Something to Remember Me By," Bellow's narrator, looking a long way back at his youthful past, mixes comic and poignant effects in a way that shows the writer at his best. ♦

B&A

Unsweetness and Light

Backstage at the Renaissance was a dangerous place to be.

BY LAWRENCE KLEPP

The most famous improvised lines in the history of the movies are the ones Orson Welles came up with while playing Harry Lime in *The Third Man* (1949): "In Italy, for 30 years under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder, and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and the Renaissance. In Switzerland, they had brotherly love, they had 500 years of democracy and peace—and what did that produce? The cuckoo clock."

That statement should have been the epigraph for this somewhat overheated but illuminating book on the dark side of the Renaissance. Alexander Lee, a lecturer in early modern history at Oxford, has written the book to dispel the conventional view that the Renaissance was all ethereal beauty and high-minded cultural aspiration. The problem is that nobody holds the conventional view. In much of the book, he sounds less like Welles than Claude Rains in *Casablanca*—he's shocked, *shocked*, to discover that assorted vices and felonies were occurring on the

The Ugly Renaissance
Sex, Greed, Violence and Depravity in an Age of Beauty
by Alexander Lee
Doubleday, 448 pp., $30

Lawrence Klepp is a writer in New York.

premises. Actually, he's just trying to goad his readers into a state of shock: The great cultural achievements of the period "coexisted with dark, dirty, even diabolical realities," he whispers in our ears in the introduction, like a tout in front of a carnival sideshow. At the end, he makes the same point: "Far from being an age of unalloyed wonder, it was a period of sex, scandal, and suffering."

It would be an unalloyed wonder if Lee could actually find someone who had been under the impression that Renaissance Italy, notoriously dominated by cutthroat clans and tyrants who were connoisseurs of poisons as much as paintings, was an age of unalloyed goodness or unalloyed anything. The chiaroscuro wasn't confined to the paintings. The whole place was, as Welles pointed out, a blend of light and appalling dark. A century ago, it's true, T. S. Eliot's proper ladies (*In the room the women come and go / Talking of Michelangelo*) were not going to be talking of the great artist's fistfights, his scatological sketches, his rarely changed, disheveled, smelly clothes, or his affairs with both sexes—all recounted in meticulous detail by Lee. Maybe they would have been surprised to hear that the Renaissance wasn't all sweetness and light. Today, they'd be watching *The Borgias* on TV.

But once you've discounted Lee's premise (or maybe just his selling point) you will find this book absorbing and, yes, mildly shocking. Even if you've read Vasari's gossipy 16th-century *Lives of the Artists* (an obvious source here) or Benvenuto Cellini's once-scandalous *Autobiography*, you will be taken farther into the pungent back alleys of the period than most historians will take you.

The Ugly Renaissance begins by letting us see Florence through the eyes of Michelangelo circa 1491, when the artist, only 16 but already a favorite of the ruling Medici, had just had his nose broken in the Brancacci Chapel—an envious fellow teenage artist having clocked him during some argument over the Masaccio frescoes there. We follow him on an imaginary walk through the wide paved streets and handsome squares lined with magnificent new palaces, civic buildings, churches, and crowded markets, evidence that Florence, with its population of 59,000 and its flourishing banking and weaving industries, had become one of the largest cities in Europe and the most prosperous. But then we get to the grittier districts, where narrow, muddy lanes carry a rank odor of garbage and animal and human excrement, while prostitutes and deformed beggars jostle with one another for space at every corner. The contrasts were all the more dramatic for their proximity. Rich and poor often lived literally on top of one another. Even the imposing *palazzo* of one of the Medici had "six little shops" on the ground floor that were rented out to prostitutes.

Cosimo I de' Medici by Agnolo Bronzino (ca. 1545)

HERITAGE IMAGES / GETTY IMAGES

Political unrest and violence were always just around the corner. There were frequent bloody conspiracies against the Medici, but then their rule under Cosimo and Lorenzo the Magnificent was little more than government by conspiracy, punctuated by poisonings. And all respectable Florentine families had to keep weapons by the door to hold off the frequent rampaging mobs.

Rome, where Michelangelo ended up, could be even more dangerous; robbery and rape were routine. And the Renaissance popes, culminating in the ruthless Borgia pope Alexander VI, had the sprawling Papal States to rule. They became virtually indistinguishable from the other Italian petty despots, more interested in military prowess or in bestowing lucrative benefices on family members—including their own illegitimate kids—or in display, luxury, and what H. L. Mencken used to call non-Euclidean sex than in religion.

Lee devotes a chapter to the most thuggish of the Renaissance scoundrels, the mercenary soldiers known as *condottieri*, who ended up seizing power in several cities, at which point they usually became, as we would say today, "supporters of the arts." Lee repeatedly compares them to Mafia *consiglieri*. There was, for instance, Sigismondo Malatesta ("the Wolf of Rimini"), who put that city-state—now a charmingly sleepy, out-of-the-way little town near the Adriatic—on the Renaissance map through outstanding depravity: general mayhem, the probable poisoning of two wives, alleged incest with his daughters. But he also commissioned a church designed by the archetypal Renaissance Man, Leon Battista Alberti, and frescoes by the master of austere quietude, Piero della Francesca.

The most seductive chapter, naturally, is the one on sex; it could have been subtitled "The Real Housewives of Florence." The reader ends up thinking that the "sexual revolution" happened 500 years earlier than it's usually dated. Lust was in the Renaissance air: It pervaded the art and it crossed class and ecclesiastical lines, freely encompassing both sexes, same sexes, and seemingly every momentary opportunity. Lee detours into intellectual and literary history to trace the transition from the ideal of chaste

love and otherworldly aspiration maintained by Dante and Petrarch to the more naturalistic, hedonistic attitudes, sometimes fortified by the new Neoplatonic philosophers and their theories of beauty, which they could quickly put into practice. Pico della Mirandola, perhaps the most brilliant of them, was poisoned after an affair with the wife of one of Lorenzo de' Medici's cousins.

But Lee's chapter on Renaissance prejudice seems to have been written with a wary eye on his more doctrinaire postcolonialist colleagues. It's dense with markers of political self-congratulation such as "alterity" and "Islamophobia." His account actually shows the Italians of the time to have been, as usual, a study in stark contrasts: They could be tolerant and curious; they could revert to hostile stereotypes. Islam drew the most consistent antagonism, bolstered by the polemics of humanist scholars as well as the proclamations of popes. But in 1480, the town of Otranto, near Naples, had been conquered by Ottoman Turkish forces who beheaded 800 citizens (including women and children) for refusing to convert to Islam, sawed the presiding bishop in half, and enslaved thousands of others; a planned march on Rome was averted only by the sudden death of the sultan. Therefore, a little phobia where Islam was concerned seems appropriate.

Alexander Lee isn't a writer to be savored for style, like earlier generations of British historians, and I finally quit noticing phrases like "never-ending whirl of activity," "truly breathtaking series of paintings," and "everyone who was anyone," plus clumsy constructions like "however tempting it may be to succumb to the temptation. . ." But if his own prose is artless, at least he never throws the art of the Renaissance out with the bathwater. Unlike many of his contemporaries in the academic-industrial complex, Lee doesn't tar and feather artists for being alive at the wrong time, against a backdrop of original Western sin. On the contrary, he offers his own version of the moral paradox Orson Welles seized on: "It would have been all but impossible for the greatest monuments of the Renaissance to have come into being had its foremost artists, writers, and philosophers not been mired in every kind of depravity and degradation."

Great art, as Welles noticed, rarely appears in peaceful, pastoral societies, whether Switzerland, Lapland, or some tropical island paradise. It tends to turn up in wealthy, multifaceted, and tumultuous urban societies such as 15th-century northern Italy. Their usual accompaniment of high ambition, greed, steep social hierarchies, crimes of passion and calculation, and political and amorous intrigues provide either the subject matter for the art or the motivation to escape and transcend them through form, color, and harmony.

Great art is alchemy, extracting sublimity out of dark, devious realities. And as Lee points out, we could use some of that ourselves. ♦

B&A

Best-Laid Plans

Meeting at Potsdam but thinking of Versailles.

BY JAMES M. BANNER JR.

Some treaties put a definitive end to wars and establish an enduring new order among states. The 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, which ended the 30 years of religious warfare that ravaged Europe in the early 17th century, was one of those. The 1919 Treaty of Versailles, which concluded World War I without setting up lasting stability on the European continent, was of another kind. It's not clear where Michael Neiberg would put the Potsdam Agreement, concluded in 1945 between Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States and the subject of this solid book. Probably somewhere in between.

As every participant in the Potsdam negotiations intended, the agreement finally solved the problems that the Versailles treaty had failed to solve—in fact, that Versailles had helped to create—even if it was 26 years too late and after another world war, the most destructive in history. The trouble was, the Big Three, who gathered outside Berlin after Hitler had died and Germany had surrendered, didn't provide for a lasting, stable order on European soil. But that's not the concern of this book. Instead, Neiberg shows how the three men and their associates put to rest the difficulties that Wilsonian idealism, diplomatic errors, and American avoidance had created in 1919, difficulties that had led to an even larger world conflict. In his estimation, Potsdam was a major achievement despite the Cold War that followed it.

All historians of geopolitical affairs face a choice about how to proceed. Borrowing from political scientists and theorists, they can structure their works around arguments that are as old as Herodotus (the immemorial clash between East and West) or more modern (like Halford Mackinder's emphasis on control of the European "heartland"). They can invoke broad themes, like Russia's historical suspicions of the West, to organize their books, or they can design their subjects as narratives of what occurred,

Potsdam
The End of World War II and the Remaking of Europe
by Michael Neiberg
Basic Books, 336 pp., $29.99

James M. Banner Jr., a historian in Washington, is writing a book about revisionist history.

finding what meaning the subjects hold in the succession of events and decisions that brought about certain outcomes. Neiberg's approach is firmly of that last, traditional kind: He's a skilled storyteller—although, as is often the case with narrative, his book yields no surprises and adds no fresh arguments to earlier studies.

It's in his details that the significance of Potsdam emerges. Neiberg, a historian at the Army War College, sets up his narrative by pointing out that its three main characters—Harry S. Truman, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin—were veterans of the Great War. Truman, an artillery officer, had been under fire in France. Churchill had served as first lord of the Admiralty until the failure of the Gallipoli campaign, then as an officer on the Western Front. Stalin had participated in the Soviet Revolution during the war as commissar of nationalities.

Their experiences in that war, and their understanding of its failed aftermath, determined them once and for all to exorcise the "ghosts" of Versailles, two especially: the reparations enforced on Germany and the American withdrawal from responsibility for ensuring the peace. Aiming to end what some of them saw as another Thirty Years' War, they also had in mind a third "ghost"—appeasement, the notorious 1938 Munich agreement that freed Germany to invade Eastern Europe. This time, Germany would be permanently brought to heel and leashed. But did these men have the stuff—the skills, the knowledge, the political authority—to achieve their vital aim?

Truman arrived at Potsdam not long after having assumed the presidency from the deceased Franklin Roosevelt, who had resolutely kept his vice president in the dark about everything, including the atomic bomb. So unknown and underestimated was Truman that many contemporaries dismissed him as a weak, provincial country boy who required the tutelage of Ivy League statesmen. (Truman reciprocated such feelings, calling British foreign secretary Anthony Eden a "perfect striped-pants boy.") Churchill considered himself capable of influencing the freshman president but was exhausted by the war, drinking heavily, and often distracted. Like FDR with Truman, Churchill held Clement Attlee, the Labour party leader, at arm's length; but Attlee, a member of the British war cabinet, was more knowledgeable about world affairs than was Truman. When Attlee took over after Churchill was ousted from power by elections at home, he got up to speed more easily than did the new American president. Stalin, who thought Truman "vulgar" and belittled Churchill, was the only one of the three to enter the negotiations in a position of unchallenged power at home.

Smiling for the camera: Churchill, Truman, Stalin

This was not a gathering of people overly gracious about each other. Yet the meeting was not without its civilities: sumptuous quarters, lavish dinners, lively parties, sightseeing. Potsdam, formerly home to wealthy Germans, was in the Soviet zone in 1945. It had emerged from the war unscathed. Not so the nearby (formerly) great city of Berlin. As if to make clear the kind of destruction the Soviets had endured, Stalin opened the leveled Berlin cityscape to a kind of tour of the damned for the visiting delegations. Their members took in the stench of rotting corpses, saw thousands of wandering, starving refugees (a huge proportion of them fleeing vicious Soviet depredations in the east), and strolled through Hitler's bunker—from which they didn't hesitate to take souvenirs.

The Soviets, with the usual exception of foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov, proved themselves uncharacteristically friendly and accommodating, which in no way was to affect their negotiating stance. All three allies held firmly to the conviction that Germany had brought its suffering upon itself. Somehow, the defeated nation and its people would have to pay for what they'd wrought. Yet while making Germany pay, the Big Three also had to prevent another rise of *revanchiste* sentiment there. It was not to be easy.

Relating how these aims were achieved, at least on paper, composes the core of this book. Neiberg shows how differing views within, and then between, delegations gradually made way for the final agreement. The key difficulty was determining how to satisfy the Soviet insistence on humiliating vengeance through German reparations. This failed to take into account the risk of once again beggaring Germany and forcing it to rely on American and others' financing to stay afloat in order to avoid the emergence of another embittered Hitlerite regime.

When it became clear that the Soviets would not yield on extracting the maximum spoils of war from what was left of German wealth, the British and Americans, led by Secretary of State James Byrnes (whom Neiberg makes look better than he is usually portrayed), saw a way to satisfy the Soviet Union by agreeing to freedom of action in each

victor's respective zone of occupation. That way, at least some of Germany's surviving industrial capacity in the American, British, and French zones might be preserved and put to use. And since, short of another war, there was no way for the Western allies to prevent Russia from doing what it was set on doing anyway—the Americans having strong reason to believe that the Soviets were already stripping Eastern Europe of its wealth—they had to accept this arrangement. That meant also giving up the aim of a united postwar Germany.

James Byrnes (center) and Harry Truman chat with Captain James Foskett en route to Germany.

What to do about Poland—a problem for Europe since at least the 18th century—was another difficulty. Here, again, the Soviets held the strong cards: They already occupied Poland, and Poland was the historic buffer between Russia and Germany. To Stalin, "the blood of the Soviet people" was due repayment here, as in Germany. Moreover, to the Americans and British, Poland was of less importance than Germany. So Poland once again became the victim of greater powers' needs, doomed to suffer harshly for decades more. As Neiberg puts it, by arranging the Potsdam Agreement to solve "the dilemmas created by the Treaty of Versailles . . . Poland's political and ethnic borders at last lined up reasonably well, and its government would not be in a position to disturb the peace of Europe as it had in 1919."

Finally, there was East Asia. In their final discussions, the Americans and British tried to convince the Soviets to enter the war against Japan. Their pleas failed. Consequently, when the Japanese wouldn't concede defeat short of invasion and destruction of the kind visited upon Germany, Truman ordered the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki while on his way home. The Soviets entered the Pacific war only after the two cities' destruction—and the rest of Asia was dealt with nonchalantly. To everyone in Potsdam, the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Koreans were insignificant. The result, of course, was that while a cold peace would hold in Europe, Asia (save Japan) was left to further warfare.

The Big Three also did not discuss the plight of refugees, the Holocaust, or Palestine. Potsdam wasn't intended to be a comprehensive world agreement; it was designed only to solve immediate postwar European challenges. And in the author's estimation, it succeeded in that aim: The agreement "did surely begin a new chapter in European, and world, history. Potsdam was the final paragraph of the chapter that began on a street corner in Sarajevo [in 1914]."

Yet that convincing conclusion is also the frustration of this book. Neiberg only hints at history's next chapter: post-Potsdam Europe. Like the men who gathered outside Berlin in 1945, he keeps glancing over his shoulder to Versailles and to the failure of Potsdam to deliver an acceptable, general solution to Europe's situation along the lines of, say, Westphalia or the 1815 Congress of Vienna. In 1945, world leaders and their diplomats all wanted to avoid creating new problems for the war-weary European states, and that meant avoiding the errors of 1919. They succeeded, Neiberg believes, in this aim. But for that case to be made conclusively, Neiburg would have to show that the ensuing Cold War owed nothing to the limitations of the Potsdam Agreement.

On the face of it, that claim seems far-fetched, and Neiburg asserts his position without trying, even briefly, to substantiate it. To do so would, of course, require another book—one that contended with the massive existing literature on the origins of the Cold War. But given the depth of the author's knowledge, and his narrative gift, it's regrettable that he doesn't sketch out his argument, indicate where he may differ from others—and thus contribute to one of the most freighted debates of modern history.

In the end, while a fluent narrative of Potsdam days, Neiberg's study raises a key issue about the revival of narrative that so many people, including many professional historians, desire. The glutinous nature of much academic prose may yield little of interest to the general reader. But through debate, new evidence, and technical presentation, academic professional historians, while sacrificing some readership, advance knowledge that eventually finds its way into the stories of the past, such as this one.

Narrative with a theme—the theme here being the effort of the Potsdam negotiators to put the shadows of Versailles behind them—is one thing;

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narrative with argument is something else. A theme is always necessary, but rarely, on its own, does it advance our understanding beyond the facts related. Argument offers an idea that can be assessed on grounds of evidence, clarity of assumptions, and strength of presentation. Then history becomes more than story. It becomes part of the endless arguments that reflections on the past have always been. And if we're lucky, those endless arguments gradually yield to consensus, or at least a narrowing of differences.

If we remove the Versailles conceit from *Potsdam*, the narrative stands strong, but it leaves us with nothing beyond. This book would have been even stronger had it included an assertive argument. ♦

B&A

Strange Interludes

A second introduction to a master of the mysterious.

BY CATHY YOUNG

A middle-aged company man on a business trip in 1970s England gets lost miles from the nearest town and, running out of gas near nightfall, takes refuge at a hostel, where things go from weird to worse.

In a large overheated dining room, the guests eat silently, consuming daunting quantities of food; a matronly server harasses the stranded traveler with nanny-like admonitions to finish his meal, then smashes the plate in a fit of pique when he refuses. The manager, who somehow knows his name, calmly explains that the establishment has no telephone—so as not to disturb the guests' nerves. A beautiful lady guest moves from an unsettlingly intense after-dinner conversation to an equally unsettling amorous advance. A creepy male roommate comes and goes stealthily in the night, and may or may not alter his appearance between outings.

The next morning, someone is dead, and the traveler's adventure ends (or does it?) in an anticlimax likely to leave one asking what in the world happened.

Robert Aickman (1914-1981) happened. A British writer virtually unknown outside a cult following,

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Dark Entries
by Robert Aickman
Faber & Faber, 265 pp., $4.67

Cold Hand in Mine
by Robert Aickman
Faber & Faber, 368 pp., $8.51

The Wine-Dark Sea
by Robert Aickman
Faber & Faber, 464 pp., $8.51

The Unsettled Dust
by Robert Aickman
Faber & Faber, 384 pp., $8.51

Aickman—author of several story collections as well as two novels, two autobiographies, and a book on conservation—is sometimes described as an author of supernatural or horror fiction. But the best way to describe his work is with his own preferred term: "strange stories."

Last summer and fall, to mark the centennial of Aickman's birth, which occurred the day before the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Faber & Faber brought out a four-volume series that comprises about two-thirds of Aickman's short-story oeuvre. *Dark Entries* and *Cold Hand in Mine* are reprints of Aickman's original books, published in 1964 and 1975, respectively; *The Wine-Dark Sea* and *The Unsettled Dust* are posthumous collections assembled from other volumes.

These handsome paperback editions may not spark a Robert Aickman revival, but anyone who picks them up is in for a memorable literary discovery—and a rewarding, though disconcerting, experience.

As a rule in supernatural fiction, mystifying and frightening things have (or eventually get) a logical, if paranormal, explanation, be it ghosts, sorcery, or demonic presence. Aickman's work—such as "The Hospice," the story about the traveler stuck at a sinister hostel—nearly always defies this convention. It's as if a whodunit ended with the "who" still unanswered, and perhaps also the "how" and "why."

There are exceptions. "Pages from a Young Girl's Journal" is a fairly straightforward vampire tale set around 1820, lifted above the genre by its dry humor and skillfully paced descent from mundane into macabre. "Ringing the Changes," Aickman's most-anthologized story, draws on two horror-fiction staples—the town with a dark secret and zombies—to create a stunningly original piece. A couple on their honeymoon, the much older Gerald and his wife Phrynne, find themselves in the midst of a quaint local festival that starts with the incessant ringing of church bells. Here, the answer to the mystery is telegraphed in advance: A fellow lodger at the inn tells Gerald they are literally "ringing to wake the dead," who rise once a year to join the living for a night of orgiastic dance. Gerald half-believes it, at best; but we know it's true—and this knowledge heightens the growing dread, as husband and wife frantically reassure themselves there's no cause to worry.

The frenzied throng finally invades the inn, and Phrynne is dragged away and swept up in the awful revelry. She is rescued, seemingly unharmed; but the very Aickmanesque morning-after

ending hints at some ineffable transformation: "Gerald had become aware of something dividing them which neither of them would ever mention or ever forget."

In other, more quintessential, Aickman stories, ambiguity is all. In "The School Friend," the unspeakable coexists with the deliberately unspoken, starting with the unspecified "catastrophe" that brings the narrator, Mel, a successful novelist, back to her small hometown at the age of 41. Mel's childhood friend, the brilliant and beautiful Sally, returns as well after her reclusive father's death. Before long, Sally starts to change, looking haggard and unkempt, and acting oddly; and there may be someone or something else inhabiting her late father's house. A series of perplexing events culminates in a hair-raising confrontation with Sally, horribly transfigured and "dressed in a very curious way, about which I do not think it fair to say more." A fittingly cryptic coda follows.

Robert Aickman (1960)

"Ravissante" is another tour de force: a story-within-a-story in which a manuscript found in the papers of a deceased, obscure painter describes a life-changing incident from his younger days. On a trip to Belgium, the narrator's visit with a prominent artist's widow, Madame A., quickly turns unpleasant—the old woman is a repulsive gnome-like creature full of nasty gossip—and then veers into the grotesquely surreal. Soon, the spellbound guest is crouched on a bedroom floor, with Madame's jeering encouragement, pawing at dresses that she says belong to her exquisitely beautiful adopted daughter. He is also seeing small animals that *may* be there and a painting that *may* be his. At last he escapes with nothing intact: not his art, not his self, not his sense of reality.

While these stories often have the quality of nightmares or fever dreams—indeed, some of the characters wonder if they are dreaming—Aickman means to hold a fantastical mirror to the real world, not to create a fantasy dreamland. The frame narrator of "Ravissante" observes that "the sheer oddity of life seems to me of more and more importance, because more and more the pretence is that life is charted, predictable, and controllable." Aickman's protagonists tend to learn the hard way that it is not.

The uncontrollable realm includes sex. Several stories—"The View," "The Stains," "Never Visit Venice"—focus on emotionally stunted middle-aged men whose lives are changed, and undone, by a passionate romance with a young, enigmatic (and not necessarily human) woman. These *femmes fatales* are figures of masculine fantasy. But Aickman can also create believable, sympathetic female characters, some of whom fare comparatively well. Margaret Sawyer in "Into the Woods," a housewife profoundly affected by a sojourn at a Swedish sanatorium for insomniacs, is a rare protagonist whose encounter with the unknown may be the start of something better.

Aickman's inventiveness as a storyteller is matched by his fine prose, with sparse and striking descriptions: The men reburying the dead after the festival in "Ringing the Changes" are "as thick as flies on a wound, and as black. . . . In the mild light of an autumn morning the sight of the black and silent toilers was horrible." He evokes with equal deftness the commonplace and the uncanny, the chilling and the lyrical and the poignant. "I wanted that girl more than I had ever wanted anything," muses the protagonist of "The Swords," recalling his sexual initiation. "I wanted to love her and tousle her and all the other, better things we want before the time comes when we know that however much we want them, we're not going to get them." (Being in an Aickman story, the poor bloke ends up getting both less and much more than he bargained for.)

While the circle of Aickman aficionados may be small, there is no shortage of essays and online discussions analyzing his fiction and trying to solve his riddles: A leading theory about "The Hospice" is that the traveler is dead or dying and the hostel is either a gateway to the afterlife or a final hallucination. But such mental gymnastics miss the point. The best clue to Aickman's strange tales is his epigraph to *Cold Hand in Mine*, a quotation from Sacheverell Sitwell: "In the end it is the mystery that lasts and not the explanation."

These mysteries are here to last. ♦

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON

B&A

Max Redux

The first postapocalyptic vision remains the best.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

One Friday evening in 1980, I journeyed to the far West Side of Chicago to a drive-in on Cicero Avenue and attended what may have been the strangest double feature in the history of the world. The top of the bill was *The Gong Show Movie*, a film written by, directed by, and starring Chuck Barris, the host of the TV show of the same name. The B-picture was something called *Mad Max*. And so, sitting in my 1970 Chevy Chevelle, I found myself watching, seriatim, one of the worst movies ever made—for the *The Gong Show Movie* was irredeemably terrible in a way few things ever are—and one of the most sensational action pictures ever made.

Written and directed by an emergency-room doctor named George Miller, *Mad Max* portrays a depopulated Australia cut off from oil and rapidly descending into a state of nature as gangs seek to corner the market on the suddenly scarce resource that made society run.

One good cop, a young husband and father named Max, tries to restore law and order, but when his wife is raped and his son is killed by a gang of gasoline-obsessed crazies, he hunts them down until he finally finds the leader and cuffs his ankle to a car about to catch fire. Max explains that it will take 10 minutes to saw through the handcuffs but only 5 minutes to saw through his own ankle—and the car will explode in less than 10. Then he walks away as the bad guy screams. Roll credits.

Miller drew on the twin anxieties of the civilized world in the late 1970s to give his movie startling resonance: the fear caused by the leap in urban crime in every democratic society, and the fear of Arab and Persian oil power, which had led to an embargo in 1973 that tripled the price of gasoline and to a cutoff of supply following the fall of the shah in Iran.

Mad Max: Fury Road
Directed by George Miller

Miller's inexhaustible invention was evident from the way he figured out how to use the emptiness of the Australian continent to convey the breakdown of order—giving the movie the combined pace of an action thriller and intensity of a horror movie and allowing him to make *Mad Max* for next to nothing.

There would be two sequels over the next few years: *The Road Warrior* and *Beyond Thunderdome*. Miller had a lot more money to play with, and he created entire postapocalyptic societies for us to see through the eyes of Mel Gibson's Max—who became the successor to Clint Eastwood's Man with No Name character from the 1960s spaghetti westerns. There's no question that *The Road Warrior* in particular was enormously influential, spawning hundreds of life-after-the-end-of-civilization movies in dozens of languages over the subsequent decades.

But the epic scale of *The Road Warrior* and *Beyond Thunderdome* makes them seem silly in a way *Mad Max* never is. In addition, Miller turned out to have an unfortunate Jungian streak, and so his movies are shot through with archetypal self-seriousness of the sort peddled so successfully in the 1980s by ersatz wise man Joseph Campbell.

Now, three decades later, Miller has brought forth *Mad Max: Fury Road*. There's a new Max (Tom Hardy), and unlike the old one, who was "mad" in the sense of "angry," this one is "mad" in the sense of "crazy." And so is the movie. It's nuts. It's bananas. It's got the most advanced case of ADHD in motion-picture history. It makes the hyperactive *Road Warrior* look like security-camera footage from the lobby of a Mormon temple.

This is kind of an alt-version of the original story, since we're now 75 years into a postapocalyptic world that has resulted not from an oil shortage but from a global thermonuclear war. Max is taken captive at the beginning of the movie by a vicious warlord who is mostly sealed in plastic to hide his radiation sores. The movie's opening scenes at the warlord's citadel offer a genuinely startling vision of hell on earth. The warlord's army is made up of hairless, white-skinned teenagers whose bodies are racked with cancerous tumors. Max becomes a "blood bag" for one of these kids, meaning that the kid is kept alive and strong through a direct transfusion from Max's veins into his.

The plot, such as it is, kicks into gear when one of the warlord's prize generals, a woman called Furiosa (Charlize Theron), hijacks a makeshift tank and spirits away the warlord's harem of healthy young girls—promising to take them to the land of her birth, "the green place" from which she was kidnapped as a child. Max goes along for the ride, and the rest of the movie is basically one long chase scene.

Fair is fair: It's an amazing chase scene, and it's even more amazing that the freakish energy of this blockbuster emanates from George Miller, who is now 70 and (one would have thought) too old for this sort of thing. In its scale, invention, and power, *Mad Max: Fury Road* puts all other action pictures in memory to shame.

Even so, it's not as good as that cheap little squib of a thing I saw after *The Gong Show Movie* at a Chicago drive-in 35 years ago—that unpredictable, remorseless, and strangely relevant picture that seized on the zeitgeist in an entirely novel way. *Mad Max: Fury Road* pretty much just wants to knock you sideways. ♦

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

...ork Times

...AY, MAY 25, 2015 *ONE DOLLAR CHEAP*

voted for de Blasio, like everyone else we know. But does that have to mean a long, slow descent into Dinkins-era mayhem?

HILLARY CLINTON'S APPEAL SURVIVES SCRUTINY, POLL SAYS

Video of Candidate Strangling Aide in Hotel 'Not a Concern'

By ELLEN FREER
Special to the New York Times

Ten days after a video went viral on social media showing Hillary Clinton strangling a young aide to death, a New York Times/CBS poll reveals the controversy has had little impact on the Democratic frontrunner's support among the party's voters. Indeed, for many Democrats the incident appears to have only heightened her appeal.

On the video, taken on a cell phone April 12 and confirmed by multiple sources as genuine, the aide, 34-year-old Kenneth List, can be heard urging the former secretary of state to show greater "transparency." It was unclear whether he was referring to Mrs. Clinton's use of a private email account when she was secretary of state, the questionable practices of her family's charitable foundation, the recent revelations regarding animal abuse at the Clinton family home in Chappaqua, or some other purported ethical transgression.

Recorded surreptitiously in a conference room of the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee late in the day on which Mrs. Clinton formally declared her intention to run for president, the video has been dismissed by the campaign as "old news" and "an internal matter." "Yes, Hillary has a temper," acknowledges one member of Mrs. Clinton's inner circle, on the condition of anonymity, "but that is not exactly front page news. In fact, we do not even necessarily regard it as a liability."

This optimism was confirmed by the poll, which indicates more members of her own party now view Mrs. Clinton as a "strong leader" than prior to the episode, with her favorability rating rising 9 points among Democrats to 88 percent.

Chatham House

In an image from the video, Hillary Clinton mocks her strangulation victim.

While roughly 48 percent of Americans overall say Mrs. Clinton is psychotic, only about one in five Democrats agree with this characterization. Indeed, many say they have made a point of ignoring media reports of Mr. List's strangulation and express annoyance that it has received the attention it has.

"I think the whole thing is political and it's all going to go away," says Norman Gabler, 83, a retiree from *Philadelphia*. "There are always going to be people trying to dig up dirt, but no one I know cares. People just like her."

Others point to the fact that District Attorney for Milwaukee County John T. Chisholm has repeatedly declined to investigate the matter. "It is not our job to poke around the lives of individual citizens, no matter how prominent," he said yesterday, speaking by phone from Milwaukee. "What Mrs. Clinton does in the privacy of her home or office—and, in this case, the conference room served the same purpose—is her own business. I will not engage in a witch hunt for political ends." Mr. Chisholm refused to confirm reports that he is seeking indictments against the individual who made the video public.

The survey also revealed that roughly 83 percent of Democrats, or more than four in five, say Mrs. Clinton shares the values they themselves try to live by, and 97 percent say the fact that she is a woman is of "high," "extreme" or "overriding" importance to them.

In a related development, the Clinton campaign yesterday unveiled a new advertising campaign aimed at further enhancing this aspect of Mrs. Clinton's appeal. Campaign materials that previously bore the slogan "Ready for Hillary" will be replaced with those bearing the word VOTE and the image of a speculum. Sources within the campaign confirm that many men won't get it. "But our core voters get it—they're not stupid," says a campaign spokes-

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