

ARE WE BETTER  
OFF NOW . . . ?  
NOEMIE EMERY

the weekly

# Standard

JULY 6 / JULY 13, 2015 • \$4.95



SUMMER  
READING

# Contents

July 6 / July 13, 2015 • Volume 20, Number 41



- 2 The Scrapbook *Confederacy dunces, for whom the kettlebell tolls, & more*
- 5 Casual *Joseph Bottum, morning truant*
- 6 Editorials *'Peak Leftism'? • The Iran Deal, Then and Now • It Could Have Been Worse*

## Articles

- 12 Running on Empty BY JAY COST  
*So much for ecstatic modes of living*
- 14 Do They Have a Prayer? BY MICHAEL WARREN  
*GOP candidates court the evangelical vote*
- 16 Republicans to the Rescue BY FRED BARNES  
*A rare partnership on free trade*
- 17 China's Foreign Aid Offensive BY CHARLES WOLF JR.  
*What will Beijing gain from its massive assistance program?*
- 19 Environmental Religions BY IRWIN M. STELZER  
*The climate change crusade gains a prominent leader*

## Feature

- 22 Are We Better Off Now? BY NOEMIE EMERY  
*Looking back at the Iraq war*

## Books & Arts

- 26 White House Cool BY TEVI TROY  
*Celebrity as two-edged sword for presidents*
- 27 Fighting Siblings BY DOMINIC GREEN  
*The House of Windsor in uniform*
- 29 Atlanticspeak BY MICHAEL M. ROSEN  
*What we say over here, what they hear over there*
- 30 A Tragic Hero BY MICHAEL DIRDA  
*Offscreen and on the battlefield with Audie Murphy*
- 32 Say It Again BY CLAUDIA ANDERSON  
*A liberal makes the conservative case for free speech*
- 33 Manhattan Fare BY AMY HENDERSON  
*A pilgrim's guide to the Algonquin Round Table*
- 34 Screen Tests BY SONNY BUNCH  
*The verdict(s) on a half-century of moviegoing*
- 35 Max Unillustrated BY DANNY HEITMAN  
*A major minor master in prose*
- 37 The East Wing BY ARAM BAKSHIAN JR.  
*All the presidents' spouses in one place*
- 39 Wellington's Axis BY STEPHEN G. SMITH  
*At Waterloo, victory pivoted on a farmhouse*
- 40 Girl in the Mirror BY SOPHIE FLACK  
*One very unconventional coming-of-age*
- 41 Spectral Presence BY DAVID AIKMAN  
*Echoes of Salem across the centuries*
- 43 An Afghan Tale BY ANN MARLOWE  
*Reality and unreality at a Combat Outpost*
- 44 Parody BY A TEACHABLE MOMENT

# Allen Weinstein, 1937-2015

Thirty-seven years later, it is difficult to describe the impact of Allen Weinstein's *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case* on the America of 1978. Weinstein died last week at the age of 77, but his most famous work has long since been enshrined in the historical canon. Here's why.

One of the unseemly byproducts of the Watergate scandal of the early 1970s, and of Richard Nixon's resignation from the presidency, had been the rehabilitation—and in some cases the celebration—of certain Nixon political adversaries. Chief among these was Alger Hiss, the onetime New Deal lawyer and State Department official who had been accused of spying for the Soviet Union and convicted of perjury in 1950. It was Rep. Richard Nixon who had led the congressional inquiry into the Hiss case, which featured (among other dramatic details) a testimonial standoff between Hiss and his chief accus-

er, former *Time* editor and once fellow Communist Whittaker Chambers.

From the time of Hiss's conviction and brief imprisonment until the publication of *Perjury*, it had been an article of faith among many liberals, here and abroad, that Hiss was not a Soviet spy but a victim of anti-Communist hysteria. Perceptions of Hiss's innocence, like the innocence of the atomic spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, depended largely on left-wing revulsion at his prosecutors. Nixon's resignation in disgrace (1974) only deepened this instinct, and Alger Hiss enjoyed a brief and well-rewarded celebrity in the journalistic-intellectual-academic circles of the disco era.

Allen Weinstein, a young history professor at Smith College, shared the conventional view of the case and set out to vindicate Hiss in a definitive scholarly study. But his deep research and wide-ranging inquiries—gradually and very much to his surprise—led

him to the unanticipated conclusion that Nixon and Chambers were right: Alger Hiss had been a Communist and Soviet spy in the 1930s and '40s, lied about it under oath, and been properly convicted of perjury.

It is no exaggeration to say that *Perjury* created a sensation and sorely tested the integrity of Hiss's advocates. To his eternal credit, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. wrote at the time that *Perjury* is "the most objective and convincing account we have of the most dramatic court case of the century." And although, decades later, a handful of Hiss partisans still exist on the fringes of political discourse, years of revelations from the Soviet archives, and other authoritative sources, have long since confirmed Weinstein's pioneering work and Hiss's guilt—as well as set the stage for the corrective scholarship of Cold War historians such as Ronald Radosh, Harvey Klehr, and John Earl Haynes. ♦

## 'It's Never Anyone's Turn to Be President'

THE SCRAPBOOK's faith in the younger generation has just spiked upwards. A reader emails us an editorial from the *Zephyr*, student paper of the Brearley School, the very liberal prep school on Manhattan's Upper East Side. A tip of THE SCRAPBOOK's homburg to author and editor in chief Claire Kozak for the cogently argued and gracefully written piece, which we reproduce here:

I am, without question, a feminist. I have attended an all-girls school for nearly ten years, and I have had the remarkable opportunity to grow up in an environment that is dedicated to educating and empowering women. I believe that we should have a woman president. But when that day comes, I want that woman to be elected because of her accomplishments. Not her gender.

However, Hillary Clinton's popularity seems to be based on her identity as a woman. Since she announced her candidacy in a video where she claimed to be the voice of the "everyday American," she has answered very few questions on substantial issues. She's spoken about a small number of key issues including campaign reform and immigration—topics where her opinion will be popular among the Democratic community. But mainly, her selling point is speaking for the American people. This might be a noble cause, but it is a campaign strategy that doesn't tell us much about her plans. And yet, she continues an unusually smooth and silent glide towards the White House. In early February, President Obama's former campaign manager Jim Messina voiced the phrase that many have now made their own, "It's Hillary's Turn."

This phrase has a complicated history. In past years, it has actually referred to the political tradition of the vice

president or vice presidential candidate becoming the party's nominee. However, the phrase has been appropriated by many of Hillary's fans to signify her rightful claim to the oval office because it's time for a woman president.

But the fact is, it's never anyone's turn to be president. The presidency is one of the most complex and demanding positions in the world, and when someone is chosen to lead the United States of America, it should be because they are the most qualified person for the job. Gender, race, socioeconomic status, or religion should not factor into a presidential election.

Margaret Thatcher did not become Prime Minister of the United Kingdom because of her gender. She earned the votes of the British people with the clarity of her positions. She made it very clear what her policies were, and she won that office three times. Benazir Bhutto did not serve two terms as the Prime Minister of Pakistan because she was a woman—she led her country

because voters thought she was the most equipped person to do so at the time. Golda Meir was elected as the fourth Prime Minister of Israel because of her politics and previous experience as the Minister of International Affairs. All of these women leaders were highly qualified and clear in their positions.

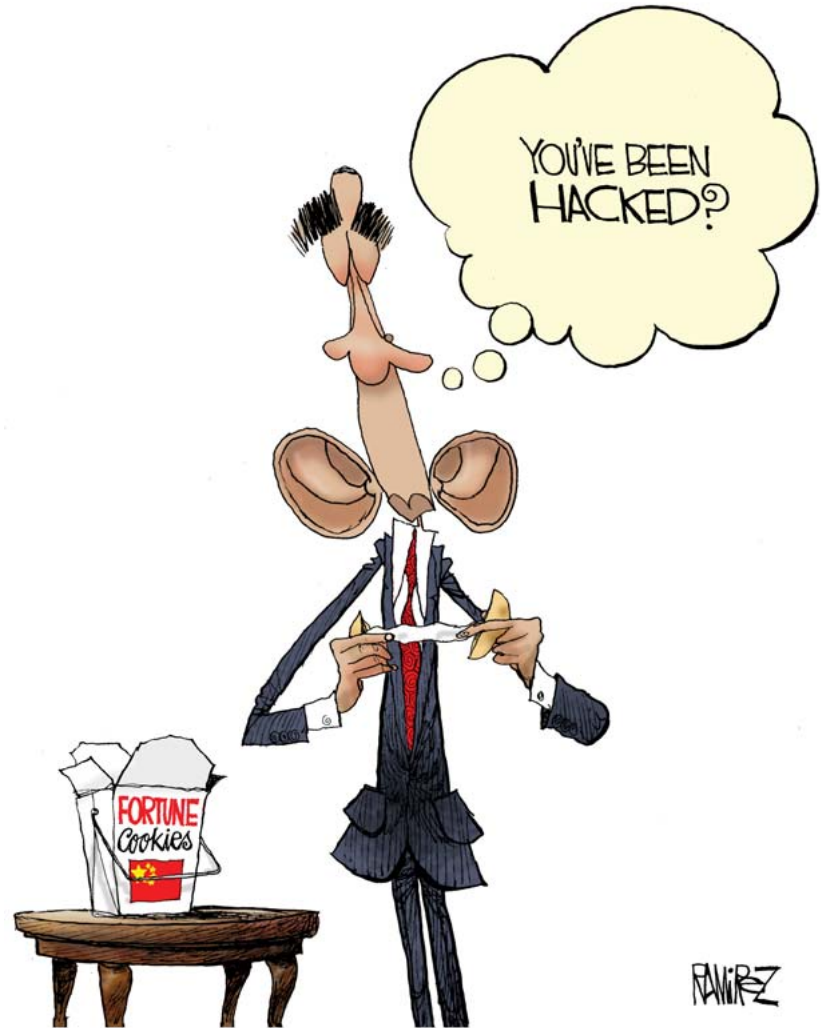
If anyone “deserves” to be president, it should be because of his or her policies, promises, plans for the country, and political record. It shouldn’t be because the government needs to diversify. Feminism and gender equality are relevant and highly important issues, without a doubt. But we cannot elect a woman president just because it is time for a woman to be president.

And when we do elect a female president, it should be because she is the most qualified person for the job, because she has won the hearts and minds of the American people with her promises and positions on national and international issues. As of now, Mrs. Clinton has barely campaigned. She has steered clear of major issues like America’s war on terror or her plans for the conflict in the Middle East, focusing instead on the feel-good notion of representing Americans. She has spoken only on issues of little substance, and has avoided controversial and personal topics that need to be addressed.

So, Mrs. Clinton, start answering questions. Start telling us your policies, instead of making general statements about how you want to be the voice of the American people. Show us why you are the most qualified person for the job. Once you can do that, you might get my vote. But you need to earn it, first. ♦

## Confederacy Dunces

Did the clock just strike 13, or are we now in the middle of some interminable national conversation about all the things we’d like to ban? It started with the Confederate flag, a controversial emblem to be sure. THE SCRAPBOOK is not opposed to removing the flag as an official state symbol. But there is something unseemly, to say the least, in the rush by institutions and corporations and lawmakers to use



the horrific murder of nine worshippers at a black church in Charleston by a racist psychopath as the occasion for social justice theater. The effect this will have in reducing racism, let alone blunting violent impulses, is nonexistent. And dare we say it? To the extent such crimes are motivated in part by a sick desire for the spotlight, last week’s cascade of crazy might even be counterproductive.

Retailers such as Walmart, Amazon, and eBay—spurred by activist media calling them for comment—have decided not to sell any more Confederate-themed merchandise. (Despite this, you can still buy all manner of Communist and Nazi regalia at their sites.) Warner Brothers announced it will no longer license *Dukes of Haz-*

*ard* merchandise with the Confederate flag. *New York Post* film critic Lou Lumenick decreed “*Gone with the Wind* should go the way of the Confederate flag.” The Senate majority leader called for the statue of Jefferson Davis to be taken down from his native Kentucky’s capitol. Students at the University of Texas at Austin called for the removal of their Jefferson Davis statue.

Apple removed a slew of Civil War video games from its app store. Many of these games strive for historical accuracy. And again, there are World War II video games, especially what they call “first-person shooter” games, that allow you to play from the perspective of a Nazi. The makers of the game *Ultimate General: Gettysburg* issued a useful statement—

We receive a lot of letters of gratitude from American teachers who use our game in history curriculum to let kids experience one of the most important battles in American history from the Commander's perspective.

Spielberg's "Schindler's List" did not try to amend his movie to look more comfortable. The historical "Gettysburg" movie (1993) is still on iTunes. We believe that all historical art forms: books, movies, or games such as ours, help to learn and understand history, depicting events as they were. True stories are more important to us than money.

Therefore we are not going to amend the game's content and Ultimate General: Gettysburg will no longer be available on AppStore.

When the makers of video games come off as voices of thoughtful and uncompromising reason in the face of political hysteria, things have truly run off the rails. ♦

## For Whom the Kettlebell Tolls

Needless to say, THE SCRAPBOOK was horrified last week to learn that Sean (Diddy) Combs had been arrested in Los Angeles and charged with assault with a deadly weapon, making terrorist threats, and battery. All of this took place on the UCLA campus, where Combs's son Justin is a member of the football team and Diddy is in the habit of watching practice sessions. On this particular afternoon, he seems to have been angered by an assistant coach's criticism of his son's performance. He later confronted and threatened the coach, swinging a kettlebell—a heavy iron object used in weight training—at people trying to restrain him.

All of this, presumably, will be sorted out in the judicial system, and THE SCRAPBOOK has no doubt that the much-admired Diddy—a stalwart supporter of the Democratic party who once stood trial in connection with a New York nightclub shooting and who witnessed the 1997 murder of rapper Notorious B.I.G.—will ultimately be vindicated. "The

various accounts of the event . . . are wholly inaccurate," a Diddy spokesman said. "Once the true facts are revealed, the case will be dismissed."

Yet anxious as THE SCRAPBOOK may be to learn the "true facts," it is not the incident that interests us so much as the circumstances of Justin Combs's matriculation at UCLA. For it turns out that young Combs is not just a member of the Bruins squad—albeit one who reportedly sees little playing time—but is the recipient of a full athletic scholarship to play football there. The former coach who recruited him, Rick Neuheisel, has acknowledged that if Justin Combs's father were someone other than Diddy, he might not have recruited him: "When you're weighing the assets of what a youngster can do for your program," he says, "there's no question [being Diddy's son] had something to do with it for me."

Of course, in practical terms, what this means is that a spot on the UCLA roster was denied to some deserving but unfamous high school athlete so that the son of Sean (Diddy) Combs could warm the UCLA bench. According to *Forbes* last year, Diddy is worth an estimated \$700 million. Alas, there is no evidence that Diddy, given his extraordinary wealth, has made anything but an ordinary taxpayer's contribution to California's hard-pressed higher-education system. And Justin, for his part, once explained on Twitter that "regardless of what the circumstances are, I put that work in!!!! PERIOD."

THE SCRAPBOOK understands that it's prudent for institutions of higher learning to regard the admission of certain applicants as a likely investment; and Coach Neuheisel undoubtedly had visions of a Combs Gymnasium. But was it necessary to offer this particular scholar-athlete a free ride? As far as THE SCRAPBOOK is concerned, simply admitting the son of Sean (Diddy) Combs was probably sufficient for UCLA's purposes. But now, with the potentially lethal swing of a kettlebell, and those felony charges, UCLA has lost considerably more than it gained. ♦

# the weekly Standard

[www.weeklystandard.com](http://www.weeklystandard.com)

William Kristol, *Editor*

Fred Barnes, Terry Eastland, *Executive Editors*

Richard Starr, *Deputy Editor*

Claudia Anderson, *Managing Editor*

Christopher Caldwell, Andrew Ferguson,  
Victorino Matus, Lee Smith, *Senior Editors*

Philip Terzian, *Literary Editor*

Stephen F. Hayes, Mark Hemingway,  
Matt Labash, Jonathan V. Last,  
John McCormack, *Senior Writers*

Jay Cost, Michael Warren, *Staff Writers*

Daniel Halper, *Online Editor*

Kelly Jane Torrance, *Assistant Managing Editor*

Ethan Epstein, *Associate Editor*

Julianne Dudley, Jim Swift, *Assistant Editors*

David Bahr, Erin Mundahl, *Editorial Assistants*

Philip Chalk, *Design Director*

Barbara Kytte, *Design Assistant*

Teri Perry, *Executive Assistant*

Max Boot, Joseph Bottum,  
Tucker Carlson, Matthew Continetti,  
Noemie Emery, Joseph Epstein,  
David Frum, David Gelernter,  
Reuel Marc Gerecht, Michael Goldfarb,  
Mary Katharine Ham, Brit Hume,  
Frederick W. Kagan, Charles Krauthammer,  
Yuval Levin, Tod Lindberg,  
Robert Messenger, P.J. O'Rourke,  
John Podhoretz, Irwin M. Stelzer,  
*Contributing Editors*

### MediaDC

Ryan McKibben, *Chairman*

Stephen R. Sparks, *President & Chief Operating Officer*

Grace Paine Terzian, *Chief Communications Officer*

Kathy Schaffhauser, *Chief Financial Officer*

Catherine Lowe, *Integrated Marketing Director*

Mark Walters, *Sr. V.P. Marketing Services & Advertising*

Paul Anderson, T. Barry Davis,  
Andrew Kaumeier, Brooke McIngvale,  
Paul Plawin, Jason Roberts  
*Advertising Sales*

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

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of Clarity Media Group, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, and fourth week in August) at 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-274-7293. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-386-597-4378 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, \$4.95. Back issues, \$4.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit [www.weeklystandard.com](http://www.weeklystandard.com) or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. Copyright 2014, Clarity Media Group. All rights reserved. No material in The Weekly Standard may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. The Weekly Standard is a registered trademark of Clarity Media Group.



## Midnight's Child

**M**orning comes like a great bird, sailing over the dark curve of the earth to illuminate the hills and trees. Dawn arrives like an angel's burning sword, expelling night from the garden of this world. Sunrise melts to fresh dew the last wisps of frost across the lawn, a diamond sparkle in the golden angle of the sun's first rays, and in the background always plays "Morning Mood," the opening movement of Grieg's first *Peer Gynt Suite*.

Or maybe "Spring" from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. The Beatles' "Here Comes the Sun"? Peter Gabriel's "Solsbury Hill," which movie soundtracks seem to use for scoring almost any uplifting scene? Hard to say, really, since I'm not at my best before noon. Or maybe mid-afternoon. Evening, certainly—by 6:00 P.M. or so, I'm raring to go: bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, facing the new day's challenges with a well-rested dedication and commitment. Shouldering life's burdens with a good and happy will.

Not that I have anything against the A.M. hours. They have their part to play in this crazy cavalcade of life, no doubt, and who am I to condemn times I've rarely encountered? Or, at least, rarely encountered from the sunny side. Most days I see the clock well past midnight: the early hours in their dark mood, when they dress in nightshades and prowl the deserted alleys and the empty docks down by the water. It's a different look from the new morn, with its face all scrubbed, tying the strings of its bright apron around its gingham dress.

No, the only trouble with morning is that it comes too early in the day, while I'm still asleep. Given that

measured time is a human invention—its arbitrariness revealed by the games we play with "daylight savings" (which may be the oddest phrase currently allowed in English without a doctor's prescription)—you'd think somebody would do something about the way morning disappears before we night owls have a chance to appreciate it. I mean, the dawn-besotted



music of Edvard Grieg does give me a sense of what it might be like, but why are early risers the only ones who get to taste the day's worms?

I know I'm not alone in this circadian deprivation. Recent studies have suggested that the later classes begin, the better boys do in school. Girls less so—more proof, if it were needed, of the advantages American education gives its female students. My father always said that the one thing his two years in the Army taught him was how to get up in the morning. But he never said it with anything like fondness or gratitude in his voice.

In truth, I have measured out my life in broken alarm clocks, smashed

in the ham-handed attempt to shut them off. I have spent my years with pillows curled around my head to block out the clatter of morning traffic. I think I made it to brunch a time or two, back when I was young, but breakfast is basically a dream of lives I haven't led. Rex Stout's assistant detective Archie Goodwin once admitted his need to find a way to wake up in the morning without resenting it: "It may be that a bevy of beautiful maidens in pure silk yellow very sheer gowns, barefooted, singing 'Oh, What a Beautiful Morning' and scattering rose petals over me would do the trick," he agreed, "but I'd have to try it." As would we all.

Back when I lived in Washington, there was a congressman who called me, looking for someone to meet him for breakfast once or twice a month and talk about the novels he had read as an undergraduate and wanted to have back in mind. I tried to explain to him that no one capable of talking about *Ulysses* is capable of doing it before noon—the mutual exclusivity of literary criticism and early rising a fact well documented in the literature—but he wasn't buying it. "Morning is the best time," he insisted. The town is quiet, the workday only started, and the mind fresher, more able to absorb ideas and operate efficiently.

Perhaps so. Perhaps each new morning glows with a golden and graceful light. Perhaps brightness falls from the air like luminous, new-minted coins, and the early worms gladly offer themselves up as sacrifices. Perhaps the world's soundtrack plays a feel-good movie score from dawn to noon. Perhaps bebies of maidens really do scatter rose petals on those who rise to meet the day without bashing their alarm clocks and cursing the ungodly hours.

How would I know?

JOSEPH BOTTUM

# ‘Peak Leftism’?

It’s the summer of 2015, and the left is on the march. Or perhaps one should say—since the left presumably dislikes the militarist connotations of the term “march”—that the left is swarming. And in its mindless swarming and mob-like frenzy, nearly every hideous aspect of contemporary leftism is on display.

We see a French Revolution-like tendency to move with the speed of light from a reasonable and perhaps overdue change (taking down the Confederate flag over state buildings) to an all-out determination to expunge from our history any recognition or respect for that which doesn’t fully comport with contemporary progressive sentiment. The left’s point, of course, is not to clarify and sharpen appreciation for our distinctive history; the point is to discredit that history.

And the point is not to advance arguments and criticize alternative views; it is to deny the legitimacy of opposing arguments and to demonize opponents and purge them from the public square.

We see a pitiful aversion to standing up to barbarism abroad and a desperate willingness to accommodate and appease. This requires an amazing ability to shut one’s eyes to reality, and an extraordinary refusal to make tough decisions and assume real responsibilities. As Harvey Mansfield put it in the 1970s, “From having been the aggressive doctrine of vigorous, spirited men, liberalism has become hardly more than a trembling in the presence of illiberalism. . . . Who today is called a liberal for strength and confidence in defense of liberty?”

We see a wanton willingness on the part of leftist elites to use sophisticated arguments to override democratic self-government when the people might not endorse the outcome (say, “marriage equality”) that the left has decided “progress” requires. We see a desperate desire to find a secular substitute for religious belief in the embrace of abstract doctrines (“global warming”) that are appropriately renamed (“climate change”) when the facts complicate matters. And we see a cavalier willingness to impose costs on others less fortunate and less well-protected for the sake of the left’s moral self-regard (by, for example, pledging to end “the era of mass incarceration,” also known as the era of crime reduction).

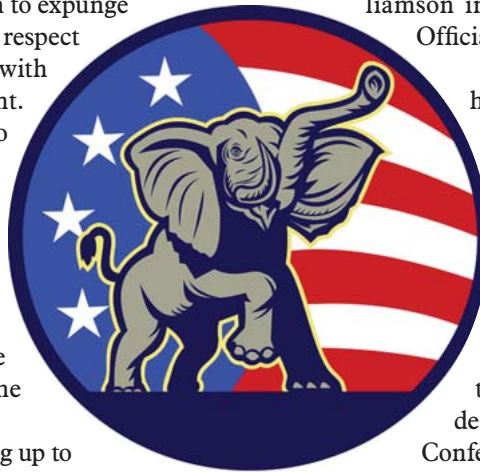
But as Alexander Hamilton (another recent object of the left’s perpetual discomfort with human achievement) wrote in *Federalist* 70: “There can be no need . . . to multiply arguments or examples on this head.” All the trends and tendencies, the pathologies and perversities that have made the modern left so corrosive of national spirit, so corrupting of self-government, so damaging to Western civilization, are on display front and center in today’s America. As the title of a brilliant article by Kevin D. Williamson in *National Review* puts it, “We Have Officially Reached Peak Leftism.”

Williamson interprets this moment hopefully, as one of leftist desperation, as a sense on the part of the left that time is running out: “The hysterical shrieking about the fictitious rape epidemic on college campuses, the attempts to fan the unhappy events in Ferguson and Baltimore into a national racial conflagration, the silly and shallow ‘inequality’ talk—these are signs of progressivism in decadence. So is the brouhaha over the Confederate flag.” It’s all, he concludes, “a fraud.” And, Williamson posits, “some scales are starting to fall from some eyes.”

Let’s hope so. The term “Peak Leftism” first came to our notice in an interesting essay several months ago by Robert Tracinski, “Have We Already Reached Peak Leftism?” Tracinski points out just how bad things have gotten in the academy, just how lopsided the left’s dominance is. And he suggests, “There are two ways to look at this trend: as evidence that we are doomed because the left has taken over the key institutions of the culture—or as evidence that the left has reached such a high degree of saturation that they have nowhere to go but down.”

Tracinski argues that we may well have reached peak leftism. He sets forth various factors, most notably a deep tendency for institutions and trends to revert to the mean, that indicate things will get better. But he also acknowledges, “I don’t mean to suggest that a cultural reversion to the mean is inevitable.”

Of course the very term “peak leftism” makes that point. The term plays off the claim that America, or the world, had reached “peak oil.” But it turns out that “peak oil” wasn’t a peak. Fracking means we’re producing more



oil than ever before. So, to pursue the analogy, will the left's cultural fracking take it to new heights?

The only way to ensure leftism has peaked, and to ensure that it doesn't drag us further down into the abyss, is to fight it and defeat it. We either overcome peak leftism, or we're doomed.

—William Kristol

---

# The Iran Deal, Then and Now

One week before the June 30 deadline for a nuclear deal with Iran, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei made a series of demands about the final terms. Among them: He called for an immediate end to all United Nations Security Council and U.S. economic sanctions on Iran; he said Iranian military sites would not be subject to international inspections; he declared that Iran would not abide a long-term freeze on nuclear research; and he ruled out interviews with individuals associated with Iran's nuclear program as part of any enforcement plan.

The *New York Times* headline read "Iran's Supreme Leader, Khamenei, Seems to Pull Back on Nuclear Talks." That's one explanation. The more likely one: Khamenei understands that Barack Obama is desperate for this deal and will agree to just about anything to make it a reality. In private remarks caught on tape, top White House foreign policy adviser Ben Rhodes likened the Iran deal to Obamacare in its importance to the administration. And on April 2, the president held a press conference to celebrate the preliminary "historic understanding with Iran" that, he said, was "a good deal, a deal that meets our core objectives."

But the impending deal is not a good one. It legitimizes a rogue state, shifts regional power to the world's most aggressive state sponsor of terror, strengthens the mullahs' hold on power, and guides Iran to nuclear threshold status. Those are not our "core objectives." They are Iran's.

A steady stream of news reports in the weeks before

the deadline has brought into sharp focus the extent of the administration's capitulation. Among the most disturbing new developments: the administration's decision to offer relief on sanctions not directly related to Iran's nuclear program and its abandonment of hard requirements that Iran disclose previous nuclear activity, without which the international community cannot establish a baseline for future inspections.

From the beginning of the talks, the Obama administration has chosen to "decouple" negotiations on Iran's nuclear program from the many other troubling aspects of Tehran's behavior. It was bit of self-deception that allowed the United States and its negotiating partners to pretend that concerns about the Iranian regime's possessing nuclear weapons had everything to do with nuclear weapons and nothing at all to do with the nature of the Iranian regime; it was an approach that treated Iran as if it were, say, Luxembourg. The Obama administration simply set aside Iran's targeting of Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan, its brutal repression of internal dissent, its provision of safe haven and operational freedom for al Qaeda leadership, and its support for terrorists sowing discord throughout the region and beyond.

Now we learn that the administration is effectively ending this decision to "decouple" nuclear talks from broader regime behavior, not in order to hold Iran to account for its many offenses but as something of a reward for its supporting a nuclear deal. It is a swift and stunning reversal. In his Rose Garden statement less than three months ago, the president declared that under the terms of any agreement, sanctions on Iran "for its support of terrorism, its human rights abuses, its ballistic missile program, will continue to be fully enforced." But the Associated Press reported earlier this month that "the Obama administration may have to backtrack on its promise

that it will suspend only nuclear-related economic sanctions" and will do so by redefining what it means to be "nuclear-related." Under the new interpretation, sanctions unrelated to Iran's nuclear program may be deemed "nuclear-related" if they helped push Iran into nuclear talks or if they overlap with "previous actions conceived as efforts to stop Iran's nuclear program."

Likewise, the U.S. capitulation on Iranian disclosure of previous nuclear activity is both hasty and alarming. As recently as April, Secretary of State John Kerry suggested that Iranian disclosure of past activity was a red line for U.S. negotiators. "They have to do it. It will be done. If



GARY LOCKE

there's going to be a deal, it will be done. It will be part of a final agreement. It has to be."

But on June 16, Kerry cast aside those demands. "We're not fixated on Iran specifically accounting for what they did at one point in time or another. We know what they did. We have no doubt. We have absolute knowledge with respect to the certain military activities they were engaged in. What we're concerned about is going forward."

We can't yet know all the concessions the United States has made in order to secure a deal, but the list of those that are known is long and embarrassing.

#### On decoupling nuclear negotiations and sanctions relief on nonnuclear items

**Then:** "We have made very clear that the nuclear negotiations are focused exclusively on the nuclear issue and do not include discussions of regional issues."

*March 10, 2015, Bernadette Meehan, National Security Council spokesman, email to THE WEEKLY STANDARD*

"Other American sanctions on Iran for its support of terrorism, its human rights abuses, its ballistic missile program, will continue to be fully enforced."

*April 2, 2015, Barack Obama, statement in the Rose Garden*

"Iran knows that our array of sanctions focused on its efforts to support terrorism and destabilize the region will continue after any nuclear agreement."

*June 7, 2015, Treasury Secretary Jack Lew, remarks to Jerusalem Post conference, New York City*

**Now:** "Administration officials say they're examining a range of options that include suspending both nuclear and some non-nuclear sanctions."

*June 9, 2015, Associated Press*

#### On the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program and disclosure of past activities

**Then:** "They have to do it. It will be done. If there's going to be a deal, it will be done. . . . It will be part of a final agreement. It has to be."

*April 8, 2015, Secretary of State John Kerry interview with The NewsHour*

"The set of understandings also includes an acknowledgment by Iran that it must address all United Nations Security Council resolutions—which Iran has long claimed are illegal—as well as past and present issues with Iran's nuclear program that have been identified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This would include resolution of questions concerning the possible

## Businesses Hire 500,000 Veterans and Military Spouses

### By Thomas J. Donohue

President and CEO  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

As Americans gear up to celebrate the July 4th holiday, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is celebrating a major milestone for Hiring Our Heroes, an initiative that helps veterans, businesses, and our economy.

Four years ago, the U.S. Chamber launched Hiring Our Heroes with a simple mission: connecting veterans and military spouses with employment opportunities in the private sector and helping put them on fulfilling career paths.

Today, more than 2,000 businesses have committed to hire some 707,000 veterans and military spouses through the Hiring 500,000 Heroes campaign, sponsored by Capital One. As of this month, more than half a million of them have already received jobs. The Hiring Our Heroes program has also hosted 900 job fairs across the country and holds more every week.

These are remarkable achievements,

but our work isn't finished yet.

Over the next three to five years, 1.5 million U.S. military personnel will hang up their uniforms and transition into the civilian workforce. The unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans remains above the national average—and more than double for veterans under 25. The situation is even worse for military spouses, 25% of whom are without a job. Their work is often interrupted by frequent moves, making it challenging to build and sustain rewarding careers.

The good news is that hiring service members and their spouses isn't a hard sell. It gives companies the opportunity to do the right thing for our country and the smart thing for their businesses. Veterans are excellent job candidates. They've received world-class training by the military and have developed critical skills that are attractive to employers. Their leadership and experience have been tested and proven in duty. Likewise, military spouses possess attributes that make them strong job candidates. They are resilient,

adaptable, and effective under pressure.

Through key partnerships in the private and public sectors, and with the engagement of state and local chambers, Hiring Our Heroes will continue to drive momentum in the nationwide movement to address this challenge. It will keep working to educate businesses on the value these heroes can add to their workforces and help veterans translate their military skills into civilian careers. And the program will continue to meet the unique needs of wounded veterans and their caretakers.

As Hiring Our Heroes pushes into its fourth year, don't expect us to be content celebrating successes or counting milestones. Our nation is indebted to the men and women who have served and sacrificed for us—ensuring that civilian career opportunities await them is one important way we can show our gratitude.



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
[www.uschamber.com/blog](http://www.uschamber.com/blog)

military dimension of Iran's nuclear program, including Iran's activities at Parchin."

*November 23, 2013, White House fact sheet, First Step: Understandings Regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran's Nuclear Program*

**Now:** "World powers are prepared to accept a nuclear agreement with Iran that doesn't immediately answer questions about past atomic weapons work. . . . Instead of resolving such questions this month, officials said the U.S. and its negotiating partners are working on a list of future commitments Iran must fulfill."

*June 11, 2015, Associated Press*

"We're not fixated on Iran specifically accounting for what they did at one point in time or another. We know what they did. We have no doubt. We have absolute knowledge with respect to the certain military activities they were engaged in. What we're concerned about is going forward."

*June 24, 2015, Secretary of State John Kerry, remarks at a press availability*

#### **On shuttering the secret nuclear facility at Fordo**

**Then:** The Obama administration and its partners are "demanding the immediate closing and ultimate dismantling" of the nuclear facilities at Fordo.

*April 7, 2012, New York Times*

"We know they don't need to have an underground, fortified facility like Fordo in order to have a peaceful program."

*December 6, 2013, Barack Obama, remarks at the Saban Forum*

**Now:** "Under the preliminary accord, Fordo would become a research center, but not for any element that could potentially be used in nuclear weapons."

*April 22, 2015, New York Times*

"The 1044 centrifuges [at Fordo] designated only for non-nuclear enrichment will remain installed, so they could potentially be reconverted to enriching uranium in a short time regardless of technical or monitoring arrangements."

*June 17, 2015, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Olli Heinonen, former IAEA deputy director-general for safeguards, and Simon Henderson, director of the Gulf and Energy Policy Program at WINEP*

A draft copy of the final agreement allows Fordo to remain open, "saying it will be used for isotope production instead of uranium enrichment."

*June 24, 2015, Associated Press*

#### **On suspension of enrichment**

**Then:** "Our position is clear: Iran must live up to its

international obligations, including full suspension of uranium enrichment as required by multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions."

*April 7, 2012, National Security Council spokesman Tommy Vietor, New York Times*

**Now:** "Agreement on Iran's uranium enrichment program could signal a breakthrough for a larger deal aimed at containing the Islamic Republic's nuclear activities." The tentative deal imposes "limits on the number of centrifuges Iran can operate to enrich uranium" but allows Iran to continue enrichment.

*March 19, 2015, Associated Press*

#### **On ballistic missile development**

**Then:** Iran's ballistic missile program "is indeed something that has to be addressed as part of a comprehensive agreement."

*February 4, 2014, Under Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee*

"They have to deal with matters related to their ballistic missile program that are included in the United Nations Security Council resolution that is part of, explicitly, according to the Joint Plan of Action, the comprehensive resolution negotiation."

*February 18, 2014, White House spokesman Jay Carney, White House press briefing*

**Now:** "We must address long-range ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. So, it's not about ballistic missiles per se. It's about when a missile is combined with a nuclear warhead."

*July 29, 2014, Under Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee*

These specific concessions matter. So do the ones we'll learn about in coming days. Together they make the path to an Iranian nuclear weapon easier and the prospect of preventing one ever more remote.

But we don't have to wait until Iran's first nuclear test to see the damage done by the negotiations. Last week, the *New York Times* reported that the administration resisted confronting China on its authorship of the hacking of sensitive U.S. personnel information partly out of concern about China's role as a negotiating partner on the Iran deal. No doubt the Iran negotiations contributed to Obama's reluctance to confront Vladimir Putin's aggression in Ukraine. And to Obama's tacit acceptance of continued Iranian support for the Taliban and al Qaeda; his passivity as he watched the unfolding slaughter in Syria; his acquiescence in Qassem Suleimani's expansive role in Syria, Iraq, and beyond; and his refusal to provide arms directly to the Kurds and to the Sunnis.

The impending deal is an embarrassment: the world's greatest power prostrate before the world's most patiently expansionist, terror-sponsoring, anti-American theocracy.

—Stephen F. Hayes

---

# It Could Have Been Worse

Ye who are disappointed in the Supreme Court this term, take heart: Its plainly wrong decision in the housing case from Texas, handed down last week, was not as bad as it might have been.

“The underlying dispute” in *Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs v. Inclusive Communities Project*, wrote Justice Anthony Kennedy for a five-member majority that included the four judicial liberals, “concerns where housing for low-income persons should be constructed in Dallas, Texas—that is, whether the housing should be built in the inner city or in the suburbs.”

The federal government provides low-income housing tax credits. The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs distributes them to developers, thus affecting where low-income housing is built. The Inclusive Communities Project (ICP), a Dallas nonprofit that assists low-income families in finding affordable housing, sued the department, charging that its allocation of credits violated the antidiscrimination provisions of the Fair Housing Act of 1968 (FHA).

That statute plainly forbids the disparate treatment of individuals because of their race. But the Supreme Court before now had never ruled on whether the law also prohibits “disparate impact”—in which a practice neutral on its face and nondiscriminatory in its intent has a disproportionate effect, statistically discerned, on some racial or other protected group. To prevail, a defendant must then show some degree of “necessity” for the practice.

The case brought by the Dallas nonprofit alleged disparate impact, the claim being that the Texas housing department granted too many credits for housing in mainly black inner-city areas and too few in mainly white suburban neighborhoods. The question before the justices was whether the FHA authorizes disparate impact claims, and the Kennedy majority held that it does.

Justice Samuel Alito wrote the 35-page dissent, joined by Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas. “The Fair Housing Act does not create disparate impact liability,” said Alito, “nor do this Court’s precedents.” Alito’s handling of the text of the statute (including the 1988 amendments) and his reading of

the precedents were so compelling that Kennedy referred to Alito’s opinion as “well stated.” Perhaps Kennedy knew that Alito had the better argument.

But Kennedy’s opinion is not terrible. While he affirms the disparate impact approach currently taken by civil rights agencies and the lower courts, he doesn’t seek to expand it. Quite the opposite: He wants it to operate under certain limitations.

He writes that disparate impact liability “has always been properly limited in key respects that avoid the serious constitutional questions that might arise under the FHA, for instance, if such liability were imposed based solely on a showing of a statistical disparity.” Whether that is true or not—whether disparate impact has *always* been so limited—Kennedy is saying it should be.

Likewise, he writes, “Difficult questions might arise if disparate-impact liability under the FHA caused race to be used and considered in a pervasive and explicit manner to justify governmental or private actions that, in fact, tend to perpetuate race-based considerations rather than move beyond them.” Kennedy addresses the courts in particular, telling them to “avoid interpreting disparate impact liability to be so expansive as to inject racial considerations into every housing decision.” He adds that when courts do find liability, their remedial orders “must be consistent with the Constitution.”

And there’s more on this theme of limitations: Kennedy says that “if the specter of disparate-impact litigation causes private developers to no longer construct or renovate housing units for low-income individuals, then the FHA would have undermined its own purpose as well as the free-market system.” Moreover, governmental entities “must not be prevented”—by disparate impact claims—“from achieving legitimate objectives, such as ensuring compliance with health and safety codes.”

*Texas Department of Housing v. ICP* thus has settled the question of whether the FHA recognizes disparate impact. But not without directions by Justice Kennedy on how it must operate—within certain limits. The case has been remanded for further review, but the irony is that ICP could lose on the merits, as Kennedy all but predicts. “From the standpoint of determining advantage or disadvantage to racial minorities, it seems difficult to say as a general matter that a decision to build low-income housing in a blighted inner-city neighborhood instead of a suburb is discriminatory or vice versa.” For that reason, “this case on remand may be seen simply as an attempt to second-guess which of two reasonable approaches a housing authority should follow in the sound exercise of its discretion in allocating tax credits for low-income housing.”

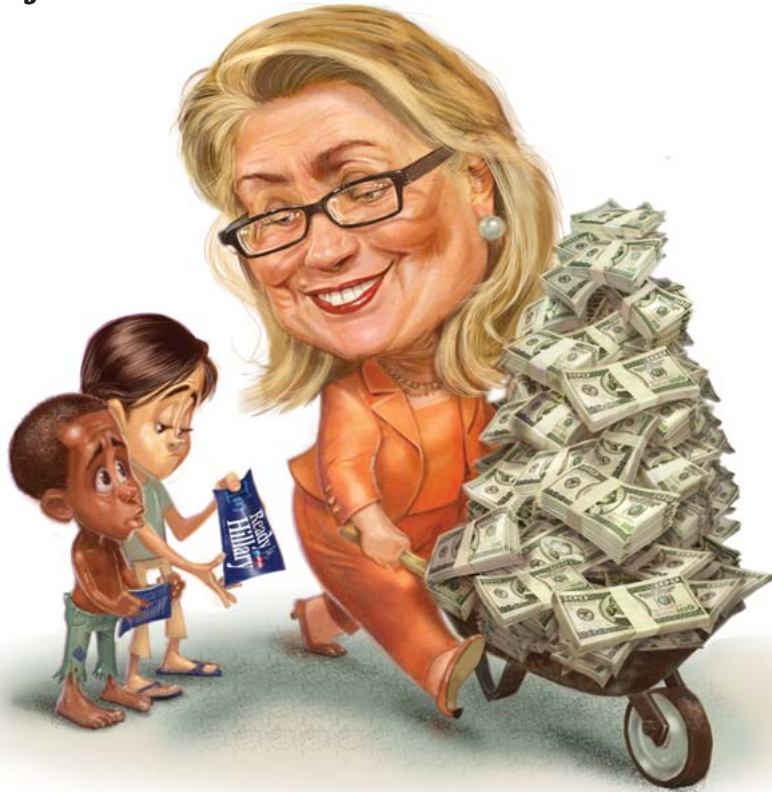
We await the final chapter in this case, while observing that Congress is free to pass laws curtailing, if not ending, the dubious use of disparate impact in housing.

—Terry Eastland

# Running on Empty

So much for ecstatic modes of living.

BY JAY COST



In 1969, a young Hillary Rodham was chosen to give a commencement address to the graduating class of Wellesley College, and she used the occasion to deliver some fairly radical remarks. She spoke of her generation feeling “that our prevailing, acquisitive, and competitive corporate life, including tragically the universities, is not the way of life for us. We’re searching for more immediate, ecstatic, and penetrating modes of living.” She praised the student protest movement as “an attempt to forge an identity in this particular age” and said that she and her peers perceived society as hovering “between the possibility of

disaster and the potentiality for imaginatively responding to men’s needs.”

To be sure, it was a confusing, middle-class, soft-New Left radicalism—hardly the stuff of the old farmer-labor coalition. But it was still a challenge to the established order. Surely, if those listening had been told that in half a century this young woman would be a candidate for president, they would have expected her to run as a radical.

But the opposite is true. Since she left the State Department, Hillary Clinton has been consumed with two decidedly nonradical activities: making as much money as possible and developing a precisely modulated candidacy, built on small ideas so as to cobble together a critical mass of voters. It’s a left-wing approach, for sure, but it is premised on a liberalism that views the status quo as mostly fine.

Somewhere along the line, Clinton left behind her youthful radicalism and embraced the assumptions of mainstream progressivism. And good for her. College life is lived in a bubble inside which it is easy to waste time indulging leftist nonsense. Growing up usually means leaving this behind.

Still, the juxtaposition of the youthful aspirations of Clinton in 1969 and the joyless, money-grubbing Clinton of today says something about progressivism. By embracing the “prevailing, acquisitive, and competitive corporate life,” progressive elites have made a lot of money, but they can no longer “imaginatively respond . . . to men’s needs.” Clinton, as presumptive nominee of the major progressive party, embodies this denatured idealism.

When it began, the progressive movement was actually a middle ground between early-20th-century “reactionaries,” who wanted to retain a corrupt status quo, and surging radical forces, notably agrarian populists and urban socialists. The progressives called for abandoning the Constitution’s limits on the national government. They believed fervently that an alliance between the state, business, farmers, and laborers could solve the nation’s problems. The progressives presumed to manage everything, from growing the economy to regulating business responsibly, providing social welfare, mitigating inequality, and combating corruption.

To a large extent, both parties have accepted the core assumptions of the progressive model. Much of the GOP’s domestic agenda during the George W. Bush administration—targeted tax credits, a Medicare prescription drug benefit, an expanded federal role in education, and substantial use of earmarks—was cast in this mold. It was progressive for Republicans to expand the scope of the state via a broad political alliance of “stakeholders,” even if they made heavier use of free market concepts than leftists and jilted many Democratic clients in the process.

Yet it is increasingly difficult to accept the premises of progressivism. Over the last 15 years, the economy has stagnated, inequality has worsened,

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

GARY LOCKE

cronyism is much worse than it was even in the Gilded Age, and the United States is now burdened by a large structural deficit that yearly adds to an already \$18 trillion national debt. These problems can be traced, at least in part, to the inherent limitations of the progressive model.

Above all, progressivism requires an omnipotent government coordinating a broad alliance of factions for, it believes, the greater good. Over time, this approach tends to heighten inequality, as the groups with the resources to acquire influence win the most favors. It facilitates cronyism, as politicians cash in on their connections. It puts upward pressure on budget deficits, as the political incentives inevitably favor increasing expenditures without commensurately raising taxes. It constrains the options of policymakers, as all proposals must win the consent of a vast array of clients. And it stifles reform, as stakeholder factions thwart changes that hurt their bottom lines, regardless of the public interest. Progressivism eventually produces sclerotic and corrupt government.

Early in the progressive movement, these problems were not evident because the number of clients was small. FDR had free rein to craft the New Deal. But adding faction after faction to the list of government clients constrained the scope of action for subsequent generations, making it ever more difficult for leaders to govern effectively. Eighty years after the New Deal, the range of policy options available to progressive politicians is very small indeed.

These limits were evident during the first two years of the Obama administration. In 2008, widespread Bush fatigue, a thin résumé, and the historic nature of his candidacy enabled Barack Obama to claim credibly that he would break with the past. But once in office, the limits of the progressive model proved decisive. Time and again, he endorsed legislation that highlighted progressivism's worst aspects. He approved a nearly \$1 trillion stimulus, a grab bag of giveaways to Democratic client groups. He signed Obamacare, an unfunded entitlement that bought off

the medical services industry by coercing citizens to purchase overpriced health insurance. And he adopted the Dodd-Frank financial reform law, drafted with heavy input from Wall Street, which gave the biggest banks the protection of too-big-to-fail.

Of course, progressivism still works for some. The leaders of the movement do fine, even if they cannot improve the state of the union. As the list of interest groups clamoring for government favor gets longer, those in charge of dispensing goodies become more powerful. The industrious members of this elite caste are adept at monetizing their public authority.

Which brings us back to Hillary Rodham. As a student radical, she issued a (largely incoherent) challenge to the established powers. But by 1969 those powers were already thoroughly progressive and had been for a long time. They remain so today, and Hillary Clinton strives to helm the very power structure she once criticized.

The effects of her transformation are manifest. She has profited handsomely from her role in government. Yet what fresh vision does she offer? There is plenty of fear-mongering and naked pandering to Democratic constituencies, but where are her big ideas to address the great challenges of the day? She offers nothing of the sort, because progressivism no longer has room for sweeping change. It would only offend some valued stakeholder, and that is unacceptable. Perhaps if she could speechify like Obama and could still cast Bush as the national villain, she might mask the strictures of her ideology. But she can't, so she appears to be what she actually is—rigid.

As a result, Clinton's agenda is as small-minded as her bank account is fat. It is no coincidence that Bernie Sanders, the socialist, is drawing crowds that rival Clinton's. American socialism might be wholly impractical, but it is less blinkered and grim than contemporary progressivism. One suspects that if the young Hillary Rodham could return today, she would show up cheering at a Sanders rally rather than dutifully falling in behind candidate Clinton. And who could blame her? ♦

**"An all-too plausible and scary scenario..."**

-- Lee Bender, Phila. Jewish Voice

From the author of EAST WIND

**Jack Winnick**

**DEVIL AMONG US**

**The team from EAST WIND is back to smash an anti-Zionist plot in the US.**

**When a New York synagogue is destroyed, Lara Edmond and Uri Levin take on the Muslim extremists in a new action-packed, international chase.**



"Winnick's fine thriller displays his expert knowledge of the Middle East and his laudable skill as a storyteller."

-- Kirkus Reviews

**Now available at Amazon.com Kindle.com and BN.com**

# Do They Have a Prayer?

GOP candidates court the evangelical vote.

BY MICHAEL WARREN



*Ted Cruz, at left, prays with audience members after announcing his candidacy at Liberty University, in Lynchburg, Virginia, Monday, March 23, 2015.*

How should Republicans court the conservative Christian vote in 2016? Among the presidential candidates, Jeb Bush and Ted Cruz are offering competing models for maintaining and growing a critical part of the GOP's coalition in the primaries and in the general election. Both strategies show promise and peril.

The former Florida governor is taking a page out of his brother George W. Bush's political playbook, calling for what amounts to a compassionate conservatism for the post-Obama era. "I do believe, I honestly believe that as a conservative that

believes in limited government, we need to put the most vulnerable in our society first, in the front of the line," Bush said at the Faith and Freedom Coalition conference in Washington in mid-June.

His rhetoric among the faith-focused crowd emphasizes shared Christian values and duty toward fellow man, even if it's not always clear how this translates into policy on health care or taxes. "We could shut down government if we all acted on our sense of consciousness about helping others," he said.

Not that Bush doesn't talk or care about the social issues that have energized white evangelical Protestants and conservative Catholics to pull the GOP lever. He's pro-life, like the

rest of the Republican field, and says marriage should be only between a man and a woman. He connects these issues to actions he took as governor, like passing tougher regulations on Florida's abortion clinics and intervening to keep alive the brain-dead Terri Schiavo after a court ordered her feeding tube pulled. But always, Bush's pitch is couched in terms of Christian compassion, with an eye to appealing not just to traditional Republican voters but Hispanic and black Christians as well as moderate whites.

"We took special care for the most vulnerable in our society," he says of his eight years in office.

If Bush is a lover, Cruz is a fighter. "I will never, ever, ever shy from standing up and defending the religious liberty of every American," said the Texas senator at the same conference. He predicted 2016 will be "the religious liberty election." Close Cruz-watchers won't be surprised to hear him use combative rhetoric in addressing these issues. At the conference, Cruz mentioned the "forces of darkness and threats that face" conservative people of faith.

"The battles today have only intensified," he said. "In fact, just this week I think the EPA has named religious liberty an endangered species."

Cruz wants to show evangelical voters not only that he's fought on the right side of important religious liberty battles but also that he's one of them. He sounded part litigator, part preacher as he described his religious freedom legal work to the Faith and Freedom Coalition. One case brought Cruz toe-to-toe with the ACLU, which sought to remove a white cross from a World War I veterans' memorial on federal land in the Mojave Desert. Several federal courts had ruled the cross be taken down, and the question lay before the Supreme Court.

"They said you could not gaze upon the image of a cross on federal lands," Cruz said. "Well, I'll tell you this. They were right on one thing. The cross has power."

And the people of the cross, Cruz insists, have untapped political power. "There are, right now, about

*Michael Warren is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.*

AP/ANDREW HARNIK

90 million evangelical Christians in America. Fifty million evangelicals are staying home.” It was an echo of his announcement speech at Liberty University, where Cruz said “roughly half of born-again Christians aren’t voting.” There, the senator asked the evangelical crowd to “imagine instead millions of people of faith all across America coming out to the polls and voting our values.”

It looks like Cruz’s “turn out the base” strategy could succeed in the GOP primary but be devastating in the general, whereas Bush’s broad-based approach hurts his chances for the nomination while helping the party overall in November 2016. But it isn’t that simple, says John Green, a political scientist at the University of Akron and senior fellow at the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. He says they’re chasing different types of Republican primary voters.

The Cruz method focuses on maximizing turnout of those evangelicals who are primarily social conservatives—a smart move, Green says, when early primary states like Iowa and South Carolina have an abundance of socially conservative voters. Cruz has two problems, though. First, he’s not alone in the Republican primary. Mike Huckabee, Rick Santorum, Bobby Jindal, and Ben Carson are all competing in a similar way for the socially conservative vote. Two, if evangelical votes are concentrated in reliably red states, there may be no added value in chasing more of them. “I don’t think there’s huge room for Republicans to grow” with evangelicals, Green says.

But not all evangelical voters are motivated primarily by issues like abortion and same-sex marriage, even if they sympathize or agree with social conservatives. “Many evangelicals are social conservatives, but evangelicals are all very Republican,” says Green.

Consider the 2008 Iowa Republican caucuses, where 60 percent of the voters were evangelicals. Mike Huckabee, a former Baptist minister who emphasized a socially conservative message, won with 34 percent of

the vote, including 46 percent of the evangelical vote. But that means 54 percent of Republican evangelicals voted for another candidate, such as Mitt Romney, Fred Thompson, Ron Paul, or John McCain.

So there’s an opportunity for Bush and others in the field (potentially including Ohio governor John Kasich) to woo evangelicals as honest-to-God moderates. The candidate would then avoid sounding too strident on social issues that might damage him against Hillary Clinton, the thinking goes.

Gary Bauer, a leading Christian conservative activist within the GOP, disagrees that the Republican nominee can afford to be a social moderate in the primary or the general election. He says the expected Supreme Court defeat for conservatives on same-sex marriage could “demoralize” those voters on whom the GOP has relied to win elections in the past. Republicans, he believes, must take a stand on religious liberty or prepare to lose, no matter who is the nominee.

“If the party is not willing and able to fight on that, you would see an unraveling of the coalition,” Bauer says. He points out that in 2004, George W. Bush eked out a win in Ohio (and thus won reelection) by maximizing turnout in the culturally conservative rural counties. These were lower-income evangelical Protestants drawn to the GOP for its message on marriage and cultural values. Winning a critical swing state like Ohio in 2016, Bauer says, means not taking those voters for granted.

What remains to be seen is if Bush and other candidates nearer the middle of the party (like Marco Rubio and Scott Walker) can strike the right balance. At the Washington conference, Bush didn’t shy away from the questions of religious liberty raised in the Obama era, though he wasn’t as forceful or passionate as Cruz. “In a big, diverse country, we need to make sure we protect not just the right to have religious views but the right of acting on those views,” Bush said. It’s true the line didn’t bring the crowd to their feet. But that posture could be enough. ♦

# JED O’Dea



## Unsustainable



A sociopath is funded by Russia to take advantage of California’s drought and burn the state into bankruptcy which ultimately overstresses the United States taxpayer.

Tucker and Maya Cherokee look for ways to help the nation avoid a civil war and ensure world stability during a time when their own family is under attack.

China takes advantage of a weakened America to expand its reign of influence.

We get a peek of what could happen if wrong-headed policies are maintained.



# Republicans to the Rescue

A rare partnership on free trade.

BY FRED BARNES

It was like an out-of-body experience,” Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell says. He was talking about his congratulatory phone call from President Obama after Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) passed the Senate last week. “It was kind of fun.” McConnell enjoyed hearing the president castigate Democrats who voted against TPA and oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade treaty whose passage is now all but certain.

It was an important victory for Obama, undoubtedly the biggest accomplishment of his second term. He gets credit for sticking with a treaty that his party and its interest groups loathe. He lobbied Democrats in the House and Senate.

Presidents have traditionally played an influential role in struggles over trade. But Obama’s role was small. He was expected to keep the minority of Democrats who support free trade from defecting—nothing more. “I give the president credit,” McConnell says. “He did reinforce those who intended to vote for it.” Their votes were crucial.

In the Senate, 14 of 46 Democrats voted for TPA when it came up in early June. Last week, Obama lost 1 of the 14, Ben Cardin of Maryland, as the measure survived a Democratic filibuster. Cardin voted no only after TPA had gotten the 60 votes required to move ahead to the treaty itself later this summer. TPA bars amendments,

preventing a trade agreement from being killed by hostile amendments.

For weeks, House Republicans were in constant contact with the White House. Republicans found that relations were positive and professional. “White House officials found it easier to work with Congress on trade now that Republicans control both houses,” the *New York Times* reported.



McConnell and Obama in the Oval Office, August 4, 2010

But after watching Obama in action, Republicans concluded he lacks the skill set to pressure, much less persuade, Democrats to follow him. He bombed when he addressed the House Democratic caucus on June 12. Only 28 of 188 Democrats voted for TPA, often known as “fast track.”

So the trade treaty was left to Republicans to rescue. Protectionists in the decades before World War II, Republicans are mostly free traders today. Democrats, led by organized labor and environmentalists, are strongly against treaties that eliminate barriers to trade. In 1993, more Republicans than Democrats voted for the North American

Free Trade Agreement, allowing it to pass. Since then, most Democrats have become committed anti-free-traders.

To win enough Democratic votes, Republicans had agreed to attach to it TAA, “trade adjustment assistance” to aid workers out of jobs supposedly because of the treaty. That gave anti-trade Democrats an opening. “It never occurred to us Democrats would vote against what they were for to defeat what they were against,” McConnell says. Yet that’s exactly what they did in the House, figuring TPA without worker assistance would die.

Despite this hitch, House speaker John Boehner and majority leader Kevin McCarthy decided to call a vote in the House. TPA was approved, TAA lost overwhelmingly. With no TAA attached, TPA couldn’t be sent to the president, but at least it “locked in” a 219-vote majority for trade promotion authority, a Republican official says.

At this point, McConnell came up with a plan: Detach the aid package from TPA and add it to another bill, one sure to pass. Democrats could vote separately against “fast track” and for trade assistance. Assistance would be added to a “preferences” bill involving trade with Africa. The plan worked. Both passed. TPA was sent to Obama for his signature.

While left-wing Democrats were the biggest threat, a band of conservative Republicans turned against the treaty as well. They opposed it because they believed it gave Obama too much power and feared it contained secret provisions that could affect, among other things, immigration. They opposed TPA—and its no-amendments rule—because the 12-nation treaty could not be concluded without it. Blocking TPA would kill the treaty. The most obstreperous Republican was Senator Ted Cruz, who flipped to oppose both the treaty and TPA at the last minute.

Four other Republican senators joined Cruz. One was Rand Paul,

Fred Barnes is an executive editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

McConnell's Kentucky colleague. Alabama senators Jeff Sessions and Richard Shelby voted no. So did Maine senator Susan Collins. "No senator from Maine has voted for a trade agreement since I've been here," McConnell says. He doesn't know why. McConnell was first elected in 1984.

McConnell takes the long view of TPA. He insists it will help Republicans, especially if a Republican is elected president in 2016. The authority to keep a treaty from being derailed by "poison pill" amendments will last for six years, covering the first term of the next president.

Without TPA, a Republican president would be unable to negotiate a trade treaty. Other countries would worry a treaty they agreed to could be altered by amendments they dislike. And had TPA failed to pass last week, it would be dead for the remainder of the Obama administration.

But couldn't a Republican president get Congress to enact TPA? Not a chance, McConnell says. Democrats have become so protectionist and so tied to labor and the environmental movement that TPA "wouldn't get a single Democratic vote" in Congress with a Republican president leading the charge. Without a Democrat in the White House, McConnell says, a Democratic filibuster in the Senate would have succeeded.

McConnell, a believer in free trade, had another reason for joining Obama on trade. Republicans "had an opportunity to do something for the country," he says. He echoes GOP senator Orrin Hatch of Utah. "While we hear a constant drumbeat decrying our trade deficits, the United States enjoys a \$60 billion yearly manufacturing surplus with our 20 existing partners to free trade agreements," Hatch said in a speech.

Besides Obama's call, McConnell got another important one. It was from Caroline Kennedy, the U.S. ambassador to Japan. She told him the treaty issue was being followed closely in Japan, notably by pro-treaty prime minister Shinzo Abe. He wants America to be more involved in Asia to counteract China. McConnell does too. ♦

# China's Foreign Aid Offensive

What will Beijing gain from its massive assistance program? BY CHARLES WOLF JR.

China's foreign aid programs are distinguished by size (much larger than those of other countries), breadth (encompassing 92 emerging-market countries in six geographic regions), and composition (focused on mining and exports of natural resources and supporting infrastructure). They are also unique in their accompanying quid pro quo conditions: For example, increased production and exports of mineral

including aid for economic development, international narcotics control, international refugees, and children's survival programs. Notably, U.S. aid represents appropriated funds provided as grants, while Chinese aid mainly represents pledges to lend. Security assistance is not included in either country's figures.

How the pledges are divided—by type and among regions and countries—provides a crude indication of China's purposes and priorities. Seventy-five percent are devoted to natural resource (mainly oil, gas, and coal) and infrastructure projects. Some infrastructure (such as roads, rail, warehousing) directly supports the resource projects, while other infrastructure (schools, office buildings, housing, stadiums) is separate. The remaining 25 percent include medical

supplies and services, humanitarian aid, technical assistance, and training.

China's ministry of commerce—ostensibly the lead agency among the several that oversee these programs, including the foreign ministry, state-owned enterprises, and perhaps the People's Liberation Army—divides recipient countries into six regions. The regional shares of total pledged assistance from 2001 through 2014 (in billions): Africa (\$330), Latin America (\$298), East Asia (\$192, excluding the bulk of China's aid to North Korea), the Middle East (\$165), South Asia (\$157), and Central Asia (\$69).

The following table shows the top six country recipients of China's



*The Gwadar deep-sea port in Pakistan, constructed with heavy investment from China*

resources are explicitly consigned for delivery to China—payback conditions characteristic of commercial investments rather than bilateral foreign assistance.

China's pledged assistance in the past six years varied from a low of \$91 billion (2012) to a high of \$317 billion (2013), with an annual average of \$174 billion. By way of comparison, U.S. foreign economic assistance in 2012 amounted to \$37 billion,

*Charles Wolf Jr. holds the distinguished chair in international economics at the RAND Corporation. He is the author of Puzzles, Paradoxes, Controversies, and the Global Economy.*

assistance, in total and per capita, in the last 14 years. Singapore's outsize per capita figure reflects the city-state's importance as the entrepôt trade link between the Indian Ocean and South China Sea, its role as a key member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and its small population (under five million).

Funding is principally provided by China's Export-Import Bank and the China Development Bank, an elite policy institution responsible to China's

projects typically import thousands of Chinese workers (a unique requirement of China's assistance programs, often not welcomed by recipient countries), necessitating additional housing construction and logistic support. Deliveries usually lag approximately six years behind pledges; pledges made in the years from 2001-2008 correlate with deliveries made in 2007-2014. (The payout period associated with U.S. grant assistance is typically much shorter.) By 2014, China's cumula-

Infrastructure Investment Bank, to enhance connectivity and trade in the region (e.g., to revive and modernize China's storied Silk Road and perhaps provide bullet trains for the Trans-Siberian Railway), as well as accelerate broader economic development throughout Asia. AIIB will cover three of the six regions cited by China's ministry of commerce: Central Asia (comprising former republics of the Soviet Union), South Asia (the Indian sub-continent), and East Asia (including Korea and the ASEAN countries). China has set AIIB's initial capitalization at \$100 billion, of which its share is slightly under one-third; the second-largest shareholder is India (\$8.4 billion), and the remaining shares are subscribed by the AIIB's 55 other members, principally those in Asia and, to a lesser extent, Europe. The United States is not a member. Whether AIIB will seek to raise funds in commercial credit markets presumably will be determined by AIIB's 57 members.

Whether and to what extent the China Development Bank—whose role in China's foreign assistance has been crucial—will be active in AIIB is unclear. It's worth noting the CDB already has a separately managed China-Africa Development Fund. Adding the AIIB to CDB's responsibilities is unlikely, but not inconceivable. What is clear is that China will have decisive leverage in the new bank's major decisions.

How the AIIB may affect and be affected by international capital markets remains to be seen. The bank's prospects do not appear especially bright. AIIB is one big addition to the plethora of multilateral and bilateral sources of subsidized assistance to emerging-market countries, a list that includes the World Bank Group, Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), as well as the numerous bilateral assistance agencies and government-supported banking institutions in the United States, U.K., EU, Japan, and elsewhere. The supply side is so abundant that virtually any well-conceived and sensibly configured development project can

THE WEEKLY STANDARD

## Yuan for the Road

The top country recipients of China's assistance, in total and per capita, from 2001 to 2014, in U.S. dollars

TOTAL		PER CAPITA	
Iran	<b>\$143 billion</b>	Singapore	<b>\$8,954</b>
Pakistan	<b>135 billion</b>	Venezuela	<b>4,372</b>
Venezuela	<b>126 billion</b>	Iran	<b>1,774</b>
Nigeria	<b>110 billion</b>	Malaysia	<b>920</b>
Brazil	<b>80 billion</b>	Argentina	<b>840</b>
Indonesia	<b>61 billion</b>	Pakistan	<b>687</b>

SOURCE: CHARLES WOLF JR. AND RAND CORPORATION

State Council. The terms of these loans include annual interest rates between 2 and 3 percent and repayment spread over 15 to 20 years. Estimating the implicit subsidies in these terms is difficult because most of the 92 recipients would not qualify for long-term loans from international capital markets irrespective of interest rates. On the other hand, the few recipients whose credit ratings are relatively favorable (e.g., Indonesia, Brazil, India) might qualify to borrow at rates only 3 or 4 percent above the London Interbank Offered Rate. For these countries, the implicit subsidy is between 3 and 5 percent.

China's delivery of equipment and services has markedly but unsurprisingly lagged far behind its pledged assistance. The lag is unsurprising because project implementation involves geological surveys, civil engineering, mining operations, construction, and logistic arrangements stretching over several years. And the

tive delivered aid accounted for more than 95 percent of total pledges from 2001 through 2008. We can project that pledges made between 2009 and 2014 will result in deliveries of \$500 billion between 2015 and 2020.

What does this portend for the future? An earlier RAND study considered a range of factors that might affect the scale of China's foreign aid. For example, China might increase its assistance in an effort to stimulate its own economic growth by increased exports to recipient countries and subsequent increased energy supplies consigned to China. On the other hand, China might be inclined to decrease its foreign aid to ease resource constraints and reduce income disparities at home. Our conjectured conclusion was that China's assistance would continue to be large, perhaps with some reductions in the coming years.

More recently, China has launched a new institution, the Asian

already qualify for support from one or more of these sources. Hence, it is likely that the AIIB and other sources of financing will compete with each other in offering attractive terms to their prospective borrowers. The result may well be invidious comparisons of the lenders by the borrowers: Which among the many options offers the best bargain? A walk—if not race—to the bottom may ensue in terms of project quality and financial terms. The result may be borrowers burdened with debt they can't pay, while lenders hold accounts-receivable they can't or don't want to collect. It would not be surprising if 5 to 10 years down the road

China views the AIIB as an albatross it regrets launching.

Contemporaneously, the United States is actively engaged in efforts to create a multilateral Trans-Pacific Partnership. TPP is an agreement with 11 other Pacific-trading countries to expand free trade and boost investment in the region. Although TPP will entail losers as well as beneficiaries—a circumstance reflected by the current controversy surrounding it—its implementation is likely to generate net gains for the United States and its partners. AIIB's prospects for success are far dimmer—a welcome and timely plus for the United States. ♦

# Environmental Religions

The climate change crusade gains a prominent leader. BY IRWIN M. STELZER

Ever since the environmental movement began it has had a religious fervor: Like God, Earth is always capitalized, and there is an annual celebration, Earth Day, rather like holidays celebrated by other religions. Of course, the dogmas of green religionists have changed over time: Prophecies of a new Ice Age gave way to forecasts of global warming, and those to a more all-purpose fear of climate change. Fair enough. In order to survive, any religion has to adapt to changing times.

Which brings us to *Laudato Si* (*Praise Be to You*), the encyclical recently issued by Pope Francis, who, during a trip to the Philippines, told reporters that “man has slapped nature in the face” and that global warming is “mostly man-made.” He now warns, “If we destroy Creation,

Creation will destroy us.” In preparation for the release of the encyclical, Pope Francis received U.N. secretary general Ban Ki-moon, who, according to the *New York Times*, arrived at the Vatican accompanied by “his own college of cardinals”—U.N. bureaucrats representing all major U.N. agencies. He then issued his encyclical, warning the world's billion-plus Catholics that global warming, mainly created by man's use of fossil fuels, is especially threatening to the poor.

The pontiff's certitude aligns him squarely with President Obama, who proclaims the science of climate change to be settled, much as believers that the sun circled the Earth once claimed their science to be settled. And they knew what to do with that heretic Galileo. Obama doesn't have such enforcement measures available to him, despite the elasticity with which he views his constitutional powers. But he does have the bully pulpit, congressional allies willing to demand

that holders of unorthodox beliefs be excommunicated from universities, and now the support of a papal encyclical, a teaching document that is one of the most authoritative statements made by the Catholic church. Democrats are hoping the encyclical will put pressure on presidential hopefuls Marco Rubio, Jeb Bush, Rick Santorum, Chris Christie, and Bobby Jindal, all Catholics, to moderate their opposition to regulations on the use of fossil fuels. But Jeb Bush, although expressing an interest in what the pope has to say, told an audience, “I don't get economic policy from my bishops or my cardinals or my pope.”

This merging of the Catholic and environmental faiths should come as no surprise. Pope and president, the respective leaders of the Catholic and environmental faiths, are as one in holding the “science” of global warming to be settled fact. Obama's followers also tend to believe he is infallible and cheered in 2008 when he proclaimed his victory in the Democratic primaries as “the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal.” Both warn of biblical-scale droughts, floods, storms, and pestilence in our future, owing to the use of fossil fuels. Some might reject Obama as a religious leader—his decades of study at the feet of the Reverend Jeremiah Wright notwithstanding—but none can doubt the stature of Pope Francis.

State-supported religions typically have state-supported schools. We have Common Core educational standards, not quite the same thing, but increasingly the impressionable young are taught that there is one truth, and it is that man's activities are having a devastating effect on global climate. As the *Wall Street Journal* has pointed out, the new K-12 science curriculum recommends “that by the end of Grade 5, students should appreciate that rising . . . temperatures” will affect the lives of everyone. By Grade 8, they “should understand that the release of greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels is a major factor in global warming.” And by Grade 12, that “global climate models are very effective in

*Irwin M. Stelzer is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD and a columnist for the Sunday Times (London).*

modeling” and managing the impact of climate change. Lest educators lack the ability to transmit this knowledge, the EPA and other agencies have prepared climate-change primers for instructors.

Like all religions, environmentalism has its factions and sects. I am not certain that pantheism is the right label for those environmentalists who believe that salvation is to be found in the sun and the wind, but both forms of energy have caused considerable concern among coreligionists who see abstinence, using less of this or that, as the preferred route to a better, greener world—a sort of “just say no” approach to big cars and fridges, cooling in summer and heating in winter.

Unfortunately for the pantheist wing, the sun god has produced only about 40 percent of the bounty it promised when a vast acreage in the California desert was devoted to its solar-paneled places of worship. And the power of wind loses believers every time flocks of birds, and not all of them virgins, are slaughtered when the wind is high. Besides, those large whirling towers are scars on Earth’s beautiful vistas. Little wonder that nonbelievers are grumbling about the tithes, known commonly as subsidies, exacted from them to support these sources of energy.

Factionalism has not yet escalated to schism. Sun, wind, abstinence—believers in all of these unite around one single proposition: The fires that burn when fossil fuels are alight must be extinguished. Although deniers of this proposition are not tolerated, doubters remain. One such group consists of former deniers who have come around to a belief that something must be done, that the pope and the president can’t both be wrong. Some of these onetime apostates run major European oil companies and have expressed a willingness to atone by paying the costs created by their plundering of the Earth for its carbon-containing riches. Well, not quite paying, but they will support measures to have their customers pay. And not quite for

using all of their fossil fuels, but only the liquid ones, leaving natural gas to continue to drive the real evil, coal, from the market by heavily taxing it.

The second group consists of doubters willing to concede that environmental religion might, just might, contain some enduring truths. These skeptics are not certain that the evil environmentalists seek to expunge is real, and have a nagging suspicion

**The pope might not have any divisions, as Stalin pointed out when asked by the French to ameliorate the condition of Russia’s Catholics, but as Churchill later noted, the holy father has ‘a number of legions not always visible on parade.’**



The cover of Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si*

that it is concocted for the purpose of devolving more and more power to the environmental priesthood. But they are willing to take prudential steps, like imposing taxes to reduce the use of the objectionable fuels and redistributing the proceeds to lower-income families, a step that would surely appeal to the pope, whose redistributionist beliefs parallel those of the president.

All of these groups, from some 200 countries, are preparing for a synod in Paris in December. Political leaders of the G7 industrialized countries want to “decarbonize” the global

economy over the course of this century. Less-developed countries think that is a great idea—so long as richer countries mobilize from public and private sources the \$100 billion per year they have been promising to the poorer countries by way of penance for developing their wealthy economies with fossil fuels. True practitioners of the environmental faith will undoubtedly consider the \$100 billion merely the price one pays to ease one’s conscience—a modern-day version of simony.

It won’t be easy to meet the goal of cutting carbon-dioxide emissions by 40-70 percent from 2010 levels by 2050. Barack Obama, who frequently seeks forgiveness for the sins he believes America has committed, will happily make promises for others to keep. A new president might not, and a certainly hostile Congress will not. Canada’s prime minister, Stephen

Harper, sums it up best: “I don’t think we should fool ourselves, nobody’s going to shut down their industries or turn off the lights.” And few are even willing to keep hybrid and electric vehicles at trade-in time, when 55 percent of owners are switching to gasoline-powered vehicles. Yet 69 percent of Americans tell Pew pollsters that global warming is a “very” or “somewhat serious” problem. So much for the answers concocted to please pollsters.

Unlike in past such meetings, Obama and like-minded European leaders will now have the moral authority of the pope behind them. The pope might not have any divisions, as Stalin pointed out when asked by the French to ameliorate the condition of Russia’s Catholics, but as Churchill later noted, the holy father has “a number of legions not always visible on parade.” Perhaps the papal legions can combine with people more sensitive to the fiscal reforms a carbon tax would make possible, to produce a sensible result in Paris. But only perhaps: True believers are not naturally given to compromise, or to worries about the cost in human misery of achieving their growth-stifling dreams. ♦

NEWS.COM

# Are We Better Off Now?

*Looking back at the Iraq war*

BY NOEMIE EMERY

Is the world better off than it was eight years ago? Is the Middle East? Is Iraq? These questions, echoing the one asked by Ronald Reagan in his debate with Jimmy Carter just before the 1980 election, should be posed by all Republicans until the polls close in November 2016. Added to these are a few other things . . .

Is Ukraine better off? Do we have more allies? Are we more trusted by them? Of course some countries are better off now than they were before Barack Obama unleashed his transformative powers, but these include Iran, Russia, and Cuba, which may not be a good thing. (On the other hand, our relations with Israel, the Gulf Arabs, and the former possessions of the Soviet empire have hit a new low.) Is the Western world safer from terrorist violence? Since ISIS exploded, violent incidents triggered by it have taken place in countries as widespread as Denmark, Australia, and France. By contrast, since the shock of September 11, 2001, nothing of the sort has taken place again in America, which most at the time would have thought an unlikely development. In the weeks and months after, President Bush, in a very short time and under a great deal of pressure, constructed protocols for the containment of terror that prevented further attacks on this country, and that Obama, despite much complaining, once he was in office did nothing to change. It is a fact that after a brilliantly executed invasion in 2003, Bush let the occupation of Iraq begin badly, and become a catastrophe, but it is a fact too that at the very last moment he changed course dramatically, and—against the intense opposition of the Democrats—turned



*An American soldier, center, is mobbed by jubilant Kuwaitis after their liberation from invading Iraqi forces, February 27, 1991.*

the situation around by the time he left office, so dramatically that in a few years the Democrats would be saying it had been *their* accomplishment.

Despite the complaints from the left (and from some on the right) that the Bush foreign policy had been a disaster, the facts are that his security policy was a success, and he left Iraq on a fairly sound footing and in the process of evolving into an imperfect democracy. (If you don't believe that, see what the Democrats were saying circa 2010-2012, or just prior to our leaving that country.) The last two are facts, based on what did and what failed to happen, and the assessments made at the time, and not later in retrospect. On the contrary, the complaints made by critics—

that the invasion of Iraq was unwise and unwarranted, and that the world would have been better off had Saddam stayed in power—are based on conjecture, and the creation of alternative outcomes in projected scenarios that have no basis in fact.

Take the grilling of Republican candidates about whether the Iraq war was worth it, or if they would have launched the war had they known already that no caches of nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons were there

on the ground to be found. The answer to this is “of course not,” but neither Bush nor anyone else could know this at the time, and one purpose of war was to find out if they were there, something Saddam had made obvious would take a war to find out. Several candidates had struggled to say this, until Charles Krauthammer explained it in the *Washington Post*: “The question is not just a hypothetical, but an inherently impossible hypothetical. It contradicts itself. Had we known there were no weapons of mass destruction, the very question would not have arisen. The premise of the war—the basis for going to the U.N. and to Congress and indeed to the nation—was Iraq's possession of WMD in violation of the central condition for the ceasefire that ended the 1991 Gulf War.” Indeed, it is possible,

*Noemie Emery, a WEEKLY STANDARD contributing editor, is author most recently of Great Expectations: The Troubled Lives of Political Families.*

even logical, to say that had we known there were no WMDs, we would not have invaded, but since we did not know that, the possibility of leaving WMDs in the hands of an erratic, despotic enemy of the United States who had a score to settle with the president's family and indeed the whole country, was too great to take. The far-left, or paranoid, reading—that Bush was not merely swayed by bad information but actively lied or cherry-picked information to make his case plausible—has to contend with the failure of the president to plant evidence or arrange later that it somehow be “found” by inspectors. What kind of war-mad stage villain tells lies that are bound to be found out as lies later? Isn't faking what good villains do?

Then there's the question of “was the war worth it?” which rests on conjecture, too. What would Saddam have done had he been left in power? Here, wishful thinking tends to take over, and crystal balls become cloudy indeed. The argument has been made (and by some on the right) that Saddam kept Iraq “under control” if just by brutality; that dictators tend to keep order and sometimes can act as a source of stability, fending off the wrong kind of “change.” But Saddam was not your ordinary type of regional strongman, such as Mubarak, content to tamp down dissent at home and push around his own subjects in what passes sometimes for peace. He was a loose cannon, a predator, an irrational force, a crosser of borders without provocation, over a timeline of decades. Unlike most regional strongmen, he was dynamic, an unguided missile, an unstable force.

Robert Kaplan called his regime “anarchy masquerading as tyranny. . . . Saddam was beyond ‘brutal.’ The word brutal has a generic and insipid ring to it . . . that simply does not capture what Iraq was like under his rule.” In 1980, he invaded Iran, starting a war that killed more than a million people and lasted eight years. In the aftermath, he gassed thousands of Kurds who tried to shake off his domination. In 1990, he invaded Kuwait, in an attempt to seize control of its oil fields, from which he was ejected months later by an American-led coalition assembled by the first President Bush. He spent the next decade in attempts to avoid the conditions of weapons inspections on which the cease-fire was based.

In 1994, President Clinton sent U.S. aircraft, ships, and troops to the Gulf region, where Saddam, as Kanan

Makiya wrote, was “yet again engaged in a game of chicken with the American president . . . that had reached the stage of armed conflict on at least ten previous occasions since the cease-fire . . . came into effect.” In August 1996, he “sent his tanks and forty thousand Republican Guard troops into Arbil, inside the safe-haven area set up by the allied coalition in 1991 . . . penetrating deep into Iraqi Kurdistan, killing hundreds. . . . The whole array of arrangements by which the United States had sought to ‘contain’ Saddam Hussein since the Gulf War came tumbling down.”

In December 1998, Bill Clinton ordered targeted strikes on Iraqi facilities, saying, “Six weeks ago, Saddam Hussein announced he would no longer cooperate with the U.N. weapon inspectors. . . . So long as Saddam remains in power, he threatens the well-being of his people, the peace of the region, the security of the world.” A year later, U.N. inspector Richard Butler wrote in *Talk* magazine that Saddam had “put an end to all attempts to get rid of his weapons of mass destruction. . . . It's impossible to know exactly what Saddam has been up to. . . . If Saddam gets away with facing down the U.N., he could destroy the world community's ability to deal with rogue states.”

Before George W. Bush had made his decision to take out Saddam, the two presidents before him had made regime change in Iraq a national object and goal. Steering just wide of the taboo on assassination, Bush 41 and his commanders clearly intended Saddam to be a casualty of their war to repel Iraq's Kuwaiti incursion. Failing that, they hoped Saddam would be deposed and/or killed by his countrymen: As Bush and Brent Scowcroft wrote in their memoir, “We were disappointed that Saddam's defeat did not break his hold on power, as many of our Arab allies had predicted, and we had come to expect.”

In 1998, while bombing targets in Iraq in response to Saddam's latest defiance of U.N. inspectors, Bill Clinton made regime change in Iraq a de facto goal of American policy, though through cooperation with dissenting elements inside that country, rather than U.S. force of arms. Until 2003, Bush 41 had felt obliged to apologize for his decision in 1991 not to follow Saddam back to Iraq and finish him off, giving him additional time to torture his people, and unsettle the rest of the world.

The road not taken quite often seems better in

---

**Saddam was not your ordinary type of regional strongman. He was a loose cannon, a predator, an irrational force, a crosser of borders without provocation, over a timeline of decades. Unlike most regional strongmen, he was dynamic, an unguided missile, an unstable force.**

retrospect, and only a few years after that the same sort of second-guessing would be directed at his son for having settled the question of Saddam's fate once and for all. In the shocking aftermath of September 11, Saddam's defiance of U.N. weapons inspectors gave Bush 43 his chance, though Saddam had in other ways, too, long since established himself as being qualitatively different from, and more dangerous than, the other strongmen and thugs in his region, and not the sort of dictator likely to foster stability. As a result, Kaplan argued in 2014, the road taken in 2003 was likely to have been not wholly unjustified, and perhaps not the worst thing for Iraq: "Nobody can know what would have happened . . . if President George W. Bush had not invaded, and Saddam was still in power to face the Arab Spring. . . . A Shiite revolt against Saddam would have had one of two results: either Saddam would have crushed it with his trademark level of brutality . . . or the revolt would have succeeded, with a sectarian war and the break-up of Iraq as a consequence. That, too, would have led to a scale of bloodshed comparable with the Syrian conflict. . . . If George W. Bush had not invaded Iraq and the country violently blew apart in the course of the Arab Spring, Bush would have been blamed for not riding Iraq of Saddam when he had the chance."

Right now, Bush is being blamed by some for the whole Arab Spring in its absence of glory, for having, as Robert Merry informs us, "destabilized the Middle East" by the invasion of Iraq, which "lit it on fire and fostered the resultant rise of the Islamic State and the deepening sectarian war." Has he a case? Bush invaded Iraq in March 2003, and eight years later—on December 17, 2010—a Tunisian vendor, distraught after a government official shut down his fruit stand, set himself on fire and set off the rolling series of riots that toppled the governments of four different countries, almost as night follows day.

But if the invasion had set off these disasters, why did they wait for eight years to happen—and five years after Iraq had been pacified? If these countries were primed to explode, they ought to have done so in 2006, when Iraq was on fire, not six years later, when the tumult there had long subsided. In 2010 Vice President Biden called Iraq

a signal success for *his* administration, and in 2011—a year after the Tunisian vendor set himself on fire—President Obama spoke of a "sovereign, stable, and self-reliant Iraq," whose future seemed limitless. What stood between this sovereign, successful Iraq, in which al Qaeda had been destroyed by the Sunnis and Shiites acting together with the Americans, and the events of July 2014, when the Islamic State burst over the Syrian border and quickly annexed almost half of that country? The truly destabilizing event that unhinged the whole region—Obama's decision, argued against by all his advisers, to pull all U.S. troops from Iraq.

What stemmed from this ill-advised, almost feckless, decision? Nothing good. "We didn't just withdraw our forces," said Charles Krauthammer. "We abandoned, destroyed, or turned over our equipment, stores, installations, and bases. We surrendered our most valuable strategic assets, such as control of Iraqi airspace, soon to become the indispensable conduit for Iran to supply and sustain the Assad regime in Syria and cement its influence all the way to the Mediterranean. And . . . we abandoned the vast intelligence network we had so

painstakingly constructed in Anbar province, without which our current patchwork operations there are largely blind."

No wonder we were blind to the emergence of ISIS (Obama dismissing it as no cause for worry), until it burst over the border from Syria, murdering and torturing thousands and beheading a well-chosen few. And lest we forget, there were a few other destabilizing events that occurred in the Middle East after 2009: Obama's tilt towards Iran, which unnerved Israel and the Gulf Arabs and may yet lead to an arms race and/or a preemptive war in that region; the many red lines in Syria that Obama first drew and then refused to enforce once they were crossed; and the "liberation" of Libya, undertaken by Obama and Hillary Clinton in a strange fit of hubris, and then dropped when that country turned into hell on earth.

Meanwhile, terrorist plots against citizens in the West are unearthed every day, including some to kill American servicemen and their families. Which brings us back to our series of opening questions: Is the world better off than it was eight years ago? Is Iraq better off? Is the Middle East better, or safer? Are we?



*Sunnis displaced from the city of Ramadi by invading Islamic State fighters arrive outside Baghdad, May 19, 2015.*



Bob Hope, John Wayne, Ronald Reagan, Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra (1970)

# White House Cool

*Celebrity as two-edged sword for presidents.* BY TEVI TROY

**T**hat the president is an important media figure is an indisputable fact in the modern political landscape. In my own book on presidents and popular culture, I argued that the ways in which presidents interact with the content and various modes of popular culture can provide a valuable insight into their individual psyches. Now, Kenneth T. Walsh has come along and taken the case to a different level, arguing that celebrity is an indispensable part of the modern presidency and that

*Tevi Troy, president of the American Health Policy Institute, is the author of What Jefferson Read, Ike Watched, and Obama Tweeted: 200 Years of Popular Culture in the White House.*

**Celebrity in Chief**  
*A History of the Presidents  
 and the Culture of Stardom*  
 by Kenneth T. Walsh  
 Paradigm, 280 pp., \$27.95

presidents who handle celebrity better are more successful as presidents.

To accomplish his mission, Walsh takes his readers on a breezy tour of modern presidential history. He stops briefly in some areas, and lingers in others, while making the case that celebrity is a crucial factor in assessing presidential success. He has a point: Presidents aided by the cultural elites gain a boost in popularity and perhaps even in historical reputation. He

notes that “President Obama has taken outreach to nontraditional media to an entirely new level,” and that this outreach has helped him politically: “Obama’s job-approval ratings have dropped from their initial highs for a number of reasons, but they would surely be worse if not for his constant and unusual outreach.”

Walsh counts Franklin Roosevelt, John Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton on the successful side of the ledger. (Obama, he notes, “is still a work in progress.”) On the other side of the divide, he puts Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, and both Bushes. This analysis raises the question of how, exactly, Walsh is defining success: by accomplishments or popularity on exit? Johnson and Nixon

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES / GETTY IMAGES

suffer from poor reputations today, but they both accomplished more as presidents than did Kennedy, in his brief tenure, or Clinton, who had relatively few lasting legislative achievements.

In the current landscape, Walsh is effectively pitting Republicans against Democrats in a contest that the GOP has little chance of winning. America's cultural elite is notoriously liberal, and conservatives will always have a more difficult time competing on this playing field. This is not just some conservative mantra or talking point. Journalist Jonathan Chait, no fan of conservatism, has noted that one need not "be an especially devoted consumer of television . . . to detect a pervasive, if not total, liberalism" in the popular culture. Walsh makes this point as well, observing that George H. W. Bush "was unpopular (as modern Republican presidents tend to be) with many in the entertainment industry, which seems increasingly populated by liberals." The treatment of Bush 41 was mild compared with the treatment of his son, who was vilified by the purveyors of popular culture.

Walsh's analysis is particularly important as we embark on a new presidential campaign. Republicans have not done well in recent presidential elections—in the last six, they carried the popular vote just once—and the relentless cultural critique of Republicans is one of the key Democratic advantages on this battlefield. *Celebrity in Chief* can provide a useful road map for how Republicans can proceed in this election on the cultural front.

The first piece of advice would have to be that Republican candidates should avoid low culture. Voters may want a candidate that relates to them, but they also want their presidents to maintain certain standards. Barack Obama, it should be said, does not try to maintain said standards—appearing, for example, "on Zach Galifianakis's insult-filled parody interview program on the Web, *Between Two Ferns*." As Walsh notes, "what would have once been called 'low culture' dominates the White House as it does our entire society." Still, Obama gets a sort of blanket of protection from the mainstream media for his cultural

dalliances, something GOP candidates should by no means count on getting for their own endeavors.

In addition, Republicans can pursue support in corners of the culture where they do have advantages. Walsh points out that one exception to the media disdain of Republicans is "country-and-western artists, who tend to be more conservative." Beyond country-and-western, the GOP can also make inroads among NASCAR fans and *Duck Dynasty* watchers. Granted, these are not as all-pervasive as, say, superhero movies; but they can prove important in select areas. The endorsement of the *Duck Dynasty* stars helped Vance McAllister win an unexpected victory in a 2013 congressional primary in Louisiana.

Finally, Republican candidates and presidents alike can benefit from eschewing pop culture and focusing on reading. This can show a seriousness of purpose that voters appreciate. As Walsh puts it,

With all the technologies available for instant communication, from the Internet to television, one might think that reading has become a lost art for presidents. It hasn't, and it still enables the nation's leaders to

find a valuable link to the world of ideas and especially to history.

One need not compete with Democrats in the realm of pop stars and musicians to show that one is ready to be president. In fact, competing too much in that field can show a lack of seriousness. In 1960, John Kennedy recognized this potential vulnerability and instructed his staff to maintain some distance between him and the Hollywood stars fawning all over him.

In 2016, the GOP will benefit from not running against cultural omnivore Barack Obama. Hillary Clinton, the likely Democratic nominee, is a very different character, lacking the cultural facility that Obama has displayed thus far. Says Walsh, Hillary "needs to show that she is in touch with everyday people and doesn't take herself too seriously or feel entitled to the White House. This has been a bumpy road for her so far."

Her challenge is even deeper than that: In the iconic measure of "cool" in popular culture, she will always fall short of Obama. Given her deficiencies, the GOP should have a chance to shrink its cultural disadvantage—and perhaps even end its presidential losing streak. ♦

BCA

## Fighting Siblings

*The House of Windsor in uniform.*

BY DOMINIC GREEN

All royal families are alike; all are unhappy in their own way. Most of their unhappiness is as common as their subjects, but the best of it has the resonance and unworldliness of a fairy tale. Royalty, as the proverb says of the Jews, are like other people, only more so.

"This is quite mad!" the duke of Kent protested in 1936, as Edward VIII

*Dominic Green is the author of The Double Life of Dr. Lopez and Three Empires on the Nile.*

### Princes at War

*The Bitter Battle Inside Britain's Royal Family in the Darkest Days of WWII*

by Deborah Cadbury  
PublicAffairs, 384 pp., \$28.99

renounced his crown for Wallis Simpson. In 2010, an excellent film, *The King's Speech*, depicted Edward's demotion to duke of Windsor, his sensitive, stuttering brother Bertie's promotion to George VI, and George VI's

transformation into Colin Firth. Edward is the villain of *Princes at War*, too, but Deborah Cadbury's canvas and cast are broader. This is a vivid, gripping portrait of an ordinary English family of German princelings in a disordered age.

Once upon a time, before the First World War, George V and Queen Mary had five sons. The youngest, John, was epileptic and intellectually impaired. Hidden from view, he died at 14. The heir was handsome, stylish Edward (known to his family as David), the future Edward VIII. The "spare" was frog prince Bertie, the accidental

swans, mated for life, and Edward was the head of the church. Abdicating, he became the world's most glamorous remittance man.

Cadbury begins where the romance ends. George VI's first command as king is an order to his younger brothers: "You two have got to pull yourselves together." Gloucester stops drinking with his army pals; Kent, whose misdemeanors include cocaine abuse, affairs with actresses, and being arrested while dressed in drag with Noël Coward, becomes a Royal Air Force officer and a conscientious raiser of morale.



Prince George, Duke of Kent (ca. 1941)

George VI and future father of Elizabeth II. There were also a pair of surplus Shakespearean princes: Henry, duke of Gloucester, a professional soldier and good egg, and George, duke of Kent, who started out as a bad egg but improved with age.

The family weathered the Great War, the Russian Revolution, the rise of socialism, and the fall of the pound. And then, the wicked witch of the west, Wallis Simpson, bewitched the prince of Wales—perhaps through the “Shanghai Squeeze,” perhaps because a twice-married Baltimorean seemed like fun to a spoiled man-child in his early 40s. As king, Edward proposed marriage, creating a constitutional crisis. For in that faraway kingdom, Anglicans, like

Meanwhile, Edward and Wallis decamp to the south of France with Edward's chum Fruity Metcalfe, whose brother-in-law is Oswald Mosley, leader of the British Union of Fascists.

“Personal relations,” E.M. Forster claimed, “are the most important thing for ever and ever, and not this outer life of telegrams and anger.” In the Bloomsbury Group's abdication from public duty to private gratification, the historian Noel Annan saw a moral decay that would manifest in the appeasers and aristocratic fascists of the thirties and the gentlemen spies Guy Burgess, Kim Philby, and Donald Maclean in the fifties. Edward VIII, a thoroughly modern prince, rejected sartorial and constitutional limits. He devised a personal

signature for his necktie, the Windsor knot. He ordered his suit jackets in Savile Row and his trousers in New York. He abdicated his responsibilities like a modern king, too.

Yet personal feelings were not enough. If Wallis ever loved Edward, she loved “wealth and money” more. Nor could Edward gratify her desire for status: His mother and brother refused to grant her the coveted “Royal Highness” status. Somehow, Edward had not foreseen that there was, as one courtier explained, “no place in the British cosmos for an ex-king.” Condemned to aimless and bitter luxury, and supported by the kindness of dubious strangers, he was a Windsor in a knot.

While Edward was a fastidious dresser, he was less astute in his choice of friends. Some were crooks; many were fellow travelers with fascism and future collaborators. As prince of Wales, Edward had embraced the conventional wisdom that Hitler could be appeased and exploited as a bulwark against Soviet communism. After abdicating, Edward pursued a freelance diplomacy at odds with his constitutional position and, in time, the national interest as well. In 1937, he and Wallis toured Germany. They gave the Nazi salute, and Edward talked privately with Adolf Hitler. Next, the Windsors launched themselves in the United States. Their fixer, the future Vichy collaborator Charles Bedaux, asked the American press to refer to Wallis as “Her Royal Highness” and Edward as the “Head of the Peace Movement.”

In *The Code of the Woosters* (1938), P.G. Wodehouse spoofed Britain's aristocratic fascists: Oswald Mosley becomes Roderick Spode, leader of the Black Shorts. Disastrously, Edward had positioned himself to lead Britain's appeasers and Mosley sympathizers. Reading *Princes at War*, you wonder if Wodehouse's fancies are, like those of Dickens, truths stranger than fiction:

On September 3, the duke was summoned to the telephone to take a call from the British ambassador in Paris. He returned to the pool where Fruity Metcalfe and Wallis were soaking up the sun. “Great Britain has just declared war on Germany,” he said.

"I'm afraid in the end, this may open the way for world Communism." His words were abruptly punctuated with a splash as he dived into the water.

Edward, like Wodehouse, was out of his depth with Nazi Germany. In 1939, he joined the British military staff at Paris; his brother, the king, ordered that Edward should not be trusted with military secrets. As France collapsed and the British retreated to Dunkirk, Edward and Wallis returned to their villa in the south of France, with "seemingly traitorous intent." While the duke of Gloucester was wounded when his car was strafed, and emerged from sleeping in a hotel basement to find that the building had been blown up in the night, Edward and Wallis intrigued with the Nazis through intermediaries for the return of the linen and plate in their Paris home. While George VI and Winston Churchill were leading Londoners through the Blitz, the Windsors sunned themselves in neutral Spain and Portugal, where another set of intermediaries—all, Cadbury shows, keen fascists—facilitated contacts with Joachim von Ribbentrop's foreign ministry.

Edward, Cadbury writes, was "playing for time, and ready to become a quisling, or worse." His conduct in the summer of 1940 made the strongest case for a British republic since the trial of Charles I. "With him," Joseph Goebbels reflected, "an alliance would have been possible." Eventually, Churchill reminded Edward that, as a British soldier, he had committed a court-martial offence by refusing to return home as ordered. Edward and Wallis were exiled to the Bahamas, to mix in further rum business with the local cads.

Meanwhile, the bravery of Edward's brothers restored the standing of the monarchy. The duke of Gloucester worked ceaselessly to raise morale and dodged death once more when his convoy was attacked by a U-boat in the Irish Sea. George VI exhausted himself in leading his people, permanently weakening his health. The duke of Kent, serving in naval intelligence, died in a flying accident in 1942.

Deborah Cadbury comes from another beloved British dynasty, the

Cadbury chocolate makers. Her prose is higher in calories than nutrients, and its velvety smoothness has a honeycomb center of cliché. The rise of the Third Reich casts an "ominous shadow"; George VI trusts Neville Chamberlain as "a safe pair of hands"; and Churchill's "clarion cry" falls on "deaf ears." The duke of Windsor, planning to visit Hitler, keeps his friends "out of the loop." Wallis puts a "brave face" on her isolation. Alarming, one of Kent's lovers, the singer Florence Mills, emerges "warm and sultry from cabaret," like a tropical vegetable from a steamer.

Here, though, Cadbury is true to her sources. Most of the protagonists speak like characters in a Nancy Mitford novel. Only Churchill can coin a phrase,

especially when Gibbon and Macaulay have coined it first; everyone else understates heroically. Deputizing for the king, Gloucester considers his constitutional duty: "To keep my wicket up and just take the edge off the bowling until the star turns are ready to go in."

The British, having taken the edge off Hitler's bowling, were eclipsed when the United States entered the war. As Britain's standing declines, Cadbury's tale melts into domestic melodrama. Evelyn Waugh called George VI's reign "the most disastrous" since the Middle Ages: an empire lost, a country demolished by war, and socialists ruling the rubble. It could have been worse. What if Edward VIII had listened to his brothers in 1936 and been king in 1939? ♦

BCA

# Atlanticspeak

*What we say over here, what they hear over there.*

BY MICHAEL M. ROSEN

**L**ike humans and chimpanzees, Americans and Britons share 99 percent of linguistic and cultural DNA, but it's the 1 percent difference that often seems to define us. Here, Erin Moore ably strives to explain how and why this is so.

A former editor who published British books for American readers, and a native-born American who now lives with her family in England, Moore nimbly curates a tour of American and English language and culture, with special attention to the fault lines where they collide. As the American husband of an English-born wife now residing in Israel among both Yankee and British expats, I eagerly devoured her book, hoping to gain a deeper understanding of how these geologic forces both cleave and bond our two societies.

Moore seeks answers to questions such as: "Why do Americans, who

*Michael M. Rosen is a writer and attorney currently living in Israel.*

**That's Not English**  
*Britishisms, Americanisms, and  
What Our English Says About Us*  
by Erin Moore  
Gotham, 240 pp., \$25.95

arrive in England with an entire language in common, have such a hard time fitting in?" And: "Why do English people, who once set up homes in every far-flung outpost of their empire, find America so foreign?" While definitive solutions to these quandaries at times elude Moore—in fact, they may not actually exist—she weighs several plausible explanations, along the way offering an insightful take on the evolution of language and culture.

Authenticity only partly accounts for the rift. After all, as Moore notes, "today's English English, like American English, evolved as a dialect from 16th-century English, and neither can claim to be closer to the original." Perhaps

the differences have become so prominent because of our strong similarities. Moore describes a “keen sibling rivalry” in which “England plays the role of the cool older sister, trying to ignore the fact that pesky little America is now big enough to pin her to the wall.”

But in many respects, language both reflects and reinforces these distinctions. Moore skillfully focuses disputed words like a lens through which key cultural differences become apparent. Thus, her chapter entitled “Cheers” explores varying drinking habits of Britons and Americans. “Knackered” (English English for “exhausted”) considers diverse baby-and-mummy/mommy practices; “Ginger” (“red-head,” but a fiercely derogatory term across the pond) wades into race-relations; and “Mufti” (“the state of *not* being in uniform”) analyzes differing American and English dress patterns.

In one especially clever twist, she transforms her study of “bespoke”—which likely derives from the expression “been spoken for,” referring to the single bolt of cloth from which the tailor cuts a custom suit—into a comparison of sandwich-craft in both countries, thence into a reflection on wartime deprivation and rationing in Britain, and finally into a meditation on entitlement. Most compelling, however, is her sensitive but assured explanation, by way of linguistic distinction, of the persistent differences, and surprising similarities, between American and British approaches to issues of class, perception, and authenticity.

For example, Moore cites the term “dude”—“one of the most American-sounding words there is”—as Exhibit A in “the story of how American slang can become universal and classless in a way that is hard to imagine happening in England.” She traces the evolution of the all-purpose American word from its 1883 origin as a term of ridicule, to its early-20th-century usage in Black English as an approving way to describe a guy, to its lazy Californian surfer-stoner sense, and, finally, to its explosion in 1998, through *The Big Lebowski*. But Britons would never be caught dead saying “dude” in anything but an ironic way. Moore’s English friends

(and mine) relish using “dude” as a way of “poking gentle fun at Americans, while taking advantage of the utility of the word.”

Or consider “shall.” In distinguishing “shall” from “will,” as Britons often but Americans rarely do, Moore examines striving and inevitability in the two lands. “Shall” implies what’s *bound* to happen to me, not what I’m *determined* to make happen. And while, as Moore notes, “in America, effort (and above all, being seen to make an effort) is practically a religion” and determination the national character trait, “should an English person appear to make an embarrassing effort, and rise too far above his peers, vulnerability to attack is his reward.” Thus, it’s not exactly surprising that “*shall* is not really part of Americans’ vocabulary. For them it is all about the individual *will*.”

On the other hand, a word like “proper” illustrates certain continuities between our societies. “Proper” is a characteristically British term that Americans often misinterpret to mean pretentious or stuffy, while “being genuine, or ‘real,’ is far more desirable in American society.” But Moore astutely notes that “when the Eng-

lish say *proper*, genuine and real is precisely what they mean.” Through the example of the proper breakfast—also known as the “full English” and comprising everything from sausage to eggs to fried tomatoes to baked beans—she furnishes a handy culinary education of how the British use “proper” to connote authenticity.

Along the way, Moore pulls back the curtain on several etymological curiosities that alternately bolster and undermine cultural similarity, such as the British origin of tipping (now a more firmly entrenched Yankee custom), the American source of the “stiff upper lip” (now more characteristic of England), and the birth of the term “OK” (an 1839 American intentional misabbreviation of “all correct”).

Not every chapter is a home run—or, if you wish, an easy goal—such as when Moore betrays an absence of expertise in political and economic matters, or when she gratuitously bashes George W. Bush (along with Tony Blair, to be fair). But if you’re looking for a clever read on the common language that divides us, as well as a jolly (not to say bloody) good read, you’re certain to be quite happy with *That’s Not English*. ♦



# A Tragic Hero

*Offscreen and on the battlefield with Audie Murphy.*

BY MICHAEL DIRDA

It’s a Saturday afternoon in 1955, and I am sitting with my father in the Palace Theater in Lorain, Ohio. I am 7 years old, and we are waiting for the start of a war movie called *To Hell and Back*. It is, my dad tells me, a true story, and the hero is a real hero playing himself. His name, I learned that day, was Audie Murphy,

*Michael Dirda, weekly reviewer for the Washington Post, is the author of the forthcoming* *Browsings: A Year of Reading, Collecting and Living with Books.*

**The Price of Valor**  
*The Life of Audie Murphy, America's Most Decorated Hero of World War II*  
by David A. Smith  
Regnery History, 256 pp., \$27.99

the most decorated American soldier of all time.

As David A. Smith, senior lecturer in history at Baylor, writes in his introduction, Murphy’s “actions in World War II were of the sort from which chroniclers,

balladeers, and poets since the days of the ancient Greeks have composed legends. He was the man charging headlong into fortified enemy positions, holding his own against an onslaught of enemy soldiers, defying the odds. Always brave, always valorous. Always alone.” And now, largely unknown to anyone under the age of 50.

Audie Murphy grew up in Hunt County, Texas, one of the many children of a feckless alcoholic father and a worn-out mother. Forced to quit school after the fifth grade, he learned to shoot partly to put food on the family table. (“If I missed,” he later said, “we didn’t eat.”) Once the United States entered World War II, Murphy tried to enlist in the Marines, but they wouldn’t have him. He was just five-feet-five-inches tall and weighed all of 112 pounds. Lying about his age—he was only 17—Murphy finally managed to join the Army, where he was soon “classified as a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) specialist and assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, of the 3rd Infantry Division.”

He killed his first man in Sicily—actually, two men. “I have shed my first blood,” he later recalled in his bestselling autobiography *To Hell and Back* (1949). “I feel no qualms; no pride, no remorse. There is only a weary indifference that will follow me through the war.” He will be in combat for 20 months and will ultimately kill, in face-to-face encounters, at least 240 enemy soldiers. Generally, he is cool in battle: “When I get in a situation where it’s tense and everything,” he remarked later, “things seem to slow down for me. It doesn’t seem a blur. Things become very clarified.” But when his closest friend, Lattie Tipton, is shot by a sniper, he goes on a rampage. As Smith writes:

He counterattacked like a berserker, bursting from his foxhole firing his carbine. He killed the two Germans who had been shooting at him, grabbed their machine gun, and “holding it like a BAR for firing from the hip,” Murphy found the gun crew that had killed Tipton and raked them with fire. “I remember the experience as I do a nightmare. A demon seems to have entered my

body”—a demon that led him to clean out the entire hill of Germans. When the stress finally passed and the rush of adrenaline left his body, his hands began to tremble and he sank to the ground exhausted.

He received the Distinguished Service Cross and would be wounded three times, earning a Purple Heart with two oak clusters. He once nearly died when gangrene set into his wounds, but he always survived to fight again. And after every battle, he would immediately strip his gun and clean it. The readiness is all.

On January 26, 1945, near the small village of Holtzwihr, France, Second



Lt. Audie Murphy (1945)

Lieutenant Murphy and his men were attacked by six German Tiger tanks supported by around 250 infantry in white winter gear. In short order, the Americans’ two tank destroyers were hit and disabled. Murphy then ordered his men to withdraw, while he stayed on to direct an artillery barrage. The Germans, however, kept on coming, “as though nothing would stop them.” Smith then describes what was, to my young self, the most thrilling moment of the autobiographical movie:

Murphy scrambled back to the .50 caliber machine gun mounted atop the burning tank-destroyer to his rear. He did not know if the gun was

still operable, but it was now the only chance he had to slow down the Germans. He dragged the phone over to it and climbed on top. The body of the lieutenant was half in and half out of the turret, his blood running down the side.

The .50 caliber still worked.

When he squeezed the trigger “the chatter of the gun is like sweet music. Three krauts stagger and crumple in the snow.” He swept the gun across his field of fire, peering through the swirling smoke searching for more targets. He “killed them in the draws, in the meadows, in the woods—wherever he saw them,” one eyewitness said later. Murphy knew that the German tanks would break off their advance if they had no infantry to accompany them, so he tried to take out as many soldiers as he could. The artillery phone continued to ring. “How close are they to your position?” came the frantic voice. “Just hold the phone and I’ll let you talk to one of the bastards,” Murphy shouted back, a retort that would soon become famous.

Even now, 60 years later, if I close my eyes, I can see Murphy in the film, standing on that wrecked tank destroyer, blasting away, alone, indomitable. As Smith reports, “Those who were witnesses to Audie Murphy’s feat were incredulous at what had transpired. Some could barely believe what they had seen. ‘He saved our lives,’ said one soldier from Company B. ‘If he hadn’t done what he did, the Germans would have annihilated us.’ It was, said a lieutenant who was one of the forward artillery observers, ‘the bravest thing I’ve ever seen a man do in combat.’”

Soon afterward, Audie Murphy learned that he had been awarded the Medal of Honor. In all, he won 24 different medals—and later gave many of them away to small children.

What does a hero do when the war is over? Murphy returned to Texas, to parades and citywide celebrations. The farmboy with an angelic smile became, in Smith’s words, “the ideal of ‘everyday American’ virtue, an embodiment of Norman Rockwell America. He was how the country wanted to think of itself.” *Life* featured him on its cover, where he caught the attention of James

Cagney, who had recently started his own film company. Cagney liked the vet's boyish good looks and invited him to Hollywood to work in a movie.

In short order, Murphy was playing bit parts in westerns, then starring in John Huston's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1951), and gradually establishing himself as a bankable, if somewhat wooden, actor. As Smith writes, "He made nearly fifty movies in a career that spanned twenty-three years—ten times as long as the war experiences that made him famous—and during his peak of popularity received more fan mail than almost any other actor."

He also gambled obsessively, cheated on both his wives, and always carried a gun, which he kept under his pillow at night. He would frequently wake up screaming, reliving in his dreams the deaths of his buddies and the horrors of war. David McClure, the coauthor of *To Hell and Back*, knew about his friend's demons: "It is generally assumed that Audie easily readjusted to civilian life, making a fortune as a movie star, and living relatively happily ever after. Almost the reverse is true. Let us hope that God did forgive him. His battered nervous system never did."

It's clear now that he suffered deeply from post-traumatic stress disorder: "There was always," Smith says, "a profound melancholy just under his surface along with a fatalism that was completely at odds with his image." In 1971, the then-middle-aged veteran was facing financial ruin and his best movies—*To Hell and Back* and the dark western *No Name on the Bullet* (1959)—were behind him. Still, he was hoping for a comeback when a small plane in which he was a passenger crashed in Virginia. Murphy was a month short of his 46th birthday.

When praised for his war exploits, America's most decorated soldier would always say that the real heroes were dead. He may have meant it in more ways than one. In retelling Audie Murphy's story, *The Price of Valor* reminds us that soldiers, then as now, may survive the trauma of battle but still lose their lives. "Before the war, I'd get excited and enthused about a lot of things," Murphy once quietly told John Huston, "but not any more." ♦

BCA

# Say It Again

*A liberal makes the conservative case for free speech.* BY CLAUDIA ANDERSON

**T**he term "illiberal left" is one of the useful contributions of this book. Liberals, as Kirsten Powers grew up believing, are committed to tolerance, pluralism, and reasoned debate. Freedom of speech is, to them, a cherished principle. By contrast, she insists, "authoritarian demands for intellectual conformity and the relentless demonizing of people who don't support [one's point of view] are inherently illiberal and wrong."

A career in political commentary taught Powers, a columnist for *USA Today*, that just such demonization and aggressive policing of conformity are now common, and they are practiced overwhelmingly by the illiberal left. Her book is a compendium of meticulously sourced examples of this nasty phenomenon.

Many are familiar. Shrill, fact-free feminism and outlandish incivility on college campuses cannot surprise, and we're already accustomed to the take-no-prisoners zeal of the LGBT jihad. Even so, this book contains eye-openers. Chief among them is Powers's dossier on the White House's attempt to delegitimize Fox News, echoed and amplified by leftist websites. We may associate government moves to discredit dissident media with Putin's Russia or Chavista Venezuela. But it *did* happen here, in the first year of the Obama administration, and Powers cites chapter and verse.

The opening government broadside against Fox News came from Barack Obama himself in the summer of 2009. "I've got one television station that is entirely devoted to attacking my

*Claudia Anderson is managing editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.*

## The Silencing

*How the Left Is Killing Free Speech*

by Kirsten Powers

Regnery, 304 pp., \$27.99

administration," he told John Harwood of CNBC. "You'd be hard-pressed if you watched the entire day to find a positive story about me on that front." Apart from being untrue—Powers cites studies to that effect by the Pew Research Center and the Project for Excellence in Journalism in collaboration with the Shorenstein Center at Harvard—this gripe came from the beneficiary of "the most laudatory press coverage of any senatorial or presidential candidate in recent history." Having the overwhelming majority of journalists and all but one of the broadcast and cable channels in Obama's corner obviously wasn't good enough.

Administration officials who publicly joined the campaign against Fox include White House communications director Anita Dunn ("Let's not pretend they're a news network"), her deputy, Dan Pfeiffer ("We simply decided to stop abiding by the fiction, which is aided and abetted by the mainstream press, that Fox is a traditional news organization"), senior adviser to the president David Axelrod (Fox is "not really a news station"), and White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel (Fox is not "a legitimate news organization"). Interestingly, when the administration tried to exclude Fox from briefings, the White House press corps balked, insisting that the Fox correspondent be treated like any other member. That didn't stop administration spokesmen from lying to reporters about their attempt to

exclude Fox from a briefing by pay czar Kenneth Feinberg in October 2009. Nearly two years later, internal emails obtained by Judicial Watch showed that the White House had told Treasury, “We’d prefer if you skip Fox please.”

As a liberal commentator for Fox News, Powers had a ringside seat for this abuse of power. She knew her employer and colleagues were being slandered. Similarly, as an adult convert to Christianity, she knows whereof she speaks when she asserts that “the illiberal left reserves a special strain of strident wrath for manifestations or protections of Christian belief.”

Note that not all conservative religious belief is targeted: Islam, though hostile to same-sex marriage, is strangely exempt from the opprobrium reserved for orthodox Christians, whether Roman Catholic or evangelical. Note, too, that the animus against Christians is already having real-world effects. InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA, present on college campuses for over 70 years, was thrown off 19 of the 23 campuses of the University of California last year. Its offense? Requiring that its officers be orthodox Christians—that is, that the organization’s leaders believe in its mission. Last month this absurd policy was reversed, but the fight is not over. Catholic Charities has been forced out of adoption and foster care work in several states because (in accordance with Catholic teaching on the family) it does not place children with same-sex couples. We used to call that the free exercise of religion.

An obvious strength of this volume is Kirsten Powers’s calm and engaging tone of voice: Her work cannot be dismissed as talk-radio rant. While her writing is forceful and direct, she never stoops to the rhetorical tactics she denounces, perhaps hoping that mountains of evidence alone will cause some fair-minded reader to rethink a few assumptions. Her wise, though mildly expressed, conclusion is that ignorance and groupthink blind liberals. She challenges readers to “make some unlikely friends” and discover for themselves that not all conservatives—not even all Christians!—are bigots whose ideas deserve to be shouted down.

Powers does not attempt to trace the route by which illiberal tactics have migrated from the hard left to mainstream politics, yet her work is apparently motivated by a right recognition

of the threat they pose: As she sees it, the degradation of our discourse mortally threatens what Tocqueville called the “habits of the heart” that sustain American freedom. ♦



# Manhattan Fare

*A pilgrim’s guide to the Algonquin Round Table.*

BY AMY HENDERSON



*‘Algonquin 1998’ by Natalie Ascencios*

In its heyday in the twenties, the Algonquin Round Table was a headline-grabbing “smart set” that came to fame in a decade when mass media took center stage in American culture. A showcase setting for journalists and theater people, the Round Table’s stars included Dorothy Parker, George S. Kaufman, Robert Benchley, and Franklin Pierce Adams. They were “famous for being famous,” but, as Parker once said, they “were no giants. Think of who was writing in those days—Lardner, Fitzgerald, Faulkner, and Hemingway.” The Round Table “was just a lot of people telling jokes and tell-

## The Algonquin Round Table New York

*A Historical Guide*  
by Kevin C. Fitzpatrick  
Lyons Press, 288 pp., \$24.95

ing each other how good they were.”

Several Round Table members met working for *Stars and Stripes* while serving in Europe during the Great War. Regrouping in New York after the Armistice, they met at the Algonquin Hotel to throw a welcome-back lunch for Alexander Woollcott in June 1919. It was such a success that someone said, “Why don’t we do this every day?”

In the decade following that lunch, New York was the most exciting place in the world for young writers. It was an

*Amy Henderson is a cultural historian in Washington.*

NATALIE ASCENCIOS

age when words mattered, and print journalism flourished. There were 15 major New York newspapers, and two new magazines—*Time* began publishing in 1923 and the *New Yorker* in 1925—helped define the cultural dynamism that shaped the postwar era.

As Gilbert Seldes argued in his landmark *Seven Lively Arts* (1923), the twenties roared not because of European sights and sounds but because of America's own popular culture: jazz, movies, Broadway musicals, comics, ragtime, vaudeville, and radio. New York's theater district was a showcase for many of these lively arts, and the centrally located Algonquin became a hub for both theater people and journalists whose offices were nearby. Dorothy Parker and Alexander Woollcott were critics, and George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly both became Pulitzer Prize-winning playwrights. Harpo Marx (minus his brothers) was an Algonquin regular, and Robert Benchley launched a stage and screen career from his Round Table roost.

The Algonquin wits earned fame because, as Dorothy Parker noted, "It was the Twenties, and we had to be smarty." They happily put their stamp of approval on whatever tickled their cultural fancy; if they disapproved, their words could carry poisonous barbs. When I spoke with her late in life, Katharine Hepburn was still fuming about Parker's snarky review of her stage performance in *The Lake*: "Miss Hepburn's emotions ran the gamut from A to B."

The Round Table enmeshed itself in New York's dazzling high life, but after the 1929 crash, Broadway faltered. "Talking pictures" became the new media rage, and some of the Algonquin wits followed the money west to write screenplays. By 1930, the Round Table had ceased to exist.

The group's virtual fame lived on, however, through much of the 20th century. Its legacy of wit and amusement was sustained in the many books that continued to celebrate its importance, beginning with Margaret Case Harriman's *The Vicious Circle* (1951), her memoir of growing up in the hotel where her father, Frank Case, was

owner/manager. Later notable works included James R. Gaines's *Wit's End: Days and Nights of the Algonquin Round Table* (1977), Dorothy Herrmann's *With Malice Toward All* (1982), and Marion Meade's *Dorothy Parker: What Fresh Hell Is This?* (1989).

Today's devotion to tweets and text-messaging, however, has rendered the Round Table's passion for word-crafting and smartness highly anachronistic. Their fame has passed from companionable familiarity to the dark sidebars of "history." So it is refreshing that someone has now written a book that restores their cultural currency in a fitting and contemporary way. Kevin C. Fitzpatrick is an independent historian and Round Table enthusiast who founded the Dorothy Parker Society in 1999 and has published such earlier works as *A Journey into Dorothy Parker's New York* (2005). Most important, he is a licensed New York City tour guide, and *The Algonquin Round Table New York* is an informative guidebook that treats the Round Table as prime Fodor's fodder.

It offers an organized approach for exploration and contains maps, photographs, and some primary docu-

ments. It begins by chronicling members of the Round Table alphabetically (Adams to Woollcott), and then goes on to give capsule descriptions of the Algonquin Hotel's history, the world of journalism that flourished in New York in the 1920s, Broadway's golden age before the crash, the rise of movies and radio, the advent of the *New Yorker*, and Prohibition's spin-off world of speakeasies and brothels. A concluding chapter describes the wits' post-Algonquin lives and offers an optimistic assessment of their lasting legacies.

The Algonquin Round Table helped define the spirit of the twenties. The most famous among them was probably Dorothy Parker, and a Viking Portable edition of her writings remains in print. She may have given the best assessment of their legacy when she said,

The trouble with us is that we stayed young too long. We remained in the smarty-pants stage. . . . We were little individuals; and when we finally came to and got out it was quite a surprise to find a whole world full of human beings all around us. "How long," we asked, "has this been going on? And why didn't somebody tell us about it before?" ♦



## Screen Tests

*The verdict(s) on a half-century of moviegoing.*

BY SONNY BUNCH

**R**ichard Schickel—the *Time* critic who has been writing about movies for a living since 1965—estimates in the opening chapter of *Keepers* that he has seen roughly "22,590 films, or about 294 of them a year. Which means that two out of every three days, for a long time now, I have been at the movies." *Keepers* is the distillation of a lifetime of moviegoing knowledge, a collection of must-sees with a few don't-bothers thrown in

*Sonny Bunch is managing editor of the Washington Free Beacon.*

### Keepers

*The Greatest Films—and Personal Favorites—of a Moviegoing Lifetime*

by Richard Schickel  
Knopf, 320 pp., \$26.95

to keep things lively. It also serves as a kind of memoir for Schickel, a reminder that he's known and loved and respected by a good many filmmakers.

Starting with Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin and winding up with *No Country for Old Men* (2007), Schickel takes us on a tour of not only critically

acclaimed masterworks but also the movies he has a soft spot for personally. He makes the case for all-time classics such as *Casablanca* (1942), as well as lesser-known fare such as Bette Davis's *Mr. Skeffington* (1944), often within the same page. Schickel doesn't mind ruffling some feathers, going after 1939's *Gone with the Wind* ("a faux epic"), *The Wizard of Oz* ("It wants so desperately to be liked, it pants with its need to be adored"), and Jean Renoir's *The Rules of the Game* ("Ostensibly a romantic comedy . . . the movie is, to me at least, distinctly unmerry. . . I take full responsibility for my failure to embrace it").

A biographer and documentarian concerned with the lives of great directors, Schickel approaches the project with a great deal of respect for those behind the camera. He seems to appreciate the pros more than the virtuosos:

Hawks, Hitchcock, Renoir, Bergman, De Sica, Ford, and on and on—their contributions to film history are far larger than those of Welles. . . . I think the contributions of someone like Hawks or Hitchcock are more important than *Citizen Kane*. Their films set the tone for entire decades. Pleasure, multiplied a dozen times in some of these cases, needs to be reliable, something we can count on.

Schickel hopes that his writing will inspire the reader not only to look into some films they otherwise might have missed—he makes an impassioned case for a home video release of the films of Ernst Lubitsch, for instance—but also to push back if they disagree.

If this book is not a pleasure to read and does not trigger some reflection on your part, then it will have failed in its purpose. You are supposed to argue with me—*Why this? Why not that?* We should agree to disagree, but I hope in a civilized way. Where once we did not take movies seriously enough, we now, I think, oftentimes take them too seriously, arguing our cases too loudly.

In that spirit, then, allow me to suggest, in an entirely civilized way, that *Keepers* spends a bit too much of its time focused on the films of Schickel's youth. Roughly three-quarters of the book is spent recounting films that were

released before he even started writing about film regularly. One can't help but feel that the major works of New Hollywood and everything that came after it are given short shrift. This happens, occasionally, with such projects: For instance, David Thomson's *'Have You Seen . . . ?': A Personal Introduction to 1,000 Films* (2008), features just 67 films from the 1990s and 145 from the 1930s.

Of course, it's possible that the 1930s were objectively twice as great as the 1990s. More likely, though, it is a simple function of time: We've had more of it to canonize the studio system classics, less of it to give the same treatment to modern fare. It feels like an unconquerable bug in such collections. Conventional wisdom must be addressed and there's so much more of it about ye olden days of filmmaking. Consider Schickel's discussion of *The Searchers* (1956):

I was mildly dubious about it; it seemed to me not quite routine, but also not all it might have been. I had not, however, reckoned with the enormous power of John Wayne's performance. In its rage, in its implacability, in its sheer command on the screen, its complexity, it is towering.

You'd be hard-pressed to find a more succinct statement of the conventional

wisdom as it pertains to Ford's classic western. And that, at least to me, isn't terribly interesting. Far more intriguing is Schickel's tossed-off aside about Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966): "I don't suppose that *Blow-Up* is all we cracked it up to be at the time. (There's a review of it in my files that makes my ears burn now.)"

Doesn't that sound so much more worth reading—the on-the-ground, at-the-scene-of-the-revolution thoughts of a man experiencing something he loves?

This is why I generally get more out of collections of criticism—the Library of America's Pauline Kael and Manny Farber omnibuses, Stanley Kauffmann's *A World on Film* (1966), John Simon's *Reverse Angle* (1982), and so on—than I do these after-the-fact retrospectives.

I'd willingly shell out quite a bit of cash for such a collection from Schickel, a lively critic who has written smartly and interestingly for a mass audience: no mean feat. Then again, I spend a fair portion of my workday writing about movies—"a fairly exotic way of making a living," as Schickel correctly notes. Those less ensconced in the day-in/day-out fights about film will likely have fewer reservations than I did with *Keepers*. ♦

BCA

# Max Unillustrated

*A major minor master in prose.*

BY DANNY HEITMAN

**T**he English writer and artist Max Beerbohm lived between 1872 and 1956, nearly 84 years in all. But early on, he cultivated his career like a man with little time to lose. Fresh from Oxford, he began contributing witty articles to the *Yellow Book*, a lively

*Danny Heitman is the author, most recently, of A Summer of Birds: John James Audubon at Oakley House.*

**The Prince of Minor Writers**  
*The Selected Essays of Max Beerbohm*  
edited by Phillip Lopate  
New York Review Books, 432 pp., \$18.95

quarterly associated with Oscar Wilde and William Butler Yeats. By age 25, he was George Bernard Shaw's pick to succeed him as drama critic for the *Saturday Review*, a transition that occasioned

Shaw's famous remark about passing the torch to "the incomparable Max."

"Note that I am *not* incomparable," Beerbohm protested some years after Shaw had crowned him with that prickly laurel. "Compare me. Compare me as an essayist (for instance) with other essayists. Point out how much less human I am than Lamb, how much less intellectual than Hazlitt, and what an ignoramus besides Belloc; and how Chesterton's high spirits and abundance shame me."

Beerbohm's plea to hold down the applause was all for naught. Nearly six decades after his death, a bright comet trail of superlatives continues to follow the man and his work. The third edition of *Benét's Reader's Encyclopedia*, a reference work not known for giddy effusion, uses the word "brilliant" (or its variants) three times in a one-paragraph summation of Beerbohm's oeuvre. (In its two-page take on Shakespeare, "brilliant" doesn't appear once.) *The Norton Book of Personal Essays* flatly declares that Beerbohm "is the greatest English essayist of the twentieth century," which might make fans of George Orwell and Virginia Woolf wonder how Beerbohm snagged the blue ribbon from those masters of the form.

Woolf, though, would be the last person to dispute Beerbohm's reputation. Although a demanding critic, she was fairly gaga over the incomparable Max's prose. "If you knew how I had pored over your essays," she gushed to Beerbohm, "how they fill me with marvel—how I can't conceive what it would be like to write as you do!—this is sober truth."

It seems that the more Beerbohm has been lauded, the less he's been read. His reputation for greatness is, perhaps, off-putting, suggesting the remoteness of a legend, not the warmth of a man. But as Virginia Woolf noted, Max Beerbohm's humanity, rendered matter-of-factly on the page, was his chief gift. In the 1890s, she wrote,

It must have surprised readers accustomed to exhortation, information and denunciation to find themselves familiarly addressed by a voice which seemed to belong to a man no larger than themselves. He was affected by

private joys and sorrows, and had no gospel to preach and no learning to impart. He was himself simply and directly, and himself he has remained.

It is this Max Beerbohm that editor Phillip Lopate captures in *The Prince of Minor Writers*, the most comprehensive selection of Beerbohm's essays to be published in many years. Note the title's reference to the minor key, a nice note of restraint that helpfully removes Beerbohm from the arid pedestal where Shaw exiled him generations ago. Lopate's sampling



Max Beerbohm by Walter Sickert (1897)

of Beerbohm's essays is the best survey of his writing since Lord David Cecil's *Max Beerbohm: Selected Prose* was published in 1970. The seventies were not, alas, the most promising decade for a Beerbohm revival: The decade's let-it-all-hang-out sensibility, expressed by confessional essayists such as Joan Didion, Edward Hoagland, and even Lopate himself, didn't chime with Beerbohm's Edwardian reserve.

With Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram making personal disclosure into a national pastime, these days might seem an equally unlikely home for

Beerbohm's elegantly reticent style. But Lopate argues that Beerbohm's essays offer a valuable corrective precisely because self-revelation can be overdone. "Today," he writes, "when the memoir and the personal essay stand (rightly or wrongly) accused of narcissism and promiscuous sharing of information better left private, it becomes all the more necessary to ponder how Beerbohm performed the delicate operation of displaying so much personality without lapsing into sticky confession."

"The Crime," a 1920 essay included here, is a good example of this balancing act. Its opening paragraph sets the scene:

On a bleak wet stormy afternoon at the outset of last year's Spring, I was in a cottage, all alone, and knowing that I must be all alone till evening. It was a remote cottage, in a remote county, and had been "let furnished" by its owner. My spirits are easily affected by weather, and I hate solitude. And I dislike to be master of things that are not mine. "Be careful not to break us," say the glass and china. "You'd better not spill ink on me," growls the carpet. "None of your dog's-earing, thumb-marking, back-breaking tricks *here!*" snarl the books.

Notice how quickly Beerbohm establishes intimacy, bringing us across the threshold of his rented house and into a room where our host feels smaller than the objects around him. It's vintage Beerbohm, a man so conditioned to self-effacement that, lacking anyone else in his story, he plays second fiddle to the furnishings. But then, within this quaint English setting, comes a shock. Peeved by a rivalry with a female author, Beerbohm commits a small act of vandalism. Detailing more here would spoil the essay, but Beerbohm points to his petty crime as proof of a few things. He's irritated by the idea of women sharing his literary profession and succeeding at it, a bias he admits is misguided. In confessing his crime to his readers, yet conceding that he's made no attempt to come clean about his transgression to the wronged party, Beerbohm acknowledges that his conscience, though persistent, has its limits. He also reveals

that crime, once indulged, can be a great deal of fun.

If he had been following contemporary literary fashions in “The Crime,” Beerbohm might probe his psyche at this point in the essay, sorting out possible motivations for his behavior. A bad childhood? Existential alienation? An anxiety disorder? Instead, he shrugs: “What I had done I had done,” he mentions casually. What he seems to say is that moral imperfection is simply part of the human condition, something so common that contemplating it clinically would amount to conceit. In this way, self-disclosure in Beerbohm’s essays points not indulgently inward, toward the navel, but outward, into the shared and often comic predicament of existence.

As “The Crime” illustrates, Beerbohm was generally skeptical about great schemes of reform. Lopate’s selections also include one of Beerbohm’s most widely anthologized essays, “Going Out for a Walk,” in which he dissents from the health police, already sounding their sirens in 1918, who wanted to make sure everyone was exercising daily: “It is a fact that not once in all my life have I gone out for a walk. I have been taken out for walks; but that is another matter. Even while I trotted prattling by my nurse’s side I regretted the good old days when I had, and wasn’t, a perambulator.”

That little pirouette at the end of the sentence, in which Beerbohm makes “perambulator” work as both a baby carriage and one who walks, underscores one of the reasons that Beerbohm is celebrated as a genius. His prose comes packed, like nesting dolls, with exquisite surprises. But Beerbohm’s literary art, though strenuously polished, didn’t aspire to grand themes. *The Prince of Minor Writers* opens with “A Relic,” in which Beerbohm reflects on an argument he had witnessed years before between a rare beauty and her older lover—the kind of scene, he reckons, worthy of a short story by Maupassant. Beerbohm tries his hand at crafting the tale, but it comes to nothing—nothing, that is, except the beautifully executed essay in which he recounts his failure.

“A Relic” serves as an apt keynote for the rest of this book, suggesting that although Beerbohm left behind no great body of fiction or epic poetry, his essays deserve an enduring place in literature. Beerbohm was also a celebrated caricaturist and master of literary parody, his deft mimicry of authors ranging from Dickens to Chesterton to Henry James assembled in *A Christmas Garland*. His comic novel, *Zuleika Dobson*, and *Seven Men*, his collected fictional portraits of men of letters, each have devoted followings. But none of that material is excerpted in Lopate’s collection, which focuses exclusively on Beerbohm’s essays. “What I really am is an essayist,” Beerbohm said.

Beyond that, he made few claims for himself, and once he’d achieved

his early fame, Beerbohm showed little interest in keeping it. In 1910, at the height of his powers, he married an American actress, Florence Kahn, and moved to Italy, largely out of the public eye. He returned to England during both world wars. In World War II, his lyrical BBC radio commentaries about English life helped soothe a weary nation. “I felt, when I was listening to them, that I was listening to the last civilized man on earth,” Rebecca West said of Beerbohm’s radio talks, some of which are included in Lopate’s selections. In our own time of partisanship, fanaticism, and strife, Beerbohm remains the sane voice, conversing with charm and wit and civility, doing what he always did: patiently talking the world off the ledge. ♦



# The East Wing

*All the presidents’ spouses in one place.*

BY ARAM BAKSHIAN JR.

When it comes to first ladies, one size does not fit all. From Martha Washington to Michelle Obama, presidential spouses have ranged from the brilliant to the batty, the dutiful to the distraught. But then, so have their husbands, so it really isn’t all that surprising. Come the 2016 election, we may even face the prospect of a former first lady and her former presidential spouse engaging in a gender-bending role swap. Or as a roadside sign posted on Twitter the day Hillary Clinton announced her candidacy put it:

Monica Lewinsky’s  
Ex-Boyfriend’s Wife  
For President!

So it is probably just as well that

*Aram Bakshian Jr., who served as an aide to presidents Nixon, Ford, and Reagan, is a writer in Washington.*

**First Ladies**  
*Presidential Historians on the Lives of 45 Iconic American Women*  
by Susan Swain and C-SPAN  
PublicAffairs, 496 pp., \$28.99

*First Ladies* ends with Michelle Obama.

If the old saying is true, and a camel is what you get when a committee tries to design a horse, *First Ladies*—an uneven compilation of the lives of all of the women married to presidents, plus a few nieces, friends, and other relations who served as White House hostesses, based on a year-long series of C-SPAN interviews with a mixed bag of presidential historians—is what you get when a committee writes a book. While short on style, flow, and depth, it offers a rich trove of insights and anecdotes—some trivial, some profound—about the women who have occupied what

is arguably the highest unelected political position in American society.

It's a job that comes with a heavy price tag. As Grace Goodhue Coolidge, the underestimated wife of an underestimated president, once wrote, it means having to be two people at once:

This was I and yet, not I. This was the wife of the president of the United States and she took precedence over me. My personal likes and dislikes must be subordinated to the consideration of those things which were required of her.

Some presidential wives have relished their role; others have done their best to evade it. None more so than Jane Pierce, who spent her husband's presidential years "cloistered on the second floor of the White House, where she would compose letters to her dead son and connect with spiritualists." Her letters to others, we are told, reveal that she was "very selfish. She seemed hooked on being ill, but they were never serious illnesses; they were usually colds. She could have a cold at the drop of a hat." All of which may help to explain why Franklin Pierce had a reputation for hitting the bottle pretty hard.

As to her legacy, "If she had any influences [on the administration], they were negative. Jane Pierce came into the White House as a 47-year-old lady who, it was well known, hated politics." She did, however, successfully push for "a new luxurious bathroom on the second floor of the White House where the family lived," making her an early advocate of clean government.

Ironies abound in this catch-all compendium. The only show-business couple to occupy the White House, Ronald and Nancy Reagan, were deeply, romantically, traditionally in love and entirely devoted to each other, while the Clintons—both Ivy League lawyers by profession—had a show-business-style marriage of convenience, chained together by personal ambitions that could only be forwarded by keeping the matrimonial act from breaking up.

As Hillary biographer Gail Sheehy reveals, in 1989, "Bill Clinton . . . fell in love with another woman, really

fell in love with her. This was not a bimbo. This was not a black-rooted lounge singer. This was actually a woman of quality, a professional whose family was in Arkansas and in politics. He asked Hillary for a divorce." Hillary's response, says Sheehy, was, "Nothing doing. That's not going to happen. This affair is going to end." The show, as they say, must go on, and love had little or nothing to do with it. One can't help wondering how many lamps would have gone unthrown and unbroken in a Hillary-free White House.

But Mrs. Clinton is far from the only first lady to make a devil's bargain on



Grace Coolidge (1923)

the way to the White House. Florence Kling Harding was a grimly high-minded do-gooder who once observed that "the happy woman is not one who has married the best on earth but the one who is philosophical enough to make the best of what she got." In her case, what she got was Warren Gamaliel Harding, an amiable philanderer of modest intellect who would never have made it to the presidency without his wife's steely determination to get him there.

In the end, Mrs. Harding's great achievement turned out to be more a triumph of the Peter Principle than of will. While both husband and wife were personally honest, the Harding

administration was riddled with corruption, including a disgraceful scandal at the newly established Veterans Bureau, headed by a crook named Charles Forbes. Forbes, who "flattered Florence shamelessly," got the appointment partially as a result of her recommendation, which she lived to regret bitterly.

Lady Bird Johnson, who also turned a blind eye to her husband's repeated adulteries and ethical inadequacies, at least succeeded in making a more lasting, positive contribution as first lady. Washington, D.C., and the millions of visitors who have passed through it since Lyndon Johnson's presidency are the beneficiaries of Lady Bird's beautification program that transformed the local landscape for the better. While Cokie Roberts and Betty Boyd Caroli also lay on the praise for Mrs. Johnson as a business genius, the fact is that the modest radio station she bought for \$17,500 in 1943 grew into "a communications empire" largely through her husband's growing Washington influence as Senate majority leader during the Eisenhower years, with sweetheart licensing deals that guaranteed a virtual monopoly in one of the most lucrative media markets in the southwest.

If ever a wife had earned a long and satisfying widowhood, it was Lady Bird Johnson, and she got it, from 1973 to 2007, when she died at the ripe old age of 94. A series of strokes slowed her down in her last few years, but not before she had played a key role in setting up her husband's presidential library and continued her conservation and beautification efforts. She was also instrumental in the release of the Johnson White House tapes—warts and all—that portray her larger-than-life mate in all of his egotistical savvy, brilliance, and vulgarity. This was an act of courage and integrity on her part that was also a gift to historians. Mrs. Johnson was a positive influence on at least two future first ladies, Laura Bush and Michelle Obama, both of whom would invoke her words: "I realized I had a pulpit and I could use it, and I could use it for good."

And then there is Eleanor Roosevelt, another cheated-on wife who consoled herself by using her position as first lady to tirelessly forward her reform-minded, and sometimes radical, socio-political agenda. No first lady before or since has played a larger public role in her husband's presidency, a role magnified by the sheer length of Franklin Roosevelt's time in office (1933-1945). Eleanor Roosevelt edited party manifestos, used radio even more effectively and frequently than her husband, wrote a widely syndicated daily newspaper column from 1935 to 1962, and toured extensively, all with FDR's encouragement—in part because it kept her on the road and out of his hair.

The quality of the individual chapters and contributors varies, with recognized White House historians and biographers such as Richard Norton Smith, Michael Beschloss, David Maraniss, and Douglas Brinkley, as well as well-known television commentators Judy Woodruff and Cokie Roberts, participating side-by-side with specialists on obscure first ladies such as Abigail Fillmore (née Powers). But *First Ladies* is useful as a wide-ranging, rough-draft introduction to “all the presidents’ women,” albeit with an overall liberal tilt and occasional instances of editorial sloppiness, such as when it describes the Hermitage as having become Andrew Jackson’s “home early in the eighteenth century,” when Old Hickory wasn’t even born until 1767.

As a former White House aide who witnessed the impact of three presidential wives—Pat Nixon, Betty Ford, and Nancy Reagan—at close quarters and had the pleasure of getting to know Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis while serving as a fellow at Harvard’s Institute of Politics, I found the chapters on all four of these strong, intelligent women to be balanced and often insightful portraits of very different characters, each of whom was devoted to, and appreciated by, her husband. And each of whom made the most of her time in the White House, whether or not she enjoyed being there. ♦

BCA

# Wellington's Axis

*At Waterloo, victory pivoted on a farmhouse.*

BY STEPHEN G. SMITH

**T**he 378 men of the 2nd Light Battalion King's German Infantry made up a tiny fraction of Wellington's force of 68,000 at Waterloo, and they are often forgotten amid Napoleon's massive frontal assaults against the allied line on the heights of Mont-Saint-Jean. Their fierce defense of a farmhouse called La Haye Sainte is the subject of Brendan Simms's short but action-packed book. By his reckoning, the five-hour struggle for La Haye Sainte changed the course of the battle.

The men of the 2nd Light Battalion were a remarkable hybrid: Hanoverian by birth and British by circumstance. Most enlisted after Napoleon overran Hanover and northern Germany in 1803, and they were ideologically committed to ousting the French scourge and restoring the European balance of power. Unlike most foreign units that joined the coalition against Napoleon—the British made up only 36 percent of the force at Waterloo—the 2nd Light was part of the British Regular Army, owing to the fact that George III was both sovereign of Great Britain and elector of Hanover. The Hanoverians' base camp was in Bexhill (now Bexhill-on-Sea), on the Channel coast. They wore the distinctive green jackets of English riflemen, fired the same Baker rifles, developed an English love of games, assumed the manners and dress of English gentlemen, and even married local girls.

But while they fought gallantly and contributed mightily to Wellington's victory, they were not, as Simms's subtitle asserts, “the 400 men who decided

*Stephen G. Smith is a contributing editor to National Geographic and Smithsonian Journeys.*

**The Longest Afternoon**  
*The 400 Men Who Decided  
the Battle of Waterloo*  
by Brendan Simms  
Basic Books, 208 pp., \$24.99

the Battle of Waterloo.” They had to be massively reinforced during the battle, and men from five other regiments were also inside La Haye Sainte by the time it fell to the French. The end came when the defenders ran out of ammunition; they had been given the standard-issue 60 rounds apiece, plainly insufficient given the location of the farmhouse. Only 42 men of the battalion's original complement answered a roll call after the fighting, with the rest killed, wounded, missing, or dispersed across the battlefield. A final tally showed 168 casualties, including 31 dead.

Simms finesses this change of cast by putting special focus on the battalion's leading characters. Its commander, Major George Baring, known for his involvement in “affairs of honor” over women, had three horses shot out from under him. Lt. John Drummond Graeme, only 18 years old, picked off countless French soldiers from his post atop the pigsty and refused medical aid after being wounded (“no going back, that won't do”). Finally, Pvt. Friedrich Lindau, a ferocious warrior and indefatigable looter, was shot in the back of the head but kept fighting after a rifleman wrapped a rum-soaked scarf over the wound.

The battalion's finest moment came during Napoleon's first infantry assault. Two brigades, some 5,000 men in all, made straight for the farmhouse. The emperor, meanwhile, tried his own version of “shock and awe,” starting with a half-hour cannon barrage. Then his

drummers and buglers made a din while officers danced at the head of the line and flourished their swords—rather like New Zealand ruggers doing a haka dance before a big match. Major Baring coolly instructed his men to wait until the enemy was perilously close.

It was now that the riflemen opened a deadly fire from the skirmish line beside the farm, the hedge behind the orchard, the barricade, the courtyard walls and the top windows of the house.

It's not known how many fell at that moment, but French sources estimate that as many as 2,000 men died trying to take the farmhouse. The real hero was La Haye Sainte itself, which was 400 meters south of Wellington's main line and 700 meters north of Napoleon's forward batteries. "The buildings formed a breakwater which shattered the cohesion of the French advance," Simms writes, "and a bulwark which prevented him from bringing up artillery to blast the allied line at close range."

Simms believes that, had the house been taken sooner, "Napoleon would almost certainly have broken the allied center, and defeated Wellington's army" before Prussian reinforcements arrived from the east.

La Haye Sainte is still part of a working farm, and Simms was prompted to write about it when he discovered that the present owner is a childhood friend. The masonry walls are so thick that, today, a cordless landline phone cannot be used in the farmhouse.

Simms, professor of the history of international relations at Cambridge, has an academic's skill for archival research and a sharp eye for detail—sometimes too sharp. As the battle ebbs and flows at and around La Haye Sainte, it can be difficult to keep track of the players without a scorecard. But patient readers will be rewarded by the meticulous way Simms assembles the pieces of an enormously complicated jigsaw puzzle—remember, no one even knows for sure what time the battle started—and by how close he brings them to what John Keegan famously called "the face of battle." ♦

BCA

# Girl in the Mirror

*One very unconventional coming-of-age.*

BY SOPHIE FLACK

With grievance and unspecific anger the major themes of so many contemporary memoirs, *Unabrow* is a literary breath of fresh air. The book consists of 20 comic essays chronicling Una LaMarche's difficulty navigating womanhood while looking back at how her awkward formative years—as a single-browed adolescent—shaped her self-image. LaMarche adopts a quasi-cautionary tone, as if to warn the next generation how *not* to lead their lives, and the result is an absolutely sidesplitting collection.

It's hard to miss the dust jacket of *Unabrow* while browsing the new releases. It's a photograph of LaMarche as a 6-year-old sporting a single bushy eyebrow and an adorable grin. Even though she liberated her eyebrows in the early 1990s, LaMarche still identifies as a freak: "It's very confusing to define so much of your inner identity by an exterior trait that you no longer possess. (Jennifer Grey, if you're reading, I know you feel me on this.)"

Born in Texas in 1980, LaMarche and her family moved to Brooklyn when she was 8. New York was fitting for a child who suffered her first "existential panic attack" at the age of 4, beneath the glittering stars of the Rose Planetarium at the Natural History Museum. With a hairy forehead, troll doll earrings, and a hopeless crush on Garrison Keillor, LaMarche may have had a higher-than-average degree of adolescent awkwardness, but she manages to make her suffering seem like hilarious revelations.

But while everything is fodder

*Sophie Flack, author of Bunheads, has contributed to the Wall Street Journal, the Boston Globe, and Ballet Review.*

**Unabrow**  
*Misadventures of a Late Bloomer*  
by Una LaMarche  
Plume, 272 pp., \$16 (paperback)



*The author at 6 years old*

for comedy—there's a whole chapter devoted to death, and it's entirely punchy—LaMarche does shift to a more serious tone when discussing certain heavier topics, such as her eating disorder, postpartum depression, and the loneliness that comes from not fitting in. But she's quick to make a crack at her own expense, lightening the mood.

LaMarche is so affable as a storyteller because she acknowledges her flaws, yet she does so without self-pity or complaint, and she never bashes herself in the name of comedy. That said, she cops to making terrible decisions: She's lied about bigger things (losing her virginity) and smaller things (being a no-show at driving lessons, age 25). And in her senior year of

UNA LAMARCHE

high school, she pretended to twist her ankle with exaggerated dramatic flair in order to get out of track practice. She then had to keep up the charade for the remainder of the school year and had difficulty remembering which leg to limp on when she went up to accept an award for team spirit.

Some of these essays were inspired by her popular blog, *The Sassy Curmudgeon*, and here in print, LaMarche has breathed life into those unfiltered entries while maintaining the vigor and casualness of a blog. Unlike Lena Dunham's collection, *Not That Kind of Girl*, LaMarche (who is a decade older than Dunham—a significant age gap, since Dunham is oft criticized for being the product of the navel-gazing millennial generation) appears mature and self-aware. As a writer, her candor and colloquial use of language have a way of making you feel as though she is speaking only to *you*.

While much of the real estate here is spent retracing her reluctant jour-

ney to adulthood, the real strength of *Unabrow* is how acutely LaMarche depicts what it's like to be a woman in America these days: e.g., what it's like to give birth to a child (there's a hilarious play-by-play of her natural childbirth, written in the form of a live-blog post, followed by a helpful diagram of the "nine circles of hell"), and how her life, work, and marriage were transformed as a result. LaMarche also observes that women in their 30s are misrepresented on television and in movies—especially mothers, who are depicted either as "MILFs" or martyrs. And with so many voices out there telling women how to "have it all" or shaming women into being "better" parents, what makes LaMarche especially appealing is that she writes from the perspective of a woman who happens to be flawed. Doesn't everyone have their own version of a unibrow that they carry around with them all the time, even if it no longer exists? ♦

ous and certainly tragic. It began in February, with the Rev. Samuel Paris, a Congregationalist minister, and his wife observing that their daughter and her cousin were behaving strangely. According to a surviving account, "These children were bitten and pinched by invisible agents; their arms, necks, and backs turned this way and that way, and returned back again, so as it was impossible for them to do of themselves, and beyond the power of any epileptic fits, or natural disease to effect." Soon afterwards, other locals reported similar phenomena in themselves or in their children. Nobody knew what it was. A rumor took hold that the cause of the problem was witchcraft, something almost everybody believed in at the time. That set in motion a hunt for the possible perpetrators and a menacing number of confessions and convictions for witchcraft.

Before the whole hysteria came to an end around October 1692, 152 people had been prosecuted and many imprisoned. One-third of the accused actually admitted to witchcraft and were convicted. At the end of the sorry story, 25 people had lost their lives: 19 at the gallows, 1 by being pressed to death, and the remainder dying in the squalid jails.

The facts of the Salem witchcraft episode have long been undisputed. What is interesting, and what Emerson Baker uncovers, are the complex, unexpected factors in the background. Several of the afflicted—the suspected witches and their accusers—had lost property or money during the recent King Philip's War with the Indians. There was a plethora of property disputes around Salem and the possibility that, in some cases, the accusations came from the disgruntled. Finally, the dominion of New England, established during the unfortunate reign of James II, had been overthrown in 1689, and the new charter for the colony of Massachusetts had been established only in 1691. The newly appointed governor, William Phips, arrived from England at the height of the witchcraft frenzy and immediately set up a court of Oyer and

BCA

# Spectral Presence

*Echoes of Salem across the centuries.*

BY DAVID AIKMAN

**H**alloween, it seems, never fails to arrive in "Witch City" without a spike in tourism. These tourists have conferred the nickname on Salem, Massachusetts. For the past several decades, the otherwise ordinary Essex County community of 41,000 has been the destination of people with a sometimes-lurid fascination with an episode in American history that is forever associated with the city. Police cruisers bear a witch logo, and one local high school team calls itself "the Witches."

*David Aikman is the author, most recently, of The Mirage of Peace: Understanding the Never-Ending Conflict in the Middle East.*

## A Storm of Witchcraft

*The Salem Trials and the American Experience*  
by Emerson W. Baker  
Oxford, 416 pp., \$29.95

Salem is indelibly identified in Americans' minds with the witch-hunting frenzy that broke out in 1692. In 2009, the *Boston Globe* reported that "Salem owns Halloween like the North Pole owns Christmas," and, of course, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* used the Salem witch trials as a metaphor for Joseph McCarthy's anti-Communist investigations in the 1950s.

The historical episode was seri-

Terminer (Old French for “hear and determine”), which, then, became the engine of the inquisition.

Many New Englanders, in fact, opposed the whole legal onslaught from the beginning. One of the most outspoken opponents was Increase Mather, former president of Harvard College and the father of Cotton Mather, the Puritan divine eager to pursue witches from the outset. What is often unmentioned about the Salem witch episode is that the Puritan leaders of Massachusetts, when they did come to their senses, very

setts, and why at this time? As the author acknowledges, there were far more lethal witch frenzies in parts of Europe around the same time as the Salem events. In fact, during the entire period of Puritan primacy in New England, from 1630 until the end of the century, there were only 34 executions for witchcraft. During the same period in Scotland, there were hundreds more executions for the same offense.

The most serious—and tragic—legal mishap of the episode was the use in court of “spectral evidence,”

on, though, Baker ridicules the aspiration of John Winthrop, in 1630, to build “a city on a hill,” and he labels the witchcraft episode “the dark side of puritanism.”

Well, let’s see. The Puritans, according to the estimate of most historians, were the best-educated generation of Americans in the history of the country since its colonization by Europe. They founded Harvard College, no small achievement in 1636, a full 46 years before the witchcraft trials got started. Even the much-maligned Cotton Mather recognized the value of smallpox vaccinations at a time when the Massachusetts Bay Colony was being ravaged by the disease, and long before many physicians and clergy were willing to accept vaccination.

What about the general fascination at the time with the supernatural and the occult? Baker gives no indication of his own philosophical or political affiliations aside from dismissing what he considers the superstitions of the New England Puritans. One of the most unfortunate generalizations, in what is otherwise a richly detailed account of the Salem episode, is this: “It is not a coincidence that the age of witch hunts also saw the birth and development of capitalism.” So if the witch trials were not the fault of superstitious yahoos, they must have been caused by capitalist hyenas waiting to pounce on the not-yet-formed proletariat!

Baker reveals some haunting anecdotes of the witch trials, suggesting that personal malevolence on the part of the judges, or those clerics who were egging them on, had its own comeuppance. For example, one of those to be hanged, Sarah Good, told a junior minister, Nicolas Noyes, that if she were executed, God would give him blood to drink. Years later, Noyes suffered from an internal hemorrhage, leaving him to die choking on his own blood.

The witch trials were a dark episode in American history. But the cultivation of a quickened conscience by the Puritans has rendered the figure of “a city on a hill” a much more enduring metaphor of the American experience than Halloween in Witch City. ♦

ASSOCIATED PRESS



*Witch Trials Memorial, Salem, Massachusetts*

quickly acknowledged their tragic mistake and made strenuous efforts to provide reparations to the victims and their relatives. Baker details the moving public displays of contrition by several of the judges, such as Samuel Sewall’s 1697 apology.

What this book doesn’t make plain is what caused the phenomena of the afflicted in the first place. Baker dismisses ergot poisoning and encephalitis. There was certainly widespread belief that the Native Americans were heathen and delved into devilish cults and religious beliefs. There was also common acceptance of the reality of the occult, in tarot cards and palm-reading. Obviously, there was psychological hysteria on a mass scale; but why in Massachu-

assertions by witnesses (usually the afflicted) that they had seen the “specter” of something or somebody wicked. Since it was obvious that no one could prove a specter existed in reality, the assertion that a person accused of witchcraft had projected a specter onto another person was quickly seized by critics of the trials as the weakest link in the entire process.

Where the author appears to have indulged in his own mild form of hysteria is in condemning the entire Puritan experience in Massachusetts. On the one hand, Baker admits that “the more scholars study witchcraft accusations, the more they realize that witchcraft accusations seem nearly universal and have occurred throughout recorded history.” Later

# An Afghan Tale

*Reality and unreality at a Combat Outpost.*

BY ANN MARLOWE

**T**he *Valley* is marketed as a police procedural set in a remote American military outpost in Afghanistan, and it is a page-turner, all 448 of them. It's also so cunningly constructed that I had to read it twice to be sure I understood everything that was going on—and there are still a few loose ends. But it's also an ambitious, if reticent, novel about good and evil, friendship and leadership, courage and shame that mainly succeeds.

Like a classic Agatha Christie country-house murder mystery, *The Valley* has a very limited geographic area and cast of characters. We follow Lieutenant Black—no first name—who's been sent to a small American combat outpost to conduct a routine investigation: A villager's house was damaged when an American soldier fired a warning shot in an unruly Afghan crowd, and the village chief complained to a passing civil affairs captain. Lieutenant Black is due to spend a week filling out the paperwork. Meanwhile, he has his own demons: Something has gone very wrong in what should have been a promising Army career, and this is a chance for him to prove himself.

The ramshackle Combat Outpost (COP) Vega—supposed to be the furthest-east, most isolated, and most dangerous American outpost in a Nuristan valley that ends at the Pakistan border—is home to 47 soldiers and one translator, or “terp,” named Danny, the major Afghan character. The men are fighting with not only the Taliban but the villagers, who are also fighting the Taliban. Five days before Black's arrival, a sol-

*Ann Marlowe, a writer in New York, was embedded with the 82nd and 101st airborne divisions in Afghanistan.*

## The Valley

*A Novel*

by John Renehan  
Dutton, 448 pp., \$26.95

dier from Vega fell behind 10 meters on a nighttime patrol and got snatched by locals. His end was gruesome.

In Army-speak, COP Vega is a “self-licking ice cream cone”: an isolated fort so poorly situated that it mainly exists to defend itself rather than to extend American control over terrain or people. Small wonder that the men are half-crazy with stress and treat Black as an enemy. It's not even so odd that one soldier may be a killer. It is odd, though, that a soldier no one has heard of is listed on the personnel roster, and that another soldier Black meets in the flesh *isn't* on the roster.

The U.S. Army doesn't lose track of soldiers. Or does it?

*The Valley* draws as much on the conventions of gothic fiction as crime fiction: COP Vega is a castle clinging to a fog-wrapped mountain, surrounded by hostile, poorly understood forces. Black's trip to COP Vega on a classically pitch-black, rainy night is full of ominous foreshadowing. There's a joking road sign pointing to “Xanadu,” a cryptic warning to “beware he who would be king.”

*The Valley* gives the best description of the American military base environment (and the post-9/11 Army) that I've ever read, both accurate in the details and evocative in atmosphere. John Renehan nails the big Forward Operating Bases (which are anything but forward) and the tiny, patched-together COPs up in the hills or on dusty plains where the rubber meets the road. He

also captures the tensions between non-commissioned officers and junior lieutenants, and between junior enlisted and NCOs. This is all, by extension, a portrait of America today. Consider this:

The room was standard-issue meat-head. Heavy-metal posters and jugs of workout powder. An Xbox video game system sat on a shelf beneath a small and beat-up monitor.

Or this description of Lieutenant Pistone, the commander of COP Vega:

He became your squared-away supersoldier, in his own way. Fastidiously organized, diligent about physical training. Not necessarily a good leader. He walked around with the sound track of his freshly awesome life playing in his head. He tended to forget that succeeding in the military was not so much about his own cosmic journey to heroism as it was about how good he was at dealing with people, handling people, taking care of people.

It comes as a shock to read in Renehan's acknowledgments that the painstakingly observed Afghan setting is a work of imagination. Renehan served as an artillery officer in Iraq and has never been to Afghanistan. As this suggests, Renehan is not only a brilliant writer, but a very clever one. Still, there are some first-novel fault lines here: *The Valley* is written in a close third-person, almost entirely from the point of view of Lieutenant Black. (The couple-dozen pages that take the points of view of other characters are far less successful.) But there's a major surprise at the end, and the closeness of the narration makes it seem as though the author is pulling a fast one on us.

More seriously, I wish the novelist had opened up his main character more toward the end. He has elegantly avoided all the redemption clichés we might have expected, but the ending feels a bit choked, and *The Valley* ends on an uncertain note.

Renehan has spoken in an interview of writing a sequel, and I can't wait; I hope there's a movie, too. “You are [a] man who needs the truth,” the Afghan terp Danny says to Lieutenant Black. And we need these truths about our wars and our soldiers, too. ♦

**"In L.A., Obama addresses Washington's dysfunction:  
'I did not say I would fix it.'"**

**—Washington Post, June 19, 2015**

**PARODY**

THIS IS A MOMENT . . . OR SOMETHING. THIS IS . . . SOMEBODY'S TIME. IT IS SOMEBODY'S TIME TO TURN THE PAGE ON THE POLICIES OF THE PAST. SOMEBODY'S TIME—TO BE CLEAR, PROBABLY NOT MINE—TO BRING NEW ENERGY AND NEW IDEAS TO THE CHALLENGES WE FACE. SOMEBODY—JUST TO REITERATE, PROBABLY NOT ME—SOMEBODY NEEDS TO OFFER A NEW DIRECTION FOR THIS COUNTRY, WHICH SOME PEOPLE LOVE, APPARENTLY.

. . .

THE JOURNEY WILL BE DIFFICULT. THE ROAD WILL BE LONG. I FACE THIS CHALLENGE, AS USUAL, WITH PROFOUND HUMILITY AND KNOWLEDGE OF MY OWN LIMITATIONS. SPECIFICALLY, OF MY INABILITY TO REALLY, YOU KNOW, "GET THINGS DONE." TO "FOLLOW THROUGH"—NOT MY STRONG SUIT. BUT I ALSO FACE IT WITH LIMITLESS FAITH IN THE CAPACITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE—AND FAILING THAT, THE CHINESE. BECAUSE I'M PRETTY SURE THAT SOMEBODY IS WILLING TO WORK FOR STUFF, AND FIGHT FOR STUFF, AND BELIEVE IN STUFF. BUT, YOU KNOW, LET'S NOT PUT THIS ALL ON ME, OK? I'M JUST ONE MAN, AND, FRANKLY, I'VE NOT REALLY, LIKE, EVER BEEN IN CHARGE OF ANYTHING. THIS IS PROBABLY A GOOD TIME TO TEMPER OUR EXPECTATIONS, RIGHT?

. . .

BECAUSE, I THINK WE CAN ALL AGREE, GENERATIONS FROM NOW, WE WILL BE ABLE TO LOOK BACK AND TELL OUR CHILDREN—PROBABLY IN CHINESE OR RUSSIAN OR SOMETHING—THAT THIS WAS NOT THE MOMENT WHEN WE BEGAN TO PROVIDE CARE FOR THE SICK AND GOOD JOBS TO THE JOBLESS; THIS WAS NOT THE MOMENT WHEN THE RISE OF THE OCEANS BEGAN TO SLOW AND OUR PLANET BEGAN TO HEAL; THIS WAS NOT THE MOMENT WHEN WE ENDED A WAR AND SECURED OUR NATION AND RESTORED OUR IMAGE AS THE LAST, BEST HOPE ON EARTH. THIS WAS THE MOMENT—THIS WAS THE TIME—WHEN WE KINDA JUST CHILLED FOR A SECOND AND CAUGHT OUR BREATH, YOU KNOW?

—BARACK OBAMA

44TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA